

The Failure of Democracy in Iraq

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Bachelors Thesis 15 Hp
Political Science | spring 2017
Word count: 11759



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Abstract

Subject: Bachelor Thesis in Political Science

Title: The Failure of Democracy in Iraq- A case study of the reasons behind the failure of democracy in Iraq from 2003 until present.

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The motivation of the bachelor thesis is to provide an understanding of democracy in Iraq from 2003 until present. After the fall of Saddam's regime, there have been general elections but there is still an unstable democracy in Iraq. What are the reasons behind the failure of democracy in Iraq? Of course, there are many reasons behind this but my choice is to focus on three specific ones. How do these three variables that I have chosen, affect the possibility of democracy in Iraq? These two questions will be answered in this bachelor thesis, using Path Dependence Theory and Dahl's Polyarchy Model and its Criteria that help to analyze and answer the research questions. Iraq has many major problems but the three I have focused on are ethnic and religious divides between Shia and Sunni, the violent environment and the presence of terrorist groups.

Keywords:

Democracy, Dahl's Criteria, Iraq, Path Dependence, U.S- Invasion

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1. Introduction

The reason behind writing this thesis is because I want to examine whether the optimistic view of considering Iraq's future as a state of democracy, is valid or not. The situation is complicated to be dealt with since the U.S invasion in 2003. The problematic circumstances that emerged as democracy was being enforced, led to an uncontrollable situation of kidnapping, killing and bombing people.

Another obstacle for democracy is that Iraq contains unequal amounts of different groups. Sunni Arabs constitute (and have done in modern history) to less than 20 percent of the population, while Shi'a Arabs amount to 60 percent. Therefore, traditional religious divides continue and an added division of Iraq into Sunni and Shi'a zones is probable¹. Moreover, America's first weeks of postwar engagement in Iraq were tumultuous and unsuccessful since most of the infrastructure of the state was systematically sabotaged, looted and destroyed while American troops stood by. The first and most basic imperative after conflict i.e. restoring order, and establishing, through its Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), effective political authority, were not met. Adding to this, Iraq suffered from huge bitterness over the widespread insecurity in the state- a result of increasing rebellious, terrorist (al-Qaeda and Daesh) and criminal violence².

According to a UNDP report, in 2006 about one third of Iraqis were suffering from deprivation, and in 2004 about two thirds had poor economic status at the household level. 70% of Iraqis' basic needs were not being met in mid-2006, and 80% of Iraqis suffered from a lack of health services and a lack of adequate housing, and 70% of Iraqis were deprived of educational services. In 2006, the estimated death toll in Iraq since the American-led invasion was given by Lancet as 601,027 and in 2008, the World Health Organization estimated the total death toll to be 151,000. At the end of 2006, the number of inter-ethnic attacks was averaging 15 per day, and ethnic cleansing and displacement forced an average of over 100,000 people out of their homes per month.

Because of the mentioned, it is essential to examine how democracy has failed in Iraq and what are the reasons behind its failure. Previous research on democracy in Iraq set a theoretical assumption that democracy in Iraq failed because of several

¹Anderson, Liam D. & Stansfield, Gareth R. V., *The future of Iraq: dictatorship, democracy, or division?*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, N.Y., 2004. P. 11.

²Diamond, Larry (2005) *Lessons From Iraq*. Journal of Democracy Volume 16, Number 1.9-23.P. 13

reasons. Therefore, I will employ a case study to understand why democracy in Iraq was ineffective. By doing so, the thesis will represent analytical frameworks that will analyze three different factors: ethnic and religious divides, violent environment and finally the presence of terrorist groups. The case study will focus on how these three variables have an impact on the failure of democracy in Iraq.

1.1. Research Problem

The political science research problem that will be studied and identified is the concept of democracy in Iraq. Democracy in Iraq as a topic is interesting to investigate in political science due to the fact that Iraq has been through various types of conflicts, invasions and wars. The provisional government that exists in today's Iraq has difficulties showing stability when it comes to democratic principles in the country. Therefore, the puzzle that is going to be solved is to find reasons behind the failure of democracy in Iraq. This provides the motivation for the subject of this thesis.

The topic has both social and political relevance because the aim is to acquire knowledge about how democracy works in Iraq and what type of requirements that the concept of democracy should have in order to be developed. However, the problem must always be transformed into a clear research problem in the thesis. Therefore, the research question put forth based on the problem will be discussed in below title "Purpose and Research Question".

1.2. Purpose and Research Question

This study is based on an empirical research question which is required in order to analyze the problem, from how it is, rather than how it is supposed to be. To clarify the reality of democracy in Iraq will be close to impossible, that is why the challenge is to reach results that are objective. By doing so, I have preferred articles written by different scholars with different backgrounds and compared their empirical results.

The aim of the study, with the help of selected theories, is to study, understand and examine whether there are reasons behind the failure of democracy within a specific country (Iraq). Moreover, the issue of ineffectiveness of democracy in Iraq is not unique and shares common characteristics with several states in the area that are post-conflict. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the failure of democracy in Iraq

by analyzing the reasons behind it, taking the year 2003 as the launching point. 2003 witnessed the start of a chain of huge events when it comes to the history of Iraq. The first event was the decision, made by the United States, to wage war on the country on 19th of March, 2003. The second event was the collapse of Saddam's regime on 9th of April, 2003. As a consequence, Iraq now found itself under US as well as UK occupation.

The bachelor thesis seeks to discover the different reasons behind the failure of democracy in Iraq that may depend on the new democratic system in the country, weaknesses of democracy and its interpretation, political institutions and elections in Iraq. I believe problems surrounding this issue have had a negative effect when it comes to the well-being of Iraqi society. However, the aim is not to reach a widespread theory, the aim is to study democracy in Iraq at an advanced level of analysis. The ambition is to show a general model of how democracy works in Iraq today were Religious and Ethnic Divides, Violent Environment, The Presence of Terrorist Groups are strong and how these influence the success of democracy in the country.

The research questions this thesis is looking to answer are the following:

- What are the reasons behind the failure of democracy in Iraq?

- How do the three variables that I have chosen affect the possibility of democracy in Iraq?

Based on the answers of above questions, the study will arrive at a conclusion of the factors that play an important role in influencing Iraq to build a functioning nation that can develop into a democracy. In order to ensure focus on my specific area (The Failure of Democracy in Iraq) I will concentrate solely on above reasons. Of course, there are several other reasons that are related to the failure of democracy in Iraq but they are excluded in terms of time and thesis constraints.

I have also chosen to use Dahl's Polyarchy Model in order to measure democracy. I will go into more detail on this further along in this thesis. With elections playing a key part in democracy I have focused on two important elections that are essential to understanding democracy in Iraq.

2. Background

2.1. Situation in Iraq Since 2003

Iraq was one of the world's most progressive, wealthy and modern countries and the first model of democracy in the Middle East in modern history. The country is considered as one of the richest countries in the world with oil resources and many other raw materials. This is due to its location in the Arabian Gulf, being one of the main transportation harbors, from which oil and other goods from the Middle East are transported to the Western world and vice versa.

Iraq has fallen into such decay, that its very existence as a viable state, is now questioned. It is the political and economic transformations influenced by both internal and external factors that have created deep fissures in Iraqi society. The current lack of security, the ongoing unsettled political situation and the question regarding Iraq being a democracy or not, makes writing about it challenging for any writer.

The reasons that were presented for the U.S and its allies waging war on Iraq were: weapons of mass destruction, connections to the terrorist group al Qaeda and ending the regime of Saddam Hussein to establish democracy in Iraq and eventually in the rest of the Middle East. But David Ghanim argues in his book that those motivations can be described as false at the time, yet they could have become a reality in Saddam's Iraq at any time in the future. However, the war in Iraq does not have democracy as a direct objective because democracy and war differ and contradict each other. In other words, democracy and war are two concepts that do not go well together. Ghanim claims it is apparent, that the war in Iraq is due to reshuffling governance within the dominant authoritarian order instead of having democracy in Iraq. If the country was previously based on violent authoritarian policies, that fact remains in the current Iraq³.

Scholars argue that the invasion created a chaotic situation and the country suffered from lawlessness, looting and armed insurrection. This is key to the central part that the bachelor thesis will investigate (democracy in Iraq from 2003). The situation in this country is/ has been unstable and unsecure since the American

³ Ghanim, David., *Iraq's dysfunctional democracy*, Praeger, Santa Barbara, Calif., 2011. P.3

invasion and occupation of the country in 2003. Policy makers in both the US and Britain were aiming at regime change as well as implementing the concept of democracy in the country. However, the regime has totally collapsed and the US has failed in implementing democracy and giving freedom to the Iraqi people. This has led to a tragic scenario in which the country has suffered from lawlessness, looting and armed insurrection since 2003. In other words, what was and still is going on in Iraq can influence many lives both inside and outside the state.

2.2. Definition of Democracy

It is frequently assumed that the idea of democracy is universally popular nowadays. Some scholars argue the fact that the concept of democracy is broad and can be described with several interpretations that differ from each other “ *a term that means anything means nothing*”. But what does it mean by democracy? Greeks started to practice the word ‘demokratia’ and the root of this term is not difficult. Demos means people and kratia means rule or authority, thus “rule by people”. On the other hand, it is important to mention that a significant reason for the confusion over the meaning of democracy in our current world, is that the term has progressed over several thousands years and is still in progress and stems from a diversity of resources ⁴.

Scholars further motivate that democracy is a system of government where people have the right to select their leaders and replace them in systematic, fair and free elections. They argue the fact that democracy can be structured in several ways however; a central part of any democracy is the right to protect minorities and persons. Those persons are supposed to be free to think, write, organize, speak, and assemble the government no matter their religion and culture. Successful democracy may consist of a culture of tolerance, compromise, negotiation and restraint. It is argued that the population is not only supposed to practice their rights as well as, respect the rights of others ⁵.

It is further highlighted that the notion of the concept of democracy has always provided an arena for critics that are based on three types:

“Those fundamentally opposed to democracy because, like Plato, they believe that while it may be possible it is inherently undesirable; those fundamentally opposed to

⁴ Dahl, Robert A., Democracy and its critics, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, 1989.P. 2

⁵ Dahl, Robert A., Democracy and its critics, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, 1989.P.106

*democracy because, like Robert Michels, they believe that, while it might be desirable if it were possible, in actuality it is inherently impossible; and those sympathetic to democracy and wishing to maintain it but nonetheless critical of it in some important regard. The first two might be called adversarial critics, the third sympathetic critics”*⁶.

2.3. Democracy in Iraq

Many Iraqis agree on one fact when it comes to the concept of democracy and that is to see democracy as a long-term goal. The Iraqi people understand that the commitment will require patience and a long time for the change of their mind-set, because of the thirty-five years when they had been taught to listen and obey unquestioningly to authority⁷.

Adam Garfinkle, for example, argues in an article called (democracy in Iraq) the idea that the attempt of building democracy in the Arab world would not only fail but would even cause anti-Americanism⁸. The article tackles critics that shed light on five related objections in terms of establishing a democratic Iraq and they are shortly the following: Firstly, Iraq is not ready for democracy. Secondly, Iraqi society is too fragmented for democracy even if the country had elections and other elements of democracy. Thirdly, such systems may lead to liberal outcome for example, a tyranny of the Shia majority. Fourth, the transition to democracy in the country would lead to a weak government and a federal form of democracy would fail. Finally, the country would witness a vision of an Iraq that is based on civil strife and rival communities that tend to revenge each other where neighboring countries and their armies enter and trample on the country. Implementing democracy in Iraq would not be an easy, straightforward and certain task⁹. Furthermore, it is argued that the task requires a long time as well as long-term U.S commitment.

Iraq up until the U.S invasion in 2003, was ruled by the armed forces (Republican Guard) led by Saddam, that had the power to govern the state. The

⁶ Dahl, Robert A., *Democracy and its critics*, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, 1989.P.2

⁷ Dawisha, Adeed (2005) *The Prospects for Democracy in Iraq: challenges and opportunities*, *Third World Quarterly*, 26:4-5, 723-737. P.724

⁸ Byman, Daniel L. &Pollack, Kenneth M. *Democracy in Iraq?* *The Washington Quarterly* 26:3,119-136. P. 119

⁹ Byman, Daniel L. &Pollack, Kenneth M. *Democracy in Iraq?* *The Washington Quarterly* 26:3,119-136. P. 120

Republican Guard lost the power, became decimated and fragmented as soon as the military offensive of U.S invaded the country. Before Saddam's regime, Iraq consisted of several groups such as religious, military, municipal, tribal, and merchant leaders. The groups that now remain are the Sunni tribes, religious figures as well as the Shi'ite militias. These groups are political pygmies and do not have the independent power to dominate the country. Moreover, approximately, 75 % of the Iraqi citizens are urban which means that they do not prefer to be represented by unsophisticated, Sheikhs who lack the political and social knowledge when it comes to the style of life in Iraq. So, scholars ask the following question: "*who would represent the urban lower and middle classes that constitute the bulk of Iraq's population?*"¹⁰.

The article discusses the idea that Iraq needs a democratic process that enables new leaders to emerge and those leaders have to be selected from the Iraqi population. Otherwise, the Iraqi majority would be left with the absence of a voice. A newborn Iraqi democracy would start with weaknesses and the new government would need a long time to flourish, gain the trust of the Iraqi people and have the ability to address order¹¹.

Scholars believe in the fact that democracy would prepare a solution for one of the most important issues in Iraq, which is the reconciling of ethnic and religious groups. They argue that democracy would prepare political mechanisms that could help in handling divisions by peace rather than force. Democracy would provide a legitimate Iraqi government that aims at working for all the Iraqis. In this case, it would be the first time in the history of Iraq in which the government would serve in terms of democracy¹².

On the other hand, failing in implementing democracy in Iraq should be taken into consideration because this would cause "*civil war, massive refugee flows, disastrous, and even renewed interstate fighting would likely resurface to plague this long cursed region*"¹³. If democracy would fail to take its root in Iraq, the U.S would

¹⁰ Byman, Daniel L. &Pollack, Kenneth M. *Democracy in Iraq?* The Washington Quarterly 26:3,119-136. P.121

¹¹ Byman, Daniel L. &Pollack, Kenneth M. *Democracy in Iraq?* The Washington Quarterly 26:3,119-136. P. 119-124

¹² Byman, Daniel L. &Pollack, Kenneth M. *Democracy in Iraq?* The Washington Quarterly 26:3,119-136. P.134

¹³ Ibid

be considered to care little when it comes to Muslims and Arabs. Therefore, they should avoid making a similar mistake as they did in 1991 when the state failed in transforming the government of Iraq¹⁴.

Other scholars were more optimistic in their article, the authors of the article describe that there are several challenges when it comes to the progress of democracy in Iraq and these challenges could be transformed into possibilities with the help of a correct policy¹⁵.

The forcible removal of Saddam's dictatorship was easily achieved and that in turn, gave hope for a successful transformation into democracy. *"The public commitment of the US administration to democracy, coupled with the alienation of the majority of Iraqis from Saddam's brutal dictatorship engendered hopes that robust and sustainable democratic structures would be built in post-Saddam Iraq"*¹⁶.

What scholars hoped to see in Iraq is the passing of a liberal constitution including rights for everyone. For example, (women, religious and ethnic minorities) should be guaranteed; elections that are based on fairness and equality; a parliament that has control over government constantly; political parties that represent many choices for the voters etc.¹⁷.

Writers and observers of Arab and Middle East politics tend to focus on the chances for democracy to be transformed in Iraq with pessimism, since the fall of Saddam's regime. They argue that one vital reason for pessimism is the *"lack of liberal and democratic traditions"* in the country as well as its *"historical experiences and political culture"*¹⁸. Another main reason is communal divisions and federalism, which means that Iraqi society is divided into those of Arab against Kurd as well as Sunni versus Shiite. These two gaps make it difficult to understand the social and political unity of the country. The fissure between Sunni and Shiites can be described as a fight between Arab and Arab that absences the intensity of ethnic particularisms¹⁹.

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Dawisha, Adeed (2005) *The Prospects for Democracy in Iraq: challenges and opportunities*, Third World Quarterly, 26:4-5, 723-737

¹⁶ Dawisha, Adeed (2005) *The Prospects for Democracy in Iraq: challenges and opportunities*, Third World Quarterly, 26:4-5, 723-737. P.723.

¹⁷ Dawisha, Adeed (2005) *The Prospects for Democracy in Iraq: challenges and opportunities*, Third World Quarterly, 26:4-5, 723-737. P.724

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Dawisha, Adeed (2005) *The Prospects for Democracy in Iraq: challenges and*

Larry Diamond claimed in his article called “What Went Wrong in Iraq”, that today, Iraq falls increasingly in a way that differs from what the Bush Administration promised (spreading of freedom and democracy to the Iraqis). As an outcome of a long series of U.S miscalculations, the U.S occupation left Iraq in a much worse situation compared to the situation of Iraq before. Therefore, this led to the decrease of democracy in Iraq. The killing of Iraqis, Americans and other foreigners still occurs²⁰.

Mona Damluji mentions in her essay that the sectarian identity appears in Iraq (Baghdad) after the U.S led invasion and occupation. Mona means, in accordance to sectarian identity, one could work and move in limited restrictions that belong or under the control of the same ethnic group. Arguably, this social ethnic factor weakens the formulation of democracy or may weaken the process of democracy²¹.

The previous literature overview is related to the thesis in such way that scholars have contributed to the general understanding of democracy. What differs from the literature overview and this thesis is that while scholars focus on several challenges and opportunities for democracy in a broader comparative context, this thesis will only focus on three reasons that affect the process of democracy in Iraq.

opportunities, Third World Quarterly, 26:4-5, 723-737. P.725.

²⁰ Diamond, Larry (2004) *What Went Wrong in Iraq*. Council on Foreign Relations. Foreign Affairs, Vol. 83, No. 5 (Sep. - Oct., 2004), pp. 34-56. P.34

²¹ Damluji, Mona (2010) "*Securing Democracy in Iraq*": *Sectarian Politics and Segregation in Baghdad, 2003-2007*. International Association for the Study of Traditional Environments (IASTE). Vol. 21, No. 2 (SPRING 2010), pp. 71-87. P.71.

3. Theory

In order to unearth democracy in Iraq, this bachelor thesis must first choose a theoretical framework that maps the democratic principles in order to apply them in the case of Iraq. The study will therefore assess the failures in Iraq's own democracy by applying firstly Path dependence theory and secondly Dahl's polyarchy model.

3.1. Path Dependence Theory

Previous research on path dependence theory demonstrates that the theory has primarily been developed by economics and historians. They have tried to find different reasons for economic stability, or to find changes throughout history. Path dependence theory means that history and historical events play a large part in the future also. Later on, the theory has been developed for social science. *"Pierson (2000b) has suggested that models of 'path dependency' could constitute a rigorous way to show that history matters, and that these models are applicable under conditions that are quite common for a range of political phenomena"*²².

*"Path dependency, in turn, is a specific case of a more general focus on the important 'timing' and 'sequence' in the analysis of politics"*²³.

There is criticism regarding path dependence theory that must be considered in order to use path dependence as a clear framework in political analysis:

*"First, if path-dependent political processes preserve the past in their form, how do we break free from them? If history matters so much, how do we break from it? How does change occur?"*²⁴.

"Second, what exactly is the role of ideas in path dependence (and historical institutionalism)? What is the relationship between ideas and history, and how can

²² Immergut, Ellen M. *Historical-Institutionalism in Political Science and the Problem of Change*. Constellations of Contingency. 2002. P. 242

²³ Immergut, Ellen M. *Historical-Institutionalism in Political Science and the Problem of Change*. Constellations of Contingency. 2002. P. 241

²⁴ Greener, Ian. *The Potential of Path Dependence in Political Studies*. University of York. POLITICS: 2005 VOL 25(1), 62–72. P. 64

they combine to create continuity and resist forces for change in the past?”²⁵.

“Third, how can we characterize the feedback mechanism through which path-dependent processes prevent change? Are they subject to increasing returns and positive feedback mechanisms (Arrow, 2000; Arthur, 1990; Pierson, 2000a) or can we include negative feedback mechanisms as well (Mahoney, 2000)? If we include both kinds of feedback mechanisms, are we at risk of losing the distinctiveness of path dependence as a concept (Schwartz, 2003), so reducing its use to a loose metaphor rather than a clearly defined framework for analysis?”²⁶.

“Finally, Pierson, one of the most significant writers on path dependence,, has commented that the diversity of studies now being published under its name risks ‘concept stretching’ (Pierson, 2000a, p. 252) occurring, and the risk of it becoming meaningless”²⁷.

Raghu Garud and Peter Karnøe describe the theory as a chaos theory, where some events create a kind of chain reaction, which ultimately becomes a decisive factor for a future change. Garud and Karnøe divide this theory into path dependence and path creation²⁸.

When conducting a bachelor thesis such as this, there is no complete answer and it is not my ambition to find a solution for democracy being successful in Iraq in the future. First is the fact that the situation of democracy in Iraq is complex to discuss and analyze with any sense of finality. At the time of writing, terrorist groups, complex conflicts, and violence continues to have its effect on the process of democracy that is still ongoing. Therefore, there is no simple clarification of the situation. In this case, I will use path dependence theory in order to examine the three variables religious and ethnic divides, violent environment and the presence of terrorist groups to clarify how democracy in the case of Iraq has failed.

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Garud, R., & Karnøe, P. *Path Dependence and Creation*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. (2001)

My hypothesis is that the explanation behind the failure of democracy in Iraq lies primarily on the three variables mentioned above. But before doing this, I will measure democracy in Iraq by applying Dahl's Polyarchy model.

3.2. Dahl's Polyarchy Model

Dahl's polyarchy model is procedural²⁹. Polyarchy means "a form of government in which power is vested in three or more persons"³⁰. The reason why Dahl's Theory is appropriate for this study, and why I have chosen his theory instead of other theories of democracy, is because his research, has meant a lot for the view of democracy in modern political science. In addition, Dahl's Polyarchy Model has been very influential even if other researchers have criticized his model. It would be no exaggeration to claim that Dahl's Polyarchy definition is one of the most accepted democracy definitions in modern political science. The model improves the requirement of a democratic content, taking into account political rights and freedom. In other words, freedom of speech, freedom of the right to vote and freedom of association can be clarified as fundamental elements that play a dynamic role in making the model work. Yet, countries vary in the way their governments meet the criteria of the democratic process. Therefore, it might be useful to mention the meaning of these institutions:

1. Control over governmental decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials³¹.
2. Elected officials are chosen and peacefully removed in relatively frequent, fair and free elections in which coercion is quite limited³².
3. Practically all adults have the right to vote in these elections³³.

²⁹ Dahl, Robert A., *Democracy and its critics*, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, 1989

³⁰ Dictionary <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/polyarchy?s=t> (accessed 2017-08-03)

³¹ Dahl, Robert A., *Democracy and its critics*, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, 1989.P.233

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid

4. Most adults also have the right to run for the public offices for which candidates run in these elections³⁴.

5. Citizens have an effectively enforced right to freedom of expression, particularly political expression, including criticism of the officials, the conduct of the government, the prevailing political, economic, and social system, and the dominant ideology³⁵.

6. They also have access to alternative sources of information that are not monopolized by the government or any other single group³⁶.

7. Finally they have an effectively enforced the right to form and join autonomous associations, including political associations, such as political parties and interest groups³⁷.

The bachelor thesis will shed light on elections in Iraq as well as the new constitution of the country. This is to examine whether democracy can be assessed and observed from the prospective of Dahl's criteria as well as to show that there is no doubt that elections are the necessary street to governance. The reason behind the idea of focusing on the January 2005 and 2010 elections more specifically is firstly, because the election that was held in 2005 was the first election in the country since the fall of Saddam Hussein. The second reason is to see whether change has occurred when it is time for the second election. The third reason is to see whether elections would determine the citizen's political, economic, and social destiny permitting people to achieve their legal rights.

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Dahl, Robert A., *Democracy and its critics*, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, 1989.P.233

4. Method

4.1. Case Study

The bachelor thesis consists of a case study method with focus on a single event. As Alan Bryman claims in his book, that case study involves the comprehensive and intensive analysis of a single case³⁸. In this case, the thesis is based on my selected case that is an intensive analysis of democracy in Iraq. Moreover, the thesis puts more emphasis on collecting and analyzing secondary data and this strategy is called qualitative research study. In other words, the thesis does not aim for the collection of numerical data or the measurement of how often something occurs³⁹. Therefore, the study will investigate whether ethnic and religious divides, the violent environment and the presence of terrorist groups could explain the failure of democracy in Iraq. After evaluating the circumstances of democracy in Iraq as well as the Iraqi politics in a broad view, one can assume that the ethnic and religious divides, violent environment and the presence of terrorist groups need to be analyzed in order to understand whether these reasons are actually behind the failure of democracy in Iraq. In this case, the aim is not to disprove the theories in which the bachelor thesis is based on rather to clarify how this case can be understood with the help of other identified factors.

This thesis will not be an extensive study that tackles several cases with lack of information regarding each. Instead, the study is based on a method that will present a better understanding of democracy in Iraq in order to discover whether the hypothesis may or may not match with the results⁴⁰. By doing so, a high level of the conceptual validity, where the selection of indicators will be appropriate in order to represent the concepts that are theoretical. An essential setback in accordance to this method is that the task can be complicated to reach reliability, bearing in mind that the nature of a case study is qualitative and not quantitative. However, my attempt will be to reach generalizations of suggestions in which the results of the bachelor thesis may provide in order to have the ability to examine other cases in the future⁴¹.

³⁸ Bryman, Alan, *Social research methods*, Fifth edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2016. P. 60

³⁹ Bryman, Alan, *Social research methods*, Fifth edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2015. P.149

⁴⁰ Bryman, Alan, *Social research methods*, Fifth edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2015. P.70

⁴¹ Gerring, John. *Case Study Research Principles and Practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 2007. P.70

4.2. Qualitative Text Analysis

The thesis is a cumulative one in which the investigation is generated from secondary sources as mentioned. The starting point was reading about Iraq and its relation to democracy since 2003. Thereafter, I examined the reasons behind the failure of democracy in Iraq by focusing more specifically on whether religious and ethnic divides, violent environment and the presence of terrorist groups could explain the failure of democracy in Iraq.

The study aims to answer questions that are conceptual, therefore, it might be difficult to answer concretely. The measuring of democracy in Iraq will be done by analyzing how the concept failed to be established in the country. This will be done with the help of applying a qualitative text analysis.

Textual analysis includes quantitative and qualitative studies⁴². The textual analysis of this study is used in order to analyze empirical facts that are collected from articles and studies that shed light on democracy in Iraq after the invasion 2003. It is not a necessity to create a model for the usage of text analysis due to the fact that text analysis is mainly about getting to understand a text by asking a question, opening new doors of analyzing this specific text, trying to find an important observation in order to broaden the investigation as well as creating depth⁴³. The usage of qualitative text analysis is considered to be acceptable in political science⁴⁴.

4.3. Methodological Frameworks

The framework of analysis in this thesis comes from Dahl's definition of the concept polyarchy that consists of a number of criteria⁴⁵. Some of the criteria are important to

⁴² Ekström, Mats & Larsson, Larsåke (red.), *Metoder i kommunikationsvetenskap*, 2. uppl., Studentlitteratur, Lund, 2010

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Esaiasson, Peter, Gilljam, Mikael, Oscarsson, Henrik & Wängnerud, Lena (red.), *Metodpraktikan: konsten att studera samhälle, individ och marknad*, 4., [rev.] uppl., Norstedts juridik, Stockholm, 2012. P.234.

⁴⁵ Dahl, Robert A., *Democracy and its critics*, Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, 1989

follow because they facilitate the process to examine and measure the existence of democracy in a country⁴⁶. Therefore, I have chosen Dahl's criteria as a measuring instrument in order to understand the following; whether there are free elections, the right to elect and candidate, the right to vote, the right to freedom of speech and expression in Iraq, which are important elements for democracy to be established?

The framework of analysis will be based on three factors and their influence, whether they have or have not caused the failure of democracy in Iraq. This is to understand why my case study differs from the previous case studies on this subject. The three reasons are selected based on the theory that is called Path Dependence Theory but also on the basis of how the political circumstance in Iraq looks from 2003 until present.

The First factor that will be analyzed in this thesis is, ethnic and religious divides. The second factor that the bachelor thesis will shed light on is, violent environment and the third factor is, the presence of terrorist groups.

4.4. Methodological Delimitations

I believe that applying a comparative study is not appropriate for this bachelor thesis. Comparing two different cases is not the best choice and will not facilitate the analysis of the reasons behind the failure of democracy in Iraq in depth. This is simply because it would make this thesis too broad and not specific enough, given the limitations in length for a bachelor thesis.

For future research, it would be interesting to compare the reasons behind the failure of democracy in Iraq to Syria. Syria might be a suitable case to examine since the country shares similarities and differences with Iraq in terms of politics, ethnic, religious divide and since the two countries are located close to each other geographically etc. *“A distinction is possible between democratization studies and the comparative study of democracies, on the grounds that the former investigates processes of change and transition while the latter simply compares features between*

⁴⁶ Ekman, Joakim, Linde, Jonas & Sedelius, Thomas, Demokratiseringsprocesser nya perspektiv och utmaningar, MTM, Johanneshov, 2015. P.24

*stable achieved democracies*⁴⁷.

4.5. Material

I was in Iraq during the war (2003), grew up in this state and as an Iraqi citizen, with Arabic as my native language, I have gained a deep understanding of the political situation in the country. However, this knowledge has been accumulated in a subjective way. Having a family who lived in Iraq for a long time, even other channels such as the news, might be considered as less objective. That is why; to gain knowledge, that is considered to be objective, was important. For this thesis, I have used the following books *Dictatorship, Imperialism & Chaos: Iraq since 1989* by Thabit A J Abdullah, which provided a background about the political history in Iraq⁴⁸. The book: *Iraq's Dysfunctional Democracy* by David Ghanim that provided an objective representation of the situation of democracy in Iraq⁴⁹. I have read the book *Democracy and its Critics* by Dahl that helped to measure democracy in Iraq. I have also read the book *The Future of Iraq* written by Liam Anderson and Gareth Stansfield⁵⁰.

Moreover, the thesis has applied different articles that were written by different researchers regarding the situation of democracy in Iraq. These authors had different points of view regarding the situation of democracy in Iraq as well as the country in general, which was interesting. For example, Abdullah predicts the possibility of democracy in Iraq to be unlikely whereas optimistic western writers describe the process of democracy in Iraq as a challenge that could be transformed into a possibility with the help of correct policy⁵¹.

To avoid a systematic error is something that is vital. This is because it can undermine the validity of the thesis' measurement. This means that measurement

⁴⁷ Gupta, Suman, *The theory and reality of democracy: a case study in Iraq*, Continuum, London, 2007. P. 83.

⁴⁸ Abdullah, Thabit, *Dictatorship, imperialism and chaos: Iraq since 1989*, Zed Books, London, 2006

⁴⁹ Ghanim, David., *Iraq's dysfunctional democracy*, Praeger, Santa Barbara, Calif., 2011

⁵⁰ Anderson, Liam D. & Stansfield, Gareth R. V., *The future of Iraq: dictatorship, democracy, or division?*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, N.Y., 2004.

⁵¹ Byman, Daniel L. & Pollack, Kenneth M. *Democracy in Iraq?* *The Washington Quarterly* 26:3,119-136.

strategy that contains systematic errors causes incorrect measurement of a concept⁵². Systematic error produces operational readings that continuously miss-measure the characteristic the researcher is looking for.

⁵² Pollock, Phillip. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. 2016. P.18.

5. Elections and the Iraqi Constitution

5.1. Election in January 2005

In 2005, Iraq witnessed a political change that can be described as significant and historical. The rule of country turned from the authoritarian of Saddam Hussein to democratic governance. The country had its first election on the 30th of January 2005 which was the first election that Iraq held since the fall of Saddam Hussein. The purpose was to choose the Transitional National Assembly that would have responsibility for drafting the permanent constitution. According to Coalitional Provisional Authority (CPA), the country constituted of a single constituency were Iraqis had to give their votes for one political party list instead for individual candidates. The sharing of the seats to the political lists was in terms of the percentage of votes gained. As a result, the membership of Shia and Kurd in the Transitional National Assembly was higher than Sunnis. This was followed by political disputes, heated negotiations and violence that led to the deviation of the country.

However, on October 15, 2005, the constitution was accepted in a national referendum. The constitution succeeded to implement a parliamentary democracy as well as principles that were based on “separation of powers”. The Council of Representatives (CoR or Parliament) consists of members and they are elected for four-year terms through a ballot that is direct, secret and general.

The Prime Minister of Iraq is the head of the Council of Ministers (CoM) with the executive authority; he or she is responsible for the overall policy in which the country is composed of. Furthermore, the Prime Minister is the chief of the armed forces. The person is nominated throughout the major parliamentary bloc and is responsible for the formation of the CoM that is supposed to be permitted by a majority of the CoR.

The president, on the other hand, is supposed to have a two-thirds majority of the CoR in order to be nominated. The president’s role is ceremonial and his or her duty can be described as “symbol of the unity of the country”. In other words, the president represents the country and its sovereignty and nothing more than that ⁵³.

⁵³ Trumbull IV, Charles P. & Martin, Julie B. *Elections and Government Formation in Iraq: An Analysis of the Judiciary's Role*. Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law. Vol. 44:331. P.336

According to article 138, there is a Presidency Council that is based on a president as well as two vice presidents. The Presidency Council is supposed to gain much more power than the President him or herself. This type of power is determined by the authority to veto legislation approved by the CoR as well as the Constitution⁵⁴.

On the 15th of December 2005, Iraqis went to the polls to vote for the first Parliament with the purpose of making “*the beginning of last phase of the political transition process*”⁵⁵. According to the election’s law, each of the eighteen provinces should have an electoral district that is separated as well as a share of the 275 parliamentary seats. The seats are appointed “*in proportion to the total number of registered voters in the governorate*”. 45 of the parliamentary seats were considered as “compensatory” seats. These seats were given to entities that could gain the “*national average of votes nationwide but not enough votes in a single electoral district to win a seat*”⁵⁶.

The requirement that was excepted from the political parties was to present a single list of candidates for each province so that people who voted could have the ability to choose one of the competing lists that included candidates rather than to vote for nominated candidates. The system is called “closed-list” system which means that CoR seats were divided into political parties that were based on vote counts, and parties were given seats to nominated candidates depending on their order on the parties respective electoral lists. In other words, political parties could have the power to make a decision regarding which candidates would be dominated to the CoR by placing the candidates lower or higher on the list⁵⁷.

The United Iraqi Alliance (a Shia-Islamist) is divided into two main political parties, Dawa and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), they succeeded to win a total of 46.5 % of the vote as well as 128 out of 275 parliamentary seats. With this result, the party emerged as the hugest political bloc leading over the Kurdish coalition that succeeded to gain 53 seats and lastly, the Sunni Iraqi Tawafuq Front (ITF) that had 44 seats⁵⁸.

⁵⁴ Trumbull IV, Charles P. & Martin, Julie B. *Elections and Government Formation in Iraq: An Analysis of the Judiciary's Role*. Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law. Vol. 44:331. P.337

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ Trumbull IV, Charles P. & Martin, Julie B. *Elections and Government Formation in Iraq: An Analysis of the Judiciary's Role*. Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law. Vol. 44:331. P.338

*“Parliament was called into session on March 16, 2006, at which time the Constitution entered into force”*⁵⁹.

The Prime Minister that was elected after a long time of negotiation (Iraqi leaders continued to have a conflict regarding who has the first priority to form the government) was Nouri al- Maliki (Shia). During the transitional government, al- Maliki, served as a compromise candidate and Deputy Prime Minister to Ibrahim al- Jaafari. The Council of Representatives nominated Jalal Talabani (Kurd) as President as well as the election of two Vice Presidents, Adel Abd al-Mahdi (Shia) and Tariq al- Hashimi (Sunni). Those who served as Deputy Prime Ministers were Barham Salih (Kurd) and Salam al-Zubaie (Sunni) ⁶⁰.

Finally, the chaotic situation in the country seemed only to get worse with time. 8.5 million people voted during the elections that were held in January 2005. The referendum yielded a 78.5 percent vote in favor of its adoption. Despite this fact, the climate of chaos and sectarian clashes approaching full-civil war continued. Moreover, the catastrophic situation in Iraq has aided the rise of such violent groups such as al-Qaida, Daesh, civil war between Shi'i and Sunni Muslims in 2006 etc. All these can be described as elements that play a significant role in influencing the institutions negatively especially in the center of Iraq ⁶¹.

5.2. Election in January 2010

The preparation for the election started in the middle of 2009. The election might be explained as one of the most significant elections in the history of the country. I will begin discussing the circumstances of the election that were different from the election in 2005. The election in 2010 would be the primary election during the permanent constitution. This election would also help show the following. Firstly, the commitment of the Iraqi people regarding the democratic ideals. Secondly, the whole society and its citizens would see for the first time whether they could believe in the leaders of their government or not. Finally, it would show whether the leaders who had been in govern for four years, would have the ability to transfer their power in a

⁵⁹ Ibid

⁶⁰ Trumbull IV, Charles P. & Martin, Julie B. *Elections and Government Formation in Iraq: An Analysis of the Judiciary's Role*. Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law. Vol. 44:331.

⁶¹ Abdullah, Thabit, *Dictatorship, imperialism and chaos: Iraq since 1989*, Zed Books, London, 2006. P.109-114.

peaceful way to the next elected leaders in accordance with the purpose of the Constitution⁶².

Another important circumstance of this election is that the existence of the Americans in the country decreased during 2009. This was because of the expiration time of the UN Mandate for Multi-national Forces Security Council Resolution 1790 on the 31th of December 2008, with the decision-making of leaving the Iraqi government eventually. The Iraqi government would be responsible for the security of the country from that date on. Despite that, the American forces stayed in Iraq in accordance to the bilateral U.S Iraq Security Agreement, all the U.S military operations were supposed to agree on coordinating with Iraqi authorities. Moreover, a part of the agreement was based on the idea that U.S forces had to withdraw its combat and troops that were located around the country on 30th of June 2009. The blood of people continued to be wasted in the country and that is why this election would be an important evaluation of the security of Iraq, military forces and police forces. They were supposed to prove that they had the ability to secure the country and its citizens no matter if U.S forces would remain in Iraq or not⁶³.

The result of the election would show the direction of the country's future. Such a positive outcome would reduce sectarian warfare. With the shape of an elected government constituted of Sunni, Kurd and Shia majority that would help the country to overcome its destructive sectarianism warfare and aim at having national reconciliation. But a lot of reasons would show that the result of the election was not positive because of the following vital reasons⁶⁴:

One reason was the formation of new political parties in 2009. Parties had dissolved because of armed combat as well as political competition such as the main Shia alliance that was elected in 2005. The Shia parties had a separation of three main coalitions; the State of Law Coalition (SoL), the Iraqi National Alliance (INA), and the Iraqi Unity Alliance (IUA). SoL constituted of the Prime Minister al-Maliki and his party Dawa. The INA was based on Vice President Adel al-Mahdi and candidates who trusted Moqtada al-Sadr (an anti-America cleric). The last party IUA, was leading by Minister of the Interior Jawad al-Bulani who had his own party before the

⁶² Trumbull IV, Charles P. & Martin, Julie B. *Elections and Government Formation in Iraq: An Analysis of the Judiciary's Role*. Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law. Vol. 44:331.P.339-341

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Ibid

provincial election that occurred in 2009. One important party that was called Iraqiyya was headed by Ayad Allawi, Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi, and Deputy Prime Minister Rafa al-Assewi. Lastly, there were two Kurdish parties, the first one was called the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the second one was Kurdistan Democratic Party⁶⁵.

Another reason that could show the negative consequence of the election's result was the tendency of the terrorist group al-Qaida to disturb the elections by screaming and preventing the voters. Mortars and rockets exploded around the capital Baghdad. This occurred on the 7th of March before the opening of polling stations. Despite this, many voters went to polling stations in order to vote. 12 million of 18.9 million voters went to 49,630 official polling stations that were located around the state in order to cast a ballot. The ballots were composed of 86 political entities, 6,292 candidates and 12 coalitions. The negative consequence of the election was that primary reports showed that al-Maliki (SoL coalition) and Alawi (Iraqiyya) were "neck and neck" leading to a rare "election cliffhanger" in an area that was controlled by authoritarian rule and rigged elections⁶⁶.

Another reason was personal interests. For example, there were suggestions for a country to recount in order to "*prevent any doubt and misunderstanding about the outcome of the election*". Moreover, there were people who aimed at making allegations such as al-Maliki but this would not serve the interests of that person and this would not serve the election process either or even progress in the country⁶⁷.

5.3. The Iraqi Constitution

To draft a new constitution is not a simple process for any state. This is a continuous process for Iraq because of the complex challenges such as ethnic and religious identities, the history of repression and the complex relationship that Iraq has with its neighboring states. One of the first steps in this part will be to examine whether it is possible to find any institution(s) of the polyarchy model in Iraq's constitution of 2005. It is possible to find the first institution of the polyarchy model "elected executives" in Iraq's constitution.

In article number 20, it is mentioned that Iraqi citizens both women and men

⁶⁵ Ibid

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Ibid

should have the right to be members in public affairs and to participate in political rights such as the ability to vote, elect and run for office. The Iraqi constitution contains information about the freedom of expression in article number 38 and all its means such as freedom of press, printing, media and publication, freedom of assembly, the ability to have a peaceful demonstration etc., this shall be organized by law. The alternative sources of information increased after the U.S invasion. One of the first Iraqi newspapers was published in Basra in April 2003. Moreover, freedom of religion is mentioned in article 41, the idea that the Iraqi people are free in their commitment when it comes to their beliefs, religion, choices, and sects, this shall be organized by law⁶⁸.

As a result, the seven polyarchic institutions can be found in the constitution of Iraq. Fundamental rights such as freedom, gender equality and a law against discrimination are all part of the constitution. This has been discussed from article number 10 to article 23. Furthermore, it is important to mention that the judiciary of Iraq should be independent and the official religion in the country is Islam. This is to say, Sharia will continue to be legal.

This is the end of the discussion about the elections on 2005 and 2010, as well as the new Iraqi constitution. I will now shed light and focus on the seven institutions to examine whether they exist in the political process that takes place in Iraq.

⁶⁸ Iraq's Constitution of 2005. Constituteproject.org

6. The Seven Polyarchic Institutions

6.1. Elected Executives

The parliamentary elections in Iraq formed the new government with its new parliamentarians. Many Iraqis went to the polls in order to elect their state's leaders as well as to choose their president. The country witnessed two parliamentary elections since the end of the war in 2003. It is clear that the executives have been appointed by the citizens.

6.2. Free and Impartial Elections

The Iraqi constitution contains article number 20 that tackles issues such as political rights (the right to vote and the right to elect). But the significant question that plays a vital role in this context is whether the elections were free and impartial? As it has been mentioned before, many factors aimed at preventing the elections such as political disputes, violence, legal challenges, the renewed sectarian warfare and terrorism could have interrupted the elections. In other words, it was difficult to keep the polling stations and constituencies open as well as it was difficult for many Iraqi people to vote. As a result, it is apparent that the Iraqi elections were not free and impartial.

6.3. Universal Suffrage

The new Iraqi constitution in 2005 guaranteed all Iraqi people "*the right to participate in public affairs and to enjoy political rights including the right to vote, elect, and run for office*"⁶⁹. Voters would be able to choose from among the six thousands candidates running for Parliament, which would then approve the Council of Ministers and elect the President. Twelve million Iraqis went to the polls. On the other hand, the statistics do not mean that every Iraqi person was registered and could have the ability to vote. Arguably, universal suffrage should be fully covered by the whole population in order to be valid and applied. That is why it might be difficult to draw conclusions regarding the universal suffrage in Iraq.

⁶⁹ Trumbull IV, Charles P. & Martin, Julie B. *Elections and Government Formation in Iraq: An Analysis of the Judiciary's Role*. Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law. Vol. 44:331.P.333

6.4. Right to Candidate in Elections

The new Iraqi constitution guarantees the right to candidate in elections. Iraq as a state is based on the semi-proportional system. According to the new constitution of the state, the system is dependent on the goodwill of the candidate to represent the requirements of their constituents. The constitution ensures places for the Iraqi women in the parliament so that they can have the possibility to attend. In other words, the right to candidate in the election has progressed in part due to the participation of the Iraqi women in the parliament. Just a few years back, the Iraqi women lacked the possibility to participate in the parliament and they lived with the idea of having a lower position in society. So this criteria is being met.

6.5. Freedom of Speech

The new constitution of Iraq protects freedom of speech and expression in both article number 38 and article number 42. Hundreds of channels owned by private people, print media and radio outlets have started since Saddam Hussein's regime was overthrown year 2003. However, ethnic fractions as well as political parties fund most of the media outlets. The government controls the editorial content of many outlets by manipulating and pressuring private advertisers or public advertising. Furthermore, statistics show that many journalists in the country suffered from physical harassment and regular threats that were directed both from the state and non-state actors. Iraq still lacks national legislation that provides access to government information and journalists still struggle with this fact ⁷⁰.

Media freedom in the country still suffers from the threat of retaliation or lawsuits by people who are powerful. The Committee to Protect Journalists realized that at least five journalists were killed during 2015 in relation to their job, and many others such as bloggers and people who gained information online were also at risk and suffered from threats. This criteria does not fulfill the requirements for the polyarchic model⁷¹.

⁷⁰Freedom House- Iraq <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2015/iraq> (accessed 2017-08-03)

⁷¹Freedom House- Iraq <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2015/iraq> (accessed 2017-08-03)

6.6 Alternative Sources of Information

A growing number of newspapers have appeared since 2003 and the rules of Internet that existed in the country before are changed today. The U.S and its allies played a vital role in influencing and controlling expression throughout the American media network in Iraq. In other words, the U.S had direct control over media in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein. (IMN) as a network was controlled by the authority of Chief Civilian Administration Bremer and its duty was to control the property of the pre-war ministry of information. Bremer also had requirements and one of those requirements was that all Iraqi media was supposed to be registered.

Another requirement of Bremer was that media outlets that aimed at breaking the rules would have their licenses revoked as well as their equipment removed. Individuals were watched and those who were trying to break the rules could be sentenced to one year in prison as well as a 1,000 dollars fine. Outbreaks of violence during demonstrations occurred.

6.7. Freedom of Assemblage

The Iraqi people have the right to freedom of assembly according to the new constitution but this right may be restricted in practice. As it has been mentioned before, innocent people died during many demonstrations that occurred in different cities around the country. The demonstrations occurred in response to issues such as power outages, the mismanagement of public utilities etc. In other words, the nature of the Iraqi street still lacks the opportunity to advance towards normalization as well as improvement of public security and civil society.

To summarize, Dahl's polyarchy model and its institutions have been improved and established in both elections. On the other hand, this is not sufficient enough to be called a democratic process but it is possible to claim that the country is based on a political process in development towards democracy. This is due to several facts that need to be improved. Firstly, many Iraqis went to the polls in order to elect their politicians but they faced difficulties such as violence, political disputes, legal challenges, terrorism etc. aimed at preventing their goals. Secondly, the country had elections but those elections were not free and impartial. Moreover, a huge number of polling stations were closed because of different circumstances that have been

mentioned previously. Something that may be explained as a positive consequence was the massive participation in the two elections where people had the right to vote and they had the right to candidate no matter the gender. Finally, it is important to keep in mind that political processes that are democratic take time.

7. The Three Variables

This section will present an examination of the three variables that were mentioned in the method's section. The usage of "Path Dependence Theory" offers another dimension in clarifying the specific role when it comes to the situation of democracy in Iraq. As the focus of this study takes place during Iraq's invasion in 2003 until today, the Path Dependence Theory highlights historical decisions and events that play a vital role in characterizing the more current political agenda, that is considered to be relevant to the study. The first part will analyze the ethnic and religious divides and how they have influenced the ineffectiveness of democracy in Iraq. The second part will illustrate how the violent environment, caused by the power vacuum after the war, contributed to the emerging of militias (mainly religious militias). The third part will focus on the presence of terrorist groups that exist in Iraq and how this variable affects the construction and procedures for democracy.

7.1. Ethnic and Religious Divides

There may appear some complicated issues that are related to the nature of democracy that is supposed to be applied in Iraq. Democracy will reverse the power structure that exists in Iraq. This is because of the function of numbers. The Sunni Arabs represent less than 20 percent of the Iraqi population whereas the Shi'a Arabs represent 60 percent. In any democratic order, the Shi'a will dominate and they must assure Sunnis that they will not revenge Sunnis and will let them take part in the democratic process and decision-making.

Firstly, the application of democracy needs a written agreement regarding the legitimate order. Simply, all social groups in Iraq should admit that Iraq is a legitimate territorial entity. Secondly, any form of democracy needs a matter of trust. This means that minority groups should have equal rights to majority groups (forms of checks and balances). Thus, some decisions should take place in accordance to majority rule. Otherwise, the state cannot work ⁷².

What has happened in Iraq is rather unusual. The state did not collapse as a result of internal conflict or a civil war, but as a result of external military interference to overthrow it. The political difficulties in Iraq beginning from 9 April 2003, when

⁷² Anderson, Liam D. & Stansfield, Gareth R. V., *The future of Iraq: dictatorship, democracy, or division?*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, N.Y., 2004. P. 9-10.

Saddam's government fell in Baghdad and a postwar administration led by the U.S began to assert itself, were similar to many other current post conflict-reconstructions or nation-building efforts.

Once the Ba'athists (the name of Saddam's followers) were removed from power, there was a vacuum of political authority that needed to be filled, and order on the streets had to be reconstructed. The institution of the state had to be rebuilt and brought to life again. Infrastructure had to be repaired, jobs created and basic services had to be restored. Violence between different regional, ethnic and religious groups, several of them with well-armed militias, needed to be stopped and prevented. The political culture of brutal dominance and fear had to be changed.

Civil organizations and political parties representing citizen's interests, rebuilding communities and teaching information about democracy, required assistance, training and protection. A plan was required in order to produce a widely representative and valid new government⁷³.

Several fundamental problems and obstacles have to be solved if the situation is to be improved. The list is long and includes more technical problems such as the repair of infrastructure and the re-opening of hospitals and schools, the security problem of reestablishing a state monopoly of violence, the political task of building a credible interim government, and finally the difficulty of choosing the right institutions that will make democracy work in Iraq⁷⁴.

Elections are likely to stir up ethno-religious conflict in the future, if democratic institutions are not designed to foster moderation and compromise.

In order to solve the problems in Iraq the following will be recommended: An electoral system that favors vote polling across ethnic lines; federalism on a non-ethnic basis with a strong component of fiscal decentralization; a strong regime of minority rights and a judicial apparatus capable of enforcing the rule of law. Elections should come last, not first in the process of institutional transformation. International institutions can provide the legitimacy for the continued outside supervision and support that are needed, during years to come, to make democracy sustainable.

However, it may be difficult for democracy to take place in Iraq. One

⁷³ Diamond, Larry (2005) *Lessons From Iraq*. Journal of Democracy Volume 16, Number 1.9-23.

⁷⁴ Diamond, Larry (2005) *Lessons From Iraq*. Journal of Democracy Volume 16, Number 1.9-23.

particular problem is that not all political forces in the country would like to accept democracy Western-style. This is not because of Islam being in contrast with democracy but may be because of the political forces that dominate now e.g. the Shiite political scene. For historical reasons, this type of force does not have a trend toward any secular political system that believes in power division. Therefore, the Shiite as a political power can affect the final result of elections throughout a process that is known as pressure and patronage politics⁷⁵.

7.2. Violent Environment

America's first weeks of postwar engagement in Iraq were tumultuous and unsuccessful since most of the infrastructure of the state was systematically sabotaged, looted and destroyed while American troops stood by. Having failed to meet the first and most basic imperative after conflict- to restore order- and having failed to establish, through its Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA), effective political authority as well. The United States quickly created, in mid-May 2003, a new instrument for political and economic reconstruction in Iraq. This was the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). This was an occupation and administration that was lead by a former American Diplomat who was highly regarded, L. Paul Bremer III. The CPA had wide British participation and included many other European nations, however, the occupation was still overwhelmingly American especially, from the point of view of the Iraqis. It had not been the Pentagon's plan to administer postwar Iraq for an extended time. The belief was that the U.S forces would be welcomed as liberators by a rejoicing Iraqi people and that power would quickly be handed over to an Iraqi interim government. So when Bremer came to Iraq in May, he brought along plans to dissolve the Iraqi army and "de-Baa'athify" Iraqi government and society and also Iraqi economy and politics through a full-scale occupation that may last two years or so. Adding to this, there was also huge bitterness over the widespread insecurity in the state- a result of increasing rebellious, terrorist (I will discuss this later on) and criminal violence. In the month following the political handover, the rising violence hindered economic reconstruction destroyed Iraqi confidence in the appointed Interim Government, and

⁷⁵ Wimmer, Andreas. *Democracy and ethno-religious conflict in Iraq*, ZEF Discussion Papers on Development Policy, No. 72 (2003)

awoke major doubts about the country's capacity to hold elections that would be sufficiently, fair, inclusive, transparent and free of violence and intimidation to be viewed as reasonably valid, by the January 31 deadline.

It costs a lot of money to rebuild a destroyed state and the task is difficult when it comes to a country such as Iraq and its violent past. This article claims that the U.S has made a mistake regarding the invasion of Iraq simply because of the lack of international troops on the ground after the state had collapsed. This led to chaos and disregard of law ⁷⁶.

People started to loot significant buildings as soon as the capital fell. The public infrastructure was destroyed while the U.S troops were watching the tragic scenes without intervening. These acts from the population were spontaneous from the start but soon became habit for people who wanted to loot and sabotage. The country struggled with financial losses and the country suffered the ability to function. From the side of Iraqi people, it was also difficult to have faith in the U.S troops ⁷⁷.

There were major mistakes made by the U.S troops. The first mistake was not succeeding in establishing order and safety for the public and the second mistake was failing to have a concrete plan regarding post conflict transition. The trust was not helped either by the fact that the U.S relied on Iraqi exiles, who the Iraqi people did not trust, to rebuild the state.

It is important to have military occupation in order to fill the vacuum that remains when a country has collapsed, is close to civil war and is in chaos. There should be a balance between implementing democracy with force and leaving the country so that the country can create its own form of democracy. In other words, when it comes to decision-making by occupation powers and people they have chosen, there needs to be sufficient national consensus or new problems will emerge that threaten the prospects for democracy and tolerance.

Even if U.S made major mistakes regarding planning the reconstruction of Iraq after the war and enforcing a political occupation when it comes to citizens that are nationalistic, proud and skeptical of the West. There is still a possibility for Iraq to have democracy but a political agreement has to be achieved in order to enable

⁷⁶ Diamond, Larry (2005) *Lessons From Iraq*. Journal of Democracy Volume 16, Number 1.9-23. P.13

⁷⁷ Diamond, Larry (2005) *Lessons From Iraq*. Journal of Democracy Volume 16, Number 1.9-23. P.14

elections to take place with a wide universal suffrage for religious, regional, political and ethnic groups. In order for Iraq to become a stable, secure and democratic country, it is required that all major groups have to believe that they have more to win from peaceful politics than an arena full of violent insurgency and terrorism.

In order to decrease violence it must be met with a strong response from the Iraqi state. In this case, the most important thing is that the state has monopoly over violence. For this to be implemented, the national guard, the army, the police force need to be sufficiently trained, armed, organized, numerous and ready to enforce law and order in the country. Without this, it is impossible for political stability and democracy to have a chance in Iraq ⁷⁸.

The article that is written Ibrahim Sirkeci discusses the idea of that after the invasion in 2003, a new era representing continuation of EOH (Environment of Human Insecurity) for Iraqis. Ethnic groups killing each other in order to ensure getting a share of power and the income of Iraq's premium natural resource i.e. oil. The country has suffered from the UN sanctions and an embargo for more than ten years. This fact along with continuous bombings and the 2003 invasion, have made a previous oil-rich state into a struggling to survive financially ⁷⁹.

The Iraqi civilians suffered from torture methods and attacks coming from the US-led invasion as well as the New Iraqi administrations. As it has been noted in the article, after the invasion, the country is not capable of having a successful future as many hoped and expected that Iraq would be able to have within a decade from 2003 invasion. The consequences of long-term civil war and insecurity obliged Iraqis to flee from the country in order to settle in other secure countries. The 2003 invasion and its long messy period have caused increasing problems regarding the lack of opportunities such as health, education, economy etc. It is not easy for the Iraqis to fulfill needs that are simple and fundamental. Moreover, the invasion has caused political deprivation. This means that Iraq suffers from power vacuums in several places around the country and there is no doubt that an ethnic inequality in power

⁷⁸ Diamond, Larry (2005) *Lessons From Iraq*. Journal of Democracy Volume 16, Number 1.9-23.

⁷⁹ Sirkeci, I. (2008) "Conflict, the Environment of Human Insecurity and Migration in Iraq in the Aftermath of 2003", in Rittersberger-Tilic, H. et al. (eds.) *Rethinking Global Migration: Practices, Policies and Discourses in the European Neighbourhood*, KORA - Center for Black Sea and Central Asia and Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, pp.161-175. P.165.

sharing also exists⁸⁰.

Another aspect of the violent environment is that People kill each other and the country witnesses street violence everyday. This is simply because these people are motivated economically, politically, religiously etc. The article provides the following statistics:

“According to a UNDP report, in 2006 about one third of Iraqis were suffering from deprivation, and in 2004 about two thirds had poor economic status at the household level. The report also revealed that about 70% of Iraqis’ basic needs were not being met in mid-2006, that 80% of Iraqis suffered from a lack of health services and a lack of adequate housing, and that 70% of Iraqis were deprived of educational services”⁸¹.

“This means a great deal in a country with a population of over 28 million, half of which are children and young adults under age 20; the situation also suggests that there will be difficulties in the near future when considered alongside the fact that about 40% of Iraqi professionals, including more than a third of all medical doctors, fled the country after the invasion (UNAMI,2007,P.2)”⁸²

From the mentioned statistics, it is understandable that the violent environment in Iraq has made it difficult for the new government to have control over power. Ethnic and religious groups can be described as a vital key that plays a significant role in the current instability. Ethnic and religious hostilities continue to play a major part among civilian and government officials, which is another cause for deteriorating the situation in Iraq. The country is still far away from security and peace⁸³The following statistics taken from the article emphasize this argument:

“In 2006, the estimated death toll in Iraq since the American-led invasion was given by Lancet as 601,027 (Burnham et al.,2006,p.6); in 2008, the World Health Organization estimated the total death toll to be 151,000 (IFHSSG,2008). At the end of 2006, the number of inter-ethnic attacks was averaging 15 per day, and ethnic

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Ibid

⁸³ Sirkeci, I. (2008) “Conflict, the Environment of Human Insecurity and Migration in Iraq in the Aftermath of 2003”, in Rittersberger-Tilic, H. et al. (eds.) Rethinking Global Migration: Practices, Policies and Discourses in the European Neighbourhood, KORA - Center for Black Sea and Central Asia and Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, pp.161-175. P.166.

cleansing and displacement forced an average of over 100,000 people out of their homes per month (O'Hanlon & Campbell, 2007). At the same time, an Iraqi poll indicated that, by the end of 2006, one in four Iraqis had had a family member or relative murdered since the invasion, one in eight had had a friend murdered, and one in six had had a family member, relative or friend kidnapped during the same period"⁸⁴.

"In 2007, the Brookings institute reported that the number of daily insurgent attacks exceeded 175; that there were over 50 multiple-fatality bombings and 14,000 people killed per month on average; and that there were kidnappings of 30-40 people per day. All of this indicates that ethnic conflicts have spiraled out of control since the invasion, and the inevitable outcome one would expect from this is ethnically disproportionate migration"⁸⁵.

7.3. The Presence of Terrorist Groups

The first category of terrorist groups that this discussion will include is relatively small but very important group. As a group, they can be described as radical and ideologically motivated, and we can call them *takfiri*. The takfiris are quick to call other Muslims apostates and heretics, that is how they justify their use of violence. One of these groups was called al-Qaeda that had its allies not only in Iraq but also in Algeria and elsewhere. The strategy of this group did not have a trend in formal politics except for wanting to build a strict pan-Islamic state that they wished to establish once they had overthrown the existing county's governments. The group interprets the concept of democracy as a violation of God's greatness and they interpret violence as something that is related to religious duty. The article emphasizes that the *takfiris* will negatively affect the possibility of democracy in Iraq⁸⁶.

Another *takfiri* group that has had a huge influence in the failure of democracy in Iraq is Daesh. In June 2014 Daesh declared the Islamic State located from Iraq over the boarder to Syria. Deemed a terrorist organization by a majority of the international

⁸⁴ Sirkeci, I. (2008) "Conflict, the Environment of Human Insecurity and Migration in Iraq in the Aftermath of 2003", in Rittersberger-Tilic, H. et al. (eds.) Rethinking Global Migration: Practices, Policies and Discourses in the European Neighbourhood, KORA - Center for Black Sea and Central Asia and Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, pp.161-175. P.167

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Cofman Wittes, Tamara. *Islamist Parties-Three kinds of movements*. Journal of Democracy July 2008, Volume 19, Number 3. P.8.

community they have taken responsibility for many attacks against civilian populations around the world and they are often referred to as IS/ISIS/ISIL. They have acquired large areas of land in Iraq such as Mosul (one of the largest cities in Iraq) and other areas around the country. Daesh are known for their success using social media and their recruitment of foreign soldiers who travel to the self-declared state to join them. The definition of the part of Democracy, according to Daesh, is that Democracy is not a legitimate system.

“That will cause the world to hear and understand the meaning of terrorism, and boots that will trample the idol of nationalism, destroy the idol of democracy, and uncover its deviant nature.”⁸⁷.

Democracy, according to Daesh, is not a legitimate ruling system because of its deviant nature. It is deviant in that it is not deemed acceptable. As it has been stated in Dabiq (the magazine of Daesh), they do not believe in countries such as the U.S, Australia, Canada, Iran (Shia Muslims), the government of Iraq (Shia Muslims) and Japan as well as several European countries. These are examples that can be seen as non-believer countries because these countries are based on concepts such as democracy, freedom and peace.

Mary Kaldor claims that the goals of today's wars have a political motivation surrounding identity rather than it being used as a weapon of war, as in the old wars. The new method, according to Kaldor, has to do with the use of violence. Today the use of violence is directed towards the civilian population as opposed to the forces of the enemy ⁸⁸.

⁸⁷ Dabiq, Daesh online magazine. Issue 1, <http://www.clarionproject.org/news/islamic-state-isis-isil-propaganda-magazine-dabiq> .P.8

⁸⁸ Kaldor. Mary. 2013. In defence of new wars. *In defence of new wars*. Stability: International Journal of Security and Development. 2 (1): 1-16.
http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/49500/1/_lse.ac.uk_storage_LIBRARY_Secondary_libfile_shared_repository_Content_Kaldor,M_Kaldor_Defence_new_wars_2013_Kaldor_Defence_new_wars_2013.pdf . p.1-3

8. Results and Discussion

8.1. Discussion of Results

Calling the Iraqi's democratization attempt a failure is no exaggeration. The purpose of this study is to explain how democracy has failed in Iraq, and the questions that the study aims to answer are what reasons lay behind the failure of democracy in Iraq? In this discussion, I will discuss the three main variables that I believe lay behind the failure of democracy in Iraq.

The first factor behind the ineffectiveness of democracy in Iraq is the ethnic and religious divides. The unequal amount of different groups in the state such as Sunni versus Shia, Arabs versus Kurds have played an important role. These groups need to consider Iraq as a legitimate territorial entity and not see the country as different areas for each group.

If the U.S had not taken down Saddam's government as they did, democracy would have had better opportunities to succeed in Iraq. The state would not have collapsed from civil war and violence between different ethnic and religious groups that ended with bloody scenes. The situation created hate between these groups and the only thing they care about is gaining more power.

The second reason behind the failure of democracy in Iraq is the violent environment and security situation were that began after the invasion, which can be described as a huge mistake. This has caused widespread insecurity in Iraq and an outcome of increasing rebellious, terrorist and criminal violence. This has problematic since Iraq has struggled with financial losses and suffered the ability to function.

It is reasonable to have military occupation in order to fill the vacuum that remains when a country has collapsed, is closed to civil war and is in chaos. Therefore, it is argued that there should be a balance between implementing democracy with force and leaving the country so that the country can create its own form of democracy. Despite these mistakes, there is a chance for democracy in Iraq but many things need to be put in place such as such as political agreement, all major groups have to believe in each other's peaceful politics than an arena full of violent insurgency and terrorism, the state has to have monopoly over violence (the national guard, the army, the police force need to be sufficiently trained, armed, organized, numerous and ready to enforce law and order in the country). Otherwise, it is impossible to have democracy in Iraq.

The third reason behind the failure of democracy in Iraq is the presence of terrorist groups since takfiris dominate big cities in Iraq. Their agenda and policy was that they considered any foreign entity or even governmental representative as a non-muslim therefore they regarded them as their enemy. Thus, al-Qaeda and Daesh worked through imposing fear among people in order to construct a strict pan-Islamic state. Due to the takfiris concept and beliefs, democracy is a major religious sin and it did not get better for it being imposed by the U.S. (a country that the terrorist groups do not believe in). The mentioned explanation is an image of chaos, violence and instability that shows that it can be difficult to implement democracy because the concept requires tranquility, stability, healthy circumstances and discipline.

In conclusion, democracy did not work in Iraq because of three variables. Firstly, the ethnic and religious divides, secondly, violent environment and thirdly, the presence of terrorist groups that cost people their lives. The three chosen variables are crucial and important for this thesis. As it has been mentioned, according to the theory of path dependence, history matter, and the three variables have historically influenced democracy in Iraq. Furthermore, the impact of the three variables still influences the road to democracy and the problematic political situation in Iraq. Therefore, I have come to the conclusion, that it is important to shed light on exactly these three variables that have influenced and continue to influence democracy in Iraq.

8.2. Recommendation for future studies

In future studies on the failure of democracy in Iraq, it would enlarge research to examine how the concept is organized in a country. Because the outcome of the bachelor thesis points that the failure of democracy in Iraq depends on three reasons. These reasons are a given but there are also many other reasons behind the failure of democracy in Iraq that could be investigated and further studied. For example, it would add to this field to study how corruption within political parties influences the effectiveness of democracy in Iraq where ethnic and religious ties and violent environment are dominant.

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