



DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

„How does civil societal activity move the transition to democracy? The impact of the work of NGOs on the democratization process in Iraqi-Kurdistan“

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angestrebter akademischer Grad

Magistra der Philosophie (Mag. Phil)

Wien, 2012

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt: A 300

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt: Politikwissenschaft

Betreuerin: Priv.-Doz. Dr.in Karin Liebhart

*Wake up world! Wake up and stop sleeping! Wake up and stop blaming! Open ur
eyes! Stand up and rise!*

-Nneka -

Acknowledgements

Several people have contributed to this diploma thesis through their knowledge, participation and advice.

I am grateful for having had the opportunity to work with the Austrian NGO LeEZA that supports emancipatory projects in Iraqi-Kurdistan. My colleagues and friends allowed me to get an insight into the NGO-world in this region, which triggered the motivation to write about this topic.

I also want to thank my Swedish professor Lasse Lindström for encouraging me with this plan, as well as my Austrian supervisor Karin Liebhart for her critical insight and good advice.

I express my deep gratitude to all the research participants who gave me the chance to interview them in order to carry out this study. Zor supastan ekem! At that point I want to thank my aunt Perween and my friend Andrea, whose tireless support, encouragement, advice, humour and friendship made my stay in Kurdistan bearable.

I am lucky to be surrounded by my wonderful friends who encouraged me to finish this work. Very special thanks go to Veronika and Emii who contributed immensely to this paper through their valuable comments and their constructive critique.

I express my deep gratitude to my family, who gave me the gift of combining two cultures and always supporting this hybrid, constantly changing form of my Austro-Kurdish identity. Zor supas Daya, Baba, Saya, Srud w Yada, xoshm ewén!

Last but not least I want to thank Mam Peter, to whom this work is dedicated. The challenging discussions, the coffees and the cheesecakes broadened my horizon and truly enriched and inspired this paper!

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1 Introduction

Non-governmental organizations have been working in Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991. After the breakout of the Gulf War and Saddam Hussein's invasion into Kurdistan, millions of refugees left their homes to escape the cruel forces of the Iraqi army. The International Community reacted by sending emergency help to the affected regions, which were Iran and Turkey. UNHCR and the International Red Cross were one of the first organizations reaching these places and providing help for the refugees by giving them food and shelter. The withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from Kurdistan and the establishment of the no-fly zone enabled many of those refugees to return back to Kurdistan. However, the region was completely destroyed and for the first time, the dimension of the destruction of this area was evident. Hence many international organizations decided to go to Kurdistan in order to support the reconstruction of the Kurdish region on the one hand and provide emergency help for the rest of Iraq, still under Saddam Hussein's rule, on the other. The biggest organizations stationed were UN-related organizations such as UNHCR, Unicef and the Food and Agriculture Programme (FAP). Although all these organizations are not non-governmental per se, they played a crucial role in determining the picture and the perception of international organizations. The UN made projects of NGOs possible by being one of the most important donor and project partner.

In the beginning of the 1990s, many NGOs left Kurdistan when the civil war broke out. They ceased their unfinished projects. Only a few could cope with the situation and stayed there. These organizations are still well known and respected among the people.

The US-led war in 2003 defeated the Iraqi forces and put an end to the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein that had lasted for over thirty years. What remained was a devastated country without any administration. Ever since this time, Iraq has fallen into a chaotic situation, overshadowed by continuous violence that hinders the democratization process.

However, the Kurdistan-Region of Iraq remained calm and is considered to be the safe haven of Iraq. Ever since the installation of the autonomous zone in Northern Iraq in 1991, the Kurdish Region has undergone a move towards democracy; one of the most important steps was the formation of a national government by the two dominating

parties the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Together they formed the government of Iraqi Kurdistan, the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG).

Intensive humanitarian aid efforts have also influenced the civil society sphere in Iraqi Kurdistan. The presence of foreign NGOs has encouraged local people to found their own associations and organizations. After 2003 these organizations flourished, not only in Kurdistan but also in the rest of Iraq. The fall of the Baath regime enabled foreign NGOs to enter Iraqi territory legally, whereas before the war foreign workers were prohibited to work by Iraqi law. While Iraq was basically flooded by international NGOs, the US government tried to establish an administration that would strengthen the state apparatus and democratize the latter. This resulted in two parallel developments: on the one hand, foreign regimes attempt to introduce a democratic political system to a country that has not experienced democracy for decades. On the other hand, foreign non-governmental organizations aim at emancipating a society that has suffered under oppression for decades. The crux now was to integrate the civil society into this democratisation process.

While the KRG and Kurdistan are regarded as a role model for Iraq, there are still a number of democratic deficits to address. A major deficit is the lack of participation of civil societal organisations (CSO) and associations in the decision-making process despite the high number of CSOs. Nonetheless, a number of social movements and organizations still manage to gather and voice their needs publicly although they are confronted with restrictive conditions.

The women's movement in Kurdistan has grown, especially after 2003, and tries to exert influence in the political arena. It has been very active and has raised the attention of the media, thereby reaching a number of supporters. Hence, the women's movement could be seen as a speaking tube to give women's issues a voice in the political arena. However, some questions remain open, e.g. whether these organizations are able to convey the political message back to the people, that is, to act as mediator, through which the communication between these two levels runs or to scrutinize whether the achievements on the political level show an actual effect on the societal level.

1.1 Research Question

Though NGOs make up only one part of the wide range of civil society, they prove to be a good example to show the ambiguity of civil society activity. NGOs are usually associated with well-meant activities, which try to improve the people's situation. But they often play a role in maintaining the status quo.

This ambivalence is the subject of discussion of this thesis. Therefore the research question is:

How does civil society influence democracy?

I shall analyze if there is an interaction between the civil societal and the political level in Kurdistan. If so, what is this interaction like?

This paper will further seek to discuss the ambiguous role of civil society. Non-governmental organizations can act as a mouthpiece for the people's needs and can be the consequence of discontentment with political decisions. Conversely they can play a significant role in maintaining the system. As Thomas Carothers says: *"It is very possible that outside democracy promoters can work for years helping to (...) nourish civic advocacy, foster greater women's rights, and promote more democratic civic education without contributing to a basic change of regime type"*.¹

The aim of this paper is to show that organizations which root in the society can influence the process of democratization in many different ways, they can either spur or hinder a democratic system.

1.2 State of the Art

Many theories have dealt with the topic of "democratization" or "Democracy" and have come to the conclusion that there is no single way to achieve the goal of a consolidated democracy but that there are many different factors that play a role in the democratization-process. Democracy is seen as a dialectic interaction between the political, economical and societal level, but it is difficult to find one specific recipe,

¹ Carothers, Thomas (2003): *Is Gradualism Possible? Choosing a Strategy for Promoting Democracy in the Middle East*, in: Working Paper No. 39, Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, p.11.

which is valid and feasible in every case. As democracy is a long and open process it will always be vulnerable to internal (local) as well as external (regional, global) influences.²

The political scientists Larry Diamond, Juan Linz, Alfred Stepan and Thomas Carothers are important masterminds of democracy concepts in the English-speaking region. Their theses also had great influence on the policy conducted during the reconstruction of the Iraqi administration, and their concepts will act as guidelines in determining what democracy in this specific context means. Since these theories pursue a top-down approach, source criticism is also being applied. This should help to understand that the above-mentioned authors show only one way to install democracy. Jean Grugel and Nelson Kasfir see various shortcomings in this approach.

For the chapter about civil society I used important concepts throughout the last three centuries, since all these concepts shaped the notion of civil society immensely. I added affirmative views on civil society such as Tocqueville, Habermas or Wolfgang Merkel as well as a critical approach pursued by Gramsci. These theories often provide important guidelines for many civil society organizations (CSO).

For the historical part I used various monographies by well-known German and English-speaking political scientists such as Denise Natali, Gareth Stansfield, Michael Gunter or Andrea Fischer-Tahir. All of them have spent many years living in Kurdistan and provide a deeper analysis of the Kurdish situation in Iraq.

1.3 Structure of this paper

In order to answer this question appropriately, the structure of this paper is as follows: In the first part, there is a rather detailed theoretical analysis. The two main variables of this paper, democracy and civil society, enclose various theoretical concepts and definitions, hence a delimitation of the two terms is crucial for the understanding of this paper. In the beginning, I shall give a theoretical overview on the notions of democracy. I chose those theories that were relevant in the case of Iraq, namely concepts of democracy presented by important US-American political scientists. These scientists were also needed as advisors for the Iraq Study Group of the US administration.

² See: Whitehead, Laurence (2002). *Democratization. Theory and Experience*. University Press. Oxford.

Subsequently, a theoretical overview on civil society is given. I delimited the theories in relevance of the case study and chose concepts that can be applied to NGOs. The end of this theoretical part focuses on the applied concept, namely the one presented by Gordon White³ who suggests that civil society can influence democratization in four different ways, which contribute to the balance of power between state and civil society and hence a deeper interaction, or even co-operation between those two levels

The second part will outline the methodological approach. I carried out a field study by conducting semi-structured with six NGOs in the Kurdish city Suleimaniya. To analyze these interviews I chose the content analysis approach. Furthermore, the chapter on methods describes the working atmosphere while doing the research. I added these pieces of information not only because a socio-political context is crucial for understanding the outcome of this paper but also because the peculiar situation of September 2009 explains why I decided to be even more cautious by keeping my interviews anonymous.

The third part will give a historical overview on the political developments in Iraqi-Kurdistan, followed by an outline of the situation of NGOs.

The following chapter will then deal with the evaluation and interpretation of the interviews. In order to understand the evaluation a specific formatting is used: quotes from other texts are written in *italics* whereas quotes from interviews are written in Block without spacing. The interview parts are original transcripts therefore grammar mistakes were not corrected.

Finally, the last chapter will summarize the main points gained from the empirical research and draw conclusions.

The paper does not contain numbers or figures or any other quantitative data regarding Iraqi-Kurdistan, because the existing numbers are neither accurate nor reliable due to the unknown sources and are therefore irrelevant.

³ White, Gordon (2004): *Civil Society, Democratization and Development. Clearing the Analytical Ground*, in: Peter, Calvert/ Peter J. Burnell (eds.) (2004): *Civil Society in Democratization*, London:Routledge, p. 10-21.

2 Theories

2.1 Democracy

Democracy is a broad term with varying meanings depending on the different schools of thoughts, definitions, theories, discourses and models the concept is derived from. After all, democracy does not only deliver a theoretical concept, it also conveys a set of different values, norms and ideals, which vary in dimension, intensity, and design. *“Democracies are political systems comprising institutions that translate citizens’ preference into policy, have effective states that act to protect and deepen democratic rights, and count on a strong participatory and critical civil society.”*⁴ This chapter seeks to give an insight into theories, which have been selected according to the relevance of the discussed problem of this paper.

In the case of Iraq, mainly US-American notions of democracy were taken into consideration whereby the next part will introduce some of these concepts.

2.1.1 Liberal Democracy

One of the main contributors to the democratization process of Iraq is the American scholar Larry Diamond. One of the basic assumptions underlying Diamond’s view is that democracy is the best way to govern, since *“(…) only a constitutional government, restraining and dividing the temporary power of the majority, can protect individual freedom.”*⁵ We can see that, as the denotation shows, that the centre of attention in the discourse over liberal democracy still lies on the individual’s freedom. Another important conclusion we draw from this statement is that a division of power and self-restraining of politics is necessary in order to avoid political arbitrariness. Diamond uses the concept further *“(…) to mean a political system in which individual and group liberties are well protected and in which these exist autonomous spheres of civil society and private life, insulated from state control.”*⁶

⁴ Grugel, Jean (2002): *Democratization. A Critical Introduction*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, p.36.

⁵ Diamond, Larry (2003) [1999]: *Defining and Developing Democracy*, in: Dahl, Robert et al. (2003): *The Sourcebook of Democracy*, United States of America: MIT-Press, p. 28.

⁶ Ibid., p. 29.

Freedom of speech, freedom of religion as well as the protection from torture, enslavement, arbitrary imprisonment, etc. are considered as universal human rights which are maintained in a system of liberal democracy. *“Liberal democracy provides, by definition, comparatively good protection of human rights.”*⁷

Similar arguments are put forward by Albert Weale. Firstly, democracy enables protecting and promoting common rights and interests. The idea that the government depends on the population’s opinion and hence is under control of its people prevents the regime from taking over the power. *“Thus, we may say that, what the varying conceptions have in common is the idea that the resolution of political questions is made by a body that is at some point dependent upon the views of citizens.”*⁸ A democratic system according to Weale is in constant exchange with its citizens, which automatically leads to a system of checks and balances. Hence, a democratic regime protects the people from governmental arbitrariness and not only respects but also lives the “five virtues of Democracy” which characterize a well-established democratic system: peace, prosperity, human development, social justice, acknowledgment of human rights.

Moreover, democracy offers the possibility for everybody to participate in the political decision-making process. It fulfils the principle of political equality so to say, as it gives *“(...) each citizen an equal status in the system of collective political authority.”*⁹ The main point here is that the right of determination of the members of society is guaranteed; it is only their approval of the government that gives the ruling force its legitimacy.

According to Diamond, liberal democracy contains a long list of requirements, some of which are presented below¹⁰:

⁷ Ibid., p. 30.

⁸ Weale, Albert (2007): *Democracy*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, Second Edition, p. 51.

⁹ Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁰ See: ibid., pp. 35.

- Interdependency and interactions among institutions provide a system of horizontal accountability, which again limits the executive power of the state.
- Minority rights in terms of guaranteeing the right and the freedom of cultural, ethnic, religious and other expression are safeguarded.
- Parties are not the only way of interest accumulation. Numerous sources and ways to pursue one's interests are given, such as the founding of associations, organizations, interest groups, etc.
- Individual freedom, such as freedom of speech, religion, political freedom, etc. is provided.
- The rule of law is seen as a main state principle, which protects the citizen from unjustified/arbitrary internal or external intervention.
- *"Democracy requires a constitution that is supreme."*¹¹

Diamond puts special emphasis on the last point, which is the supremacy of the constitution. He claims that this point already includes all the other factors and safeguards them, since the constitution determines the rules of the game, or rather the rules of politics.

He claims that liberal democracy encompasses *"(...) a much broader and more continuous play of interest articulation, representation, and contestation"*.¹²

¹¹ Ibid., p. 36.

¹² Ibid.

2.1.2 *Five Arenas of Democracy*

A similar system is presented by Linz and Stepan, outlined and highlighted in the “*Five Arenas of a Consolidated Democracy*”¹³. These five arenas seek to describe five interdependent elements that are in a dynamic process of interaction with each other in order to not only create but also foster and stabilise a democratic system. The five arenas include the political society, civil society, rule of law, the state apparatus and the economic society. Each one will be explained in the following part:

The first arena refers to the existence of an **independent and active civil society**. The relationship between state and civil society is based on a mutual acceptance and acknowledgement of each other’s legitimacy. Civil society is seen as the arena which consists of „(...) *self-organizing groups, movements and individuals which attempt to articulate values, create associations and solidarities, and advance their interests.*“¹⁴. According to the authors, civil society acts autonomously and exerts influence on political institutions, especially on opposition forces and is said to suggest and develop alternatives. It is essential for a successful democratization process, to root on an active and independent fundament of civil society. „*A robust civil society, with the capacity to generate political alternatives and to monitor government and state, can help transitions get started, help resist reveals, help push transitions to their completion, help consolidate, and help deepen democracy.*“¹⁵ It exercises control functions on the government or the state apparatus on the one hand and acts as a speaking tube of the people on the other hand.

The second arena relates to the **political society**, which represents the arena where actual political life is taking place and carried out. It represents the sphere which permits a “(...) *legitimate right to exercise control over public power and the state apparatus*”¹⁶ through providing a certain framework such as political and state-run

¹³Linz, Juan .J./ Alfred, Stepan, (1996): *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation, Southern Europe, South America, and Post-communist Europe*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, pp.5.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁵ibid., p. 9.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 8.

institutions, in which this exertion of power, influence or control occurs. The importance of the political society lies in its ability to complete activities of the civil society, since “(...) *civil society can destroy a non-democratic regime*”¹⁷ but it needs a political society to rebuild and re-establish a democratic one. The interplay between civil and political society is a crucial one. Political society plays a mediating role between state and society; Communication from both sides is reflected in the political society, which after all represents the dynamics of politics since it is “(...) *informed, pressured and periodically renewed by civil society.*”¹⁸ The main actors within this arena are political parties and political leaders whose power is bound to the outcome of competitive elections that are held according certain electoral rules.

The third arena describes the principle underlying this whole model, namely **the rule of law**. As a basic element of constitutionalism, the rule of law must be accepted and respected by all relevant actors as well as by the vast majority of the people. Furthermore, it is the one factor that is valid under every condition and is therefore irreversible, despite a majority decision. “*It entails a relatively strong consensus over the constitution and especially a commitment to self-binding procedures of governance*”.¹⁹

The fourth arena highlights the state apparatus. As mentioned above, a well-functioning state is regarded as a pre-requisite for a successful consolidation. The duty of an efficient democratic state is to put political decisions into practice and in order to fulfil this duty an efficient **state bureaucracy** is indispensable. A constitutional, stable state has to enclose the coercive force, to “*claim the monopoly of the legitimate use of force in the territory.*”²⁰ Whether it is sensible or not to abolish the “ancient regime” as a whole, depends on the available resources and on the specific context. On the one hand, the state might fall into the same trap and be overshadowed by corruption and misgovernment, if the former regime remains in power. On the other hand, an introduction of a completely new state apparatus might be too costly.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.10.

²⁰ Ibid., p11.

The fifth and last arena is the **economic society**. Linz and Stepan claim that no peaceful and consolidated democracy ever applied a plan-economy, nor has there been a completely unregulated market economy. The crux of an economic society is not only to act as a synonym for the market but it rather means to describe the set of “(...) *socio-political accepted norms, institutions and regulations* (...)”²¹ that are transmitted between the state and the market by the economic society.

To sum up, Linz and Stepan talk about a system that is based on five pillars that are in constant and dynamic exchange since they are dependent on each other. One crucial point is that all of these above mentioned arenas require a state, because “*without a sovereign state there can be no democracy*”.²² Therefore, the first three arenas are meant as pre-requisites for a successful consolidation of a democracy. In other words, an active civil society as well as an active political society that are both embedded in a system of rule of law constitute a well-functioning democratic state. A system of rule of law, in terms of a well functioning state apparatus, is regarded as a pre-condition for a successful implementation of democracy.

²¹ Ibid., p. 12.

²² Ibid., p. 19.

2.1.3 *Merkel's Embedded Democracies*

The German political scientist Merkel tries to design a more differentiated picture of democracies by distinguishing certain types of a consolidated democracy in order to put an end to the dichotomy between autocracy and democracy.²³

Democracies are – according to Merkel – embedded in certain internal and external contexts. These have to be taken into consideration in order to understand the formation of democratic systems. To further facilitate the meaning of being embedded, Merkel divides the political system into so-called sub-regimes. The first and very important regime is what he calls, the “*electoral regime*” which implies the existence of free and fair elections. This factor is a necessary condition, though not a sufficient one, to call a system democratic since it is dependent on the second regime, namely *political rights*. This regime includes the right to form organisations, the right of interest accumulation and freedom of speech in order to guarantee the development of an independent public arena where people are free to voice interests. The first and the second regimes represent the vertical dimension of democracy.

The third regime includes the area of *civil rights*, which is a pre-requisite for the existence of a rule of law. The main aim is to safeguard constitutional rights such as the protection of the individual from state-run arbitrariness.

The fourth regime is called the “*Division of Power and Horizontal Accountability*” and implies the actual ability of autonomous actors from society to act as a control mechanism vis á vis the state apparatus. It basically means to describe a system of checks and balances that can vary from state to state.

The last regime is called “*the effective power to govern*”. This last one plays a significant role, especially when it comes to young democracies and their militaries. In an embedded democracy the effective power to govern, the power of decision-making is with the government.

²³ See: Merkel, Wolfgang/ Puhle, Hans-Jürgen (1999): *Von der Diktatur zur Demokratie. Transformationen, Erfolgsbedingungen, Entwicklungspfade*, Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, p. 131-138.

In summary, embedded democracies cover a system of interdependent, reciprocal factors that need to interact properly and adequately in order to give a complete picture of a well-functioning democratic system.

As mentioned above, being embedded still depends on external as well as internal factors. The latter ones refer to Merkel's complex system of intertwined sub-regimes that influence each other and delimit each other's level of power through a system of checks and balances. External embedment, however, includes the surrounding of a developing democracy since the surrounding often shows great impact on the rise and fall in the quality of a democratic system, its chance to improve or the danger to deteriorate.

Merkel mentions the socio-economic situation as one of these external factors. He puts emphasis on the correlation between a stable democratic system and socio-economic prosperity. Nevertheless, he acknowledges that it should not be regarded as an indispensable pre-condition for democracy, stating that the role of economy is delimited. His converse argument claims that unequal distribution of resources leads to a wide gap between rich and poor. This would again deny certain groups of society the access to education, employment, etc.

Merkel's democracy ideal is a more complex one as it combines various aspects and factors of a democratic system which builds its pillars upon so-called sub-regimes that are in constant interaction with each other. It is remarkable that his suggested model not only takes a glance at the internal political system but also at external factors that influence internal developments.

These ideas and concepts presented above are important to bear in mind if we want to understand the theories about democratization or the transition into democracies. All these theories have one thing in common: they all show the complexity of a democratic system that apparently involves a stable state apparatus as well as safeguarding individual rights and liberties. Democracy is a combination of diverse factors that

interplay on different levels and hence all rely on each other's ability to fulfil their assignments.

2.1.4 Consolidation

The question remaining is how do we know when a democratic system is consolidated?

Alfred Stepan and Juan Linz also dealt with this issue and tried to develop a concept that is more tangible. Before this model is introduced, it is important to first mention a significant presumption underlying this concept, which says that a coherent democratic system is based on an already existing state. According to the authors, consolidation cannot succeed without a functioning state-apparatus.²⁴

However, in order to understand how far-reaching and deeply rooted consolidation actually is, Linz and Stepan present a combination of three dimensions.²⁵

The first dimension pays attention to the so-called behavioural consolidation, which claims that consolidation is achieved if there is a general acceptance of the democratic order among the political elite. The institutions and the establishments of the state are thus approved by everybody and there is no further attempt to change the political system.

The second dimension refers to the various prevalent attitudes and opinions throughout society. The democratic political system also needs to be approved by a vast majority of the population while the forces towards a non-democratic system represent a rather small percentage of the people.

These instructions, however, are very vague, therefore it is difficult to actually set certain numbers or percentages as a generally accepted criterion which is then valid in and applicable to all cases.

The third dimension covers the legal framework of a democratic system and puts emphasis on constitutionalism where the solution of internal conflicts lies under the

²⁴ See: Linz, Juan J./ Alfred, Stepan, (1996): *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation, Southern Europe, South America, and Post-communist Europe*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, p.5.

²⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. 5.

supervision of the rule of law. Rule of law is the one mechanism that is binding to all parts of society, namely political actors, the economical realm as well as actors from civil society.

2.1.5 Conclusion

The suggested ideas by the authors seem to present applicable models. Nevertheless it is also worth looking at their shortcomings, especially when it comes to the sphere of civil society. One major critique says that transition theories focus too much on the role of elites, since they are regarded as the ones actually shaping democracy and thus setting the norms. This approach contradicts one of the essential aspects of a democratic system namely that democracies “(...) *generate multiple sources of authority and decision-making*”²⁶ and make use of diverse sources of power. The main focus then lies on the activities and decisions made on the political level, undermining the quintessence of democracy. “*Democracy is visualized as a set of procedures for government negotiated by and between political leaders. Thus the transition approach separates democracy from its essential meaning as rule by the people and conceptualizes it principally as the establishment of a set of governing institutions.*”²⁷ Grugel’s main concern relates to the elite-centred approach of transitionologists, which does not pay enough attention to the other actors or agencies found, for example, in civil society.

As to be discussed in the following part, the above concept neglects many other factors, which are important to understand democratization processes in developing countries:

First, it is questionable whether this model of democracy is applicable and feasible everywhere. To put it in Nelson Kasfir’s words: “*Indeed, the whole point of democratization is to deny legitimacy to existing governments (...).*”²⁸ Kasfir suggests that the implementation of a new system upon an old one undermines the prevalent system and gives it a negative connotation. By “prevalent system” I do not only mean

²⁶ Grugel, Jean (2002): *Democratization. A Critical Introduction*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 36.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 61.

²⁸ Kasfir, Nelson, (1998): *Civil Society, the State and Democracy in Africa*, in: Peter, Calvert/ Peter J. Burnell (eds.) (2004): *Civil Society in Democratization*, London: Routledge, p. 118.

the political system but also the prevalent organizations and associations that are guided by certain values and norms, which would be replaced by Western norms and ideals in a process of (Western) democratization. The implementation of a new political system involves a reconstruction or a re-structuring of politics and society. I use the term reconstruction instead of “construction or building up” because it implies that something had already existed before and a “renovation” took place.

This example leads to the next missing point, namely external influences. Foreign donors often financially support projects or attempts to push civil society in developing countries. These donors focus on certain organizations, which mirror the donor’s rules and ideas. This means that certain criteria for organizations are set, which are considered to enhance democracy. As a consequence, one can say that the degree of the democratization power of civil society is shaped by donors – mainly from the so called rich northern countries – that form and formulate democracy according to their own view, without considering the national, political, economical and cultural context. Donor-supported democratization is a top-down approach, one that neglects these society structures. Enhancing and supporting organizations which act according to certain (often Western) premises means to limit the space for other associations that are rooted in the society – associations that might have a high position within the traditional system but do not play any role in the eyes of the donors or seem to be in conflict with the latter.

Another question concerns the significance of a “robust” civil society. Civil society embodies many different associations, unions, organizations, movements etc. that vary from state to state. As a consequence it is important to first conceptualize civil society in its political and/or cultural context, to figure out which actors are dominant players in the civil society sphere. Depending on which sectors are strong, and which organizations are influential, civil society can spur or hinder a democratic opening. Why would an organization, which is either embedded in a party structure or which openly acts as a pro-establishment platform and is therefore strong or “robust”, try to fight, resist or weaken the ruling power – as in the case of Iraqi Kurdistan, where Civil Society Organizations (CSO) or the media are active but integrated in the party system?

The argument lies within the fact that even though civil society is rather marginalised in transition theories, there is already a fixed image of a ‘good’ or ‘robust’ civil society, which again leads to the conclusion that transition theories “(...) *omit to analyze in any depth the roles of culture, development, history or the internalization of politics in democratization*”.²⁹

These above-mentioned points need to be considered while talking about transition theory. After all, an elite-centred approach results in a rather narrow field of work, which is focused on the implementation of institutions, elections and on the development of a constitution. Other assumed obstacles which may be far deeper rooted in society, can be overlooked easily.

²⁹ Grugel, Jean (2002): *Democratization. A Critical Introduction*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 61.

2.2 Civil Society

In the previous chapters I have discussed different approaches to the transition process towards democracy and the goal of the process, namely democracy itself. Both terms imply complex activities that rely on each other's accountability and as such are interwoven in big net of interactions.

In this chapter I shall now move away from democracy theories and discuss the term civil society, which is the centre of attention of this paper. Similar to the last two chapters I will discuss various approaches since theoretical debates on civil society are as controversial and broad as the term itself. My aim is to give an insight into different implications of civil society in order to provide the understanding of the concepts.

The tradition of civil society theories goes back to philosophers like Hobbes, Locke or Montesquieu.³⁰ Each one of the three mentioned regards the sphere of civil society as a separate one from the state. While Hobbes only saw the political organisation of society as civil society, Locke points out the importance of a so called pre-political community that is the society, since it lays the fundament for the ruling powers, namely the government and the state apparatus. Montesquieu puts his focus on the political constitution of a free civil society. In the following years these concepts have been adopted and applied in different contexts. Adam Smith added the economic factor, thereby connecting issues of property with civil society. Tocqueville, being one of the classical liberals, later took up this concept and regarded lively civil society as a means to control the state to prevent state-despotism. *“In contrast to Aristotle, Plato and Hobbes, the thinkers of Enlightenment viewed civil society as a defence against unwarranted intrusions by the state (...)”*³¹

³⁰ See: Fein, Elke/ Matzke, Sven (1997): *'Zivilgesellschaft. Konzept und Bedeutung für die Transformation in Osteuropa', Arbeitspapiere des Bereichs Politik und Gesellschaft*, Heft 7, Osteuropa Institut der Freien Universität Berlin.

³¹ Edwards, Michael (2009): *Civil Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 7.

Later a new school of thought which is lead by philosophers such as Marx, Hegel and Gramsci moved away from the original definition by creating a link between state and civil society. Their approach puts emphasis on the convergence to civil society, which at the end enables the self-governance of society without class differentiation.

Obviously there is a broad spectrum of ideas and visions of civil society, ranging from positive connotations in terms of the transformatory and emancipatory potential of civil society to the rather sceptical view presented by Antonio Gramsci. Adopted and further developed theories, like Habermas' concept of civil society, play a significant role in today's discourse revolving around civil society.

A detailed description of these mentioned theories will now be outlined below.

2.2.1 The School of Democracy³²

One of the earliest theorists, who recognized the link between civil society and democracy, was Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859). He visited America in order to examine a democratic system in regards to its strengths and weaknesses and came to the conclusion that civil society plays an, if not the most, important role in democracy because civil society represents the sphere of society where democratic values and democratic behaviour, such as tolerance, acceptance, etc. are created, developed and lived. The actual duty of civil society, according to Tocqueville, is to protect the democratic establishment from the danger of authoritarian or dictatorial attempts by keeping up democratic norms and values.³³ *“Wenn jeder Bürger, je schwächer er als einzelner wird und je weniger er infolgedessen imstande ist, seine Freiheit alleine zu wahren, nicht die Kunst lernte, sich zu seiner Verteidigung mit seinesgleichen zu verbinden, so ist klar, dass die Tyrannei mit der Gleichheit zwangsläufig zunähme.”*³⁴. Tocqueville's main point can be summarized as follows: in order to build a strong entity, that can resist state arbitrariness, it is essential to unite with like-minded people.

³² Ibid., p. 98.

³³ See: Merkel, Wolfgang/ Puhle, Hans-Jürgen (1999): *Von der Diktatur zur Demokratie. Transformationen, Erfolgsbedingungen, Entwicklungspfade*, Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, p. 84.

³⁴ Tocqueville, Alexis de (1985) [1748]: *Über die Demokratie in Amerika*, Stuttgart: Reclam, p. 248.

“A highly articulated civil society with overlapping memberships was seen as the foundation of a stable democratic polity, a defence against anti-democratic nation by any one group, and a barrier to anti-democratic forces.”³⁵ The formation of communities, associations and unities strengthens the otherwise weak individual and renders it a louder voice, after all these associations enable the assistance of each other’s needs. These groups should seek to gather as many people as possible since more members lead to more power and weight when it comes to voicing needs along with and checking upon the state. “In this school of thought, civil society was a self-regulating universe of associations committed to the same ideals that needed, at all costs, to be protected from the state in order to preserve its role in resisting despotism.”³⁶ Merkel concludes: *Tocqueville’s tradition of the positive functions of civil society for the entire democratic community that is, state and society are underlined and are linked to a distinctive participatory component of ‘self-government’.*³⁷

2.2.2 Between Public and Private

Jürgen Habermas sees civil society as the sphere between the public and the private³⁸. The core of civil society consists of “(...) *nicht-staatliche und nicht ökonomische Zusammenschlüsse auf freiwilliger Basis* (...) “,³⁹ meaning economic unions and voluntary associations, which can represent different aspects and parts of society, such as churches, media but also people’s initiatives. The aim of these associations is to tackle societal issues and problems and make them public. For Habermas, the public represents the space between state and society, which paves the way for political debates and conflicts. As a result, civil society acts as a mediator between state and society and aims at bringing private issues to the public, in order to make these issues relevant in the political arena, and moreover it is for formulating these issues, making them public and bringing them on higher discourse levels. These issues tackled by non-

³⁵ Edwards, Michael (2009): *Civil Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press, p. 7.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Merkel, Wolfgang (2001): Civil society and democratic consolidation in East-Central Europe, in: Pridham, George/Agh, Attila (eds): *Prospects for democratic consolidation on East-Central Europe*, Manchester: University Press, p. 98.

³⁸ See: Habermas, Jürgen (1991): *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 46.

state actors are essential non-formal pieces of information that influence the political decision-making process to a high degree. This strategy gives civil society not only a voice within its own sphere but it can actually exert influence upon political actors.

These matters are also dealt with in so-called public spheres that also shape public opinion. “[T]his public is made of citizens who seek acceptable interpretations for their social interests and experiences and who want to have an influence on institutionalized opinion and will formation.”⁴⁰

These associations and organisations can also act as an indicator for prevalent problems; however they are not capable of changing the circumstances as a whole to solving these problems, since they are not strong enough. They could nevertheless be sort of role models by transforming themselves in order to enact a domino effect enforcing the “self-transformation of the political system” without substituting the ruling power.⁴¹ Civil society cannot transform the state as a whole, rather, its strength lies in its ability to stay dynamic and adapt to changing conditions. As mentioned above, this slow transformation can lead to a domino effect and slowly but surely transform public opinion as well as political leaders.

2.2.3 The “Realistic Concept”

In an attempt to concretize the broad term of civil society Merkel and Lauth⁴² present a so-called realistic concept for civil society. The authors state clearly that civil society exists between the private sphere and the state. Its main focus lies on the accumulation of collective interests rather than pursuing one specific group’s, respectively private interest.

⁴⁰ Habermas, Jürgen (2007) [1996]: Civil Society and the Political Public Sphere, in: Calhoun, Joseph/ Gerteis, Joseph et al. (eds), *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., Malden-Oxford-Victoria, p. 393.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 397.

⁴² See: Lauth, Hans-Jürgen/ Merkel, Wolfgang (1998): *Systemwechsel und Zivilgesellschaft: Welche Zivilgesellschaft braucht die Demokratie?*, in: *Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, No. 67.

Another aspect of the realistic civil society that is pointed out by Merkel and Lauth is that civil society is embedded in a pluralistic and heterogeneous structure. The reasons for this vast diversity are twofold: for one, the first pillar of civil society is made up of associations, voluntary organisations, interest groups, etc., in short institutionalised groups with different focal points. The second pillar is based on the participation of every individual who is free to partake in various activities, whatever background s/he may have.

Through different channels of civil society individuals, citizens respectively, are enhanced to articulate their interests and form autonomous organisations. These possibilities imply automatically the fostering of political activity on a non-state level; hence “*[a]ctors in civil society are involved in politics, yet without assuming state posts*”⁴³.

Similar to Tocqueville, these authors claim that civil society entails normative connotations, since certain norms and values are being passed on. These values, above all tolerance and fairness, are principles that act as a guideline for the numerous activities within this sphere and therefore should be shared amongst the people.

Lauth and Merkel try to answer a question, which has been neglected in the previous theories. In all the above-mentioned concepts civil society has a very positive connotation, predominantly involving groups, which act according to democratic principles; they actively interfere and interact in the political as well as the societal sphere. Other groups, however, such as para-state organizations or prevalent society structures that do not fall into these categories, are not taken into consideration within these presented concepts.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 7.

2.2.4 Gepanzert mit Zwang⁴⁴

Until now liberal concepts of civil society have been discussed. Each of them is important when it comes to the contextualization of civil society within liberal democratization theories. Now I will move away from liberal approaches and shed light on one of the most significant contributors to Marxist theories, Antonio Gramsci. In contrast to the before mentioned authors Gramsci holds a rather sceptical view on civil society.

In one of his thirty two notebooks, he describes the state with the following formula: “*Staat = politische Gesellschaft + Zivilgesellschaft; das heißt Hegemonie gepanzert mit Zwang.*”⁴⁵ This formula summarizes accurately his approach towards civil society. Gramsci sees civil society as a fundamental part of the state and can therefore not be treated as a separate entity. On the contrary, it provides a space where questions of societal hegemony are discussed, bargained and exercised. The state is built upon two pillars: the first pillar is the political society, which embodies political institutions. “*For the coercive relations which are materialised in the various institutions of the state – the armed forces, police, law courts and prisons together with all the administrative departments concerning taxations, finance, trade, industry, social security, etc., which depend in the last resort for the effectiveness on the state’s monopoly of coercion*”.⁴⁶ The second one is the civil society, which includes ‘private’ institutions such as associations, organizations, trade unions, churches, etc., which aim at further deepening the consensus on the ruling power. The first pillar covers the realm of coercive force, the second one the realm of consensus and together they form the entity called state. As Gramsci states one of the main duties of the state is to create or produce a population that acts solely according to the ruling power. “*Einer seiner [des Staates] wichtigsten Funktionen (...) besteht darin, die große Masse der Bevölkerung auf ein bestimmtes*

⁴⁴ See: Gramsci, Antonio (1991ff.): *Gefängnishefte*. Kritische Gesamtausgabe auf Grundlage der von Valentino Gerretana im Auftrag des Gramsci-Instituts besorgten Edition, Hamburg: Argument, Band 4/6, p. 783.

⁴⁵ Ibid. A loose summary can be: the state is made up of a civil plus a political society, which equals hegemony enclosed by coercive force.

⁴⁶ Simon, Roger (1982): *Gramsci’s Political Thought – an Introduction*, London: Lawrence&Wishart, p. 69.

*kulturelles und moralisches Niveau zu heben, der den Entwicklungsnotwendigkeiten der Produktivkräfte und daher den Interessen der herrschenden Klasse entspricht.*⁴⁷

The crucial point of his concept is the strong link with which the state leads to a strong (inter) dependency. Hitherto, civil society is needed to create consensus amongst society, in form of producing and reproducing agreement with the ruling system in order to maintain the system. The state according to Gramsci fulfils an educational role that expands beyond state institutions, public education services or courts; it also flows through the branches of civil society in order to enhance and accelerate the creation of consensus through reproducing and reforming norms, values and conventions. These are summed up by Gramsci's term of hegemon. Hegemony is a dialectic and dynamic term, which combines economy, politics and culture, thereby providing a sort of common sense, which aims at catching the whole bandwidth of a ruling system.⁴⁸ In order to maintain the system of power it is crucial to spread the ideology in as many branches of society as possible. *„Hegemonie wird hier verstanden als Fähigkeit herrschender Gruppen und Klassen, ihre Interessen durchzusetzen, so dass sie von subalternen Gruppen und Klassen als Allgemeininteresse angesehen werden und es weitgehend gemeinsame gesellschaftliche Vorstellungen über die Verhältnisse und ihre Entwicklung gibt. Insofern erzeugt Hegemonie einen ‘Konsens der Regierten’ “.*⁴⁹ In other words, hegemony is the ability to assert one's own interests so long, as they are perceived as general interests, profitable for the society as a whole. This perception, or this one belief, results in a consensus amongst the ruled ones.

A Gramscian civil society does not guarantee that its activities, including NGOs, associations, social movements, churches, etc. actually have emancipatory potential, since civil society is too closely interwoven with the state. *“Die Presse ist der dynamischste Teil dieser ideologischen Struktur, aber nicht der einzige: all das, was die*

⁴⁷ Gramsci, Antonio (1991ff.): *Gefängnishefte*. Kritische Gesamtausgabe auf Grundlage der von Valentino Gerretana im Auftrag des Gramsci-Instituts besorgten Edition, Hamburg: Argument, Band 5/8, p. 1043. – a loose summary: the states tries to bring the population to the necessary cultural and moral level, that is needed for the interests of the ruling forces.

⁴⁸ See.: Jacobitz, Robin (1991): *Antonio Gramsci. Hegemonie, historischer Block und intellektuelle Führung in der internationalen Politik*, Marburg: Forschungsgruppe Europäische Gemeinschaften (FEG), p. 10.

⁴⁹ Brand, Ulrich (2005): *Gegenhegemonie. Perspektiven globalisierungskritischer Strategien*, Hamburg, VSA-Verlag, S. 9.

*öffentliche Meinung direkt oder indirekt beeinflusst oder beeinflussen kann, gehört zu ihr: Bibliotheken, die Schulen, die Zirkel, die Clubs unterschiedlichster Art, bis hin zur Architektur, zur Anlage der Straßen und zu den Namen derselben.*⁵⁰ On the contrary, the role of civil society is in this context not to oppose the rulers but rather to provide a higher degree of legitimacy for the ruling power, to justify the system by making the dominant ideology public.

This concept resembles a co-option of civil society by the state or by a strong political society. Civil societal organizations often become part of the state, which facilitates the cooperation between state and civil society, since the state is working together with these organizations without its legitimacy being threatened or even questioned. Civil society is a dependent and non-autonomous sphere, closely intertwined with the state. *“The social relations of civil society are also relations of power, so that power is diffused throughout civil society as well as being embodied in the coercive state apparatus of the state.”*⁵¹

⁵⁰ Gramsci, Antonio (1991ff.): *Gefängnishefte*. Kritische Gesamtausgabe auf Grundlage der von Valentino Gerretana im Auftrag des Gramsci-Instituts besorgten Edition, Hamburg: Argument, Band 3/4 p. 374. – As he says, many different organisations and associations that contribute to a public opinion, such as the media, schools or even architecture, make up civil society.

⁵¹ Simon, Roger (1982): *Gramsci's Political Thought – an Introduction*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 27.

2.2.5 Conclusion

This part of the paper tackled the diversity of civil society as such. Analysing the role of civil society only vis-à-vis the state apparatus or democracy narrows the view on the complexity of the world of civil society that contains a lot of varying, opposing, defending, etc. forces in it.

The normative pluralistic approach ascribes civil society an “*equitable and inclusive*”⁵² character, thereby making it a promoter of democratic rules and thus to share common values and norms. This view neglects the diversity of the arena of civil society and ignores the fact that tensions and conflicts also happen within this sphere.

It is now time to move from a structural approach to an agency-focused one as an attempt to capture the spectrum of civil society. The idea that civil society is inclusive often proves to be a fallacy. If civil society is supposed to represent the different sectors and groups of society, then this assumption lacks validity as it overlooks the diversity of organizational values, along which these groups and formations develop, e.g. sex, class, ethnicity, religion or interests and ideologies. “*(...) civil society, far from being the realm of solidarity and warm personalized interaction, is itself a fragmented, divided and hierarchal structured realm.*”⁵³ After all, the sphere of societal activity, like its “fellow-spheres” is nothing more than a match of power relations. There is not only a discrepancy between groups, opposing each other in their basic concept, but also between groups fighting for the same issue. A look at the NGO-landscape (worldwide) shows that there is vast amount of them, one women’s/children’s etc. group next to each other, operating to achieve one and the same goal but still remaining in a stage of rivalry due to scarce resources, amongst others financial. This results in an atmosphere of constant competition with each other, seeking for acknowledgment from the state, from the donors and also from the people.

What is still not clear, is who gives these organizations their legitimacy. Civil society groups have different ways to organize themselves; some do it by having actual

⁵² Biekart, Kees (1999): *The Politics of Civil Society Building – European Private Aid Agencies and Democratic Transition in Central America*. Utrecht: International Books, p. 40.

⁵³ Chandhoke, Neera (2001): The ‘Civil’ and the ‘Political’ Society. The Case of India, in: Calvert, Peter / Burnell, Peter J. (eds.) (2004): *Civil Society in Democratization*, London: Routledge, p. 161.

members, who are the supporters of an organization or group. This would mean that these supporters are the ones giving it its legitimacy. Donors to whom they are accountable, however, support others.

Apparently, there is no guarantee that civil society is only a promoter of democracy. Democratization itself is a fragile experiment and is dependent upon the already existing structure, even though the process involves abolishing old regimes.

The term “civil society” is too broad to be able to draw generalizing conclusions. It is much more important to scrutinize civil society activity by conceptualizing it into a broader context, in order to understand its relation to the state. Civil society is not a homogenous entity; it is not necessarily progressive, on the contrary it can be reactionary. The same applies for the state, which is – depending on the context – not always conservative and a hinderer of democracy.

Despite the attempts of finding clarity about the term civil society, we can see that there is not just one explanation. Different perspectives of different schools of thought decide over the definition of the term. Without repeating any of them, there is still one sentence that sums it all up: “*The movement is the candidate!*”⁵⁴ This is Harvey Milk’s answer to the question of who his candidate for the upcoming election is. A movement, an organization, a union, etc. are speaking tubes for the different forces within a society that are not directly players in the political sphere (e.g. political parties, government) but still seek to influence the political decision-making process. The crucial point is to examine these “candidates” critically and to measure their power according to the effects of their actions.

⁵⁴ Sean Penn alias Harvey Milk in the movie: Milk (2009)

2.3 Practical Approach – Non-Governmental Organizations

2.3.1 Conceptualising NGOs

Since non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are the subject of discussion in this paper, it is now important to scrutinize NGOs as a category of civil society. Nowadays, NGOs make up one of the most active and most important groups within the broad spectrum of civil society, among interest groups citizen's initiatives and associations, even being referred to as a "*Wachstumsindustrie*"⁵⁵, a growing industry ever since the 1980s. One crucial aspect, to bear in mind, is that NGOs do not cover the whole sphere of civil society. To assume that the degree of NGO activity can give a precise overlook about the strength of civil society is a fallacy and a too narrow-minded view, since other essential parts such as interest groups, active individuals, media, religious groups, etc. would be simply neglected.

As already mentioned NGOs make up an essential part of civil society. Still, the discourse and concepts about these organizations are as wide-ranging and controversial as the discourse about civil society itself. "*NGO literature has been voluminous since the 1980s, termed by some the 'NGO decade', with these new actors frequently lauded as the institutional alternative to existing development approaches (Hirschmann 1984; Korten, 1990). Critical voices at this point were largely muted, confined to expressing concern that NGOs might be an externally imposed phenomenon that, far from being alternative, heralded a new wave of imperialism (Tandon, 1991).*"⁵⁶ The authors refer to the phenomenon that the positive spirit of NGOs encapsulated in the early period of their activities. They were seen as the correct, justice-oriented counter weight to the

⁵⁵ Hirsch, Joachim (2001): Des Staates neue Kleider. NGO im Prozess der Internationalisierung des Staates, in: Brand et al.(eds.) (2001): *Nichtregierungsorganisationen in der Transformation des Staates*, Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, p.13.

⁵⁶ Bebbington, Anthony, J. et al. (2008): *Can NGOs make a difference? The Challenge of Development Alternatives*, London & New York: Zed Books, p. 9.

state. Hence, NGOs were either “(...) *playing a part in holding governments to account or else filling in gaps in services where governments cannot or will not provide them.*”⁵⁷

Up to now, there is no one single definition to further describe an NGO. The difficulty of finding one clear explanation results on the one hand, from the complex contextual background the NGOs are embedded in and on the other hand, from the diverse scientific disciplines. The German political scientist and sociologist Alex Demirovic concludes that NGOs are just another means of self-organization covering a broad spectrum of socio-political issues, which extends from human rights to ecological topics. “*NGO sind zunächst Formen der Selbstorganisation, um in ganz verschiedenen Lebensbereichen – der Bildung, der Verteidigung von Frauen und ihrer Rechte, der Nahrung und Wasserversorgung, des Umweltschutzes, der Gesundheit, des Verkehrs – eigene Interessen zu artikulieren und zu organisieren.*”⁵⁸ In other words, NGOs are self-organized groups that try to articulate interests in many different areas, such as women’s rights, health care, etc. In my opinion a useful definition is put forward by Joachim Hirsch, who states that non-governmental organizations ought to fulfil the following criteria⁵⁹:

- Non-profit orientation
- Representations of – or advocacy for – certain interests
- Formal administrative and financial independence from the state and enterprises
- Professional sustainability

NGOs play a role in the symbolic construction and articulation of socio-political problems and hence in the agenda-setting and decision-making process. They cover the realms of lobbying and monitoring, meaning the representation of interests that have

⁵⁷ Thomas, Alan (2001): What happened to Reciprocity? Implications of door Emphasis on ‘Voice’ and ‘Impact’ as Rationales for Working with NGO in Development, in: Bebbington, Anthony, J. et al. (2008): *Can NGOs make a difference? The Challenge of Development Alternatives*, London & New York: Zed Books, p. 105.

⁵⁸ Demirovic, Alex (2001): NGO, Staat und Zivilgesellschaft. Zur Transformation von Hegemonie, in: Brand et al.(eds.) (2001): *Nichtregierungsorganisationen in der Transformation des Staates*, Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, p. 143.

⁵⁹ Hirsch, Joachim (2001): Des Staates neue Kleider. NGO im Prozess der Internationalisierung des Staates, in: Brand et al.(eds.) (2001): *Nichtregierungsorganisationen in der Transformation des Staates*, Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, pp. 15.

been neglected and the observation and controlling of bargaining processes. Finally, they take over tasks that governments do not provide.

Nonetheless it is important to point out that the above-mentioned points present an idealistic view on NGOs. Hirsch himself claims that it is hardly possible to come across an organization, which actually encompasses all these features.⁶⁰ NGOs have often been and still are instrumentalised by the state, especially due to their prevalent financial dependency.

Demirovic adds another essential point. He states that there is a need to distinguish between NGOs of the North and those of the South, especially in regards to dependency.⁶¹ The Northern organizations possess an enormous amount of resources, in terms of information, money, technical equipment and political contacts. Their political and cultural background is equivalent to those of the official decision-makers. The Southern organizations are embedded in an often restrictive political environment and therefore lack independency in regards to their activities. What is more, due to their scarce financial resources they build a more intense bonding to Northern organizations or donors. A process of co-option is then taking place thereby losing the relation to local people and the original context. NGO-work becomes a donor-driven activity. The essence of their tasks is either forgotten or neglected, the employees focus rather on the well-paid salary: *“Die NGO –Tätigkeit wird zu einem gut bezahlten Job, der mit dem ursprünglichen Anlass der Aktivität und der Wirklichkeit des Landes kaum noch verbunden ist und aus Eigeninteresse der NGO-Mitglieder auf Dauer gestellt werden muss.”*⁶²

The fact that NGOs almost replace state institutions results in a situation of rivalry and competition for aid products, financial support and playing a role in accomplishment of measures. These organizations put effort into maintaining the status quo since the prevalent situation legitimates their existence.

⁶⁰ See: *ibid.*

⁶¹ See: Demirovic, Alex (2001): NGO, Staat und Zivilgesellschaft. Zur Transformation von Hegemonie, in: Brand et al.(eds.) (2001): *Nichtregierungsorganisationen in der Transformation des Staates*, Münster, Westfälisches Dampfboot, pp. 145.

⁶² *Ibid.*

2.3.2 *Applied Concept*

In order to generate a theoretical framework for this paper, I chose to use the analytical frame presented by Gordon White due to its high relevance to the NGO sphere and therefore also its applicability in this research paper.

Gordon White defines civil society as “(...) *an intermediate associational realm between state and family populated by organizations which are separate from the state, enjoy autonomy in relation to the state and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests or values.*”⁶³ By this definition White constitutes three characteristics of civil society: he sees it as a separate sphere, a third sphere next to the state and the market. Furthermore he considers it to act autonomously vis à vis the state, that is independently and sovereign. At last, he mentions how it is organized, namely voluntarily. These features are broad and include a number of organizations and associations, which are not necessarily politically relevant. On the other hand, he excludes organizations that are deeper intertwined with the state, or that are based on a different way of organizational structure other than a voluntary union, e.g. based on class, ethnicity or gender.

The question remaining is how these organisations impact the process of democratization. Gordon White presents four ways⁶⁴ that influence this process. Civil society can influence the balance of power and represent a so-called “*balanced opposition*”⁶⁵. The second, White ascribes civil society to function as a disciplinary role, setting and promoting certain values and ideals, which are supposed to be guidelines for political decision-makers. The third way suggests that this sphere is a mediating sphere between the state apparatus and the society, the sphere where communication and bargaining takes place. The fourth and last way is to constitute a new set of rules, based on democratic norms, to guide political activity.

⁶³See: White, Gordon (1994): *Civil Society, Democratization and Development. Clearing the Analytical Ground*, in: Peter, Calvert/ Peter J. Burnell (eds.) (2004): *Civil Society in Democratization*, London:Routledge, p.10f.

⁶⁴ See:Ibid., pp. 13.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 13.

White recognizes, however, that there is a constant fear of too much pressure, which can completely distort the evolving system and prevent it from gaining stability. Organizations, which oppose the ruling forces, can overtake power without any guarantee that the “new” system sticks to democratic rules. This might offer an explanation for the situation of today’s Iraq for example. The country’s situation is a complex matter and dealing with all the influences would definitely go beyond the scope of this paper, however, it could serve as a good example to show, that stressing too much on democratization, without giving time to adjust, can result in chaos.

White’s normative approach resembles the Tocquevillian tradition of civil society that puts emphasis on the “taming” character of civil society that is, the force that can tame political activity and improve governance by leading it according to rules set by civil society. However, these four ways presented by White of how civil society can influence a transition process should act as a guideline, or a useful frame of reference, in this paper for examining the effect of the work of NGOs on the democratization process in Iraqi-Kurdistan.

3 The history of Iraqi Kurds since the 1960s in a nutshell

The following is a brief introduction to the history of the Iraqi Kurds in a nutshell. As a more detailed description would cross the paper's limits, I will focus on those centuries relevant to understand the developments in the 1990s.⁶⁶

The majority of the Kurdish region extends over the Northern part of Iraq. However, the Kurdish areas reach from the city Zaho (kurd.: Zaxo) at the border crossing between Syria, Turkey and Iraq over Erbil/Hewlér and Suleymania to Khanaqin (Xanaqin) north of Baghdad. With a population of four to five million inhabitants the Kurds make up the largest ethnic minority in Iraq.⁶⁷ The lack of exact data roots back to the happenings in Iraq. A reliable demographic delimitation is hardly possible since the last census took place in 1957. Along with the brutal arabisation policy of the Baath regime, amongst others the Anfal-Campaign, has caused massive changes in the demographic structure.⁶⁸ In order to understand the Kurdish situation in the 1990s up to now, it is important to know how the Kurdish movement has developed in the course of time. The following part will give a brief overview over the Kurdish history in Iraq in the 20th century. Afterwards it will deal with the developments from 1991 onwards in more detail.

3.1 The beginning of “Kurdayeti”⁶⁹

The Kurdish society is dominated by a tribal structure. The cultural and linguistic differences create a sense of belonging within a certain group while at the same time creating a distinguishing factor to other tribes.⁷⁰ These tribes were often regarded as the one element determining the identity; hence the loyalty to the tribe was of higher

⁶⁶ For further information see Bruinessen (1989), McDowall (1996), Fischer-Tahir (2003)

⁶⁷ See: Fischer-Tahir, Andrea/Pommerening, Christian (1996): *Zwischen Aufstand und Flucht. Zur jüngeren Geschichte Irakisches Kurdistan*, Leipzig: Verein Rosa Luxemburg, Heft 22.

⁶⁸ See. Ibid.

⁶⁹ Fischer-Tahir, Andrea (2003): „Wir gaben viele Märtyrer.“ *Widerstand und kollektive Identitätsbildung in Irakischem Kurdistan*, Münster: Unirast, pp. 68.

⁷⁰ See: van Bruinessen, Martin (1989): *Agha, Scheich und Staat. Politik und Gesellschaft Kurdistan*, Berlin: Edition Parabolis.

importance than the actual loyalty to a whole ethnic group, let alone to the notion of a national identity.⁷¹

This stuck mentality was slowly but surely shaken through the development of an intellectual class at the end of the 19th century. It was this intelligentsia, which adopted Western nationalistic ideas and ideologies to the situation of the Kurds. The promotion of these concepts seemed to be difficult in the beginning, spreading only in the cities and hardly reaching the villages.⁷² Still, nationalism was a growing element in the Kurdish discourse and soon became an important factor in the Kurdish freedom movement.

The dichotomy within the Kurdish people between socio-political structures (tribes vs. elites) and ideological differences could not be hidden for long. The Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), founded in 1946, embodied the legal political representation of the Kurds and their struggle for autonomy and independence.⁷³ The head of the party, Mulla Mustafa Barzani, leader of the Kurdish freedom movement ever since the 1920s, tried to hold the party together. Nonetheless, this was a rather difficult task, since he was not only the head of the party but also the head of his tribe. Although Barzani had many followers among the Kurdish population, the structures of the party were predominantly tribal. This led to severe controversies with the intellectual-nationalistic wing whose leading figure was Jalal Talabani. The peak of the internal conflicts took place in 1964 when Jalal Talabani and his followers were excluded from the annual party meeting. That way Barzani managed to keep the power within the KDP. But Talabani was not willing to stay in the party any longer and with other opponents of Barzani he left the KDP and founded the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in 1975. This split in the party marked the beginning of heavy armed conflicts between the KDP and PUK and the weakening the Kurdish struggle for autonomy.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² See: Natali, Denise (2005): *The Kurds and the State. Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey and Iran*, New York: Syracuse University Press, pp. 54.

⁷³ See: Stansfield, Gareth R.V. (2003): *Iraqi Kurdistan. Political Development and Emergent Democracy*, London: Routledge Curzon, pp. 61.

The regime in Baghdad was well aware of the internal fights and used this to never lose control over the Kurdish areas⁷⁴.

In 1968 the Baath returned to power in Iraq after a coup d'état, with Saddam Hussein as a leading figure. Surprisingly, this time the Baath pursued a consolidating path towards the Kurds and introduced a so-called 15-point programme that included an autonomous Kurdish region.⁷⁵ The Kurdish leaders, above all Barzani, responded with suspicion and refused to trust the Baathist plans. Backed by the United States and Iran, the Kurds did not fully agree to the proposal, though the following years remained peaceful.

The situation changed in 1975 at the OPEC conference held in Algier. Iraq, represented by Saddam Hussein and Iran, represented by Shah Reza Pahlevi, reached an agreement over the long on-going disputes of the borderlines at the Shatt al-Arab between the two countries.⁷⁶ Iraq set the only condition, which demanded an official stop of every kind of Iranian support for the Iraqi Kurds. The end of the Iranian support meant a heavy setback for the Kurdish movement. Barzani gave up, some Kurdish guerrilla fighters known as “peshmerga” even committed suicide. After the Algier-Agreement, the Baath took up their fight against the Kurds again, resulting in thousands of families being deported to the south of the country⁷⁷. Barzani died in 1979 in exile in the United States.

The 1960s and 1970s were the formation years of a Kurdish nationalistic ideology and laid the benchmark for the formation of “Kurdaieti”. “Kurdaieti” is a term that describes Kurdish nationalism, as opposed to Arabic Nationalism. This ideology is not simply reduced to party-political behaviour but encloses rather a concept of collective

⁷⁴ See: *ibid.*

⁷⁵ See: Fischer-Tahir, Andrea/Pommerening, Christian (1996): *Zwischen Aufstand und Flucht. Zur jüngeren Geschichte Irakisches Kurdistan*, Leipzig: Verein Rosa Luxemburg, Heft 22.

⁷⁶ See: Mirzaie-Tashnizi, Hossain (2002): *Der Konflikt Irak-Iran. Eine Hintergrundanalyse*, Dissertation, Wien: Universität Wien.

⁷⁷ Fischer-Tahir, Andrea (2003): „*Wir gaben viele Märtyrer. “ Widerstand und kollektive Identitätsbildung in Irakischem Kurdistan*, Münster: Unirast, p.80.

identity.⁷⁸ The struggle for freedom and autonomy has been ethnicized and militarized. In the 1960s the Kurdish movement had an influential structure: a clear organisation pattern, more efficient administration, and strong guerrilla movement that was also supported by foreign states such as the Soviet Union. These structures included an official political party with a politburo, informal networks, external support as well as sufficient financial resources.⁷⁹ All that enabled the preparation and conduction of their agenda.

3.1.1 Halabja and Anfal

The Algier-Agreement was nullified after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 in Iran. The Iraq-Iran war which started in 1980⁸⁰, did not only have an impact on Iraq's external relations but also had immense consequences in Iraq itself, especially the state's relation to the Kurds. The Baath-regime used the war not only to 'defeat' the Iranians but also to eliminate the Kurds by an intensive and brutal campaign of destruction, torture and executions: „*Ganze Dörfer wurden dem Erdboden gleichgemacht, Massenverhaftungen, Folter und Exekutionen standen an der Tagesordnung.*“⁸¹ During the operation Anfal, the Arabic word for prey, villages were destroyed; Kurdish families were deported and assassinated. Around five thousand villages were completely destroyed and literally removed from the map, about 1.5 million Kurds were deported and around 200.000 Kurds were murdered.⁸² Saddam Hussein had ordered the establishment of collective-towns, which were artificially created towns in the sparsely inhabited regions of Iraq, where Kurds, especially women and children, were deported.⁸³

Halabja, a city situated at the border crossing between Iraq and Iran, came under another brutal attack. On March 16th 1988 the Baath regime used chemical weapons and

⁷⁸ See: Fischer-Tahir, Andrea/Pommerening, Christian (1996): *Zwischen Aufstand und Flucht. Zur jüngeren Geschichte Irakisches Kurdistan*, Leipzig: Verein Rosa Luxemburg, Heft 22, p. 11.

⁷⁹ See: Natali, Denise (2005): *The Kurds and the State. Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey and Iran*, New York: Syracuse University Press, pp. 54.

⁸⁰ See: Rasoul, Fadil (1987): *Irak-Iran. Ursachen und Dimensionen eines Konflikts*, Wien- Köln: Böhlau.

⁸¹ Strohmeier, Martin/Yalcin-Heckmann, Lale (2000): *Die Kurden. Geschichte, Politik, Kultur*, München, HC Beck und oHG, p.133.

⁸² See: Fischer-Tahir, Andrea/Pommerening, Christian (1996): *Zwischen Aufstand und Flucht. Zur jüngeren Geschichte Irakisches Kurdistan*, Leipzig: Verein Rosa Luxemburg, Heft 22.

⁸³ Mlodoch, Karin (2003): *Warten auf Leben*, in: ai.journal, 10/2003, Amnesty International, p. 41-44.

attacked the city with poison gas. Five thousand people died immediately, hundreds fled the city, and still many suffer from severe side effects such as cancer or infertility.⁸⁴

The Anfal campaign and the use of chemical weapons showed the brutality that was used against the Kurdish population. Critical voices in western countries were often muted, the media hardly reported on the happenings in Iraq. The reasons result mainly from the fact that the Western states were strongly involved in the Iraqi arms industry, and were therefore making a profit from the war.⁸⁵ The chemical gases were of German heritage and the dreadful Noricum-cannon is a well-known Austrian product.⁸⁶

After United Nations' intervention the war came to an end in 1988. Unfortunately, the next war was already approaching. Saddam Hussein's forces invaded Kuwait in 1991 and thereby started the second Gulf War. The United States, which played a crucial role in putting an 'end' to the war, animated the Kurds and Shiites in Iraq to support the American troops overthrowing Saddam Hussein and liberating the Iraq from its dictator. The Shiites in the South and the Kurds in the North agreed after some time of hesitation.⁸⁷ The Peshmerga in the North mobilized and re-gathered. In March 1991, the Peshmerga had regained many Kurdish areas and finally reached the city of Kirkuk. However, American support did not come. The Iraqi army led a massive bloodshed in the Kurdish regions and defeated the Peshmerga in the North as well as the Shiites in the South.

This chapter did not by far touch the complexity and brutality of the Kurdish issue that resulted from the end of the Ottoman Empire and the global situation after the First World War. I did, however, try to outline the most relevant happenings since the 1960s, which are the growing notion of nationalism (Kurdayeti), the rivalry between KDP and PUK and the brutal history of Kurds in Iraq. These are the most important developments that are useful to understand the next part, the history after 1991.

⁸⁴ Human Rights Watch (1991): *Whatever happened to the Kurds?*
<http://www.hrw.org/reports/1991/IRAQ913.htm> [accessed: 20.04.2011]

⁸⁵ See: Strohmeier, Martin/Yalcin-Heckmann, Lale (2000): *Die Kurden. Geschichte, Politik, Kultur*, München, HC Beck und oHG.

⁸⁶ See: Kreutzer, Mary (2006): *Wo waren sie damals? Erinnerungspolitik im neuen Irak*, in: *iz3w*, vol. 290, Jan/Feb. 2006, p.32-35.

⁸⁷ See: Fischer-Tahir, Andrea/Pommerening, Christian (1996): *Zwischen Aufstand und Flucht. Zur jüngeren Geschichte Irakisches Kurdistan*, Leipzig: Verein Rosa Luxemburg, Heft 22.

3.2 Political developments in Iraqi-Kurdistan since 1991

Before analysing the civil society sphere, it is of great importance to scrutinize the political level in order to have an insight into the political context, which determines the field civil society moves in.

The foundation of the “safe-haven” in the year 1991 in northern Iraq marks the beginning of a new era in regards to Kurdish political movements, since it enables the establishment of a solely Kurdish governed region, without oppressive and threatening Baathist forces.

Nevertheless, the 1990s are seen as a decade of lost chances, overshadowed by heavy internal armed conflicts. Amongst political controversies, economic issues were subject to heavy disputes, which however, could be partially solved by international aid agencies.

The global political changes after 9/11 also show its impact in Iraqi-Kurdistan. The end of the Baath-regime through the invasion of US troops in April 2003 started a process of consolidation that finally ended up in a unification of the two big Kurdish parties, the KDP and the PUK. The then strong, unified Kurdish front played an important role in the elections of 2004: the regional election in Kurdistan as well as the national elections in Iraq.

An outline of this developing process in Iraqi-Kurdistan shall be briefly given below.

3.2.1 Rapareen and beyond

After the uprising (Kurdish: rapareen) in Iraqi Kurdistan and the withdrawal of the American troops in 1991 masses of refugees, estimated about at 1.5 million⁸⁸, fled the

⁸⁸ See: Strohmeier, Martin/Yalcin-Heckmann, Lale (2000): *Die Kurden. Geschichte, Politik, Kultur*, München: HC Beck und oHG.

country via Iran or Turkey to finally find a home in Europe or the United States. As a result, these western countries were confronted with a vast amount of refugees that were then seeking asylum. In order to reduce the amount of Iraqi refugees, the USA and other European countries decided to establish a protection zone, a so-called safe haven, in northern Iraq. This protection zone, which solely included some Kurdish regions and as such was also called the Kurdish autonomous zone, marked a “no-fly-zone” north of the 36th parallel and south of the 33rd parallel for Baathist forces, which automatically meant a Baath-free zone.⁸⁹ Though the idea of a political safe region seemed to work in the very beginning, the years to come were characterized by political and economical instability.

One of the major factors influencing the Kurdish autonomous zone was the resolution 688 adopted by the United Nations Security Council. The reasons for the importance of this resolution were twofold: for one, it was the first resolution explicitly mentioning “the Kurds”.⁹⁰ Secondly, this resolution proclaimed a severe economic embargo that was imposed on Iraq, blocking all kinds of imports and exports. “*The sanctions imposed by the UN have been remarkably effective in weakening the economy*”⁹¹. In addition to these sanctions carried out by the International Community, the Iraqi regime decided to implement further sanctions on the Kurdish autonomous zone, which blocked any kind of economic transfer, in terms of goods and money but also in terms of medical supply⁹². “*Supplies from the center and the south were prevented from entering the Kurdish-controlled territories*”.⁹³ This double embargo not only led to a depletion of the Kurdish population but also of the number of Kurdish political leaders, the most important being Masoud Barzani, head of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) and Jalal Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

⁸⁹ See: Brown, Nathan J./Posch, Walter (2004): *Kurdische Unabhängigkeitsbestrebungen und die irakische Verfassung*, Wien: Landesverteidigungsakademie (LVAK) /Institut für Friedenssicherung und Konfliktmanagement (IFK), p.7.

⁹⁰ Stansfield, Gareth R.V. (2003): *Iraqi Kurdistan. Political Development and Emergent democracy*, London: Routledge Curzon, p. 95.

⁹¹ Ibid., 48.

⁹² See: Leezenberg, Michiel (2002): Refugee Camp or Free Trade Zone? The Economy of Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991, in: Mahdi, Kamil (2002) (ed.): *Iraq's economic Predicament*, Exeter Arab and Islamic Studies: Ithaca Press, p. 289-319.

⁹³ Stansfield, Gareth R.V. (2003): *Iraqi Kurdistan. Political Development and Emergent democracy*, London: Routledge Curzon p. 49.

The Kurdish authorities KDP and PUK were forced to act in order to move away from their dependency on the Iraqi regime. Hence, the Kurdish parties decided to substitute the Iraqi parliament (Iraqi Legislative Assembly) through a Kurdish parliament, called the Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA). The elections were already set for spring 1992, but before they could actually take place, rules were needed to be implemented; rules that provided a certain legal framework for the realisation of the elections. After long-lasting negotiations, Law 1 and Law 2 were introduced in December 1992.⁹⁴ Both laws were of great political, social and cultural importance since these laws were the first official judicial law codes enacted by Kurdish authorities and paved the way for the establishment of the KNA as well as the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). These two laws touched the following main issues⁹⁵:

The first law, the ‘Law of the Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly’ set basic rules for elections, determined conditions for a candidateship and explained the voting procedure.

The second law, ‘Law of the Leader of the Kurdistan Liberation Movement’ constituted rules for the leading position within a government. The most important requisite for a leading position was to reach the absolute majority.

The first elections took place on the 19th May 1992. These elections caused quite a stir in the International Community due to the unexpected high voter turnout. The results showed a balanced distribution of votes between the two big parties PUK and KDP, which led to a 50:50 parity in regards to the division of seats in the parliament as well as within the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). This system remained stable, but only as long as both parties had equal access to political and economical power. Since Ibrahim Khalil, the border crossing between Iraq and Turkey, belonged to the dominion of the KDP, a majority of the revenues stayed with the KDP.⁹⁶ This inequality of economic wealth resulted in an inequality of political power, leading to new elections due to the increasing fragility of the KRG and finally ending up in a bloody armed conflict.

⁹⁴Ibid., pp. 129.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Kakeyi, Saeed (2010): *Kurds of the other Iraq. From internal fighting to power brokering in Baghdad*, in: Kurdish Aspect Online: <http://www.kurdishaspect.com/doc062710SK.html> (accessed: 13. 07. 2010)

The so called “brother war” (Kurdish: sherri bra kuji), the internal armed conflict between KDP and PUK started in 1994 and caused thousands of deaths and deportations of families. *“During the 1994-1997 (sic) intra-Kurdish civil war, both Kurdish leaders grossly violated human rights: opponents disappeared and Barzani and Talabani ordered the execution of prisoners”*⁹⁷. The war reached its climax in April 1996 when the KDP invaded the city of Erbil (Kurdish: Hewlér) with the military support of the Iraqi regime. With the help of the Iraqi army the KDP managed to capture PUK-dominated areas up to Suleymaniya. The PUK however, could gain back its regions – with the help of Iranian forces. These regions were Suleymania, Koysinjaq, part of Erbil/Hewlér and Kirkuk. The war could only be stopped after Great Britain, the United States and Turkey intervened. In 1998 the main actors, KDP and PUK, signed a ceasefire agreement, known as the Washington Agreement. *“This meeting formulated confidence-building measures, including the enforcing of the ceasefire, the ending of media attacks, the release of prisoners”*⁹⁸.

A ceasefire line was established which divided the Kurdish regions between the two parties, not only geographically but also socially and politically. The KDP’s domain extended from Erbil/Hewlér, Salahaddin to Duhok, with its capital at Erbil/Hewlér. PUK’s territory included the regions between Koysinjaq and Darbanixan with Suleymania as its capital. Each party established a KNA and KRG in their capitals, the one dominated or rather ruled by the KDP, the other one by the PUK. *“Both sides claimed legality for themselves and scorned the illegality of the other, with the political system of Iraqi Kurdistan becoming characterized by two separate, almost identical, political and administrative systems.”*⁹⁹

3.2.2 The year 2003 and its aftermath

This static situation did not change for several years and proved to be a peacekeeping measure, albeit it did not initiate the expected consolidation process. With the discourse about the ‘axis of evil’ and the ‘war against terror’, promoted by the former US

⁹⁷ Rubin, Michael (2008): *Is Iraqi Kurdistan a Good Ally?* in: *AEI Middle Eastern Outlook*: <http://www.michaelrubin.org/1067/is-iraqi-kurdistan-a-good-ally>, (accessed: 11.08.2010).

⁹⁸ Stansfield, Gareth R.V. (2003): *Iraqi Kurdistan. Political Development and Emergent democracy*, London: Routledge Curzon, p. 100.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

president George W. Bush, the KRGs realized that it was time for an image change, implying above all a political change. After all, the Kurds were allies with the United States during the Gulf War in 1991 and had been in a prestigious position amongst the International Community before the civil war broke out. With the upcoming war of 2003 in Iraq it was high time to give a proof of life and show that the Kurdish authorities could be considered serious actors in the political arena. In order to accomplish this step, the authorities needed to put an end to the political and geographical dichotomy by initiating a reform process from within the system and to gradually start a process of consolidation of the two parties.

However, a change in the relationship between KDP and PUK became only visible in the aftermath of 2003, after the fall of the Baath regime. The fast introduction of a process of democratization – or the attempt of enforcing the latter – made it clear that nationwide elections needed to be held. The pressure of this upcoming election fostered a unification of the KDP and PUK, which finally ended up in running for the election as one single unified party. The presence of a unified front was essential in regards to promoting common Kurdish interests. This alliance of KDP and PUK, called the *List of Kurdistan* (Kurdish: listi Kurdistan) sought to form a strong Kurdish front in the elections for the Iraqi Parliament. The plan succeeded and the List of Kurdistan turned out to be the strongest party after the Shiite party *National Iraqi Alliance*. This outcome guaranteed the Kurds a powerful position in the Iraqi Parliament and therefore a determining role in designing Iraqi politics.

Despite the success of the elections that again were characterized by high participation, it was clear that the general political situation was fragile. The main goal was to maintain political stability whereas the security situation deteriorated. To prevent further political conflicts, especially in regards to the Kurdish areas, the Kurdish demands were accepted: while Jalal Talabani was chosen as the President of the Republic of Iraq, Masoud Barzani became the President of the KRG. “*Other Kurdish demands included the so-called Kurdish veto over approving or amending any future Iraqi constitution, the limited role of Islam, the rights of women, no Arab troops in*

Kurdistan, and Kirkuk, among others”.¹⁰⁰ These demands were partly accepted, Kirkuk still remains an unsolved problem.

Another historic event took place in January 2006 when both parties signed the unification code that officially set an end to the armed conflict. This incidence paved the way for the reestablishment of the KNA that took up its work as a unified institution with its headquarter in Erbil/Hewlêr.

The position of Kurdistan in Iraqi politics has changed ever since the recent events happened. Kurdistan was recognized and acknowledged as an autonomous, federal region of Iraq embedded in the Iraqi state structure.¹⁰¹ This status enables them “(...) *to preserve their ethnic unity and protect their political, cultural, and social existence. It would also grant them the closest thing to independence they almost all desire but cannot achieve now given the geostrategic realities.*”¹⁰² With the introduction of the new Iraqi constitution in 2005, a legislative fundament and frame were provided for Kurdish jurisdiction.

3.2.3 Kirkuk and the Article 140

One of the crucial points of the new Iraqi constitution passed in 2005 is article 140 that suggests a solution to the struggle for and about Kirkuk. Kirkuk is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious city and province, inhabited by Kurds, Arabs and Turcoman. During the brutal Arabisation policy of the Baath regime many Kurds were forced to leave their homes or were deported, while more and more Arabs settled.

These past events play an essential role in today's political status of Kirkuk, making Kirkuk a very sensitive issue. The formerly deported inhabitants, who had either stayed in collective towns – arranged by the Baath regime – or remained internal displaced persons in various refugee camps within the Iraq, returned to Kirkuk and reclaimed or have been restituted with their properties. “*The liberation of Kirkuk has encouraged*

¹⁰⁰ Gunter, Michael M. (2008): *The Kurds ascending. The evolving solution to the Kurdish problem in Iraq and Turkey*, New York: Palgrave Macmillian, p. 17.

¹⁰¹ Kakeyi, Saeed (2010): *Kurds of the other Iraq. From internal fighting to power brokering in Baghdad*, in: Kurdish Aspect Online: <http://www.kurdishaspect.com/doc062710SK.html> (accessed: 13. 07. 2010)

¹⁰² Gunter, Michael M. (2008): *The Kurds ascending. The evolving solution to the Kurdish problem in Iraq and Turkey*, New York: Palgrave Macmillian, p. 21.

*thousands of Kurdish families to return to their original lands, which has led to new territorial claims among Kurdish, Arab, and Turcoman populations and the reinforcement of the Kurdish ethnic claims to the city and its oil revenues.*¹⁰³

Also the Turcoman feel the need to perform strongly when it comes to their political demands, after they had been encouraged by Turkey. With the increasing Turkish influence in Iraq, especially in the Kurdistan Region, the Turcoman population can count on a strong lobby supporting their needs.¹⁰⁴ *“Turkey, in particular, has indicated it will not tolerate Kirkuk’s formal absorption into the Kurdish region, and it has various means of coercive diplomacy at its disposal, including last-resort military intervention, to block the Kurds’ ambitions”.*¹⁰⁵

Another question touches the issue of the political status of Kirkuk. Due to the ethnic and religious diversity it remains difficult to figure out whether Kirkuk should fully belong to the centralised Iraqi government, to the KRG or to become a federal region. Apart from this fragile socio-political situation, Kirkuk plays an important economic role given that it is the oil-richest region of Iraq. The export of the prevalent crude oil is highly controversial since the oil exploration concessions that are allocated by the KRG are not acknowledged by the Iraqi central government.

With these social, political and economic disputes in mind, article 140 is suggesting the following:

First, the deportations carried out in the 1980s have to be restituted through a resettlement of the now Arabic regions. This procedure implies the recreation of the old demographic structure by giving the Kurds their properties back while the Arabs have to return to their place of their origin. *“Article 140 (...) meant the assistance of the return of internally displaced people and their reclamation of seized property. Arabs installed in the region should be helped to return to southern and central Iraq (...)”.*¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Natali, Denise (2005): *The Kurds and the State. Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey and Iran*, New York: Syracuse University Press, p.66.

¹⁰⁴ See: Leezenberg, Michiel (2003): *The Kurds in a Post-Saddam Iraq. Opportunities, Constraints and Risks*. AEI-American Enterprise Institute.

¹⁰⁵ International Crisis Group (2006): *Iraq and the Kurds. The Brewing Battle over Kirkuk*, in Middle East Report No 56, p. 39.

¹⁰⁶ Talabany, Nouri (2007): *Who owns Kirkuk. The Kurdish Case*, in Middle East Quarterly, Volume XIV, No. 1, pp. 75.

Furthermore, the article demands a referendum in regards to the undefined political status of Kirkuk. This referendum is due after the reconstruction of the above mentioned demographic situation and offers three options for Kirkuk:

- Kirkuk will be integrated in the Kurdish Autonomous Region
- Kirkuk remains a part of the Iraqi Central Government
- Kirkuk will be a federal region of Iraq

The referendum bares a high conflict potential. Arabic, Kurdish and Turcoman politicians are far away from a consensual solution and refuse to hold the referendum. It was actually planned to be held at the end of 2007, but has been postponed up to now. What is clear is that this referendum is needed to finally determine the status of Kirkuk. This issue is closely intertwined with the solution of the, by now, dangerous security situation and the rising socio-economic problems of the population.

3.2.4 “Change” in the unity

The unity propagated by the two parties did not last very long. Internal disputes within the parties, especially within the PUK, were increasing. These controversies seemed to be insuperable and finally ended up in a split-off from the PUK. The group detached from the PUK in spring 2009 called its movement “Gorran”, which is the Kurdish word for ‘change’. The founder of this movement was Nawshirwan Mustafa, long-time friend and deputy of Jalal Talabani. Soon the party decided to run for the upcoming elections for the KNA in July 2009. The self-declared goal was to set an end to the sole reign of KDP and PUK, their misuse of power and the on-going corruption.

Founding another party set an example and inspired other groups to raise their voices. Several other parties and alliances – the broad spectrum included Communist as well as Islamist parties - were formed, albeit a lot smaller than ‘Gorran’ and as such rather ineffective.

The ‘Gorran’ movement was subject to criticism in spring 2010 during the elections for the Iraqi Parliament. The KRG claimed that two separate Kurdish parties would weaken the power of the Kurds in the Iraqi National Assembly and therefore also weaken the

Kurds' influence in Iraqi politics. This reproach did not keep the Gorran from running for the election as an independent party thereby challenging, above all, the PUK-KDP party "List of the Kurdistan Alliance" (Kurdish: listi hawpaimany Kurdistan).

The significance of the 'Gorran' movement resulted not only from the high degree of acceptance within the population – after all, the party gained the vast majority of votes in Suleymania in summer 2009 and in sum twenty-five seats out of 111 in the KRG. *"The PUK suffered major losses in the July 2009 provincial elections in its main powerbase of Suleimaniya at the hands of the newly-formed Gorran (Change) list."*¹⁰⁷

What's even more important is that having another strong Kurdish party as a counterweight to the already existing ones broke up the highly ethnicised political landscape. Thus, a space for ideological debates and discussions was created, considering that up to now the ethnic unity paralyzed any kind of criticism or counter movement. The KRG is now confronted with a strong opposition, which again could mark the beginning of a system of checks and balances.

3.2.5 Conclusion

With the establishment of the safe haven, a new era of Iraqi-Kurdish politics had begun. However, the first decade after the inception was overshadowed by heavy internal armed conflicts while the second one focussed on peacekeeping and consolidation measures which were necessary especially in regards to the upcoming war in Iraq.

Since 2005, an economic boost can be observed, various American and European enterprises and companies have invested in Iraqi-Kurdistan. A few years after the economic opening of the region, a change took place with the break up of the static political situation.

The security situation still kept the spirit of a safe haven and allowed an intensive economic and political exchange when it came to domestic as well as foreign issues.

¹⁰⁷ Ali, Ahmed (2010): Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Revival or mere Survival?, in: <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/arb/?fa=show&article=40242> (accessed: 13.08.2010)

The KRG managed to be perceived as a Global Player. The question about the political status of the “*de-facto state*”¹⁰⁸ of Iraqi Kurdistan is answered, at least for a while now. Iraqi Kurdistan will remain part of Iraq, since this is the only possible way to avoid instability and severe security issues and most of all for peace to prevail especially in regards to the neighbouring countries.¹⁰⁹ To oppose this development and voice the need for an independent state, an unofficial and controversial referendum took place in January 2005 where 98.8 percent voted for secession from Iraq.¹¹⁰ However, it can be said that the KRG has gone through quite an intensive development, considering the fragile circumstances. “*Since 1992 the KRG has transformed from a quasi-legal entity to a legitimate model for democracy.*”¹¹¹

Still, some issues remain unsolved. Nepotism and Corruption are the biggest challenges on the way to democracy. The government “*(...) lacks new blood and contains some ministers accused of corruption. The Kurdish people remain frustrated at the lack of services, transparency, women’s and youth’s rights, institutionalization, and, of course, the continuing corruption.*”¹¹² The slow-working administration is a result of long-term internal disputes that often hinder an accelerated progress. “*The remains of the two former regional governments in Irbil and Suleymaniya include grossly overstaffed civil service and ghost employees all collecting salaries, conflicting legislation in personal status laws and foreign investment (...)*”¹¹³ Unresolved questions such as an adequate distribution of water and electricity supply have been on-going conflicts for years and make the KRG subject to heavy criticism among the population.

Moreover, matters of personal and political freedom bear high conflict potential. In September 2009, a demonstration of teachers took place. The teachers claimed that their salaries have been reduced because they were suspected of voting for Gorran. Gorran

¹⁰⁸ See: Stansfield, Gareth R.V. (2003): *Iraqi Kurdistan. Political Development and Emergent democracy*, London: Routledge Curzon.

¹⁰⁹ See: Stansfield, Gareth/ Ahmadzadeh, Hashem (2007): *Kurdish or Kurdistanis. Conceptualising Regionalism in the North of Iraq*, in: Visser, Reidar/Stansfield, Gareth (eds.) (2007): *An Iraq of its Regions. Cornerstones of a Federal Democracy*, London: Hurst, p. 147f.
see also: Gunter, Michael M. (2008): *The Kurds ascending. The evolving solution to the Kurdish problem in Iraq and Turkey*, New York: Palgrave Macmillian, p. 16f.

¹¹⁰ www.kurdistanreferendum.org (accessed: 31.08.2010)

¹¹¹ Natali, Denise (2005): *The Kurds and the State. Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey and Iran*, New York: Syracuse University Press, p.166.

¹¹² Gunter, Michael M. (2008): *The Kurds ascending. The evolving solution to the Kurdish problem in Iraq and Turkey*, New York: Palgrave Macmillian, p. 56.

¹¹³ Ibid.

members suffer from on-going harassment on various levels.¹¹⁴ How the government treats Gorran exemplifies the way oppositional forces, whether political or civil societal, are being treated.

Social and cultural issues have been also neglected over the past decades. The lack of cultural diversity such as museums, theatres, cinemas but also institutions that support the establishment of the latter is as much an issue to be dealt with as the need for an emancipated and self-organized society.

If all these issues are not tackled, other forces will gain more power since the people are looking for alternatives to the KDP-PUK monopoly. One of these alternatives are Islamist parties that become stronger and grow more popular. *“Kurdish Islamic groups gained influence at the local level, sponsoring new mosques, Islamic radio and television stations, and Islamic clothing stores in Kurdish cities and towns”*.¹¹⁵

Dissatisfaction of the Kurdish population regarding their own political leaders has resulted in political protests against corruption, growing authoritarian behaviour of the KRG, unemployment and the lack of infrastructure. Inspired by the revolts of the Arab Spring, people gathered in the streets of Suleimaniya on February 17th 2011 to attack the KDP headquarter. After this attack, the security forces started to shoot arbitrarily in the crowd, causing the death of a young man and many injured. Although the exact happenings still remain unsolved, the escalation of the situation caused by the security forces, showed the need for a reform in the political system.

Another question is how the KRG acts in foreign – or regional – politics, especially in regards to Turkey. Turkey is the biggest and most important economic partner and investor in Northern-Iraq. At the same time Turkish military forces keeps invading Iraqi-Kurdish territory, conducting heavy military offensives against the PKK. While the KRG is not reacting to the offensives, people are demonstrating in different cities, especially Suleimaniya, against the passiveness of the KRG.

¹¹⁴ See: <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/arb/?fa=show&article=40242> (accessed: 13.08.2010)

¹¹⁵ Natali, Denise (2005): *The Kurds and the State. Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey and Iran*, New York: Syracuse University Press, p. 65.

3.3 The Presence of NGOs in Iraqi Kurdistan

The very few NGOs, which actually existed and worked in Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan before the Gulf War played a significant role in reconstructing the area after 1991. After the implementation of the safe haven Iraqi Kurdistan was almost overrun by various Western NGOs, which invested a vast amount of money in the reconstruction of Iraqi Kurdistan. The international humanitarian relief-aid was vital for the region. Denise Natali states: “*Dozens of NGOs and donor agencies, in conjunction with the KRG, reconstructed villages, demined farmlands, rebuilt infrastructure, restarted the economy, and created employment opportunities for local people.*”¹¹⁶ NGOs helped voice the Kurdish question to the international arena by raising attention to the Kurdish case in Iraq and pointing out the fragility of their situation. However positive and necessary the work of NGOs might have been for Iraqi Kurdistan in the beginning, a finer analysis is still of great importance.

3.3.1 NGOs in the 1990s

An interviewee underlines the necessity of international humanitarian aid projects, saying:

“In the beginning of the 1990s a lot of organizations came to help and support in Kurdistan after years of war. NGOs played a big role in the beginning of the 1990s, if it weren’t for the NGOs, the people’s situation would have been very very bad. They were in a very bad situation and it would have been worse without the organizations.”¹¹⁷

There is the need to contextualise the field entered by the organisations. The period after the war was marked by chaos. People were leaving the country in masses resulting in an enormous amount of refugees. Villages and cities were destroyed by severe

¹¹⁶ Natali, Denise (2005): *The Kurds and the State. Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey and Iran*, New York: Syracuse University Press, p. 162.

¹¹⁷ Interview with an employee of P2.

attacks previously, a proper administration was not established, let alone worked. The relationship between the two Kurdish parties was very tense, both seeking power. When the NGOs arrived, they were confronted with a scenery almost resembling anarchy, thus leading to troubles. The interviewee describes:

“But the problem was that there was no longer any administration. Everything got into party politics, everything was personal. So a lot of organizations came and did good things in re-building the country but it was difficult in a country where there were no institutions, no administration, no plans. Things mix up. For example, someone came to build a school and got the permission for it but afterwards there was nobody to offer teachers and actually care for the school. Or an organization built a hospital but no one could look after medicine. The people were asked what they needed- and the people were in a situation where they needed everything- and so they asked for houses, a home to stay. And then there were people who were sent back to their villages after twenty, thirty years¹¹⁸ and this caused great confusion amongst the people. Building up infrastructure does not only mean building up the villages and sending the people back, it affords also bearing in mind the psychological aspects. First the attitude was to destroy the collective towns and bring the people back to the villages. But this isn't easy because the people are already settled in these collective towns. “

The interviewee gives the impression that NGOs fell into an unexpected state of chaos and soon became part of it. At the same time, the parties became the only contact, since the party-structures were the only ones that remained in order. The political institutions handed all the efforts and responsibility for reconstruction to NGOs thereby implicitly giving a statement about their situation of being overstrained. For the international aid community money was not the problem, the implementation of the projects in terms of what to do and when to start seemed to be a bigger issue, but unfortunately they were not given enough attention. The projects were half-heartedly thought through, without really considering the effects and results. He continues:

¹¹⁸ The interviewee is referring to the so-called collective towns that were established by Saddam Hussein, after his regime had destroyed thousands of villages in Iraqi Kurdistan in the 1980s and deported the inhabitants.

“The role of organizations is very ambivalent, but from a general point of view these organizations had a positive influence in providing certain necessities, infrastructure, etc. But then again, if you look at these organizations and how much money has been put into this country, the rebuilding, resettlement and rehabilitation does not come up to this sum of money.”

NGOs were facing another difficulty, namely the security situation. International organizations expected to work freely and efficiently thereby neglecting the dangers or rather the fragile security state of a war-torn region. *“Die ausländischen Helfer betraten ein Land mit einer kriegsversehrten Infrastruktur und Gesellschaft. Dabei hatten NGOs ein Interesse an einer effizienten Umsetzung ihrer Projekte unter maximaler Gewährleistung von Sicherheit für ihre Mitarbeiter.”*¹¹⁹ In order to guarantee a relatively safe working atmosphere, the NGOs had to make arrangements with the two parties, the KDP in Erbil and the PUK in Suleymaniya. The presence of international aid workers was crucial for the survival of the region. For this reason, the political parties were keen on safeguarding the security measures. One of these measures was a controversial one, namely, the introduction of the death penalty on murderers of international aid workers.¹²⁰

Leezenberg¹²¹ has talked about the three phases of humanitarian aid in Kurdistan. The first one covers the period until the end of 1991, when the focus relied on short-term relief aid, mainly dealing with refugees and convincing them to return. The author concludes: *“The massive humanitarian effort, in combination with the allied operation and the Safe Haven, fulfilled its declared aim: by the late 1991, practically all the refugees returned home.”*¹²² The fact that the actual return of refugees was a violation

¹¹⁹ Fischer-Tahir, Andrea (2003): „Wir gaben viele Märtyrer.“ *Widerstand und kollektive Identitätsbildung in Irakisch-Kurdistan*, Münster:: Unirast, p. 282.

¹²⁰ See: *ibid.*, p. 265.

¹²¹ See: Leezenberg, Michiel (2000): Humanitarian Aid in Iraqi Kurdistan, in: CEMOTI, No. 29, <http://www.ceri-sciencespo.com/publica/cemoti/textes29/leezenbe.pdf> (accessed: 18. 02. 2011).

¹²² *Ibid.*

of the ban on non-refoulement proclaimed in the Geneva Convention, has been ignored.

The second phase, which lasted until the end of 1994, is marked by a slightly more sophisticated approach towards development aid because the focus shifted to economic aid. However, these efforts were seriously hindered by the double embargo against Iraq and by the “(...) *international unwillingness to promote or encourage in any way a viable and self-supporting Kurdish entity in the North.*”¹²³ Another obstacle for the successful implementation of projects was the lack of a properly functioning administration and coordination between the different actors, especially the KRG and the foreign organizations.

Leezenberg claims that the foreign NGOs ignored the KRG and preferred instead the few prevalent local NGOs that were, in turn, closely linked to one of the political parties. Since the relationship between the two parties was based on distrust and hostility, cooperation was hardly possible. Therefore the foreign NGOs were actually forced to choose the party they were working with rather than a real NGO.

However, the strategy of neglecting the KRG and choosing one party as a cooperation partner only encouraged the deep dichotomy in the already torn region. Foreign NGOs could afford to work without the help of the government, after all they had “(...) *larger budgets at their disposal than the government itself.*”¹²⁴ Ignoring the government did little to encourage a process of consolidation between the two parties. On the contrary, as Leezenberg says, it rather led to the creation of a “*parallel government*” that undermined the prevalent one by reducing the effectiveness and credibility of the latter.

The abilities of local organizations –with close connections to political parties- were overestimated. The NGO business was soon regarded as a lucrative one, considering the vast amount of money that was available, and “*between the two parties, there were regular mutual accusations of corruption and the embezzlement of reconstruction funds and materials.*”¹²⁵ Thus, the role of local NGOs gained ambivalence. On the one hand, political parties founded their own organizations, with the label non-governmental. These were the bigger ones that attracted more attention from the foreign NGOs. However, these organizations did little to encourage reconstruction and rehabilitation,

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

since they were used as instruments for “(...) *clientelization, and helped in manipulating the humanitarian effort for party-political purposes.*”¹²⁶ The political parties managed to gain control over alleged civil society activity.

On the other hand, small local NGOs were founded. These ones had more troubles to be considered as trustworthy and loyal cooperation partners. The interviewee describes:

“When international NGOs came, also local ones were founded. The international NGOs were the decision-makers. And during this process a lot of problems, like corruption occurred. This had effects on the local NGOs, because they were told to work on funds donated by international NGOs. So the local organizations were put in a situation where they were treated like being in second position. There were a few NGOs which worked independently but the prevalent situation, the result of unemployment, the result of the absence of trained and educated people, had effects on the staff of local and international NGOs.”¹²⁷

What he is referring to, is the hierarchy between the NGOs that occurred due to their economic situation. Whilst international NGOs were the leading figures, or as he says the “decision makers”, the non party-linked local NGOs were dependent not only on the KRG but also on the foreign donors due to their scarce financial resources. This dependency constrained their ability to work. “*So hatte die neue Situation nach 1991 ihnen [small local organizations] zwar Handlungsspielräume eröffnet, das politische Establishment schränkte die Möglichkeit dieser Gruppen jedoch ein.*”¹²⁸ The local independent NGOs were confronted with another problem - the lack of adequately educated people. During the period of the Baathist regime and later at the outbreak of the war in 1991 loads of academics and higher educated people left the country, resulting in a massive brain drain of this area. Nevertheless, these small organizations started to gather in the middle of the 1990s in order to establish umbrella organizations, associations and alliances. One of these alliance was the so called “*nawend-i hawbesh*”, the common committee, whose members were representatives of various small political parties and grassroots organizations.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Interview with an employee P2.

¹²⁸ Fischer-Tahir, Andrea (2003): „*Wir gaben viele Märtyrer.*“ *Widerstand und kollektive Identitätsbildung in Irakisch-Kurdistan*, Münster:: Unirast, p. 267.

¹²⁹ See: *ibid.*, pp. 295.

Party-affiliated NGOs, however, had a higher standing based on their political and financial resources. They carried the political rivalry between KDP and PUK to another dimension of civil society activity, extending it to the sphere of NGOs, enforcing the already existing disputes. The increasing financial resources provided by foreign donors, gave each of the parties – or their organizations- more economic influence. *“(...) they typically worked for private profit, and became kind of local contractors sponsored by foreign capital, further hollowing out the formal government structures.”*¹³⁰

In this second phase, three types of NGOs developed: foreign NGOs, which had high economic resources; local but party-affiliated NGOs which had a standing due to their party backgrounds; and local independent NGOs, which stayed rather small and powerless. First attempts at cooperation took place between foreign NGOs and party-affiliated ones, but due to the insuperable conflicts between the two parties, projects of reconstruction and rehabilitation slowed down. Cooperation in terms of work- cost- and knowledge sharing hardly took place.

As mentioned above, this absence of communication and contextual knowledge led to misconceptions and resulted in failed projects. In this phase, NGOs initiated a project of agricultural rehabilitation by trying to break up the collective towns and convincing its inhabitants to return to their villages, from which they had been deported decades ago. But the project was not designed on the principle of sustainability; the destroyed villages did not provide health care, education service, and other institutions necessary for settling down.

The third phase covers the period from 1994 until the beginning of the new millennium. This period was overshadowed by the increasing conflicts between KDP and PUK ending in a civil war. In 1996, when the KDP took over Erbil/Hewlér, many NGOs quit and left the country, as their security could no longer be assured. Even the UN responded by reducing their funds.

Since the two parties were busy fighting each other rather than rebuilding the country, the remaining NGOs took over certain responsibilities, such as maintaining health care or controlling the food rationing. By letting them get away with this strategy without

¹³⁰ Leezenberg, Michiel (2000): *Humanitarian Aid in Iraqi Kurdistan*, in: CEMOTI, No. 29, <http://www.ceri-sciencespo.com/publica/cecoti/textes29/leezenbe.pdf> (accessed: 18.02.2011).

any serious consequences, paved the way for the parties to “(...) *pursue their own political gain and economic profit, ignoring or even actively exploiting the fate of the population they claimed to represent.*”¹³¹

With the ceasefire in 1998 the situation improved slightly. The NGOs, which had stayed during and after the civil war, continued their work even though the region itself was divided.

To sum up, foreign NGOs, and later the local ones, played an ambivalent role. By first ignoring, then replacing the government’s responsibilities, they somewhat undermined the government’s authority. Given the circumstances however, which were the double embargo and the outbreak of the civil war, their presence was vital for the population. A couple of severe mistakes had been made, resulting in inefficient projects: An enormous amount of money had been spent on projects that were simply inappropriate, whereas no attention was paid to the socio-political context of the region. This again made it impossible to design adequate projects that would sustain over the course of time. Moreover, neglecting real grassroots initiatives while preferring to work with bigger self-labelled (party-linked) NGOs turned out to be counter productive and contradictory not only to the meaning of “non-governmental” but also to the significance of the working, developing and growing civil society.

The outcome of the provided humanitarian aid is a neoliberal model of economy, best described as privatization. “*What remains of the state is largely subordinated to private and party-linked interests, and the responsibility for public health and welfare has been transferred from the state to the humanitarian protection belt (...)*”.¹³²

After the fall of the Baath-regime in 2003, Iraq was again overrun by various NGOs. While the presence of foreign NGOs was prohibited in the rest of Iraq under the Saddam Hussein era, organizations could move around freely after 2003. The main obstacle was the dangerous security situation. Not only was the country overrun by foreign NGOs, the new circumstances paved the way for flourishing but smaller local organizations. According to the government’s data there are 380 registered NGOs in the

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

Kurdistan Region, 110 in the city of Suleimaniya, of which 30 are internationals and 80 locals.¹³³

¹³³ www.krg.org [accessed: 25.09.2011]

4 Methodology

For the methodology I focus on combining the applied theory and the case study. I chose to implement a research design that invokes a case study, which will specify and delimit the theoretical approach that this paper is based on. As Bryman says, “*a case study design can be associated with both theory generation and theory testing*”.¹³⁴ I use Gordon White’s democratisation approach of the four ways through which civil societal actors can influence democracy. I embedded his theory in a more general spectrum and described other liberal democracy theories as well as schools of thought that analyse civil society from different perspectives. The following chapter discusses the applied methods in detail.

4.1 Data Collection

The civil society in Iraqi-Kurdistan has not yet been dealt with in a detailed way, but I was able to make use of reports from different institutions and think tanks dealing with Kurdistan and Iraq, such as the American Enterprise Institute or the Carnegie Endowment, as well as analysing books (monographs as well as anthologies).

I soon realized that the information gained through these materials will not suffice for a thorough analysis, and therefore I chose to carry out a field study implemented mainly through the conduction of interviews. An on-site research has also the benefit of experiencing a work-in-progress. Building and strengthening civil society in Iraqi-Kurdistan is still an on-going process, so it is important to get first-hand information from the people involved on site, who are aware of the latest events. The interviews are semi-structured interviews with experts working in NGOs. I consider my interviewees as experts in their field of work, because each one of them has sufficient experience in the NGO business, especially while working in and with organizations stationed in Kurdistan.

¹³⁴ Bryman, Alan (2008): *Social Research Methods*, New York: Oxford University Press, third edition, p.57.

Semi-structured explorative interviews aim at highlighting the subjective perspective of the interviewee, who, in the end, is the one choosing the topics. As a result, a broad range of topics and issues are raised that might have been neglected by the interviewer otherwise. This phenomenon gives the interviewee the chance to emphasize certain points that are of importance to her-/him. The aim of these interviews is to understand the State of the Art, to find out the latest information and most of all, to estimate future prospects.

Semi-structured interviews require the preparation of open questions in the form of an interview guideline that should help the interviewee to keep a certain order and remember the crucial points. This method also allows the interviewee to present his/her own point of view, while the interviewer still has the chance to catch specific issues and ask further detailed question.

However, this type of interview carries some risks, which have to be considered. The interviewee might not actually respond to the questions in order to avoid confrontations or troubles. However, an oral response is not always necessary, non-communication can also reveal a lot. A defensive reaction is meaningful as it can already answer some crucial points of my research question.

Another problem that might occur are communication barriers due to the language. English is the chosen interviewee language but most of the interviewees are Kurdish native speakers and cannot express their opinions to the fullest in English. However, since Kurdish is also my mother language, these difficulties are solved easily by offering to speak Kurdish.

4.2 Case selection

A specific case selection is important to delimit the scope of the paper in order to guarantee a deeper investigation that is more tangible. In the case of Kurdistan, where many organizations are stationed, I choose to examine the following:

-Foreign NGOs: These organizations are usually based in a foreign country and receive funding mainly from the home-governments but also other big organizations. The

projects are mainly conceptualized abroad and implemented in Kurdistan. The head and most of the staff are expatriates from different countries.

-Local NGOs: These organizations are often a product of international organizations, but not necessarily. However, they are founded in Kurdistan and the projects are designed as well as implemented on site. They receive their funding from other foreign organizations and states, since they refuse to receive money from their government. Even though these organizations are often backed by their “mother organization”, the vast majority of the staff is local (Kurdish).

-Local but party-affiliated NGOs: These organizations are founded in Kurdistan and consider themselves as non-governmental but are closely linked to a party structure. They receive funding mainly from this party or the government. The staff is Kurdish but most employees have a strong party-affiliated background.

As my intention is to investigate NGOs originating from different backgrounds, I will divide these organizations into three groups. These three groups cover the majority of the NGOs working in Iraqi-Kurdistan and they also tell a lot about the different circumstances they work in. Each group shows differences in the founding process, in the funding and in the political spectrum they are embedded in, while still working on the same issues. The NGOs chosen define themselves as non-governmental organizations.

The second delimitation is a thematic one, which means that I focused on NGOs, which work in two specific areas, namely children’s and women’s rights. Making this thematic limitation facilitates the comparison of statements, experiences and conditions the organizations are situated in. My approach in the beginning is to contact with people through a **snowball system**. I make use of the few contacts I already have and ask them to help me find more interview partners. In the end, I managed to find six interview partners, two for each group of NGOs.

4.3 Data Analysis

For the data analysis I chose to use the qualitative content analysis by Phillip Mayring,¹³⁵ which combines methods from various scientific disciplines such as social science, psychology and most of all communication science. The latter is the focus point of this method. Mayring highlights that communication has different facets such as gestures, facial expressions and of course language.¹³⁶

The quantitative content analysis emphasises the necessity of a systematic technique that is needed for the data analysis. This technique is based upon two pillars: rules and theory. The aim is to examine the data according to the research question and the theoretical background and to interpret the material afterwards¹³⁷. According to Mayring there are three basic forms of interpretation that are divided into summary, explication and structuring. The summary aims at reducing the material without changing the content. The main elements of the material are abstracted in a manner that provides a good overview of the basic material. Although the details are omitted, the researcher still has a clear image of the collected data.

However, the core of content analysis is made up of categories, which are later used for the data analysis. In order to create useful categories, two units have to be filtered: the code-units and the context-units. The first one describes the single statements that are important parts of the research material. The context-units consist of text passages that belong to each other. As a result, the code-units make up the smallest possible element of the category whereas the context-units are the largest possible elements.

The data analysis is divided into four steps.¹³⁸ The first one is to paraphrase certain passages in order to eliminate repetitions and unify the language. As a second step, these paraphrases are generalised and abstracted, whereby the new formulations still imply the original meanings. The generalisation is closely related to the research question, since a correlation between the research question and the research is evident. The third step reduces the text passages to its important parts. Passages, which convey

¹³⁵ See: Mayring, Phillip (2008): *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. Grundlagen und Techniken*, Weinheim: UTB Belt, 9th edition.

¹³⁶ See: *ibid.*, p.12.

¹³⁷ See: *ibid.*

¹³⁸ See: *ibid.*, pp. 61.

the same meaning or do not contribute to a relevant issue, are omitted and transferred to relevant paraphrases. As a fourth step, these relevant paraphrases are put into categories.

After the analysis of the interviews it became evident that the interviewees had three main points of references that influenced their mode of action and their work. Therefore, the categories I finally chose, which will be elaborated in the subsequent chapters, are as follows:

- NGOs vs. the government
- NGOs vs. NGOs
- NGOs vs. the society

In the discussion the main points will be picked out in order to gain a broader overview on the most important statements. Afterwards, these points will be combined with one of the categories of the applied concept, which has been elaborated previously. The interviewees themselves are anonymous and in order to keep their organizations anonymous as well, I chose to use the following abbreviations:

L-Local NGOs

F-Foreign NGOs

P- Party-affiliated NGOs

I should make a last remark about the formatting: Quotes from texts are written in italics, whereas quotes from the interview-transcripts are written in regular font, without spacing.

4.4 Reflexion of the Field Work

My time of arrival in Suleimaniya was a difficult one. Different socio-political events were happening simultaneously that influenced my research in one way or the other.

First of all, I arrived in the month of Ramadan¹³⁹. For the duration of Ramadan, the governing city council decided to pursue a rather restrictive policy by adapting certain rules. Therefore, all cafés, bars, restaurants, etc. were closed during daytime, which affected the social life immensely. The streets were empty all day long and people hardly went outside. Furthermore, many employees and public servants either went on vacation or reduced their working hours. These two factors made it very difficult to get hold of interview partners because many of them had also gone on vacation. I had to meet those who had still stayed in their offices – a neutral surrounding, such as a randomly chosen café, was impossible, because they were closed during daytime. I sometimes had the impression that the interviewee could not speak frankly because both of us, but especially the interview partner, was still in the office, surrounded by colleagues.

In summer 2009 regional elections for the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) took place and, new constellations of coalescence had been implemented that lead to unexpected changes. The new party “Gorran” was the subject of attention, since they had gained influence rapidly after the elections and were the leading party in the city of Suleimaniya. However, since the political framework had just changed in Suleimaniya, the atmosphere was still tense, particularly when it came to the connection and communication between the KDP-PUK-led Regional Government and the opposition-led city. Gorran-supporters were harassed by the KRG, i.e. they lost their jobs or were intimidated, and demonstrations were taking place all over the city. Due to this tense atmosphere, people acted more cautiously in general.

The last factor had the biggest influence on my research. Soran Qadir Koste, a renowned local employee of the Norwegian organization NPA was kidnapped under mysterious circumstances¹⁴⁰. He disappeared for several days and was finally found in

¹³⁹ Ramadan ist he holy month of Islam. People fast at daytime and eat after sunset.

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2009/9/independentstate3144.htm> [accessed: 09.11.2009]

Kirkuk. Obviously he had been tortured and was immediately taken to hospital and put under medical care.¹⁴¹ The reasons underlying his kidnapping still remain unclear. Soran Qadir Koste is a politically active person, not only does he work for the NPA, he also partook in a highly sensitive research study about prostitution in Kurdistan that had caused outrage throughout the society and politics. Most of all, he is an open supporter of Gorran.

I soon realized that this event effected many employees of all NGOs. Many were intimidated and felt insecure in dealing with this mysterious and terrifying situation. Some of my interview partners were very cautious and careful in answering my questions.

It is important to outline these influences on my research, as every empirical study is embedded in a certain socio-political frame that has great impact on the outcome of the study.

¹⁴¹ <http://www.leeza.at/Media/soran-qadir-koste-wieder-gefunden> [accessed: 09.11.2009]

5 NGOs and the Government¹⁴²

“We can’t say that the government is bad and useless”

In the methodology chapter I have explained the process of data analysis. In the course of the analysis I figured out three main points of reference that all the organizations have in common. The most important one is the government. All of the organizations defined their position vis-à-vis the government, whom they regard as an indispensable actor for their work. However, the opinions vary, depending on the way these organizations are linked to the government. Hence, the subsequent chapter will deal with the attitudes of the non-governmental organization towards the government. I tried to extract the parts that are significant for understanding the correlation between these two actors. Surprisingly, many different answers have been given, which means that not even NGOs from the same category shared the same attitude.

5.1 Local NGOs

L1 is a local organization that is engaged in women’s rights issues founded in the year 2004. They are quite a young organization compared to the other NGOs, and like most other local organizations, this one originated from an international organization. Their field of work covers issues such as domestic violence, female genital mutilation, honour killings or forced marriages:

We also conduct campaigns to raise awareness to specific issues. We hold seminars in Germiyan and Rania about topics such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), honour killings, violence against women, forced marriages and self-burning of girls. In these seminars we also talk about issues that are directly related to women, such as legislative changes or health care.

¹⁴² All the interviewees refer to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). If the Iraqi government is mentioned explicitly, it will be pointed out in the text.

This organization, amongst others, visits the surrounding villages to pass on relevant information to those, who do not have access to these sorts of information. L1 works independently, meaning that they are not dependent on the government. The organization refuses to receive donations from the government, since this would mark the beginning of a strong dependency and accountability towards it. For now, they see no point in creating such a linkage:

I will tell you now, that the government does not play a role for women's issues. It does not help at all to improve the situation. I am pretty sure, that if the government would cooperate with us, only a bit, our work would have more impact on the people. Because the people here they rather listen what comes from the government.

According to the interviewee, the government has not done much for promoting women's rights therefore there is no evident mutual fundament for a cooperation. The organization is in charge of promoting women's rights, spreading this knowledge to the surrounding villages, educating people, maintaining the women's education centres and offering a safe place for abused women. All these obligations are carried out by NGOs only; the government has not yet taken responsibility on these issues. However, there is still the wish to cooperate, since having the government as a back-up would facilitate communication with the people. The government has a wider network and the work could be far-reaching and deeper rooted in society. Moreover, cooperation with the government would uphold the organization's safety. Many organizations employ private security forces to protect their offices or their projects, such as the women's education centres or the shelters. These private security forces have neither adequate equipment, nor enough recruited staff to cover the needs of the organizations. These organizations cannot afford to build and sustain shelters for women. The two women's shelters in Suleimaniya are permanently overcrowded, meaning they hardly have enough capacity to take in more women, albeit the increasing demand.

The government could for example open a shelter. Or, if we had a shelter and government would provide security forces to make it really a safe place. Because if a shelter cannot guarantee security, it has to send those persons back to their families because there is no other place. Also it would help and facilitate our work, if the government would improve the legal situation and work on laws in order to improve the women's situation.

The interviewee mentions another point that is important for the work of non-governmental organizations, namely a legal framework. The government has not introduced any laws concerning the protection of women's rights, especially within the realms of domestic violence, honour killings, polygamy or FGM. As a result, all these crimes remain unpunished; there are no legal regulations or sanctions that ban them. In 2005, a working group consisting of many different actors from local and international NGOs as well as from the government has formed in order to work out and formulate a law that includes all these matters. However, after several years of work, the working group disbanded in 2009 after the regional elections. The efforts of the working group have not been taken into consideration, let alone implemented properly. Polygamy, for example, is allowed according to Kurdish laws, although there are restrictions in the form of certain criteria that have to be fulfilled. FGM and honour killings have not made it into the legislative, while the draft for the law against domestic violence has been ready since 2009. The interviewee concludes:

No, the government is no help at all, no funding, no shelter, no laws. The laws just seem to be worked on but they fail when it comes to the implementation. In reality nothing has been done.

New legislative orders would be a breakthrough in the region. The KRG could signalise its commitment for the promotion of women's rights, which might also influence the Iraqi law. Not only would this contribute to a good reputation in the region, it would impact the population. The news would be spread through the media and the government would support awareness raising campaigns. All this would also enhance women to raise their voices and strengthen their position in the society.

L2 is the second local organization I interviewed. Similar to the previous organization, L1 originated from an international organization and is now its partner organization. L2 has been working in Kurdistan since the beginning of the 1990s and has also engaged in women's rights issues. This organization works similar to the previous one but has a wider range of projects, e.g. it looks after the women's prison and offers psychological help for the time afterwards. The interviewee has a clear standpoint when it comes to describing the NGO sphere in Kurdistan:

Ok, so there are two types of non-governmental organizations here in Kurdistan. On the one hand you have NGOs, which belong to the political parties in Kurdistan, on the other hand you have organizations, which do not belong to political parties, these are mainly organizations, which emerged from international NGOs.

Evidently, the interviewee differentiates clearly between two kinds of organizations. He sees a borderline between the local and party-affiliated ones. The interviewee uses the word "belonging" that ascribes these organizations a way stronger bonding to the party than sheer affiliation. The term describes more an ownership by the party that at the same time determines the organization's agenda. As a result, the party exerts a strong influence on these non-governmental organizations.

The idea of cooperation with the government is regarded as an ambivalent issue. Due to the diverse goals of these two actors, the government and the organizations pursue different approaches towards certain topics:

It's true, that Anfal is rather a local problem, a Kurdish issue, but fact is that the government has politicised Anfal rather than actually taken it as a humane issue.

The interviewee refers to the way the government has dealt with the Anfal campaign. They used Anfal to show the world how much cruelty the Kurdish population in Iraq had to undergo. A policy of victimization has been practised over decades, while at the time, no one looked after the victims of Anfal. In the course of this campaign, cities

and villages have been destroyed, many children have lost their families and many wives have lost their husbands. A generation of orphans and widows has been neglected by the government. After 2003 the situation improved, the widows were given pensions and houses. However, the NGO tried to care for the widows and make them come to terms with the past. The goal was and still is to make them reappraise the past, the violence they have experienced and the people they have lost. The approach is a more psychological one than a political one, without any claim to exploit this matter politically whereas the government emphasizes the victimization of the Kurds nurturing the wide-ranging discourse and making this victim-mentality manifest throughout society.

Even though the organization refuses to cooperate with the government in terms of content, there are still other branches, where cooperation seems to be sensible:

There are things where the government helped us. But there are also situations where the government needs us. So there is an exchange between us. So we cooperate with the government.

The interviewee describes a system in which both actors are relevant in order to keep the projects going. The dependency is a two-way street. The government is in need of the organization's expertise in certain cases and therefore falls back on its knowledge and skills and the government acts as a back-up for the organization in order to guarantee the appropriate feasibility of a project. L2 also works with state-led institutions, where top-down orders from the government facilitate the work immensely. In these institutions the organization often needs the government's permission to gain access to certain areas, which is only possible if the relationship between these two remains on good terms. The interviewee regards this kind of cooperation as indispensable for the successful conduction of the projects. Contrary to L1, this organization tries to include the government in their work because their existence still relies on the acceptance of the government. Every NGO has to be registered, and only those which fulfil the criteria, have the permission to start working.

However, a closer look at the organization shows that the cooperation takes place on a very low level. The government's role is kept on a level that mainly requires practical work, not on terms of content. The organization is funded by foreign NGOs only, because they refuse to ask for donations from the government:

We don't want to get money from the government, because the moment you accept their money, you have to work according to their agenda.

Apparently, there seems to be a clear definition of the way, this cooperation is based on. While organizations in other countries receive the main amount of donations from the government, organizations in Kurdistan refuse to even ask for it. A financial support would automatically mean a co-option of the organization by the government, almost like buying an organization off and as a result changing it inside out.

The government is needed, but their realm remains a very limited one for various reasons. Still, the local organizations are dependent on the government's good will, which is necessary for the conduction of the projects. In order to keep these projects going, local organizations are obliged to cooperate with the government in one way or the other as long as this cooperation does not have a financial base. What is interesting is that the government is always mentioned as a whole institution, no one refers to one single ministry.

5.2 Foreign NGOs

Foreign NGOs are organizations usually based in a foreign country, from where they receive their funding. The projects are mainly conceptualized abroad and implemented in Kurdistan. The head and part of the staff are expatriates from different countries.

F1 is a foreign organization that works in child protection. They have been stationed in Kurdistan since 2001 and have focused on child protection and child education ever since. My interviewee explains:

We set out to help and support working children and their families. And over the last seven years we had more than 6000 children coming to our dropping centers and many of them have been helped in one way or another. We try to encourage the people to see a future for themselves and education is a first and important road to that future. Apart from education for children we have done teaching for head-teachers and teachers and work with social workers who have actually very little training.

All the foreign organizations seem to be embedded in the same political framework like all the other organizations. However, their relationship to the government still differs from the other organizations, because they have a different starting point. International institutions work within a specific time frame and can leave the place as soon as the project is completed and so the KRG tries to maintain a positive image and a good reputation because they also rely on the work of these organizations. In this respect, the obstacles for international organizations remain small. The government benefits from the knowledge imported by the internationals, and the organization works for children as well as for local, professional staff.

We mainly work with the ministry of education and the ministry of labour and social affairs. They are happy with what we do. They're always happy if we do trainings. The people who work in the ministries, like social workers come and we go and talk to their directors. It's not the top, it's usually people who work from the ground who say, they really need trainings. But the ministry was very much behind it, they wrote the letter, they invited the people. We did it in the ministries' training centre and they facilitated the whole thing. So the government is very open once you pay for it. They have money but they have their own agenda.

Evidently, the workers in the ministries, not the ministers themselves, hire the organization. Communication works between the hierarchal lower standing employees and organizations than with the top level of the ministries. The government did provide technical and administrative support, but did not interfere in financial matters. If the employees explicitly ask for training with this organization, the government encourages training, but does not offer any improvements in terms of funding the project or content. The latter one turns out to be an advantage, whereas the former one often results in a lack of financial resources that can influence the quality of training. Financial support from the ministries would be a statement, which shows that they are actually interested in providing further education. Contrary to the local organizations, F1 regards the government's funding as support and welcomes the idea of being included in its agenda whereas the locals refuse to be co-opted. What is more, the employees of the ministries need the back-up of the organization when it comes to convincing the directors, which means that lobbying is part of their job. The interviewee adds:

You should hire somebody full time just lobbying the governments and that should be an international [person] because you have more access more easily and the local people are afraid to rock the boat too hard.

The interviewee emphasizes two main points that have been outlined, namely that there is still effort to be put into convincing the government of the NGO agenda and that being an international person gives more opportunities to work.

F1 is one of the few organizations that does not mind working with the government. After all, child protection, like many other issues, needs a legal framework that is enacted by a government and cooperation is needed in order to enhance the process of creating a legislative draft. Yet, the progress is not as far as the organization had expected:

We struggle with the whole government structures that don't seem to care. We work in a government system that is very heavy at the top and a lot of people are not really qualified to do the job they do in the government. We work with the government for change but it's very very time-consuming. We have done trainings at the highest level of ministries to establish a child protection framework and they think it's nice but it requires them to take action and actually putting the law into the system.

The interviewee mentions the lack of interest from the government towards the issues the organization is raising. Without the will to tackle and solve these problems, no change will occur and, this remark clearly shows that the government is open for suggestions or cooperation and tries its best to keep these going. However, the question of the government's motivation remains to be answered. Similar to the working group on women's rights, this cooperation on child protection has not come to any results yet. The impression made here is, that the organization puts effort into an issue that is relevant for politics and society while the government is solely registering it without any will or profound interest to make things happen. Most of all, the government's behaviour does not leave space for reproach since they can always point out that it is a work in progress – though without any actual progress. The government then pursues a policy of fobbing the public off with being committed to the issue without real interest and competence. Despite these difficulties with the ministries and government's attitude, F1 is still convinced that there is no other way than working with these main stakeholders:

But you can't really do these things unless you have the back-up of the ministries. It won't work and the people won't be able to implement it if they haven't got the green light given by their superiors. It has to be endorsed by the ministry otherwise it's a waste of time.

As a result, the organization is in a dilemma. On the one hand, it is evident that working with the government is necessary in order to improve the employees' competencies and qualifications and to enhance political and legal processes. On the other hand, the organization is well aware of the fact that work is hardly proceeding due to the lack of political willingness.

F2 follows a slightly different approach. While the previous organization focuses on their work with the government, this one is keen on finding as many partners from civil society as possible. F2 is one of the biggest foreign organizations in Kurdistan and has been active there since the beginning of the 1990s. This organization is committed to many different issues, amongst others women's rights:

We mostly work with civil societal organizations but our strategy also allows us to work with individuals who could be seen as change-agents in one way or another. So we engaged with a number of partners, as you probably know, and to look at issues, which are more pertinent to what we are, which is basically to look at issues such as human rights. We have projects that monitor the human right's situation; we have projects "violence against women, forced marriages".

F2 tries to keep up a professional relationship with the government. In order to define a guideline for an eventual cooperation, the organization has developed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between them and the KRG. This MOU is valid on the governmental level as well as on the level of single ministries that the organization works with in order to define the modality of the work. Even though this document is not legally binding, F2 prefers to uphold this strategy, since the MOU clarifies the framework in which these two actors move. Moreover, it is a piece of paper that provides transparency in terms of their agenda setting. Contrary to F1 and any other organization so far, this organization has developed a document that tries to safeguard the accountability towards the government and vice versa. This MOU also acts as a guideline in regards to the relationship between the KRG and the civil societal stakeholders. The interviewee concludes:

Obviously we as facilitators, we can encourage our partners to engage in some relationship with the powerful.

The organization apparently tries to encourage a growing connection between the government and civil society, since the former are seen as the 'powerful' ones. As such, the interviewee is implying an unequal distribution of power by only declaring the government level as powerful, thereby disregarding the effect of the power of civil society.

Being aware of this power, F2 seeks to hand over certain working areas to the government. In the course of my research this organization was the only one that mentioned the importance of nationalising certain projects, because they are too sensitive and serious. These issues are spread all over the country, which results in a heavy workload and practical difficulties that cannot be solved by one organization. Nationalising these projects would enhance and accelerate the implementation throughout the country, in that case Kurdistan, and also making things known in the villages far away from the cities. Moreover, nationalising projects shifts the responsibility from single organizations to the government, which again results in a higher degree of commitment of the government towards the issue.

Still, this power is not just simply accepted or taken for granted. F2 is well aware that the government's power needs a certain framework it can move in. This framework has to accept the realm of civil society and especially the relationship between civil society and government. Being confronted with a severe conflict with the government that has caused outrage throughout society, the organization faced its powerlessness towards the KRG:

The reason we have these problems is because the programme has done exactly what we expected it to do, which was to challenge somebody's authorities and wrong approaches. So what happened is sadly an indicator that things are going completely, completely out of line.

The harsh action of the government proved that the KRG has not learned to handle the power. It also made clear that at the end of the day even the international organizations are not safe from repression and violence. As the interviewee states, this reaction indicated an authoritarian shift on governmental level that seriously hinders a democratization process. There is a dichotomy between NGOs that try to foster an active civil society and the government that gradually increases the use of intimidating methods to deprive them of power.

5.3 *Party affiliated NGOs*

These organizations consider themselves as non-governmental but are closely linked to a party structure. They receive funding mainly from their party or the government. The staff is Kurdish but most employees have a strong party-affiliated background.

P1 is a women's rights organization that was founded in 1989 and has been expanding their regional work continuously. The organization has branches all over the Kurdish areas as well as Kirkuk and Baghdad. My interviewee explains:

The organization aims at enhancing women in every field, making women aware of their rights and how to defend and make use of these rights, democracy, peace, living together and accepting other opinions and support women everywhere, under the condition that the women believe in the aims and basic principles of the organization.

This passage outlines the basic goals of the organizations and mentions one point that is new in this business. While all the other organizations are open to everyone who shows interest and commitment, this one has a clear image of who is to become a member. In the course of the research this interviewee was the first and only one who explicitly delimited the scope of membership by emphasizing the approval of their principles. Unfortunately, the interviewee could not mention any of these principles, so this limited access – or the requirements, and as such a membership to the organization remains unclear.

Evidently, P1 has very good connections and relations to the government. Cooperation with the government seems to be working well on many different levels. Furthermore, the government is the main donor of this organization – the interviewee not only mentions the government but most of all Jalal Talabani, the president of Iraq and head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), whom she describes as a very generous donor. The amount of money given to P1 by far exceeds the funding of all the other local organizations. An insight into the sum of money is often available in their journal

that is published once a year. With this amount of money, P1 can afford to finance many different projects. The women's shelter that has been established by P1, accommodates women that are sent directly by the government, whereas the local organizations accommodate women who come directly to the organizations.

Similar to all the other organizations, P1 acts within a specific legal framework. Contrary to the previous ones, the interviewee stresses the good cooperation with the government, especially in regards to the working group on banning FG; and promoting women's right:

Unfortunately, we weren't effective when it comes to the Iraqi constitution, but we were effective with the Kurdish and we thank the government for it, because really they took all our proposals into consideration.

Like no other interview partner, this interviewee has an emotional rhetoric that is obvious in the language used by the person. Gratitude and respect towards the governmental level are two main aspects of the interviewee's speech. Moreover, this statement illustrates how influential this organization can be. In the course of the interview the interviewee gives the impression that P1 is the only partner relevant to the government when it comes to questions of honour killings, domestic violence or FGM. Hence, the organization is of great – and more – importance to the government than the others are.

The interviewee appreciates the work of the government and shows astonishment about the actual projects of the government. State-led projects for the people are unusual, since most of these social projects are conducted by non-governmental organizations. Even now, the hospital and the old people's home that have been opened by the government are not frequented often. The interviewee summarizes:

We see the government has done a lot. Of course, we have complaints but these complaints are not always justified, we have to recognize their work. Because this government has come over a destroyed country, a destroyed economy. So, what has been done is not little. I think that quite a few things have been done, for example the government has opened an old people's home.

P1 however, does not mention the pre-conditions that need to be fulfilled in order to make use of these institutions. There are certain limitations, such as age-related or financial limitations that are often an obstacle for the people and thus do not make use of these state-led institutions.

P2 is the second party-affiliated non-governmental organization that has been interviewed. It was founded in 1991 and at first was engaged in emergency help. Up until now, this organization is one of the biggest and most renowned organizations in the region. The key areas of the organization lie in child education, juvenile issues and providing appropriate health care for young people, in other words the organization monitors, protects and promotes children's rights. The interviewee explains:

We also have a youth centre for young people aged between fourteen and twenty-five. The centre is neutral, in the sense of the word, we are neutral, we don't take any side and the only thing we want is to support children and young people. After 2005 we realized that a lot of children were ill especially with heart diseases. So we try to give them the best treatment, but of course our country can't do it on its own, so we managed to build a bridge with several countries such as Austria, Italy, Turkey or Iran.

It is interesting that the interviewee stresses the point of the organization's neutrality even though the organization evidently belongs to one party. The head of the organization is very closely related to a high politician in Iraq. P2's donors are UN-based organizations as well as foreign NGOs, however, the main amount of money comes from the KRG and separately from the KRG, from the Iraqi president and head of the PUK Jalal Talabani. P2's size and power are evident, considering the wide range of working areas and the numerous branches the organization has in the country, namely Kurdistan as well as Iraq. This organization's work and expenditures are outlined in the annual report.

The main partner of the organization is the Ministry of Education. Despite good relations with the governmental level, the work is not accomplished in a satisfactory way. P2 has been working on the matter of child work for years but the outcome does not come up to the invested energy. The interviewee states:

Actually I have the feeling that child workers have increased in the last years. I mean we have done things to decrease the number but the problem is that the powerful don't work the way it's needed. If we as P2 [name changed] tell them to do something, they'll do it but for the rest, they don't care.

Contrary to P1, this interviewee admits that working with the government is not easy and that there is still room for criticism. The person describes one of the main problems with the government that has also been mentioned before: the government lacks interest and competence to proceed with the work that is needed. Governmental staff is relying too much on the organization's innovation in order to make things happen. Interestingly enough, P2's rhetoric differs completely from P1's rhetoric, despite their similar backgrounds and their close relation to the government. Gratitude is kept rather short or is not related to whereas criticism is put forward frankly.

5.4 Discussion

When having a closer look at the relationship between the non-governmental organizations and the government, it is clear that these attitudes cannot be summarized at once. The opinions differ not only between the three categories of local, foreign and local-party-affiliated organizations but they also differ within the categories.

The main point, which has to be taken into consideration, is that the government is always seen and taken as a single entity. They consider all of the ministries to be embedded in the government, making them all follow the same line and stay under the same dependency structures from governmental decisions.

The methods of approaching the government and the way of cooperating with it, varies. Some organizations prefer to maintain a good and stable relationship to the government by trying to include governmental decision-makers in their work, while still keeping their decision power on a low flame. Others simply refuse to be involved with the government, since their experience has shown that such a cooperation hardly affects a positive outcome of the projects; on the contrary, interference would hinder the progress instead of actually fostering it.

The interviewees do not hesitate to level criticism against the government. Many issues have been questioned, the organizations have found fault with the lack of government interest and commitment in contributing to the concerns of the organizations, which is in the first place to provide a suitable legal framework that safeguards women's and children's rights on the one hand and guarantees security for the organizations on the other hand.

However, the relation towards the government is an ambivalent but relevant one. After all, the government is needed in one way or the other and the organizations agree that no work can be done without the goodwill or back-up of the government. According to the interviewees, dependency describes the state of receiving money from the government and hence being dependent on it. So, dependency happens only in relation to the government and only on a financial basis. However, this definition is a narrow one, since it hides or neglects other forms of dependencies that are prevalent within this

realm. All of the organizations claim that there has to be some kind of cooperation with the government, because the government needs to know what the organization is working on. Therefore, the organizations involve governmental staff in their projects, though only to a low extent, in order to maintain a good relationship with the government. The main reason underlying this phenomenon is that the organizations are dependent on the government's goodwill, since they are in charge of giving the permission to be stationed and operate in Kurdistan. As a result, there is another level of dependency towards the government apart from the financial one that makes all of the organizations dependent on the government in one way or another.

Considering the applied concept presented by Gordon White, which has been explained in the theory chapter, this relationship covers the first and second way of how civil society can influence democracy. White's first way of how civil society can influence democracy is its ability to create a balance of power that seeks to hold the government accountable. Considering the number of NGOs in Iraqi-Kurdistan, one could assume that the government is confronted with a strong counterpart. As such, the organizations interfere in socio-political issues and try to exert influence on the decision-making process by giving inputs, advice or work experience on matters pertinent to their own field of work. Hence, many NGOs, for instance, were involved in the law-making process against Female Genital Mutilation, since these organizations were the first ones to raise awareness to this issue through their own fieldwork, the experiences they made and the reports that were written then. However, after four years of work, the draft did not receive the necessary majority in the parliament in order to be implemented. Despite failures, the government has a partner, whose know-how and experience is being taken into consideration when it comes to certain socio-political matters.

A common development is that the government or the parties co-opt these issues and establish their own organizations, which are then called non-governmental. These organizations have a strong bonding to the party-political arena which is evident in two ways: firstly, the government, but most of all one specific party is the main donor and secondly, most of the workers in these organizations are either members of well-known political families or are in some way related to them. As such, the government manifests its power in the sphere of NGOs and pushes its own organizations in order to weaken

the position of other non-governmental organizations, especially when it comes to influencing decision-making processes.

As already stated, White claims that civil society can also have a disciplinary role vis-à-vis the government, in terms of guiding governmental decisions by promoting certain values and ideas. Evidently, non-governmental organizations try to fulfil these criteria although the outcome seems to be insufficient for most of the NGOs. They put effort into influencing and affecting the decision-making process but due to the constellation of these processes and the imbalanced share of power, these efforts result in giving in to the government's will. In order to have a little impact on the government, most NGOs sacrifice their demands and seek a compromise that is in favour of the more powerful actors, which is the government. As such, the NGOs do not challenge the prevalent system but they move within the rules that are given.

6 NGOs and NGOs

“The question is how effective they are”

The previous chapter showed that the line between non-governmental organizations and the government blurs, since both stakeholders are intertwined and interdependent on each other. In the course of this research another main factor appeared, namely the relationship between the numerous non-governmental organizations and other NGOs. The following part will scrutinize the often ambivalent relationship between these actors.

6.1 Local NGOs

L1 is one of the many women’s rights organizations working in Iraqi-Kurdistan. Their emphasis lies in promoting women’s rights, in particular, preventing domestic violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) honour killings and forced marriages. All these fields of work overlap with other organizations, and cooperation with other organizations seems to be the most sensible, but according to the interviewee, this hardly takes place:

I want to be honest, there is no cooperation between the organizations. I don’t know why actually. Maybe there are just organizations which want to work alone or it has something to do with rivalries. We as an organization had contact with other organizations and we realized that some of them had even a negative influence on women’s issues. I refer to local organizations. We as a local organization, we only work with other locals.

This passage contains various points, which are all important. Firstly, the interviewee claims that there are unspoken boundaries within the realm of NGOs. Apparently, local organizations only work with other locals – but the interviewee does not describe in what terms this cooperation is based on, as this would explain the reason for this separation. Secondly, the interviewee mentions that there have been attempts to initiate

cooperation but apparently the attitudes within the organizations differ so much, although the issues are similar. Thirdly, the main point lies in the second sentence. The numerous organizations cannot work together exactly because they all pursue the same goal; therefore the organizations compete with each other rather than cooperate. As a result, the outcome of the work is in no relation to the effort that has been put into all the projects. As mentioned in the previous chapter, all organizations claim that the situation has hardly improved; the impact is not as big, neither on the society nor on the government. According to the interviewee, the reason is as follows:

There is no pressure on the government. One of the reasons is that the organizations don't unite, they don't have one common voice or one common standpoint.

Due to this rivalry, the government does not have one consulting partner. It is confronted with a wide array of NGOs that all deal with or fight against the same issues. Common lobbying that would strengthen the organizations' position towards the government hardly takes place, so the government may be set under pressure, but, in low doses only. Moreover, this competition between the local organizations weakens the position of the organizations themselves, since the organizations hardly take their colleagues' work seriously. This undermines the effort done vis-à-vis the government, society and other relevant stakeholders.

The relation to foreign organizations differs. Local organizations have a financial link to foreign organizations, since the latter are the main donors, and thereby local organizations try to stay independent from the government. What is underestimated is the strong dependency on these foreign organizations:

This economic crisis also affected our work. We get the funding from foreign organizations and if they reduce the funding, we have to close down certain projects.

The interviewee highlights this strong bonding between local and foreign organizations. However, considering the mechanism of funding organizations, it is evident that these organizations also have a strong influence in terms of content, because projects are designed according to the demands of the donor. If certain criteria are not fulfilled, the donor refuses to fund the project.

L2 presents a more differentiated view. The interviewee makes a difference between local organizations, local but party-affiliated organizations and foreign organizations, to whom L2 pursues different policies.

The interviewee regards party-affiliated NGOs as sub-organizations of a party. Therefore, these organizations can not be considered as cooperation partners because, according to the interviewee, problems are denied:

They don't have any difficulties with getting cars or offices; they don't have problems with contacting the government. But they have one big problem: they can't show the people's reality because they have taken the side of the powerful. They can't talk about issues that criticize the government. They would negate the number of honour killings, because this would cause a bad reputation for Kurdistan and for the KRG at a national and especially international level. But our work is different because we don't need the government.

L2 explains that the strong interdependency between organization and party prevents a serious scrutiny of the situation, in order for the KRG to maintain a good reputation. This denial of severe problems helps to hide the reality and maintain the status quo, which is to keep the situation as it is instead of improving it. At the same time, the interviewee points out that L2 is more flexible in their work because there is no dependency structure between them and the government, which allows them to tackle issues openly.

The next group mentioned are the foreign NGOs. The interviewee regards these organizations as essential for implementing the projects. Now that the knowledge and skills are conveyed to the local organizations, they have to start using it. What is more, these foreign organizations often act as a back-up for the local ones who need this support especially in front of the government. The interviewee concludes:

Unfortunately, the foreign NGOs have reduced, so our work as a local organization is more difficult, because not only do we have more work, but the government also listens more to the foreigners but not to us.

As already mentioned, the local organizations are still a kind of protectorate vis-à-vis the foreign NGOs, whose impact on the government is still bigger than the ones actually conducting the work.

The third group mentioned are the local NGOs. Contrary to L1, the interviewee of L2 states that cooperation does take place, though not in the same field of work. It is more mutual support, so if L2 needs a shelter for their clients they ask other organizations, who do have a shelter, to help out. The interviewee also mentions the existence of women's network but apparently this network has been inactive for at least five years. The interviewee cannot name any specific reason for the inactivity of the network.

6.2 Foreign NGOs

A closer look at foreign NGOs shows that they deal with similar issues. F1 has also difficulties with finding appropriate partners. Though there are not as many organizations, which work in the field of child protection, support is still hardly given. The interviewee argues as follows:

We don't really work closely with any of the local NGOs at the moment. We have good relationships with them but the local NGOs have their own agendas. So all they want, if they know you are an international organization, is "give us money" instead of actually working together in projects. We've tried and... you know, they never turned up at meetings...it just never happened because they were not really interested.

The impression given is that local organizations do not really understand what the work is actually about, they are described as superficial and not into the issue itself but into the money. Hence, the work in NGOs has a reputation of being more a lifestyle than actual work. What is more, the interviewee reproaches the local organizations a lack of seriousness and carelessness in terms of reliability and work ethics. Unfortunately, the interviewee does not mention why the agendas of the local organizations contradict or are not compatible their own agenda.

F1 also discusses the party-affiliated organizations, which is considered as problematic because according to the interviewee these organizations are not really non-governmental due to the strong connection to the party.

F2, on the contrary, has reflected upon the relationships with partners and has therefore formulated a concept that ought to elaborate on the organization's attitude towards cooperation. In the course of this reflection, the interviewee states:

We tried to develop relationships. Obviously there is always this financial relationship. But at the end of the day you are not really doing anything, you just become another financier of another group. So, more and more it's about finding mutual understanding. So, it's about finding these kinds of organizations and individuals that are autonomous and independent.

F2 defines the partners along certain criteria, which are basically related to independence and mutual understanding. This is an interesting and useful approach, however, it does contradict the reality. As an international organization that has been stationed in Kurdistan for many years, F2 works with local NGOs that are still their protectorates and hence dependent on them, financially as well as with regard to content. Still, F2 is one of the few organizations that questions this relation and tries to escape from this structure:

Theoretically, theoretically, we don't lead the agenda.... or at least that's how it should be. If we have a good partner, we try to influence, not influence, we try to debate, discuss.

The hesitation of the interviewee shows, how difficult the process of untying this bonding is. F2 is just about to change these attitudes and working modes that have become a habit over the past years.

6.3 *Party-affiliated NGOs*

P1 has a different view when it comes to cooperating with partners. The interviewee is very keen on emphasizing the cooperation with other local organizations within the women's committee in Suleimaniya.¹⁴³ The interviewee points out the special, influential and indispensable role of P1 within this committee:

We cooperate in every project. As I said, we are a member of the women's committee. In this committee there are more than twenty-four organizations. We meet twice a month. We support each other and help each other.

P1 highlights its role within the decision-making processes in the parliament, because some of the Members of Parliament are also members of P1. Hence, this organization works closely on issues with the government.

It is interesting though that none of the other interview partners mentioned this committee that according to the interviewee, consists of twenty-four organizations, only in Suleimaniya. As said before, local NGOs deny the existence of a committee whereas this interviewee highlighted the importance of this committee.

Similar to P1, P2 does not go into detail when it comes to the question of cooperation and working with partners. The interviewee claims:

We do things with the Ministry of Health. But, we work on the issue of working children, up until now no one has worked on this matter in this country.

¹⁴³“Torry hawbeshy jinan w afretan le slémani “- Committee on Women's Cooperation in Suleimaniya

This statement has a significant message. On the one hand, the interviewee mentions the ministry as the first and therefore most relevant partner. On the other hand, the interviewee does not even know - or pretends not to know - about other NGOs that work in the same field. It is obvious that hardly any communication occurs between the party-affiliated organizations and other NGOs.

6.4 Discussion

An analysis of the relationship between the organizations themselves shows how contradictory these positions are. It also becomes evident, how little the organizations know about each other.

Clearly, there are restrictions when it comes to cooperation with other NGOs. Many local organizations refuse to work with the party-affiliated ones due to their strong connection to the political elite. For some organizations, the party-affiliated cannot even be called non-governmental, because their workers overlap with politicians, who, according to the other organizations, make them “governmental” instead of “non-governmental”.

What is more, local NGOs only work with other local organizations; big NGOs only work with other big ones. As a result, there is hardly any communication between the important actors within the sphere of NGOs. Foreign organizations claim to have tried to initiate such a cooperation but it failed due to the lack of mutual understanding concerning issues that need to be tackled and working manners.

The numerous amount of organizations results in competition instead of progress. This scenario prevents organizations to pursue one common line and one common position vis-à-vis the government, leading to a weakening of the organizations themselves and issues that need to be solved.

The crucial, though ambivalent role of foreign organizations is not criticized as much as the role of government. In fact, local NGOs are dependent on foreign organizations and institutions because they feed the locals with donations and provide back-up towards the government. The reduction in the presence of foreign NGOs has led to some weakening of the local organizations position. As a result, the second line of dependency can be

drawn between NGOs and other organizations and institutions. Especially the local organizations stress that they need the back-up of foreign organizations in order to fulfil their work without getting in conflict with the government. Evidently, there is a hierarchal system within the sphere of NGOs, which clearly gives foreign organizations more power when it comes to confrontations with the government. Hence, local organizations without foreign support can hardly establish themselves; they would need a “big brother” whose protégé they can be.

Moreover, this dependency structure concerns also foreign NGOs. An important point, that is often neglected, is the strong dependency on donors. The NGOs have to work donor-driven in order to be able to finance the projects. The main problem thereby is that the projects have to be adjusted to the criteria, which are set by the donors. As a result, many projects are conducted without being actually compatible to the on-site context or situation. Several foreign NGOs, which are funded by national and international donors, conduct the same projects all over the region. One example could be the rising interest in seeking to empower women by introducing tailor courses. Since the beginning of the new millennium, many different foreign NGOs engaged simultaneously in establishing tailor courses for women, ending in having a vast number of unemployed female tailors all over the region. This raised not only the number of unemployed women but also a wave of loan dumping came along due to the rising competition. Even though the purpose is a good one, the mode of conduct does not contribute to the empowerment of women; not only is the content of the course, tailoring, inadequate and very traditional instead of empowering, but it has more and more become an obsolete profession in the past years, due to the emergence of new technologies and the opening of the markets. The crux here is that projects need to be contextualized in order to achieve the goal and reach the necessary outcome; otherwise the work of these NGOs misses the point, since it turns out to be just another way of doing business, making the social and political aims become meaningless. Furthermore, it is important to rethink these socio-political goals in order to design a project pertinent to the prevalent situation. This mode of conduct shows that every single organization is following its own agenda. The interviewees do not know what other NGOs work on, or at least they claim so. This proves again that organizations hardly communicate with each other even though they work on the same issues.

Again, going back to White's four ways of the influence of civil society, this part would also be the first way, namely the balanced opposition. White regards a strong and unified civil societal sphere as a means to create an equilibrium of power as opposed to the power of the state. However, these NGOs hardly communicate with each other, let alone cooperate. On the contrary, organizations compete with each other thereby weakening the position of all the organizations vis-à-vis the government. As a result, the NGOs alone do not suffice to be a balanced opposition towards the government.

The second way suggests that civil society can have a disciplinary role in terms of fostering and implementing moral standards towards the state as well as towards the society. By working on peculiar issues and thereby breaking taboos, all organizations can be regarded as promoters of human rights. As such, human rights imply also moral standards. However, none of the interviewees, with one exception, related to any moral or more sophisticated socio-political goal, which means that despite the long years of work experience, no reference has been made to the actual, long-term aim of the work or the ideologies behind.

The fourth way proposes to give civil society a constitutive role, in terms of establishing a set of rules and norms to hold the government accountable. As such, it begs a system of checks-and-balance that should be conducted by units of civil society. Similar to the first way, the NGOs begin to act as referees in the political game. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go, since the sphere of the organizations lack structure and transparency and are therefore confronted with obstacles within their own realm. This weakens their own position within the system and prevents the organizations to be an equal counter pole to the government.

7 NGOs and the Society

“All this is about humans, so it’s gonna be complex”

After having discussed the relationship between NGOs and the government as well as between NGOs and other NGOs, it is time to analyse the NGOs relation to their main addressee, which is the society. As one of the main players in civil society, NGOs have been working on improving the people’s situation by monitoring, protecting and promoting their rights. The question, however, is how does the society’s reaction affect the organizations, or how are these reactions perceived within these NGOs?

7.1 Local NGOs

L1 regards their work as successful, arguing that there are two main reasons for this development:

We work on solving certain problems. In Germiyan we have now 106 cases, which we work on. We have saved women from being killed, just through talking to people and raising awareness. I have the impression that, compared to a few years ago, in the society there is a higher awareness and acceptance to these problems.

On the one hand, the assignment of the organization is clear, since they focus on awareness raising campaigns throughout the region. These campaigns involve mainly talking about topics that have been and still are taboo publicly, including peculiar topics such as sexuality but also topics that deal with fundamental human rights. These NGOs have been trying to break up the predominant mentality by bringing these topics into the public and talking about them. On the other hand, the society is prone to accepting and naming the prevalent issues. The society has opened up and is therefore willing to talk about these issues, which means that the level of resistance towards the NGOs has decreased over the last years.

The interviewee sees a shift in the working mode:

Over the years we could gain people's trust so that they are now the ones who come to us and ask for advice or help. So, the people's response is good.

The NGOs have pursued a policy where they were the ones who visited the families in order to talk to them and introduce their campaigns whereas nowadays, these organizations are visited by the people. As a result, they have become more and more an advisory centre for the people.

L2 defines their task as follows:

The local organizations, which are not party-led, are a bridge between the people and the government and the job is to bring the people's discontentment to the government. And they set the government under pressure, set the powerfuls under pressure to fulfill the people's demands. So, this is our job, to mediate.

As a result, the interviewee sees the role of local organizations as being mediators who lead the communication between the people and the government. As such, these organizations act on behalf of the society and as speaking tubes for the people to represent the people's opinions and demands towards the government. Therefore, they observe social evils and pass these on to the government to make them aware of the people's needs and voice these, as well as putting pressure on the government in order to make changes or improvements.

L2 is a renowned local organization. According to the interviewee, the reason lies in their autonomy, on their independence from the government on the one hand and in the society on the other hand:

If the organizations are independent, they can be successful. Because people want independent organizations. We have been working here for almost fifteen years, so we gained the people's trust. And the society accepted us to work, not only accepted but they also listened to us. People opened up a bit and they have changed.

L2 puts emphasis on the independence towards the government, since the people themselves prefer organizations, which are not related to government. Similar to L1, this interviewee points out the change within the society that has facilitated the work of the organizations, particularly when it comes to peculiar conflicts between families. The higher acceptance and respect towards the organizations has given them access to these areas or realms that used to be a taboo zone.

7.2 *Foreign NGOs*

F1 deals with a topic that has not received as much attention as women's rights. Until, children have not been given their rights, as stated in the United Nations' Child Convention. F1 is fighting against child labour and working children, but this work includes conflicts that are very manifest within the society. As a result, the organization is neither very known nor is it very popular amongst the people. The increase in poverty forces young people to work on the streets. F1 provides a shelter for these children, where they can spend time, do their homework or just take a break from the streets. The interviewee describes the situation:

At least the kids have a safe place. There are a lot of shop keepers who tried to abuse kids sexually, we know this.....and, you know, the centre has a role in warning the kids, equipping them to be aware of the dangers and to tell them to be aware of their rights. But there is not much we can do here really, because there is no system that can protect children from abuse. Then again, we can't publicize it because it's very sensitive. But we know that more and more kids feel safe enough to talk about it.

The interviewee shows that they have managed to gain their client's trust. Even though response from the society and the public is hardly given, they feel that their work is fulfilling their goal to help and support children. Many young men, who had been working in the streets and visited F1 regularly, are now in higher positions and have good jobs.

F2 aims at involving the society into their work as much as possible and in keeping with this line they have funded a new local NGO. One of the main pillars of the connection between society and the organizations is dialogue. F2 is keen on maintaining direct communication with the people, so the organization remains open for those who are interested or who have something to deposit. Furthermore, they try to work with people who are politically active in the society, since this keeps the organization up to date with recent events and strengthens the connection to the society:

I think our team here is special, in the sense that as much as there are F2-employees, there are also active members of the community. Sometimes it's a bit difficult, like in one situation, where the organization gets involved because one person is political. But then again, we keep the person because the person is political.

F2 has come into severe conflict with the government and party-political forces, because the latter threatened a member of the organization due to the engagement in internal political affairs. The organization however, made and still makes an effort for their employees and stands behind them. As an organization they also see their assignment in raising awareness to shortcomings and trying to help the people to voice their needs:

Obviously, we as facilitators, we can encourage our partners to engage in some relationship with the powerful. We play a different role there, for example we report to the government to show what is happening.

Similar to the other organizations, the interviewee also sees the role of the organization as mediators between society and government. Interestingly, F2 is the only organization that supports people to make their own steps, to overcome the fear and to deal with the government on its own, always backed-up by the organization. This shift of attention may be a result of the reflection process that the organization has gone through, whereby the focus now lies on the emancipation of the people.

7.3 *Party-affiliated NGOs*

P1 also sees a shift in the society. The interviewee, like the previous ones, highlights the opening-up of the society:

I think that there is a big change, compared to ten years ago. If you ask somebody about violence, you would get the answer that there is violence. I'm not saying that there is no violence but unfortunately our media tend to make things very big, sometimes bigger than they are. I think, that there used to be more honour killings or forced marriages, but nobody talked about it. Nowadays, it's less but the people talk about it. Now people dare to talk about it.

This passage contains several points, which are crucial to understand the organization's point of view towards societal change. Firstly, the interviewee states that in the course of time, people have changed. This change has already been discussed, but basically the society has become more open-minded and more aware of the problems it has. This shift has made the organization's work easier because people do not regard these organizations as a threat but rather as a support. Secondly, the interviewee appreciates that nowadays people have overcome their fear and dare to talk about issues that have been previously a taboo. Thirdly, the interviewee, who is, up to now, the only one who refers to the role of the media that is being criticized. The media is one of the main channels to convey happenings within the society and to show social evils. As such, cases of honour killings, forced marriages or self-burnings are reported on. The opening-up of the society led to a paradigm shift, which does not allow these social phenomena, therefore the media keeps on reporting on it in order to scandalize it. The interviewee, however, contradicts their own words by claiming that the media is exaggerating. Although the interviewee welcomes the fact that people now dare to talk, the person regards the constant reporting on these issues as inappropriate, mainly because that way, the impression is given that the numbers are still very high which again would lead to a bad reputation of Kurdistan. The interviewee neglects the fact that the openness of the media is intertwined with the openness of the society, which means that both factors influence each other and go hand in hand. The attitude can be subject of discussion, as through this way the organization helps to hide the social reality of the people.

Contrary to P1, P2 admits that all the work that has been done is still not enough. The interviewee sees many reasons for it, amongst others the failure of the Kurdish government. Within the society however, the position seems to be clear:

People come to us if they want to start a project. We can give them advice.
We are sort of a bridge between the people and the government.

Like the other organizations, F2 repeats that they are acting as a bridge between the government and the people. As such, they perceive themselves as mediators, like the other interviewed organizations.

At this point it is worth mentioning that the party-affiliated organizations have the largest impact on the population, despite their unpopularity amongst the people. The immense financial support enables them to be visible: both organizations can afford to have big office-buildings that are very eye-catching. Moreover, both of them use their special resources for recreation facilities for the people, such as a sports-area for young people or an indoor swimming pool for women. As such, these organizations reach more people despite restrictive membership conditions.

Furthermore both of the organizations have their own media and are well equipped in terms of public relations. They have informative websites and more importantly, they have journals and newspapers that are published regularly. This access to their own media is helpful in creating opinions and spreading their attitudes.

Finally, the party-affiliated organizations are the main contact partners for the government when it comes to legislation issues. It is true that other organizations also have a saying but the party-affiliated ones are the ones who are listened to. As a result, they have an important role on the governmental level.

These points show that party-affiliated organizations, despite the important criticism that is put forward, co-opt the people's needs and the NGO's issues and demands in order to adapt those adequately to the government's agenda. As such, the government and the party-affiliated organizations rely on each other and support each other in their concerns.

7.4 Discussion

As mentioned in the history chapter, Kurdish society was divided across a line that determined the realm of the two big Kurdish parties. With the establishment of neutral organizations, most of them NGOS, the society had now a third player in the arena that acted beyond party membership. Hence, these organizations had a high position within the society. Backed-up by foreign institutions, these organizations had the advantage of being equipped with the necessary goods as well as knowledge in order to support the people. As a result, the organizations gained the people's trust whereby many factors have played a role in opening up the society. Especially after the war in 2003, many Kurdish families returned from exile and brought a different lifestyle and a different mindset. People now have access to new media, particularly to the Internet, which facilitates communication with people abroad as well as provides profound knowledge on relevant issues.

Another common standpoint is that NGOs are mediators between government and society. All the above-mentioned organizations see themselves as a bridge between these two main actors, since many need these organizations to voice people's needs. While some claim that it is the people who actually want independent organizations, others do not even touch the point of dependency-structures. However, all of the organizations consider themselves successful because they have managed to gain the people's trust and therefore could expand their range of work.

In this chapter another dependency structure can be found. The third line of dependency can be drawn between the society and NGOs. An interesting point that became evident in the course of the interviews is that the society is dependent on the NGOs in many different ways. On the one hand, NGOs are lucrative employers. The history chapter mentions that UN-related organizations have manifested the image of non-governmental organizations in this region, fostering the picture of rich NGOs that enable a prestigious lifestyle, which again attracted many people to work in these organizations. Nowadays, NGOs make up the third largest employer in Iraqi-Kurdistan.

Moreover, many organizations claim to be the people's speaking tube and represent them vis-à-vis the government. The described reactions show that the NGOs consider themselves as delegates of the people who are in charge of speaking up for the

population. This constellation questions the political system, which is in its essence a parliamentary one, implying that the representatives of the people are supposed to be elected by the people during elections and voice their needs as members of parliament. However, in that case the people feel more connected to the NGOs than to the MPs. Reasons for this development lie in the fragile situation of the Kurdish parliament, that is marked by nepotism and fraud on the one hand and in the fact that NGOs have taken over tasks and duties that should be state-run but have been neglected so far. What is more is that NGOs hardly ask the government to nationalize the projects, which means that the organizations seek to continue working in their field of work and thus contribute to maintaining the status quo. Nationalizing these projects would have a broader impact in the whole region, thus making the government more aware to the issues and holding it accountable to the people.

White's third way ascribes civil society the role of mediators that transmit the demands of the population to the government and vice versa four ways. Civil Societal actors should act as mediators between the society and the government by ensuring that communication and bargaining take place. Many of the interviewees claim to be the bridge between society and government through making aware of the people's discontentment in order to transmit their demands to the government. However, this communication line works only one-way: the people's demands and needs are brought to the government but the result remains untold, which means that the people do not perceive the bargaining and communication that is supposed to take place. It is evident that these organizations are used as a speaking tube for the people but the speaking tube works only one-way, meaning that the people are not aware of the procedures that are pertinent to their concerns. As such, the role of mediator works for the society in terms of making use of the organizations but it does not ameliorate the communication for the government because the information is not conveyed back to the people.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Summary

A process of democratization started in Iraqi-Kurdistan in the beginning of the 1990s with the establishment of the safe haven in 1991. The inauguration of the Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA) in 1992 was a milestone in Kurdish History, the outbreak of the civil war, however, hindered its progress. This civil war, which was predominantly a war between the two political parties KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party) and PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan), overshadowed all efforts and attempts to bring peace to this region, and dividing it instead. After the end of the civil war in 1998, the safe haven was separated into two areas: the Western part of Iraqi-Kurdistan remained under KDP-rule, the Eastern part under PUK-rule. This division of power resulted in a division of administration as well as a division of population. As a result, the people were divided according to their party-affiliation.

After the US-led war in 2003 a shift in policies can be observed. The two Kurdish parties started to approach each other slowly but surely, reaching its peak in the nationwide elections in 2005, where KDP and PUK united to form an alliance in order to strengthen the position of the Kurds in the Iraqi National Assembly. This alliance also paved the way for the re-establishment of the KNA that has been working ever since.

An interesting break to this unification was the emergence of the party “Gorran” that was the result of a split in the PUK in 2009. Led by one of the most prominent PUK frontmen, “Gorran” – the Kurdish word for change – caused outrage amongst the politicians and great expectations amongst the people. The KDP-PUK led Regional Government (KRG) was and still is confronted with a high level of discontentment among the people, since the alliance of the two big parties had led to standstill and denied all kinds of counter-movements, in order to maintain one Kurdish force. Therefore, many regard the “Gorran” movement as an escape from this paralyzed situation and see it as a way to express criticism. The government is criticized for their

corruption and the lack of transparency in the decision-making processes as well as for the on-going nepotism.

Changes occurred not only in the political sphere, but also within the society. Many Kurds, who had been living in exile all over Europe and the United States, have returned to Kurdistan. These Kurds, who had been living abroad for over a decade, made use of the experience they had gained and their language skills so far and attracted many business partners from abroad which contributed to new economic openings. Apart from the economic openings, many non-governmental organizations (NGO) started to work in this region. Even though some of these organizations had already worked there after 1991, many had left Kurdistan after the outbreak of the civil war and returned after the fall of the Baath regime in 2003. As such, business partners and international non-governmental organizations have led to a big expatriate community in Kurdistan.

New technologies have also entered the region. While it was hard to get access to the Internet in the year 2006, by the year 2009, many households had their own Internet connection. The access to the new media enabled the people to receive information from all over the world and decreased the dependency on the prevalent Kurdish media.

As already mentioned, NGOs have been stationed in Iraqi-Kurdistan for twenty years. While many of them engaged in emergency help after the war in 1991, they shifted their attention to the reconstruction and development of this region after the civil war and especially after 2003. Hence, many NGOs started to enact human rights projects, especially regarding the promotion of women's rights. These projects included health and education centres for women as well as awareness raising campaigns that tackled peculiar issues such as honour killings or female genital mutilation (FGM). The main actors in the 1990s were international organizations whereas nowadays three groups of non-governmental organizations can be identified: Firstly, there are big, international organizations, whose head-office is situated outside of Iraqi-Kurdistan, mainly in European or American countries. These organizations are marked by the fact that they act in different countries and receive funding from their home government and other big supranational organizations such as the United Nations.

Secondly, there are local organizations that originated from international organizations but are led by local people. They receive their funding mainly from their mother organization as well as other big organizations and are stationed in one region only. These organizations often follow the mother organization's agenda and continue these projects. Thirdly, one finds local but party-affiliated organizations that are also run by locals but show a close link with the governmental level, which is evident when regarding their agenda setting. Their main donor is the KRG, and depending on which region they work in, one specific party.

7.2 Results of the Research

The discussion of this paper shows that a thorough analysis of these NGOs has to be done on two levels. On the one hand, the scrutiny of the role of civil society in democratization implies to have a look at the relationship between civil society and the state apparatus or the government. As such, the applied concept of Gordon White provides four points that can be taken into consideration in order to embed the case study into a theoretical framework, which acts as a guideline for the analysis. On the other hand, the empirical work shows that it is difficult to deal with the first level without having a closer look at the sphere of civil society itself. Even though the frame of this research was delimited by choosing only one part of civil society, namely non-governmental organizations, many internal mechanisms have crystallized. In order to understand the relationship between civil society and the government, it is necessary to understand certain mechanisms within civil society itself. However, the conclusion will first tackle the level of democratization, thereby again referring to White's theory. In a second step the light will be shed on the sphere of the organizations.

Generally it can be said that all of the suggested four ways are fulfilled in one way or the other, meaning that the activities do exert influence on the government and hence spur the democratization process:

The first way suggests that civil society can act as a balanced opposition, in the sense of a counter-power towards the government. The NGOs fulfil this criteria to a certain extend, namely by bringing up issues that have not yet been dealt with. They also put pressure on the government to make it deal with these issues. One of the successes of

this process is the law against domestic violence against women, which was the result of the efforts that were meant to abolish FGM. Since the draft against FGM did not gain the majority of the votes, it has been changed into the law against domestic violence and FGM makes up one passage of the law and is therefore punishable.

The second way ascribes civil society a disciplinary role that ought to set moral standards for the government. By promoting and monitoring human rights issues, the organizations managed to bring these matters to the governmental level. The awareness-raising campaigns broke taboos and made the public as well as the government conscious of the social evils that are prevalent in the society.

The third way sees civil society as a bridge and mediator between society and government. The interviews show that all of the organizations fulfil this requirement and transmit the people's needs to the government. The organizations consider themselves to be the speaking tube for the people and thus feel committed to voice the people's concerns.

The fourth way proposes to give civil society a constitutive role, in terms of establishing a set of rules and norms to hold the government accountable. This fourth way is in the beginning phase and can only be implemented slowly. Only one of the interviewed organizations has a document that defines a code of conduct in order to ameliorate the working atmosphere between the organization and the government. However, due to internal differences the NGO sphere is not strong enough yet to internalise this role.

These internal controversies leave many questions open in regards to the work done by the non-governmental organizations. Two main points can be summarized and picked out after the data analysis. First, one of the main elements of the interviews was the term 'dependency' that seemed to be a relevant discussion point for all of the organizations.

The organizations define dependency as a strong connection to the government that is based on financial terms. According to the interviewees, the financial support of the government is equivalent to the co-option of the organization, which again makes it dependent on the government also in terms of content. This means that the government actually interferes in the work. However, this seems to be a very narrow definition, since other dependency structures are being neglected. Apart from the dependency between government and organization, another dependency line occurs, namely the one

between the donor and the NGO. Projects of non-governmental organizations are donor-driven, meaning that the projects are designed according to the demanded requirements, which are set by the donor. As such, the organization only receives the money if these criteria are fulfilled.

Moreover, there is a strong dependency between international and local NGOs. Most of the local NGOs have emerged from international ones, which are still the main donors of these local organizations. The local organizations need an international back-up vis-à-vis the government in order to be taken seriously. I consider this dependency structure rather peculiar as the one between the government and NGOs. The effect on these two relationships is the same, the only difference is that the government is regarded as the evil counter-part. However, if the local NGOs want to be recognized and acknowledged by the government or any other stakeholder, it is important for them to emancipate themselves from the mother organization and show that they can work on their own.

The third line of dependency can be drawn between the organizations and the people. NGOs make up the only institutions that provide a system similar to a social system, including women's shelters, health centres as well as education centres for women and children. This leads to a dependency of the people vis-à-vis the NGOs, because the state does not interfere in these matters. As a result, the people, especially women and children, do not have an appropriate place to go, if these organizations are gone.

This development is a major problem in all of this NGO-business. None of the organizations has tried to convince the state to nationalize the projects in order to make the state tackle social issues. These organizations have led and conducted the projects for a long period of time, resulting in the fact that everyone, the people as well as the government, have become used to this situation and rely on these organizations to solve these issues. However, the point of non-governmental organizations is that they help out and support reconstruction, especially in the beginning, in order to get things started but it is pointless to overtake tasks that actually lie in the responsibility of the state. As long as these projects are conducted through NGOs, these organizations support to maintain the status quo instead of actually changing the situation, because the political system is not challenged; on the contrary it is tolerated by making place for themselves and their projects within this system and supporting the government in keeping their hands away from these matters.

The second main point of that can be identified after the analysis of the data is the importance of communication. The lack of communication can be identified all over the NGO sphere. Many organizations claim that communication with the government is very challenging because things often do not work out the way that had been agreed upon. In my opinion, this is rooted in the phenomenon that the government is used to and therefore relies too much on the organization's skills and know-how. Similar to the matter on social issues, the impression is given that the government leans back while the organizations are supposed to work but at the same time the NGOs do not show any signs of objection.

Furthermore, there is hardly any communication between the NGOs themselves. The interviews show clearly that many misconceptions occur as a result of this non-communication. The numerous NGOs all work in the same field, resulting in a race for financial resources instead of solving problems or improving the conditions. As such, organizations tend to avoid each other and compete with each other rather than cooperate. The result is that one can find various NGOs which all work on the same matter and try to tackle the same problem but without supporting each other. On the contrary, these organizations deny the existence of each other or find reasons why cooperation is impossible, leading to the fact that the same projects are conducted in the same region to the same people simultaneously. This working manner seriously questions the quality as well as the actual aims of the projects and the organizations. Interestingly enough, no organization has referred to a long-term goal or any kind of ideological agenda setting, which again poses the question why these organizations have started to work there in the first place.

7.3 Future Prospects

An analysis of the realm of NGOs shows that the work of these organizations is indispensable for a fragile region like Iraqi-Kurdistan. However, when it comes to democratizing a country, it is evident that these organizations play a role in spurring the process in the beginning of the process and in hindering it the longer they stay there. In the beginning of the democratization process or the reconstruction of the region, these organizations were needed to provide the people with necessary products. Emergency help is necessary and vital, especially when the land is devastated. However, this help or support should be short-term. As we can see, the longer these NGOs stay in one region, the more likely it is that they find another issue they can tackle in order to stay in this region. However, the state has to learn to take over the responsibility and it will not do so until the other organizations leave.

Furthermore, the number of NGOs, especially international ones, is actually increasing. Various organizations from all over the world, but especially from Europe and the US, have started projects that do not contribute to any improvement or change of the system. Many of them work with prevalent mind-sets and ideas and foster these through their projects, instead of enhancing a shift in the public opinion as well as in the manner the government deals with socio-political issues. In order to avoid a vicious circle it is important to put the projects in the specific Iraqi-Kurdish context, considering the history, the socio-political conditions as well as the current events. Otherwise the NGOs only treat the symptoms instead of digging deeper and healing the illness.

Moreover, all of the NGOs need a thorough reflection process where they re-think their *raison d'être* and figure out whether the strategies chosen are appropriate and especially, whether they are still needed. Up until now, NGOs have been political actors in the first place, acting on a political and thus elitist level. However, what is needed now is a social development in terms of including the people into this socio-political net.

In the long run, the goal should be to have a state or a government that leads the programmes and projects that are currently run by NGOs, since solving social issues is not the duty of non-governmental based institutions, but a major responsibility and duty of the government for their own people.

At the end of the day, it is about reconstructing a country and this again concerns not only the government but also – and foremost – the people, therefore there should be a common interest and a commitment from all relevant actors, most importantly the people, to carry responsibility for the development and progress of the region.

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9 Appendix

9.1 *Abstract English*

This paper examines the ambiguous role of civil society in Iraqi-Kurdistan and shows, that organizations, which root in the society, can influence the process of democratization in many different ways, they can either spur or hinder a democratic system. Evidently, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can act as a mouthpiece for the people's needs and can be the consequence of discontentment with political decisions. Conversely, they can play a significant role in maintaining the prevalent system.

A process of democratization has started in Iraqi-Kurdistan already in the beginning of the 1990s with the establishment of the safe haven in 1991. The inauguration of the Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA) in 1992 was a milestone in Kurdish history, the outbreak of the civil war in the same year, however, hindered its progress. Non-governmental organizations have been working in Iraqi-Kurdistan since 1991 and have influenced the civil society sphere in Iraqi Kurdistan, because their presence has encouraged local people to establish their own associations and organizations.

After the war in 2003, many non-governmental organizations enacted human rights projects, especially concerning the promotion of women's rights. The main actors in the 1990s were international organizations, whereas nowadays three groups of non-governmental organizations can be identified: international NGOs, local NGOs and local-party-affiliated NGOs.

In order to conduct a research on these types of organizations, I carried out a field study by making semi-structured interviews with six renowned NGOs.

In the course of the research many internal mechanisms have crystallized, which are crucial for understanding the relationship between civil society and the political level. Moreover, this paper outlines the differences between each organization and the divergent approaches regarding the aims of NGOs. One of the main findings is the existence of strong dependencies between stakeholders, such as the government, the people, donors and NGOs themselves. These dependencies have very different reasons: Thus, a non-governmental organization is not only dependent on the financial support of

the donor, but also has to rely on the government's goodwill to give working permissions. Finally, a NGO is equally dependent on people's continuing needs and concerns, which in the end legitimise the organization's agenda. Furthermore, a lack of communication between NGOs has become evident in my research, which hampers opportunities for possible cooperations that would support and foster the carried out projects. This non-communication is also a sign of the rivalry between NGOs; internal fights on resources often hinder an efficient implementation of projects, finally leading to a failure of their work. It would be reasonable for these organizations to reflect upon the quality of their work and figure out more appropriate strategies.

9.2 Abstract Deutsch

Die vorliegende Arbeit setzt sich mit der Rolle von Nicht-Regierungsorganisationen (NGOs) auseinander und beleuchtet ihren Einfluss auf den Demokratisierungsprozess in Irakisch-Kurdistan. Während NGOs als Sprechorgan für der Bevölkerung gesehen werden, können sie gleichzeitig ein bereits vorhandenes System aufrecht erhalten und so einen Fortschritt bzw. ein Systemwandel unterbinden.

Seit dem Ausbruch des Golfkriegs 1991 und der Errichtung der Schutzzone im Norden des Landes, hat ein Demokratisierungsprozess begonnen, das die Region Irakisch-Kurdistan beeinflusst. Viele internationale Organisationen leisten nach dem Krieg Nothilfe und unterstützen den Wiederaufbauprozess. Seither beginnen immer mehr NGOs in Kurdistan Fuß zu fassen und dort Projekte zu implementieren. Einen Boom an NGOs gibt es vor allem nach dem Krieg 2003, da mit dem Sturz des Saddam-Regimes eine Öffnung der Grenzen einhergeht. Somit dürfen NGOs legal im restlichen Irak – nicht nur wie bis dahin in der kurdischen Region – arbeiten. Diese NGOs setzen den Schwerpunkt ihrer Arbeit auf die Förderung von Menschenrechten, insbesondere Frauenrechten. Die Anwesenheit von internationalen NGOs übt einen starken Einfluss auf die Zivilgesellschaft vor Ort aus, weshalb sich im Laufe der Jahre immer mehr lokale Organisationen gegründet haben. Während also in den 1990ern internationale Organisationen eine große Rolle spielen, sind es mittlerweile drei Gruppen von Organisationen, nämlich internationale, lokale und lokale – aber parteinahe Organisationen.

Um den Einfluss dieser drei Gruppen erheben zu können, wurde eine Feldforschung durchgeführt, die auf problemfokussierten Interviews mit NGOs aus diesen drei Gruppen basiert.

Im Zuge der Analyse haben sich verschiedene Mechanismen herauskristallisiert, die das Verhältnis von Zivilgesellschaft und Politischer Gesellschaft erklären. Vor allem aber zeigt diese Arbeit die Unterschiede zwischen den Organisationen auf. So werden Abhängigkeitslinien beleuchtet, die zwischen allen wichtigen Akteuren, nämlich den Regierungen, den Organisationen und der Bevölkerung, gezogen werden können. Des Weiteren wird die starke Rivalität zwischen den Organisationen sichtbar, die um

Resourcen kämpfen. Diese wird vor allem in der mangelnden Kommunikation verdeutlicht, die jegliche Art von Zusammenarbeit verhindert und somit die Position der Nicht-Regierungsorganisationen gegenüber der Regierung schwächt. Das heißt, dass diese interne Dynamiken innerhalb der Zivilgesellschaft zunächst erfasst werden müssen, bevor eine Untersuchung der Beziehung zwischen Zivilgesellschaft und Politischer Gesellschaft stattfinden kann.

9.3 Curriculum Vitae

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