



**MALMÖ UNIVERSITY**  
FACULTY OF CULTURE  
AND SOCIETY

# Remitting Cultural Capital: Involvement of the Iraqi Diasporas in Sweden and Denmark in democratization in Iraq after 2003

Salah Abdulrahman Saleh

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Supervisor: Dr. Brigitte Suter

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**Glossary:**

CPA: The Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq April 2003- June 2004.

IGC: Iraqi Governing Council.

Kurdistan: The northern part of Iraq that inhabited by Kurds

## **Abstract**

Members of Iraqi diaspora in the democratic countries can play role in democratization in Iraq as part of the bottom-up approach. This thesis is trying to present this role through the experiences of those members who are making regular visits to Iraq, 1 or 2 visits a year since 2003. Thesis studies that, to what extend they were able to transfer cultural capital they obtained from the hosting countries to their country of origin. Throughout the interviews, thesis investigates how much these visitors to Iraq, i.e. members of Iraqis diaspora living in Sweden and Denmark, were able to use religious rituals and political activities to present and transfer this cultural capital.

Unstructured meetings have been used to reach out potential interviewees. Then, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data for the thesis. Theories like transnational migration, social and cultural capital in addition to the concept of Lifestyles have been used to analyze the experiences of the interviewees.

Thesis comes up with the arguments that, it is important for the democratization in Iraq to benefit from the cultural capital those members of the Iraqi diaspora possess. Thesis also recommends that, in order to increase the benefit from diaspora, an organized work is needed to be done by formal, semi-formal and non-government organization. Strong and constant links need to be built between the members of Iraqi diaspora and their country of origin.

**Keywords:** Iraq; Diaspora, Democracy, Culture Capital, Remittances

## 1. Introduction

The importance of Iraq as a key factor in the stability of the Middle East region makes this country valuable to be study. Geographically Iraq is placed in the heart of the Ancient World, and was one of the important places on the way of the Silk Road or Silk Routes. Historically, the Silk Routes used to be used commercially by the merchants, militarily for invasions and wars, and culturally as an intersection for cultural exchanges among the cultures were on this Routes. According to Joshua J. Mark, “The network was used regularly from 130 BCE, when the Han\* officially opened trade with the west, to 1453 CE, when the Ottoman Empire boycotted trade with the west and closed the routes”<sup>1</sup> Historically Iraq was the land for some of the most ancient civilizations in the world, such as the Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians. In addition to that, Iraq plays an important role in the Islamic history, socially, politically, intellectually and militarily.

The political developments in Iraq influence the political situation in the region. Saddam Husain’s regime 1979-2003, was classified as a dictatorship regime and considered as dangerous on the stability of the Middle East. As a dictatorial regime, the regime of Saddam Husain did not give the liberty for the oppositions to work inside Iraq. Members from various political parties that opposed the regime have been either executed or jailed for long time. Due to this situation, members of the Iraqi opposition felt that, it was not easy to live under a tyranny regime. That situation forced a big numbers of the members of the opposition to leave Iraq and to live in exile. The reason for leaving the country varies from person to person so as the period of exile. Some opponents may have left because of being a direct target inside the country, others for feeling oppressed. A report prepared by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, UK, in November 2002 titled *Saddam Hussein: Crimes and Human Rights Abuses* states “Iraq is a terrifying place to live. People are in constant fear of being denounced as opponents of the regime. They are encouraged to report on the activities of family and neighbors. The security services can strike at any time. Arbitrary arrests and killings are commonplace. Between three and

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\*” The Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) was one of the longest of China’s major dynasties. In terms of power and prestige, the Han Dynasty in the East rivalled its almost contemporary Roman Empire in the West” Cristian Violatti, *Han Dynasty*, Ancient History Encyclopedia, 2013, [http://www.ancient.eu/Han\\_Dynasty/](http://www.ancient.eu/Han_Dynasty/)

<sup>1</sup> Joshua J. Mark. *Silk Road*. Ancient History Encyclopedia, 2014, [http://www.ancient.eu/Silk\\_Road/](http://www.ancient.eu/Silk_Road/)

four million Iraqis, about 15% of the population, have fled their homeland rather than live under Saddam Hussein's regime”<sup>2</sup>

As most of the opposition in the 3<sup>rd</sup> World countries, the Iraqi opposition during Saddam's regime which settled out of Iraq keep working in order to weaken the regime, and make it collapse. The goals the Iraqi opposition did not stopped at changing the tyranny regime, but also social justice, developing the country socially and economically and establishing democracy. The final statement of the coordination and follow-up committee of the Iraqi opposition held in Salahaldin 26 February- 1 March 2003 refers to some of these goals,

“The opposition is a partner in the liberation of Iraq and in building of a new democratic Iraq. The Iraqi opposition will contribute to the restoration of stability and to the prevention of potential anarchy and chaos. The opposition will enlist the assistance of the Iraqi army and people, including religious and tribal personalities, to enhance law and order, social peace and toleration among all sections of society...The Iraqi opposition wishes to return to a life of constitutionalism and to reengage with regional, international, and Arab countries in relations of mutual interest and good-neighborliness. A democratic Iraq based on the rule of law, characterized by internal peace, is the best guarantee for the spread of peace and stability with other countries and the international community”<sup>3</sup>

Members of the opposition who spend long time of their exile in free, liberal and democratic countries carry with them big hopes to change their country from a totalitarian regime to a liberal, democratic one. Members of the opposition who lived in democratic countries have bigger hope than other opposition who exiled to countries that are less democratic. The practical experience in Iraq shows that, members of the opposition who spend their exile period in democratic country have more democratic and

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<sup>2</sup> Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Saddam Hussein: Crimes and Human Rights Abuses. November 2002, UK, p. 4. <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2002/12/02/hrdossierenglish.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Reliefweb. *Iraqi Opposition Conference: Final Statement of the meeting of the Coordination and Follow-Up Committee*. 03 Mar 2003, <http://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/iraqi-opposition-conference-final-statement-meeting-coordination-and-follow-committee>

liberal practices and policies than other members of opposition who were in totalitarian, undemocratic countries. The differences between the experiences of Nouri al-Maliki, the former Prime Minister of Iraq 2006-2014 (was in exile in Iran and Syria 1979-2003), and the current Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi (was in exile in UK 1977-2003) gives a hint of differences of understanding and practices of ruling between two criteria of Iraqi opposition, those who were in exile in totalitarian countries and those who were in democratic countries. Those who lived in liberal and democratic countries for relatively long time -15 years and more according to this study, have practiced democracy in different forms and on different levels in exile. In Sweden for example, which is one of the countries from where the researcher chooses some interviewees. The non-Sweden citizens who are legally resident in Sweden for three years have the right to vote locally, and to vote for the parliament when they granted the Swedish citizenship. Practicing democracy in a way that the opposition could not do under the oppression of the tyranny regime is a practical experiment, and that helps building cultural capital of democratization for the members of opposition lived in liberal countries. This cultural capital is a skill that members of the opposition try to transfer to the population of their country of origin whenever they return back, even if they just do short visits to their home or origin. This cultural capital becomes part of the lifestyle of their life, (the concept of lifestyle is used in the thesis to refer to the attitude of individuals rather than to the appearance). That gives the exiled members of opposition lived in liberal and democratic countries a different angle of view towards democracy in their country of origin. It may even distinguish them from their other fellow opposition members that living in non-democratic countries in the matter of understanding democracy and its process. Chaney states "...lifestyle focus on the exercise of skills and tastes that are particularly relevant to the expertise of the intelligentsia, and that lifestyle concerns have therefore been used as a display of distinctive forms of status"<sup>4</sup>. The cultural capital that the opposition gains is going to be transferred back to the country of origin and, it becomes useful in sufficient way in the development of the country. The cultural capital can be as beneficial as remittances for the country of origin.

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<sup>4</sup> David Chaney. *Lifestyles*. Florence, KY, USA. 1996, P. 96.

Cultural capital needs Social capital as a tool to be implemented in an effective way. The Cultural capital "...identifies individuals as possessing cultural capital if they have acquired competence in society's high-status cultural"<sup>5</sup> While the Social capital is "...the product of regular and recurrent social interaction, and it "inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors"<sup>6</sup> The logic of this relation between Cultural and Social capital is that, the Cultural capital the individual possess needs Social capital as a tool for transformation. Eckstein states, "Migrants may generate social and economic capital abroad that they invest back home"<sup>7</sup> Social capital that the diaspora has becomes a tool that enables the returnees/short visitors to reintegrate or/and to get embedded with their society. However, in the case of the Iraqi opposition returnees/shot visitors, it is a matter of uncertainty how much social capital is going to be useful for the reintegration. This uncertainty comes from the fact that, there are many social changes occurred in Iraq since they left the country. There were a lot of inner and outer conflicts in Iraq since 1941 until 2014.

Conflict or Military coup	Type of Migrants	Place of Migration
From the movement of Rashid Ali al-Gaylani in 1941 against the UK until 1958	Iraqi Jews	Israel and UK
1958 Military coup ended the Monarchy ruling and started the Republic	Iraq aristocrats who were close to the ruling family	UK
1967 after the Six-Day war between Israel and Arab countries until mid-70s	Iraqi Jews	Israel and UK
1980-2003	Arab Shi'a and Kurds	Syria, Iran, Europe and US
2003-2008	Arab Sunnah, Christians and some Shi'a	Syria, Jordan, Europe and US
2014	Arab Sunnah, Christians, Yazidis and Shi'a Turcoman	Turkey, Europe

<sup>5</sup> Throsby, David. Cultural Capita, *Journal of Cultural Economics*; 1999; 23, 1-2; p. 4

<sup>6</sup> La Due Lake , Ronald and Robert Huckfeldt. Social Capital, Social Networks, and Political Participation, *Political Psychology*, Vol. 19, No. 3, Special Issue: Psychological Approaches to Social Capital (Sep., 1998), p. 570

<sup>7</sup> Eckstein, Susan et al. *How Immigrants Impact Their Homelands*, Duke University Press, 2013, p.11.

Table 1. trends of forced migration in modern Iraq 1941-2014

Each conflict left an effect on the social structure and the personality of the Iraqis. Those oppositions who lived long term of their life in countries far away from Iraq, like Sweden and Denmark, could not be able to internalize the social change occurred in Iraq. At the same time, and because of the long term of semi isolation Iraq has, especially since 1990 due to the economic sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council on Iraq. The people of Iraq may become unfamiliar with the political and scientific changes, especially the rapid changes in communication technologies. In addition to that, the returnees may lose their social network they had in Iraq before they left, or even if they still have it, it may become weak.

This thesis is going to study the Iraqi Diasporas in Sweden and Denmark who make regularly visits to Iraq. These Diasporas left Iraq during the Saddam Husain's regime and lived in Sweden and Denmark for relatively long time (15 years and more). They were not able to visit Iraq during Saddam's regime because they were considered as part of the oppositions. The thesis is going to investigate their participation in the democratization process in Iraq after the change of the regime in 2003.

## **2. Aim**

The aim of the thesis is to investigate, how the members of the Iraqi Diaspora who are living in Sweden and Denmark and doing short, but regular visits to Iraq were able to transfer the cultural capital they possessed in their exile, from the hosting countries to their country of origin. This transformation of cultural capital is a form of participation of the Iraqi Diasporas as individuals in the democratization change in Iraq after the end of Saddam Husain's regime. In this thesis the focus is going to be on the individuals and their experiences. The thesis is not discussing the political parties. The reason for excluding the political parties is based on the intension to approach democracy building from the point of view of bottom-up. The thesis is going to investigate if the returnees/short-term visitors were able to be re-embedded to the local community, and how much their previous social network has helped them in their effort for democratization. Through the narratives of the interviewees, the thesis is going to shed

light on the success that the returnees/short-term visitors achieved and the difficulties they face in the matter of democratization post Saddam's regime Iraq

### **3. Research questions**

The thesis brings up the overarching question on, to what degree could short-term visitors affect practices of democratization in Iraq? In order to answer this question these research questions have been raised.

1. As these short-term visitors lived for decades away from Iraq, what are the challenges and/or opportunities to be re-embedded within the Iraqi society?
2. What is the impact of the social network that the diaspora members have prior to their emigration and/or established during exile at their short-term visits?
3. Have the short-term visitors been able to transfer the cultural capital they possess in exile to their community of origin, and how?
4. What are the outcomes that, the short-term visitors conclude from their efforts?

### **4. Historical background**

A historical background that explains the political situation and development in Iraq during Saddam's regime and after it is important. It is important due to the fact that, major political and social changes do not happen in short period. It took about 40 years from Iraqi society to be changed since 1968 coup led by the Baath party until the war in 2003.

#### **4-1 Saddam Husain in power**

Historically Iraq can be seen as a land that hardly contains a fixed specific group of population. Since its ancient existence as the Mesopotamia, Iraq has either become under occupation or socially restructured by migrants from the surrounded regions, especially from regions that are poor with natural resources such as water.

The geographical importance and the natural resources were the main reasons for the occupations which occurred in Iraq throughout history. Geographically, Iraq is at the intersection point that links some empires in the ancient world, the Persian and Byzantine empires for example. At the beginning of the 20th century oil was discovered in Iraq.

With the increase of the importance of oil for industrial development, Iraq be once again under the focus of the super powers in the modern world. That makes the country an arena for conflict between regional and international powers that try to control it. This situation of constant changes of the power that control the country have left effects on the population in Iraq, who needed to adapt themselves according to the new rulers. These conflicts affected the psychological structure of the population of the country. Ali Al Wardi\*, a famous modern Iraqi sociologist and anthropologist describes the effect of the multiple invasions and occupations occurred in Iraq by various nations, and the constant changes of rulers as ‘cultural conflict’. Al Wardi says, “This cultural conflict which is called ‘clash of cultures’ in anthropology has a very deep effect on the personality of the Iraqi individual...”<sup>8</sup> This “clash of cultures”<sup>\*</sup> left traces in the Iraqi society and inside the psychology of the Iraqi individuals. Tolerance or intolerance has become like the ebb and flow, depending on the political situation and the balance of power among various components in the Iraqi society.

Al wardi is not the only scholar or expert who makes such notes concerning the ability of tolerance at Iraqi society. For example, Isakhan states that, “Stewart\* seems to suggest that Iraq is a nation predisposed to violence, chaos and despotism and incapable of tolerance, inclusion and peace. The further implication here is that these problems are so unparalleled that one could even question the humanity of the Iraqi people. If ‘mankind’ or ‘human cultures’ are orderly and peaceful, and Iraq is naturally violent and disorderly, then the conclusion must be that this is not a human culture at all”<sup>9</sup>. If it is not a ‘human culture’ as Stewart says what is that makes the Iraqi society canted toward violence? Isakhan quoted from various scholars some factors that make Iraq one of the most difficult places to seed democracy in, “democracy may have difficulties to germinate in

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\* Ali Al wardi 1913-1995, one of the first modern sociologists in modern Iraq. Graduated from the American University in Beirut in 1943, Master and PhD from the University of Texas 1948 and 1950.

<sup>8</sup> Ali Al wardi; *Shakhsyat al fard al Iraqi* (The characteristic of the Iraqi individual) second edition 2001. Dar Leila, London; p 50.

\* The “clash of culture” that Al wardi talks about is different from the idea of “clash of civilization” that Huntington talks about. Al wardi “clash of culture” is a local phenomenon that he noticed in the Iraqi society due to the effect of various powers that dominated Iraq.

\* Rory Stewart worked for the CPA in Iraq 2003-04 as deputy coordinator of Maysan and then as senior advisor in Dhiqar, two cities in the southern Iraq.

<sup>9</sup> Benjamin Isakhan, *Democracy in Iraq: History, Politics, Discourse*. Ashgate publishing Ltd. UK: 2012 P. 120

the sandy soils of Iraq' (Wimmer 2003: 111). Others claimed that Iraq has 'little tradition of power-sharing' (Byman 2003a: 57) or 'experience with democracy' (Benomar 2004: 95). There was said to be no 'society in Iraq to turn into a democracy' and that the people had not 'learned democratic practices' (Byman 2003a: 59). Iraq had been a nation of 'uneasy order maintained through rations of oppression and fear' (Benomar 2004: 95). Daniel Byman offered a list of factors that he believed would inhibit the spread of democracy in Iraq including, among others, 'a lack of cohesive identity to unify Iraq's different communities'<sup>10</sup>

This 'cultural conflict' as Al Wardi refers to, creates a contradictory aspect inside the personality of the Iraqi person. This contradictory aspect becomes very clear and demonstrates itself when some individuals become in a position of authority and power. That have been seen through the periods when rulers seize the authority in Iraq by non-democratic ways such as military coup. That was the case for example during what is known in the Iraqi modern history by the 'movement' of Rashid Aali Al-Gaylani in May 1941, see table 1. This movement was supported "by the 'Golden Square', a pro-Axis military junta of four colonels who were concerned that the pro-British party, led by Nuri al-Said, might bring Iraq into the war on the British side"<sup>11</sup> Despite the fact that this movement ended quickly with the escape of Al-Gaylani from Iraq on May 30 1941, but chaos and violence brock up directly after it. This violence targeted the Jewish population in Baghdad, what is known in the modern Iraqi history by Farhoud, which was the starting point of the displacement and the migration of Iraqi Jews to Israel. Jim Quilty states, "As the four men point out, the reasons for the mass emigration of Iraqi Jews to Israel are muddy. The community in Baghdad was badly shaken by the farhoud (arbitrary killings of Jews) conducted during the brief anti-British regime of Rashid Ali al-Ghailani..."<sup>12</sup> Similar events occurred in Iraq whenever there was imbalance of power or

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p.121

<sup>11</sup> I. C. B. Dear, Ed., *The Oxford Companion to World War II*, Oxford University Press, UK: 2001.  
<http://www.oxfordreference.com.proxy.mah.se/view/10.1093/acref/9780198604464.001.0001/acref-9780198604464-e-1350>

<sup>12</sup> Jim Quilty, 'Stories of state-building, as told by the dispossessed', *The Daily Stars Lebanon*, 2009.  
<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Culture/Art/2009/Apr-11/116889-stories-of-state-building-as-told-by-the-dispossessed.ashx#axzz39dW9C9a1>

lack of security. That can be seen in the events following the 1958, 1963 coups and other occasions of chaos.

These changes affected on the stability of country, and pushed the country into several conflicts. One of the worst periods in the modern Iraq in terms of number of conflicts, and the restriction of freedom was the period when Saddam Husain controlled the country with an iron fist 1979-2003. During this period, Saddam worked to eliminate his opponents by adopting the policy of intimidation and/or the enticement. If we take the freedom of press as an example of liberty in any country, Iraq had 69 newspapers of which three of them were government owned in 1917. In 2003, the numbers of newspapers reduced to five all of them were government owned<sup>13</sup>

After eliminated the Baathist president Al Baker, Saddam seized over the power in 1979 (Saddam was a vice president of Al Baker). He ruled until the fall of the regime in 2003 after the war led by the USA. Saddam did not accept any opposition from inside his party (Baath party) or from other parties. This turned Saddam to be a dictator who violated the human rights of his oppositions, especially the right of expression. The British Foreign & Commonwealth Office report in 2002 says,

“Saddam has, through the RCC [Revolutionary Command Council], issued a series of decrees establishing severe penalties (amputation, branding, cutting off of ears, or other forms of mutilation) for criminal offences. In mid-2000, the RCC approved amputation of the tongue as a new penalty for slander or abusive remarks about the President or his family. These punishments are practiced mainly on political dissenters. Iraqi TV has broadcast pictures of these punishments as a warning to others”<sup>14</sup>.

Although the year that the report refers to is almost at the end of Saddam’s regime (ended in 2003), the report shows part of the continuous policy of cruelty treatment of the opposition by the regime for decades. During these decades, Saddam forced hundreds of thousands of the Iraqi opposition members to leave the country. Opponents to the regime

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<sup>13</sup> Bassam Y. Yousif, *Development and Political Violence in Iraq 1950-1990*. PhD thesis University of California 2001. pp. 254-55.

<sup>14</sup> Foreign & Commonwealth Office, *Saddam Hussein: Crimes and Human Rights Abuses*. November 2002, UK, p. 4. <http://image.guardian.co.uk/sys-files/Guardian/documents/2002/12/02/hrdossierenglish.pdf>

used to be charged for every simple criticism or comment about the government or Saddam himself.

Iraqi victims of Saddam's regime were from various Iraqi ethnic groups, although the high percentage of oppression occurred towards the Kurds and Shiites. For example, tens of thousands of the Iraqi Kurds were killed during the Al Anfal campaign in 1988,

“After Halabja (March 1988), chemical attacks were used to destroy villages throughout Kurdistan, McDowall estimates that between 150,00-20,000 Kurds were killed in these operations (roughly March to October 1988), some dying of the effect of chemical bombardment and others transported to remote parts of Iraq and executed there. The PUK [Patriotic Union of Kurdistan ] has a list of 3,839 destroyed villages”<sup>15</sup>

Opponents to the regime as well as many other Iraqis who did not feel safe under Saddam's regime decided to leave Iraq. Some of them fled to neighboring countries especially Iran and Syria. While others managed to reach Europe, a number of them choose to live in Sweden and Denmark. All these opposition members in the exile waited the change of the regime in order to start a new, fresh, liberal, democratic and free political life in Iraq.

After the fall of the regime in 2003 part of the exiled opposition members went back permanently to Iraq, especially those who were in the neighboring countries, while others make regular visits to the country. Oppositions worked against Saddam's regime from countries around Iraq were more organized and have stronger influence than oppositions in countries away from Iraq. Eventually, reasonable number of the opposition members who lived for a long time in Europe and the USA went back to Iraq. They did not have chance to visit Iraq when Saddam was in power, but after the war in 2003 and the fall of the regime, they were able to return to Iraq.

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<sup>15</sup> Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett. *Iraq since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship*, 2001, London. P. 270

## **4-2 After Saddam's regime**

Democratization process in a post conflict country needs to be picked up carefully, and to be constantly reviewed. This process in Iraq after 2003 took the top-down approach. Democratic institutions were built up, and followed by democratic practices such as public voting for the constitution, local and parliament election.

Situation in Iraq did not develop towards established democracy. That is why it is important to try to have another approach towards democracy, this approach is the bottom-up approach. Members of the diaspora, especially those who lived in democratic countries, can play important role in this approach. This chapter presents these two approaches, top-down and bottom-up in the Iraqi contest after the fall of Saddam's regime in 2003.

### 4-2, 1 Top-down or Bottom-up approach for democracy

In March 2003, the United States of America led a coalition of 49 countries to remove Saddam Husain from the presidency of Iraq based on various reasons that US President Bush's administration presented to the world. On 9 April, the coalition forces occupied Baghdad, and on 1 May 2003, President Bush announced the end of the major combat operations, which meant the end of Saddam regime and the controlling of the coalition forces on Iraq. After the war all the governmental institutions in Iraq vanished like steam in the air, therefore, there was a need to establish civil administration to run the country. A decision was taken to establish The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) on 21 April 2003. The CPA runs the country for almost 14 months, 21 April 2003 to 28 June 2004.

In order to transmit the authority to the Iraqis, the CPA founded the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) which contained members representing the major ethnic and religious segments of the Iraqi society. The components of the IGC were important due to that the CPA wanted the council to represent various ethnicities, religions and political trends in Iraq. The majority members of the IGC were opponents of Saddam's regime who were in the exile.

Despite the diversity of the IGC, still it had two weaknesses. First, the majority of the members were exiled during Saddam's regime, and most of them spent decades outside Iraq. That means that, the majority of the members of the IGC were not fully aware of the

social changes that occurred in Iraq while they were in exile. Second, the components of the IGC did contain some de facto influential members of some ethnicities on the ground, especially the Arab Sunnis. At the same time, numerous of the political trends in Iraq, especially those secular political parties and Arab nationalism were missing, as Dobbins states “The biggest political challenge that the CPA sought to address was the lack of Sunni participation in the politics of the new Iraq”<sup>16</sup>

Democracy was a major goal that the US wanted to achieve in Iraq, Gordon in his article *The Strategy to Secure Iraq Did Not Foresee a 2nd War* mentions “The aim was not just to topple a dictator, but also to build a democratic system. The United States would preserve, but reform, the bureaucracies that did the day-to-day work of running the country”<sup>17</sup>. To establish stable and good transitional process towards democracy in Iraq, the CPA headed by L. Paul Bremer and the Iraqi leaders announced seven steps. These steps started with the creation of the Governing Council and ended with the dissolution of the CPA and resumption of Iraqi sovereignty.

Ideally, the plan was to set up democracy in Iraq. The plan for democracy was a top-down approach, where democratic institutions were built up to start a democratic processes. In this process, legislations and institutions were created. The Iraqi constitution is the most important legislation founded after 2003. The importance of the constitution comes from the fact that, since 1958, Iraq has temporary constitution that gives a wide space of prevarication for the rulers. This space was used to concentrate the power in the hand of the ruler and create dictatorship. The Parliament as the legislation and monitoring authority is a very important institution, so as the Independent Election Commission of Iraq in 2004, than renamed to Independent Election Commission of Iraq in 2007. This commission is responsible for conducting and observing the elections in Iraq.

Despite the fact that the Independent Election Commission is a new institution in Iraq, it still managed to conduct and observe numerous democratic activities. Starting with

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<sup>16</sup> Dobbins, James, et al. (2009) *Occupying Iraq: A history of the Coalition provisional Authority*, CA: RAND Corporation. P. 285 [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND\\_MG847.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2009/RAND_MG847.pdf)  
<sup>17</sup> Gordon, Michael R. *The Strategy to Secure Iraq Did Not Foresee a 2nd War* New York Times, 19 October 2004, [http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/19/international/19war.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/19/international/19war.html?_r=0)

voting on the drafting the constitution in 2005, which occurred in parallel with the provincial election and the election of the regional parliament in Kurdistan. In October the same year there was voting on the referendum on the constitution and in December the legislative election. In January 2009 another provincial election was held, and in July the same year a legislative and presidential in Kurdistan. The second legislative election held in 2010, and finally the provincial election in April 2013.

The recent parliament election in Iraq that occurred on the 30 April 2014 was important due to the difficulties the democracy process was facing. These difficulties have their historical and social background as mentioned before in this study. Other difficulties are more contemporary and were the result of the political process after 2003. The problem of representation and the independency from the Independent Election Commission are part of the problems. The most contemporary problem was the intention of the board of the commission to resign due to the conflict between the parliament and the judiciary “IHEC said it had found itself caught between conflicting rulings from parliament and the judiciary regarding the exclusion of certain candidates from the election, due on April 30”<sup>18</sup> That pushes the UN, US government and the EU to announce their support to commission in its mission, and considering election as the one of the most important tool of democracy. These difficulties the commission faces give legitimacy to the question raised by Ghanim in his book *Iraqi's Dysfunctional Democracy* “The key question is whether this carnival of frequent elections would necessarily translate into a real democracy capable of serving national interests and the welfare of the Iraqis”<sup>19</sup>

#### 4-2, 2 Iraqi Diaspora and bottom-up democracy

Nowadays, Iraq plays an important role in the region and in the Arab world. The importance of the change of Saddam’s regime comes from the fact that, Saddam had big influence over some of the Arab world leaders. Saddam adopted a policy of Arab nationalization, where he used to see the Arab world as one country. This view pushed

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<sup>18</sup> Reuters 30 March 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/03/30/us-iraq-vote-idUSBREA2TODZ20140330>

<sup>19</sup> David Ghanim, *Iraq's Dysfunctional Democracy*, 2011. P. 117.  
[http://reader.ebib.com.proxy.mah.se/\(S\(psf2shloobukpqr3aonym0vd\)\)/Reader.aspx?p=795022&o=1940&u=yOe%2b12Gr%2bCKok4WoXz0O3g%3d%3d&t=1396383225&h=E6DCD9E4B80874860FE92B9166384D5EF98C397E&s=22259870&ut=6421&pg=1&r=img&c=-1&pat=n&cms=-1#](http://reader.ebib.com.proxy.mah.se/(S(psf2shloobukpqr3aonym0vd))/Reader.aspx?p=795022&o=1940&u=yOe%2b12Gr%2bCKok4WoXz0O3g%3d%3d&t=1396383225&h=E6DCD9E4B80874860FE92B9166384D5EF98C397E&s=22259870&ut=6421&pg=1&r=img&c=-1&pat=n&cms=-1#)

Saddam to believe that he can interfere in the affairs of other Arabic countries, and even try to change their policies and regimes either by force, or by using the fortune of oil that Iraq possesses. For example Saddam opposed the military coup led by the current president of Sudan Omar Bashir in 1989, Saddam used Iraqi money to supports the opposition against this coup. Other example is using the force against Kuwait in 1990 and occupying the country. The change of the regime in Iraq in 2003 played very important role in the Arab spring started in 2010, Christopher Hitchens states “If Saddam Hussein were still in power, this year's Arab uprisings could never have happened”<sup>20</sup>. In another occasion, Hitchens writes, “Can anyone imagine how the Arab spring would have played out if a keystone Arab state, oil-rich and heavily armed with a track record of intervention in its neighbors’ affairs and a history of all-out mass repression against its own civilians, were still the private property of a sadistic crime family? As it is, to have had Iraq on the other scale from the outset has been an unnoticed and unacknowledged benefit whose extent is impossible to compute.”<sup>21</sup> Saddam used his intelligence agency and the money that Iraq had from selling oil to support or weaken other regimes in the region. For example, Saddam worked against the military coup that Omar Al Bashir the current president of Sudan did in Sudan in 1989. One decade before that, Saddam worked against the Islamic Revolution in Iran 1979.

That makes democracy in Iraq like a milestone in the region. The success of the democracy in Iraq is going to spread democracy in the Middle East, and vice-versa. There was a lot of work done to establish democracy, but it was a top-down approach. This approach succeeds in building some important institutions for any democracy, but it needs more efforts to achieve the goal.

After the war in 2003, big number of political elites of the Iraqi opposition members returned to Iraq. They used to give promises to the Iraqi people for a better life, equality and democratic society. Now, as we passed a decade since the change, most of these promises never happened. In contrast, the security situation is getting worse, there is no social justice and the infrastructure of the country is in its worst situation.

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<sup>20</sup> Christopher Hitchens,

[http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/fighting\\_words/2011/03/the\\_iraq\\_effect.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/fighting_words/2011/03/the_iraq_effect.html)

<sup>21</sup> Garibaldi, April 21, 2011, <http://www.loonwatch.com/2011/04/christopher-hitchens-no-arab-spring-if-saddam-still-ruled-iraq/>

Human Rights Watch's World Report 2014 states "Human rights conditions in Iraq continued to deteriorate in 2013. Security dramatically declined as sectarian tensions deepened. Al Qaeda in Iraq and other insurgent groups emboldened by the Syrian conflict and Iraq's political crisis carried out nearly daily attacks against civilians, making 2013 the bloodiest of the five years. Suicide attacks, car bombs, and assassinations became more lethal, killing more than 3,000 people and injured more than 7,000 between May and August alone"<sup>22</sup>

This political crisis the report talks about born being from the womb of the new democratization process. The parliamentary election in 2010 results in a conflict among people with different political orientations. Ghanim states that,

"...the result of elections have been contested by almost every politician in Iraq"<sup>23</sup> The result of this election puts two competitors in the lead with slide difference, "The cross-sectarian coalition list of Iiraqiya, headed by former prime minister Ayad Allawi, won the highest number of seats, 91. This result gave Allawi a plurality but not outright majority. The second runner was the list of Prime Minister Maliki, the State of Law, which won 89 seats. The difference between these two lists only 54,000 in popular votes...Moreover, adamant about securing a second term, Maliki has brought into the play the controversial constitution. He asked the federal court to interpret a rather ambiguous clause in Article 76 of the constitution: 'the parliamentary bloc with the most members' will be the one to form the government. Yet the court's interpretation was even more controversial. It stated that it is either the bloc with most votes in the election or the bloc that succeeds in forming the biggest bloc in the parliament when it reconvenes after the elections.

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<sup>22</sup> Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2014*, <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/iraq>

<sup>23</sup> David Ghanim, *Iraq's Dysfunctional Democracy*, 2011. P. 122  
[http://reader.ebib.com.proxy.mah.se/\(S\(psf2shloobukpqr3aonym0vd\)\)/Reader.aspx?p=795022&o=1940&u=yOe%2b12Gr%2bCKok4WoXz0O3g%3d%3d&t=1396383225&h=E6DCD9E4B80874860FE92B9166384D5EF98C397E&s=22259870&ut=6421&pg=1&r=img&c=-1&pat=n&cms=-1#](http://reader.ebib.com.proxy.mah.se/(S(psf2shloobukpqr3aonym0vd))/Reader.aspx?p=795022&o=1940&u=yOe%2b12Gr%2bCKok4WoXz0O3g%3d%3d&t=1396383225&h=E6DCD9E4B80874860FE92B9166384D5EF98C397E&s=22259870&ut=6421&pg=1&r=img&c=-1&pat=n&cms=-1#)

Pollack cautions that this is a recipe for political chaos in Iraq after every election...”<sup>24</sup>

Iraqis inside and outside the country had the hope for a better life after the regime but this hope turned to be a disappointment at some stages. Even within the opposition of the regime, there is a huge difference of views why these promises did not achieve. Many members of the oppositions went back to Iraq to participate in the democratization of the country. Some moved permanently, others could not.

Democratization needs more efforts on different levels, these efforts need participation of various active factors in Iraq, with a real participation of influential factors. There is a need to adopt a bottom-up approach of democracy. This approach enables the participation of the population in the process of democratization. The members of Iraqi diaspora, especially those who lived in liberal, democratic societies can play an important role in this approach. Those members have learned democracy throughout direct involvement and practicing democracy. Diaspora members can spread the culture of democracy through various ways by using various occasions, these occasions can be political activities, social or religious rituals. There are numerous occasions that members from the Iraqi diaspora participate in, for example, the political events such as the elections, meetings conducted by political parties inside Iraq, where members of the same party from inside and outside Iraq get together. Such meetings give the members of the political parties the opportunity not just to discuss the issues related the party they belong to, but rather they give them the chance to reflex their cultural capital that they possess from the societies where they lived during the exile. This transformation of the cultural capital is a helpful factor in the democratization. It opens up the audience to new concepts and practices they were not familiar with. In addition to the political events, there are even opportunities for the members of the Iraqi diaspora for direct involvement with the normal people inside Iraq through the religious rituals. A relatively big number of the Iraqis in diaspora visit Iraq to participate in Ashoora, the number may reach to tens of thousands of Iraqi Shias live outside Iraq and participate in Ashoora. Ashoora is a very important religious ritual for the Shias Muslims. It is the incident when Imam Husain the

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p. 121-22

grandson of the prophet Mohammed was killed in Karbala 105km to the south of Baghdad in October 680 AD.

## 5. Theories and concepts

Most researchers studied the democratization process in Iraq after 2003 focused on the top-down process. For example, the process of creating the constitutional institutions, electing institutions that have the form of democratic institutions in modern democracy, and the political process that related to the power struggle among the most dominated political powers in Iraq. In addition to that, researches study the role of the members of the Iraqi diaspora focus on those politicians who return to Iraq after the fall of Saddam's regime, and have direct participation in the political life. This study focuses on the members of the Iraqi diaspora, who did not return permanently to Iraq, rather they visit Iraq regularly, and participate in religious, political rituals or in political activities. These Iraqis possess culture capital that they obtain due to the long period of life they have lived in democratic societies. This paper studies specific type of members of the Iraqi diaspora, that rarely been study. It takes the angle of cultural remittances and its relation to democratization in Iraq. This thesis presents the assumption that, the bottom-up approach that uses the remitting of cultural capital can be a new approach towards democratization in Iraq. This approach can be used in combination with the top-down approach already used in Iraq. The members of Iraqi diaspora who regularly visit Iraq can transfer this culture or part of it to the society of origin. They use rituals, meetings with friends or family members and political, cultural, and social activities that they involve in while they were in Iraq for this purpose. The public rituals wither political or religious can be the scene for such transformation as the cultural sociology of politics suggests, "...cultural sociology adds to an understanding of frame alignment process is the recognition that the public agenda itself is a space that is shaped by symbols, rituals and performances. Issues do not rise and fall random, but rather are connected to the representational activities of two most powerful groups of public sphere"<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> David Chaney, 'Defining Cultural Sociology' at *Cultural Sociology: An Introduction*. 2012, Wiley-Blackwell, UK. P. 114

A set of theories and concepts are used to build the theoretical base for this thesis. Most of these theories and concepts derived from the discipline of International Migration Studies. In addition to that, thesis uses the discipline of Cultural Sociology of Politics, from where the *Lifestyles* concept is derived.

### **5-1 Cultural Sociology of Politics**

This thesis focuses on the efforts of some of the members of the Iraqi diaspora who are making regular visits to Iraq of reshape the understanding of the Iraqi society of the concept of democratization. Cultural Sociology of Politics that is using in this thesis is suitable for the contest. Cultural Sociology of Politics is different from Political Sociology, that is widely use to discuss the interrelation between society and politic?

Based on the type of the interviewees and their participation inside Iraq, the differentiation between Cultural Sociology of Politics and Political Sociology becomes crucial for this thesis. This thesis does not study the traditional class or even organizational types of participation in society. It does not study political parties, role of elites, or intelligentsia, rather it studies the participation of ordinary Iraqis who live in diaspora in making part of the change for democracy inside Iraq. These Iraqis in diaspora gained cultural capitals during the years they lived in democratic societies and due to the direct contact with the democratic societies. The main focus of the thesis is, how these members of diaspora can reshape the understanding of the Iraqi society of the concept of democratization. To understand the differences between Cultural Sociology of Politics and Political Sociology we need to look at what scholars says. For example concerning the traditional conceptualizing of the efforts for various groups for domination inside the society, “Gramsci emphasized how every group had its own **organic-intellectuals**, whose purpose was to articulate the publicly held worldview of that group, and to criticize the competing worldviews being put forth by other groups”<sup>26</sup> While Chaney states, “For cultural sociology theory, issues of power, conflict and struggle as these contribute to the cultural fabric of society are recast as the product of a multifarious range of ideological

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<sup>26</sup> Les Back et al. *Cultural Sociology: An Introduction*. 2012, Wiley-Blackwell, UK. P.112.

and aesthetically informed discourses and sensibilities in which class, gender, race and other articulations of identity are reflexively constructed and articulated”<sup>27</sup>

The Political Sociology which started by Max Weber emphasizes on the organizational capacity of the state, and the way in which non-state actors need to mobilize organizational resources in order to compete effectively for political power. In the Political Sociology, political elites control key bureaucracies and they compete among each other to capture the votes of a relatively quiescent public <sup>28</sup>

In the new democracies, compromising between the organized institutional effort and the public effort is needed to reach a clear and perpetual stable understanding and practice of democracy. There are groups inside the society that have the skills to affect positively, but they have no chance to be politically effective, because they cannot compete with the political elites, especially in media. The direct and easiest method that these groups can use is by implementing public activities and directly deal with the population, where they can use different occasions and rituals to reach out to people. Les states that, “The point is that success in politics requires the skilful and flexible use of rituals symbols and cultural performances in order to convey an authentic commitment to the public interest”<sup>29</sup>, and that is what Les calls “Culture luck [that] is related to the chance that an organization’s symbolic activities will be connected to the ‘issues of the moment’”<sup>30</sup> Throughout using the opportunity of rituals and activities, the Cultural Sociology of Politics explain how individuals can affect the public, “What cultural sociology adds to an understanding of frame alignment processes is the recognition that the public agenda is itself a space that is shaped by symbols, rituals and performances”<sup>31</sup>

## **5-2. Lifestyles**

Lifestyles concept that David Chaney talks about as a distinction pattern that helps to make distinguish among groups of people, the distinguishing becomes part of the classification of modernity, “Lifestyles, as patterns of action and as a distinct type of

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. P. 20

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. P. 114

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p. 115

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p.115

<sup>31</sup> Ibid 116

*social grouping* [my italic], are embedded in the social order of modernity. They work as a set of expectations which act as a form of ordered control on the emerging social uncertainties of mass society”<sup>32</sup> This distinction used to be based on everything, starting from clothes, speaking and the way of eating, “Lifestyles are patterns of action that differentiate people”<sup>33</sup> That makes Lifestyles a criteria of everyday life in the modern world. Lifestyles may not be one of the patterns of classification for the people not part of modernity as Cahney states, “...they function in interaction in ways that would be incomprehensible to those who do not live in modern society”<sup>34</sup> This distinction is clear for the members of the Iraqi diaspora, they live in modern societies that implement such distinction. But it may not be clear for the Iraqis inside Iraq, who look at human clusters without distinction between their inner groups. The ability to distinguish groups of people can be built up for the Iraqis inside Iraq through the direct contact between the Iraqis inside Iraq, and the members of the Iraqi diaspora, such contact happen during rituals or political activities, that members from Iraqi diaspora participate in. Chaney states that, “Lifestyles are sets of practices and attitudes that make sense in particular contexts”<sup>35</sup>, the attitudes of the short-term visitors of the members of the Iraqi diaspora can make changes on the attitudes of the Iraqis inside Iraq towards more modernity way of thinking.

### **5-3. Transnational migration**

As every other type of immigrants, Iraqi diaspora members have the transnational features of migration. Hardwick states that, “Transnational process happen in distinctive places and at distinctive moments”<sup>36</sup> This distinctive places and distinctive moment that Hardwick talks about, create a distinctive personality that can be restructured in the society of migration. The migrants’ culture, ideologies and lifestyles that have been affected by the hosting society are going to have affection on the society of origin. The “Transnational process” Hardwick talks about is the connection process between the hosting society and the society of origin. This process has various forms. The form of

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<sup>32</sup> David Chaney, *lifestyles*, Routledge, New York 1996, p. 11

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. p.4

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p.4

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p.5

<sup>36</sup> Susan W. Hardwick, 2008, ‘Place, Space, and Pattern. Geographical Theories in International Migration’ in *Migration Theory, Talking across Disciplines*. Routledge, New York, p. 170

connection that this thesis studies is, the connection that members of Iraqi Diasporas in Sweden and Denmark create throughout transforming their cultural capital from the hosting society to their society of origin. This transnational connection between the hosting society and the society of origin happens through the visits that the members of the Iraqi diaspora regularly do to Iraq, either to participate in religious or political rituals or to participate in political activities. Steven Vertovec mentions two important effects of transnational connection between the hosting society and the society of origin. These effects are reflexive traces in the relationship between immigrants, (here the members of the Iraqi diaspora), and people inside the society of origin (here the Iraqis inside Iraq) these effects are, “1) perceptual transformation affecting what can be described as migrants' orientational bifocality in the sociocultural domain; 2) conceptual transformation of meanings within a national triad of ‘identities-borders’ in the political domain...”<sup>37</sup> These traces are going to be seen through the narratives of the interviewees in the thesis. Faist states, “...individuals and groups engage in a continuum of cross-border transaction ranging from activities such as travelling, exchanging goods and services, and sending and receiving remittances to communicating ideas back and forth”<sup>38</sup>

#### **5-4. Social capital, social network**

Pieterse states that, “Social capital is usually defined as the capacity of individuals to gain access to scarce resources by virtue of their membership of social networks or institutions”<sup>39</sup> . While Putnam gives a definition of social capital that has close connection to the Iraqi context, “features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit”<sup>40</sup>

The social network is a way of achieving the goal and maintaining mutual benefits through social capital. Everyday life contains invisible and impalpable benefits that people want to achieve as part of their daily efforts. People use their social network to

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<sup>37</sup> Steven Vertovec, 2009, ‘Migrant Transnationalism and Modes of Transformation’ in *Rethinking Migration, New Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives*. Berghahn Books, New York, p. 150

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Faist, Margit Fauser and Eveline Reisenauer, *Transnational Migration P. 2*. Polity Press, Cambridge; 2013

<sup>39</sup> Jan Nederveen Pieterse, 2003, *Social capital and migration: Beyond ethnic economies*, SAGE, London, p. 31

<sup>40</sup> R.D. Putnam, 1993, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p. 67

make the achievement of the social capital. This indicates that, social capital is the “productive”<sup>41</sup> instrument that facilitated by the social network. Lake and Huckfeldt states that, “... social capital is produced by the intentional activities of individuals who are connected to one another by ongoing networks of social relationships”<sup>42</sup> Social network and social capital work similarly in both, the daily life of individuals and for the political efforts.

Although the members of the Iraqi opposition stayed in the exile for decades, they kept their social network that they had before leaving Iraq. This network has been increased while they were in the exile. The expanding of the social network depends on the type and size of activities every individual has in the country of exile. The social network that the migrants have led to the social capital that is crucial for any effort for social activities. Iraqi migrants that do regular but short-term visits need their social capital in order to make wide and active contact with their society of origin. Social network that migrants possess may vary from one to another depending on the context and social status from one to another. In the big cities like Baghdad and Basra, the social network outside the range of the relatives consists mostly of members of the same political party. While in the small cities and the villages, social capital mainly is depending on the kinship, and the old friendships, in addition to the relatives.

### **5-5. Cultural remittances**

“Immigrants transmit back home values and norms that they learn where they resettle, dubbed cultural remittances, such that cultural differences between migrants and nonmigrants may dissipate”<sup>43</sup> This dissipation happens on various levels and from different angles. Migrants may affect the way that people in the country of origin think on concepts and practices. What is important to this thesis, is the way that the short-term

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<sup>41</sup> Ronald La Due Lake and Robert Huckfeldt, 1998, “Social Capital, Social Networks, and Political Participation” in *Political Psychology*, Vol. 19, No. 3. p. 569  
<http://www.jstor.org.proxy.mah.se/stable/3792178>

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p. 569

<sup>43</sup> Eckstein, Susan et al. 2013, ‘Immigrants from Developing Countries: An Overview of Their Homeland Impacts’ in *How Immigrants Impact Their Homelands*, Duke University Press, p.21

visitors can effect on how the Iraqis inside Iraq understand democracy. This is one of the important steps in any immature and fragile democratic process. Juan Flores states that,

“Though most public and scholarly attention has focused on entrepreneurial initiative and know-how, it is clear that civic conscience, political savvy and critical oppositional vision constitute at least equally widespread and significant lessons derived from life in present-day diaspora communities, especially when our sights are set on changes emanating "from below." Clearly, when such lessons take the form of "social remittances" by intervening in home-country ways and doings, they make for serious challenges wrought not "from outside," but by "one's own,"<sup>44</sup>

Democratization in Iraq can take a different approach from that it follows since 2003. The approach that can followed is a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches. Members of Iraqi diaspora, who visit Iraq regularly can play an important role to achieve this goal, and become one tool to start the bottom-up approach of democratization. Educating about democracy in direct and indirect way can be done through transformation of the cultural capital that the members of Iraqi diaspora possess during their exile in democratic society. The idea is that, “Immigrants also transmit normative and cultural practices that they learn from the specific people with whom they associate abroad”<sup>45</sup> as Levitt states, “Social remittances are the ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital that flow from receiving- to sending-country communities”<sup>46</sup> This thesis will see if such a pattern has occurred amongst the interviewees.

## **6. Method and Methodology**

This chapter represents the method that the researcher used to collect the samples for the research and research data. It also represents the methodology that used to accomplish the research. The chapter starts with the designing of the research. Then it follows by the criteria of collecting the samples, in term of the number of the samples, the reasons

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<sup>44</sup> Juan Flores, 2005, *The Diaspora Strikes Back*, p. 23. Routledge, New York

<sup>45</sup> Eckstein, Susan et al. 2013, 'Immigrants from Developing Countries: An Overview of Their Homeland Impacts' in *How Immigrants Impact Their Homelands* p. 30, Duke University Press.

<sup>46</sup> Levitt, Peggy. 1998 Social Remittances: Migration Driven Local-Level Forms of Cultural Diffusion, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Winter, 1998), p. 926

behind the selection and how samples have been selected. After that, the chapter represents how the data collected from the participants has been collected. In addition to the ethical consideration taken by the researcher during the research process. The section ends with the role of the researcher and validity, reliability of the research.

### **6-1 Designing the research**

Due to the research is studying the experiences of a specific group of people, the research adopts a qualitative method. This group of people the research studies went through the same experiences, but in different contexts, in term of places and contexts. Chaney states “...qualitative methods look to the qualities and textures of experiences, attitudes, outlooks and practices through non-numeric methods. Most commonly, these methods collect textual data based on interviews or analysis of written document...”<sup>47</sup>

The research does not aim to reach to specific results, rather the goal was to investigate the experiences of this group of people. Studying these experiences aimed to present a potential approach that can help democratization in Iraq.

The researcher followed an inductive approach, without setting up a pre-hypothesis. The reason for that is, the researcher does not have enough data that support a specific hypothesis that might strengthen any results that come up from the research. The researcher was open to any hypothesis that the research concludes. The inductive approach may weaken the research in term of uncertainty of the researcher in which direction the research goes, and what the results that come up from the research. Perri 6 and Bellamy states “starting a research process by posing questions, inductive research risks errors because there are usually several hypothesis that could be developed to fit the data and it is hard to rule out any of them which in a way shakes the reliability of a study”<sup>48</sup> Despite this challenges, the researcher was committed to follow the results that come up from analyzing the data collected according to the research questions.

### **6-2 Gender balance**

This narratives were collected by conducting interviews with 8 interviewees. The researcher tried to balance the interviewees’ genders, but it was not easy to have female

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<sup>47</sup> David Chaney, ‘Defining Cultural Sociology’ at *Cultural Sociology: An Introduction*. 2012, Wiley-Blackwell, UK. P. 36.

<sup>48</sup> Perri 6 & Christine Bellamy (2012), *Principles of Methodology: Research Design in Social Science*. Sage, London, p.77

interviewees. The reason for this difficulty is due to the social structure of the Iraqi society inside Iraq, which leaves its traces on Iraqis live outside Iraq. This social structure does not give enough space for women to be active in democratization society inside Iraq. Especially if we take in consideration that, the research partially focuses on those members of Iraqi diaspora who participate in religious rituals. In these rituals, separation between men and women, and male domination in conducting activities is very obvious. There is only one female that has been interviewed. The solo female interviewee is from the secular part of interviewees, (going to explain that next), and she does activities inside Iraq beside her husband.

### **6-3 Collecting the sample**

The first steps of collecting the samples for the research were to present the idea and the criteria of selection to some audience. The audience were Iraqis that the researcher met at some Iraqi associations in Sweden and Denmark. The researcher gave presentations at these associations. The length of each presentation was around two hours. The presentations followed by general discussion about the research. This method worked as a snowball method, aimed to collect number of potential interviewees, and to spread the information about the research among members of the Iraqi diaspora in both countries. These meetings ended up by individual meetings with the interviewees within the criteria of selection. Each interviewee had been asked to set an appointment with the researcher to have an individual meeting and conduct the interview. The presentations and the discussions with the audience had been arranged in cooperation with some Iraqi associations in Sweden or Denmark. Other interviewees have been reached through personal relations, especially through the friends of the researcher.

### **6-4 Criteria for selection**

The interviewees are members of the Iraqi diaspora living in Sweden and Denmark. There are two major criteria for selecting the interviewees.

First, the period that the interviewee lived in one of the two countries, Sweden or Denmark. The interviewee must has been living in either country a period of time not less than 15 years. There are two reasons why the interviewees needed to be living at least for this specific period of time in either country. 1) There is big number of Iraqis living in

Sweden and Denmark nowadays. Some of these Iraqis lived outside Iraq for longer than 15 years, but most of the period of their exile was in non-democratic countries. Especially in countries surrounding Iraq. These Iraqis have recently moved to Sweden or Denmark. They cannot be included in the research, which take democracy as one of the cultural capital that have been possessed by the members of the Iraqi diaspora from democratic countries. For that reason Iraqis who lived less than 15 years in Sweden or Denmark have been excluded, even if they had left Iraq more than 15 years age. 2) The course of life of 15 years, is a reasonable period for the interviewees to internalize new culture that they learn from the hosting societies, especially the culture of democracy, which needs long period of practicing in order to be understood and personally implemented. The period of 15 years allowed the interviewees to participate in at least three local election and two parliament election. In addition to that they themselves were involved in political and association activities throughout the Iraqi associations, those that they either established with others, or they were members in both countries. Chaney states that, "...cultural sociology's central claim that culture is a process that is produced through a reflexive engagement on the part of individuals with their everyday circumstances, an empirical cultural sociological approach must be aware of the ongoing dynamic between the local and global, each acting upon the other in the production of the contemporary cultural landscape"<sup>49</sup>

Second, the selection of interviewees includes those who used to and are still making short but regular visits to Iraq. As one of the claims that this thesis presents is that, democratization in Iraq may have a bottom-up approach, the selection excluded two types of the Iraqis who lived in exile. The thesis excluded the high rank of politicians who were in exile and went back to Iraq to participate in the democratic change in the country. Due to the fact that, these politicians took the lead in the Iraqi political scene after 2003, then they became part of the top-down approach of democratization, and cannot be included in this thesis. The other type of the members of the Iraqi diaspora that has been excluded is, Iraqis in diaspora who make short and regular visits to Iraq, but their visits are only normal family visits any other immigrant does. The thesis follows after those members of

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid. P. 33.

the Iraqi diaspora who have direct involvement with Iraqi population inside Iraq throughout their participation at religious or political rituals or political activities.

### **6-5 Data collection**

The data were collected through semi structure interviews. Interviews have been conducted in various forms and in various places. Part of the interviews conducted at some Iraqi associations in Sweden and Denmark, other interviews conducted by telephone or interview via Skype.

The length of each individual interview varies from 60 minutes to 90 minutes. The language that used to conduct the interviews is Arabic. The interviews were recorded, and then transcribed in to English. For the sake of transparency, all interviews are available to be presented to any academic committee the university selects in order to do a comparison between the recorded interviews which are in Arabic and the translation transcription in English. But, as an ethical commitment, the names of the interviewees and the associations where the presentations took place are kept confidential and not mentioned in the research.

Interviews conducted in different places. Some interviews were conducted inside some Iraqi associations in Sweden or/ and Denmark. Other interviews were conducted by visiting the interviewees' houses. Two interviews conduct by telephone and one interview via Skype. The internet was used because the interviewees were in Iraq at the period of the research.

The questions used in the interviews are open-ended questions. The aim of the interviews is to collect, analyze and assess the process of transformation of the cultural capital the interviewees possess due to their long term of life in Sweden and Denmark to Iraq. Open-ended question is useful tool to collect information from the interviewees, and give them enough space to talk, as Byrne states "...open ended and flexible questions provide better access to interviewees views, interpretation of events, understanding, experiences and opinion...when done well is able to achieve a level of depth and complexity that is not available to other, particularly survey-based approaches"<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Silverman, D. Ed., *Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition. 2011, Sage: London. P.167

## 6-6 Ethical considerations

Anne Ryen states that, “There is no international agreement or regulations of ethical standards in research.”<sup>51</sup> But still there are three main issues, which are important in the research according to Ryen, these issues are “... codes and consent, confidentiality and trust”<sup>52</sup>

“Codes and consent refer in particular to ‘informed consent’. This means that the research subjects have the right to know that they are being researched, the right to be informed about the nature of the research and the right to withdraw at any time”<sup>53</sup> Ryen talks about the “consent” as controversial concept among researchers. It is debatable how much information on the research the research subjects need to have. There is no doubt that, he or she is a subject of the research but, there is debate as to how much information needs to be given by the researcher to the individual who is aiding the research. The issue of how much information must be given to the subjects under research differs from society to society. It is the responsibility of the researcher to find that, out and it is “...the researcher’s responsibility on behalf of the researched to search for the practically workable local adaptations of any standard, general ethical guideline”<sup>54</sup> Based on this rule, the researcher informed the subject of the study and give adequate information that helps the research subjects build a clear vision about the reason and the goals of the research.

Ryen talks about confidentiality as one of the ethical standards that the research must follows. To do that, “We are obliged to protect the participants’ identity, places, and location of the research”<sup>55</sup> To follow this rule, the researcher replaced the names of the interviewees in to numbers. At the same time, names of the associations where the initial meetings and some of the interviews conducted were not mentioned in this research.

Trust is a crucial issue in the any research that collects its data from field work or interviews. Establishing mutual trust was one of consideration the researcher put in his

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<sup>51</sup> Ryen, Anne in *Qualitative Research Practice*. 2002, SAGE publication, London. P. 219

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, P. 219

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. P. 219

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid. P. 221

mind from the beginning of the research. The researcher built this mutual trust through showing respect to the experiences of the interviewees, which meant respect for the interviewees themselves. The researcher was aware to avoid any kind of deception that may occur. In order to avoid that, the researcher studied the social and political context of the groups of audience that attended the initial meetings done before the interviews, which led to selection of the interviewees. This study was important in order to eliminate any information does not match the context of the research.

Ryen states, “This is in line with Stienar Kvale’s (1996) claim that loyal written representation of the oral accounts given by the interviewees is an ethical aspect of qualitative research”<sup>56</sup> In this matter, the researcher faces double challenges in the written representation, one is the translation from Arabic to English, second is the transcription of the recorder interviews itself. The researcher tried as he can to be adequate in the translation in order not to make misleading transformation regarding the narratives. Another ethical aspect of the written representation is data selecting to be presented in the research paper. Inclusion or exclusion of data was an ethical aspect the researcher considered when he selected what to write. Information that is related to the research questions and to the theoretical concepts were selected to be written. The researcher considered that the interviewees wanted that their stories were written down as they are without filtration. To solve this problem, the researcher informed the interviewees prior to the interviews that, inclusion or exclusion of data depends on the closeness of their stories to the subject matter of the research. Ryen states, “What is reported may well be loyal written representation, but this tells us very little about what has been excluded from the report. That is, selection data does not refer to the quality of the qualitative research only...but also to ethics”<sup>57</sup>

## **6-7 Role of the researcher**

The question of the objectivity or subjectivity of the researcher is always come to the mind of the reader, especially if the thesis under discussing is a controversial issue such

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid. P. 223

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. p. 223,4

as building up new democracy in a country went through decades of dictatorship. From the beginning of the research, the researcher bears in his mind the challenge of objectivity-subjectivity. The other issue that was at the benefit of the researcher, but was considered a challenge at the same time is that, the researcher comes from the same society the interviewees originally from. That gives the researcher better understanding to the contexts each interviewee talks about. The researcher also becomes under a moral hazard of prejudice and favoritism, which makes the researcher to rethink twice before engage the research.

From the beginning it was clear for the researcher that, it is very challenging to control the emotions of the audience in the first meetings. The topic that the research touches upon is emotionally sensitive for most of the Iraqis, especially to those who live abroad for different reasons. The audience at the first meetings were mixed. Some left Iraq long time, ago, since Saddam was in power, others left Iraq after the 2003 and due to the security chaos following the war.

To avoid any over emotional conversation that may happen during the meetings, the researcher contacted those who are responsible for the associations, and asked them to make short introduction about the reason of the meetings and the research. The researcher then presented the research in details to the audience in a comfortable atmosphere.

Another challenge appeared during the individual interviews, when some interviewees tried to focus on their experiences during Saddam's regime, and how they had been imprisoned, tortured, or threatened to be killed. Due to the fact that, the research does not deal with such experiences, the researcher had to re-navigate some interviewees and led them back to talk about their experiences with transferring their cultural capital to Iraq after 2003, which is the main purpose for the conducting these interviews.

All interviewees were older than the researcher himself. The researcher considered the social structure of the Iraqi society in respecting elderly people. The researcher tried as much as he could neither to show any superiority over the interviewees nor to loss control of the interviews.

## **6-8 Validity and reliability**

### **8-1 Validity**

Following the plan of the research is an essential condition to achieve validity. Restriction to the plan gives the research high validity, as 6 and Bellamy states, "...the degree to which the measures of codes used to operationalize a concept really capture what we intend to capture"<sup>58</sup> In respond to that, the research was restricted to follow the aim of the research, either in the methodology, or the research questions. The interviews with the samples that were chosen for the research, in addition to the historical background that was given about the situation in Iraq, during and after Saddam's regime have been created to answer the research questions. The goal was to have the most correct and successful answer for the research questions in order to increase the validity of the research.

### **8-2 Reliability**

This research faces two difficulties with the reliability. First, as a qualitative research that depends on semi-structure interviews were the interviewees' narrative is the main source, there is no guarantee of the truthfulness. That is why the results of the research cannot be considered as the standards that can similar case studies measured on. The other difficulty with the reliability that the research faced is the language. This thesis must be written by is English, while the interviews were in Arabic. The researcher himself translate the narratives of the interviewees. The researcher tried to find an independent interpreter that can interpret the interviews, but unfortunately there was no chance to find such interpreter because of the shortening of time and financial support. Instated all interviews have been voice recorded and these records are available to be presented for any verification of reliability. The only thing that needs to be confidential is the names of the interviewees, as an ethical responsibility towards the interviewees.

## **7. Profile of the interviewees**

The total number of the interviewees is 8. The interviewees are divided almost in to two equal halves in the matter of their residency (Sweden or Denmark) and in the matter of

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<sup>58</sup> Perri 6 & Christine Bellamy (2012), Principles of Methodology: Research Design in Social Science. Sage, London. P. 21

their political orientation religious Islamic orientation or secular orientation. There was only one female from Denmark that could be interviewed who is under the categorization of the interviewees for this research, and there are seven men from both Sweden and Denmark. Due to ethical considerations in term of the standards in the academic work, and in order to keep the name of the interviewees confidential, the real names of the interviewees are not going to be mentioned in the thesis. Instead I referred to the interviewees with numbers. The only information that is to be mention is, year of leaving Iraq and arriving to Sweden or Denmark, and the interviewees original city in Iraq. The interviewees are from different cities in Iraq, and they formulate examples from different regions of the country. This diversity of places strengthens the idea of the importance and effectiveness of finding a wide network consisted of members of the Iraqi diaspora. This network works in order to create an affective power that helps in the matter of democratization in Iraq.

As mentioned before, the interviewees have two different political orientations, religious Islamic and secular. This mixing of two orientations does not happen randomly. The reasons for including these two contradict political orientations are; first, in order to be able to make a comparison of types of participations and the effectiveness of each one in transferring the cultural capital. Second, as these ideological power are competing to dominate the political scene in Iraq, each one has different point of view towards the democratization and the political changes happening in the country. What is happening inside Iraq has external effects outside the country, the reflections of these contradict point of views can be seen on the members of the Iraqi diaspora. Including both orientations enriches the research and give the researcher and the reader wider vision on the political and cultural phenomena inside Iraq. It gives the ability to formulate a better picture on how each group uses social network, and cultural capital to maximize the benefits. That usage of social network and cultural capital serve at the end the interests of each group. The narratives of the interviewees draws a good map that enable us to differentiate where each group invest their cultural capital, and which social network each group uses to achieve their goal. The narratives of the interviewees represent mainly two parts, the religious Islamic orientation interviewees and the secular orientation

interviewees. The next part of the thesis represents materials from the interviews divided according to the research questions and the theoretical concepts.

The researcher feels that he is lucky to find interviewees that represent various ethnically and geographically parts of Iraq. The interviewees' origins were from the south, middle and middle-east of Iraq. Almost half of the interviewees come from urban backgrounds, other half have rural backgrounds. In the Iraqi context, the geographical origin of the person has an important role in shaping the social network of the individuals. As a result of that, the social networks of the interviewees were moving at during their visits to Iraq were various.

The findings and summing up of the interviews is presented after the interviews.

## **8. Evidence and analysis from field work**

Each individual story is a life time that the researcher did not want to interrupt and to give it the value it deserve, in the initial version of the research the researcher chose to write down the complete narrative of the participants one by one. But, and because of the formality of the academic writing, each narrative has been sliced according to the research question and the theoretical concepts of the paper.

### **10-1 Challenges and/or opportunities to get embed within the Iraqi society.**

Almost all of the participants, except one of them, mentioned that it was difficult for them to be embedded with the Iraqi society after these long years of exile. Most of the participants sees that, Iraqi society in which they lived in before they had left Iraq differs from the one they return back to. This is a common feeling between the participants with both Islamic or secular orientations.

For interviewee 1, difficulties did not started at the first visit to Iraq, in contrast he was warmly welcomed at the beginning, and "It was a real happiness to arrive in Iraq after the fall of Saddam's regime. When I arrived to my city Samawa [a city in the southern Iraq], I have been warmly greeted by a big number of relatives and friends. In the first visit, the happiness and the emotion of seeing the relatives covered everything, but in the following visits difficulties started arise" The difficulties that he talked about were in the way that Iraqi society views Iraqis in exile, who went back to Iraq after 2003. He faced some questions that he considered accusations. "Some of these questions were raised based on

a conception that, all Iraqis outside Iraq have a decent life that most of the fellow Iraqis inside Iraq are lacking. I tried to avoid some people with whom I thought that making contact might cause problem” (Interviewee 1)

While interviewee 2 says that, the reason for the difficulty lays on cultural differences between Sweden and Iraq. He explains that members of Iraqi diaspora who used to live in non-democratic countries did not face difficulties in embedment with the Iraqi society. “One of my main difficulties was with my fellows in the refugee camp. The problem is that they moved from the refugee camp to the non-democratic countries, while I moved to Sweden. As they lived long time in these non-democratic countries, this affected negatively their personality. There are huge differences between those who lived in democratic countries and those who lived in non-democratic countries. Those I knew in Sweden who went back to Iraq after the 2003 could not coexist with the society in Iraq. While those who were in the countries around Iraq were able to coexist” (Interviewee 2)

Interviewee 3 says, “The first visit to Iraq was in 2004. I felt surprised because of the miserable situation of the infrastructure in the country. In addition to that, mentality and social constructions have been changed from the society that I left in 1991. In my first visit I made a comment in front of a friend that, exile is our fate, I felt it may become hard for me to be embedded with the Iraqi society. It was very difficult for me to adapt with the situation there” (Interviewee 3)

The only participants that did not face a problem to get embedded with the Iraqi society was interviewee 4. He says, “I did not face any problem to get embedded with the Iraqi society when I went back. The reason for that is the social status that me personally and my family have within my community. This social status of a family well known in my city make me a welcomed person in most places I visit, and people used to listen to me very well” (Interviewee 4)

Interviewee 5 says, “It was very difficult for me to be embedded in the society there. The social situations in the country has changed from that one I left in 1990”

“My first visit to Iraq after the 2003 shocked me; I felt that, Iraqis are just empty people” (Interviewee 5)

Interviewee 6 differentiates between his experience with friends and relatives and with the surrounding society. He says “I did not face difficulties in readapting to my friends or relatives although I left them for decades. The difficulties was with the surrounding society. The mentality of the society has changed since I left in 1979” (Interviewee 6)

Interviewees 7 and 8 are a married couple who left Iraq together at the end of the 70s. They had long time experience with exile. It was not easy for them to get embedded again with the Iraqi society, they say “We went back to Iraq after a long time of exile, we saw the Iraqi society very much different from that we left in the 70s. During the 70s the society was more liberal, women have rights and they were respected in the society more than now. The features of civilized and liberal society that was famous in Iraq is faded, and now there is a weak shadow of that liberal and civilized society. The illiteracy is very high; norms of the society have been changed. The political ideologies have changed from that in the 70s. At that time, ideological differences of the political parties were based on ideologies that dominated that era which was the conflict between West and East. Iraqi political orientation after 2003 dominated by the Islamic, and sectarian ideologies that consider any liberal ideas that opposes the dominated Islamic point of view as atheism that must be refuted. That created difficulties for us to deal with the society, and even sometimes to deal with our friends and relatives” (Interviewee 7 and 8)

## **10-2 Impact of social network**

The experiences of social network are more diverse among participants, while their experiences in terms of embedment is have slightly differences.

Interviewee 1 did not need to reestablish his old social network. He used to create new network of friends in every visits he did to Iraq. He says, “I have a guesthouse where I serve those who walk towards the shrine of Imam Hussain in Karbala.” (Interviewee 1). Most of those who have guesthouses and serve the visitors of the shrine of Imam Husain

in Karbala used to stay at in these houses for almost one month in order to serve the visitors of the Imam in their way towards the shrine. Everyday new visitors either take rest in these guesthouses for some hours before they complete their walk to the shrine, or they sleep over at least one night in the guesthouse. That gives the owners and the workers in the guesthouse good opportunity to increase their social network.

Interviewee 2 has different experiences he says, “I faced difficulties when I went back to Iraq. One of my main difficulties was with my fellows in the refugee camp. The problem is that they moved from the refugee camp to the non-democratic countries” (Interviewee 2). This interviewee reassures the crucial importance of society where the member of diaspora was. The cultural differences between societies can facilitate or complicate the social network as it complicated the embedment for the same participants.

Interviewee 3 says, “My social network has been negatively affected due to the long period of time that I was in exile out of Iraq. In addition to that, my social network that I built in Sweden was not beneficial for me. The reason is that Iraqis that I knew in Sweden are from different cities that I could not visit while I am in Iraq. What was interesting for me is how fast a relationship can be built between “us” the migrants and other Iraqis who live in Iraq. Such relationship may not build that fast among Iraqis living inside Iraq, sometimes even if they are from one city” (Interviewee 3)

Interviewee 4 did not lose his social network that he had in Iraq even when he moved out of the country. He says, “For me I have continuous social network that started from the time I was in Iraq until now. I kept my connections with some people that I knew during the period I have been at Rafha refugee camp in Saudi Arabia. This relation continued when we moved to Sweden. In addition to that, my visits to Iraq after the 2003 helped me very much in creating new social networks. I used to go to Iraq twice a year. The main purpose of my visits was to serve visitors of Karbala during Ashura. This ritual is an important occasion for me to expand my social network in Iraq. At the same time I used these opportunities to transfer some of the social cultures that I learned in Sweden.” (Interviewee 4)

Interviewee 5 says, “From my social network before I leave Iraq, I had just six persons that I have continuing relations with. I could not continue my relation with most of my other friends that I knew before I left Iraq in the 1990” (Interviewee 5)

Interviewee 6 is the only participants who got use from the social network he had in Iraq before he left to exile. He says, “My previous social capital helped me when I went back to Iraq. I contacted my comrades who stayed in Iraq and they have good social network, which helped me finding my way in the society” (Interviewee 6)

Interviewee 7 and 8 say, “We definitely lost some of the social networks that we had before leaving Iraq. This loss of the social network happened for two main reasons. First, the long period of staying outside Iraq weakened this network. Second, most of social network that we had before we left Iraq built on based on political, artistic activities in addition to the network built through work. When we went back to Iraq, we found that our friends’ way of thinking changed, towards more utilitarian and self-love. In Denmark, we had very good and wide relations, especially when we participated in an Iraqi cultural organization, which helped us to increase our connections” (Interviewee 7 and 8)

Despite the fact that their old social network negatively was affected, the interviewee 7 and 8 got used from their social network they had outside Iraq in exile, “Although our previous social network inside Iraq has been negatively affected but our social network that we built in the exile was good, and serve our purpose in spreading the liberal ideas and democracy” (Interviewee 7 and 8)

### **10-3 Remittances**

Eckstein states that, “Immigrants transmit back home values and norms that they learn where they resettle, dubbed cultural remittances, such that cultural differences between migrants and nonmigrants may dissipate”<sup>59</sup> The question the participants have in the

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<sup>59</sup> Eckstein, Susan et al. 2013, ‘Immigrants from Developing Countries: An Overview of Their Homeland Impacts’ in *How Immigrants Impact Their Homelands*, Duke University Press, p.21

interviews was, during their visits to Iraq, what cultural remittances each of them was able to transfer from Sweden or Denmark to Iraq.

Interviewee 1 used religious rituals to approach people in Iraq and inform them what cultural capital he has from Sweden, “I used the opportunities of such gatherings in order to inform people on how much the rights of the individuals are considerable and respectable in Sweden. I talked to them also on the social services, and that every individual receive the same social services despite his position, class, or gender. Politically, I make a comparison between the function of the Swedish parliament and the huge differences between the parliament in Sweden and Iraq.” (Interviewee 1)

As a matter of democracy, interviewee 2 explained to the Iraqi people what democracy is and how people in democratic countries are practicing it. As a person who lived more than 15 years in Sweden interviewee 2 internalized the concepts of democracy, which gave him a good chance to transfer what he feels and practice of democracy. He says, “Concerning transferring the cultural capital to Iraq, I talked to the Iraqi people about democracy and the civilized conversation. I explained to them the reason behind the existence of democracy and democratic practices. I gave them several examples of some positive practices of democracy, such as public demonstration that demanding for rights for the people or asking for a service from the government. I told them democracy does not mean irrational criticism that is based on personal hatred, rather it is criticism that seeking is the development and the progress of the democratic proses and the development of the public services.” (Interviewee 2)

Interviewee 3 says, “I tried to transfer the cultural capital that I have from Sweden to the Iraqi society, especially to those with whom I feel in a position of responsibility. For example my relatives or those whom I related to with kinship.” (Interviewee 7 and 8)

Interviewee 4 has a guesthouse where he services the visitors of the shrine of Imam Husain in Karbala. He was in contact with people from different ages, and tried to orient people towards the right behavior whenever he sees something wrong. He talked on two

incidents when he dealt with youngsters in the first incident, and dealt the adults (fathers of families) with the other one.

Interviewee 5 says, “I considered transferring of cultural capital that I gained during the period I spend in Sweden as a duty that I must do to participate in the development of my country of origin. The majority of the people that I dealt with in Iraq, wanted to cooperate with me, most of them were responsive.” (Interviewee 5)

Interviewee 6, “I transfer various cultural capitals I possess from Sweden to Iraq. Some capital is important, others are less important. For example, I talked about the rights of women in Sweden. The social welfare system that protect any individual inside Sweden from starving and provide shelter to everyone.” (Interviewee 6)

Interviewees 7 and 8 both work together to transfer their experiences and cultural capital they possess to Iraq. Due to the fact that, they adhere to a left wing political ideology, interviewees 7 and 8 focused more on the social issue of the society. They say, “We talked a lot about various dangerous phenomena that we believe are destructive for the Iraqi society. For example the high percentage of school dropouts in the compulsory education stages.\* The school curriculum that contains ideas and approaches that reduce the status of women in society. In one occasion we had a meeting at the ministry of culture in Baghdad, we talked about some of these negative phenomena.” (Interviewee 7 and 8) This type of remittances is what Levitt calls “Normative Structures [which are] ideas, values, and beliefs. They include norms for interpersonal behavior, notions of intrafamily responsibility, standards of age and gender appropriateness...”<sup>60</sup>

They also say, “We work very hard in order to transfer the cultural capital that we gain through the period we lived in Denmark. We faced and still faces difficulties, but still, the more difficulties we face the more we insist on our goal.” (Interviewee 7 and 8)

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\* The compulsory education in Iraq is from class 1-6. Normally children’s age is 6-14 years old.

<sup>60</sup> Levitt, Peggy. 1998 Social Remittances: Migration Driven Local-Level Forms of Cultural Diffusion, *International Migration Review*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Winter, 1998), p. 933

#### **10-4 Participants' assessment of their experiences**

Interviewee 1 feels that he did not succeed to make change in the society of origin, the main reason for that is, as he says, "If I want to assess my efforts, I would say I could not succeed in making any change. This is for various reasons. First, these are the characteristics of the community I visited in Iraq. Members of the community are from one sect. For example, they want specific names from the same sect to win the election, even if they feel that these candidates cannot serve the voters properly. The biggest problem in Iraq now is that each sect sequesters itself within one sect and not ready to waive to one another" (Interviewee 1)

Interviewee 2 sees that, admiration that he received from the society inside Iraq was not enough, because it did not combined with action for the change. Interviewee 2 says, "I received positive answers from most of those whom I met. Unfortunately those who agreed with these ideas that I presented did not turn their acceptance to a practical actions. The acceptance are rarely exceed the admiration and/or the hope for the change. There was no real action towards the change. I felt that, there was some kind of frustration among the population in Iraq. This frustration affected negatively on the will of the population to work hard in order to achieve positive goals." (Interviewee 2)

Interviewee 3 says, "They [the people in Iraq] evaluated the ideas that I presented to them. They agreed with my comments and observations, but they could not do anything. Their excuses for their inability is that they follow their administration chain of commands, and they work within a system that needs complete change. I feel sad and disappointed that I could not do a change throughout the ideas that I presented. Despite this sadness, I still feel that there is hope for change to the better in Iraq." (Interviewee 3)

Interviewee 4 says, "Whenever there is a chance to transfer the cultural of democracy and acceptance of the others I tried to do that. I succeeded in some parts and failed in others." (Interviewee 4)

Interviewee 5 raised an important point when he linked between the ability to make change and the type of actions that need to be done. According to his opinion, individual actions are not effective in making changes, but rather, the collective actions are practical and more successful. These collective actions are the efforts to make the change which means that, different branches from the society work together for the sake of making changes. The government has responsibility of making changes through the legislations, and organizing major campaigns to links between the members of Iraqi diaspora and the Iraqis inside Iraq. Interviewee 5 says, “I do not feel that I achieved some goals except spreading knowledge and making comparison between the situation in Iraq and Sweden. What I did was individual activities, but the real change needs bigger efforts and needs legislation from the government.” (Interviewee 5)

Interviewee 6 partially attributed the failure of making changes on the security situation in Iraq after 2003, which affected the psychology of the Iraqis. He says, “My assessment to the experience of transforming the cultural capital is controversial. My experience has its success and fails, and that because various factors inside Iraq. If the situation in Iraq, especially the security situation was stable, and not as it was after 2003 the experience would be more fruitful. The security issue affected too much the way Iraqi people look at things. This violence pushed people to abandon the trench sectarianism. That made my mission very difficult. In contrast, I saw there were positive effects on the young people specially members of the communist party, and others who carry liberal ideologies.” (Interviewee 6)

Interviewees 7 and 8 say, “What we were mostly able to transfer is the ideas of healthy social relations, respecting the other and the social system that support the citizens through social welfare and the workable organizations. It was hard to transfer the ideas of real democracy and liberty as it is implemented in Denmark. We faced an idea rooted in the Iraqi conscience that democracy does not work in Iraq.” (Interviewees 7 and 8)

## 9. Summing up and findings

The interviewees have deep hope for a better change in Iraq. They all suffered from Saddam's regime in different ways, and all of them were away from their extended families for long years, some for decades. The narratives of the interviewees show that, they regularly visit Iraq, but the reasons for visits vary from group to group. The group of the interviewees with the Islamic orientation visits Iraq to participate in the religious rituals especially Ashoora, when millions of Muslims gather in Iraq especially in Karbala every year. For example, interviewee number 4, used to run a guesthouse in the road to Karbala. He goes every year during the period of Ashoora to be at that guesthouse. While the secular orientation group of interviewees combine in their visits between the family issues in terms of visiting their relatives, and participating in the political rituals and activities. Interviewees 7 and 8, who are couple explain why they visit Iraq, "We are retired now as both of us are over 60 years old. We used to visit Iraq regularly since 2003. As members in at the Iraqi communist party, our main purpose from these visits is to participate in the activities that the party do inside Iraq"

Les states that, "What cultural sociology adds to an understanding of frame alignment processes is the recognition that the public agenda is itself a space that is shaped by symbols, rituals and performances"<sup>61</sup> An implementation of this idea is seen with the member of the Iraqi diaspora that have been interviewed, and who used to use the religious and political rituals as a space to make changes. As the interviews show, the interviewees try to create an opportunity from these rituals to advocate for changes inside Iraqi society. They try to transfer the cultural capital they possess from democratic societies to Iraq, as a tool for change.

What makes this group of members of the Iraqi diaspora an interesting case study is that, they act differently from Iraqis lived inside Iraq during Saddam's regime. Acting differently does not mean that they consider aliens when they are among Iraqi society, rather they can be differentiated. What does that mean to be differentiated? It means that they have life style that differentiate them from Iraqis living in Iraq. Lifestyle as an attitude make the person becomes more recognizable, and under focus. To be the spot that people focused at, and be able to turn eyes and minds towards you, is an important

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<sup>61</sup> Les Back et al. *Cultural Sociology: An Introduction*. 2012, Wiley-Blackwell, UK. P. 116.

point and opportunity for the members of the Iraqi diaspora to benefit from in order to transfer the cultural capital they possess. The reason for that was, due to the isolation of Iraq from the international community because of the economic sanctions imposed by UN Security Council. These sanctions imposed on Iraq after the invasion of Kuwait in 1990. This period of sanctions from 1990 to 2003 isolated Iraq from the modern world, and that makes the group of Iraqis diaspora a distinctive group. Chaney states, “Lifestyles, as patterns of action and as a distinct type of *social grouping* [my italic], are embedded in the social order of modernity. They work as a set of expectations which act as a form of ordered control on the emerging social uncertainties of mass society”<sup>62</sup> This distinction used to be based on everything, starting from clothes, speaking and the way of eating, “Lifestyles are patterns of action that differentiate people”<sup>63</sup> That makes Lifestyles a criteria of everyday life in the modern world. Lifestyles may not be one of the patterns of classification for the people not part of modernity as Chaney states, “...they function in interaction in ways that would be incomprehensible to those who do not live in modern society”<sup>64</sup>

Summarizing the interviews shows that, most of the interviewees they have difficulties to be embedded with the Iraqi society after this long period in exile. The main reason for this difficulty as the interviewees say is that, the social construction have been changed during these years, for various reasons, especially wars and armed conflicts, in addition to the financial difficulties Iraqis faced since 1991, as a result of the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq by the UN Security Council in 1990. The way the interviewees see these changes in the social construction are different. For example interviewee number 3, who has Islamic orientation describes his observations by, “...mentality and social constructions have been changed from the society that I left in 1991. In my first visit I made a comment in front of a friend that “exile is our fate”. Same thing with interviewee number 5, who has secular orientation, he describes his first observation, “The social situation the country has been changed from that one I left in 1990. Definitely the change happened due to the difficulties Iraqis faced, problems and conflicts the country went

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<sup>62</sup> David Chaney, *lifestyles*, Routledge, New York 1996, p. 11

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p.4

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

through, especially the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq since 1990 due to the invasion of Kuwait.”

The interviewees with Islamic orientation focus more on, what they argue to be a high level of consumerism and tendency of selfishness the Iraqis inside Iraq. This is an examples of the changes that happened to the Iraqi personality. Interviewee number 4 gives two incidents that shows this tendency. In the first one he talks about group of youngsters who want to take apples more than they actually need, which are going to be rotten and thrown away. The second incident, with the father of the family who was angry just because the owner of the guesthouse served another family that arrived before them to the guesthouse. Although at the end, both families received the same type and level of service. While the interviewees with secular orientation see that the big changes happened in the Iraqi society, are in the norms of the society from liberal and open society to close and radical society, in addition to these they are in common with the Islamic orientation group.

The social network of all interviewees does not stay as it was when they left Iraq, except of the interviewee number 4, and that is because of the social status his family has in the city where they live. While Putnam gives a definition for the social capital that has close connection to the context of this interviewee, “features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit“<sup>65</sup>

Interviewee 3 raised very interesting point, he says “What was interesting for me is how fast a relationship can be built between “us” the migrants and other Iraqis who live inside Iraq. Such relationship may not be built that fast among Iraqis living inside Iraq, sometimes even if they are from one city.” This point was very interesting to me. The interviewee 1 says there was tension between “us” [the Iraqi migrants] and Iraqis inside Iraq, while number 3 says the opposite. I asked him “what do you think is the reason for such differences in creating friendship although you all talk same language, belong to the same city and have same traditions? According to his explanation, the reasons is that, people in Iraq may feel more comfortable to talk to “us”. That comes from the

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<sup>65</sup> R.D. Putnam, 1993, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, p. 67

differentiations that people make when they observe the differences in behaviors of the members of the Iraqi diaspora who are visiting Iraq, and the majority of the non-migrants local population. The focus becomes more on the differences of talking to other people, listening and giving more attention to the ideas presenting by others. The description that interviewee 3 gives can be links to what Chaney states on Lifestyles, he says “Lifestyles are patterns of action that differentiate people”<sup>66</sup>

When it comes to how the interviewees perceive Iraqi society after 2003, especially concerning the women. The answer comes from the solo female interviewee, she says, “The wife from her side explains that, the way the society sees the woman is very different from that in Denmark. I can even say it is worse than the way the Iraqi society used to see the woman in the 70s when we left. This rising tide of religious ideologies affected too much the way the society sees the woman. When I say the society, I mean the society with all components, even women themselves. There is a trend towards disrespect of the woman as an independent human, irrespective of the all her services and benefits to the society. Wide range of the society sees the woman throughout a piece of cloth covers her head. If she puts this cloth then she is a respectable woman, if not, then she is the opposite.”

Most of the interviewees tried to transfer part or all cultural capital they possess from Sweden or Denmark. The information that has been presented to the Iraqis inside Iraq can be classified at various categories.

First, cultural remittances concerning the social construction and the relation among the individuals in the society. Interviewee 1 says, “I used the opportunities of the gatherings in order to inform people on how much the right of the individuals are considerable and respectable in Sweden. I talked to them also on the social services that the state gives, and that every individual receives the same social services despite his position, class, or gender.”

Interviewee 3 says, “There is a big difference between the Iraqi society and the Swedish society. The Swedish society has a long term of stability and democratic culture. The Swedish society focuses on how to raise the individuals from their childhood on the bases of democracy and respecting human rights. Individuals in Sweden, have the sense of

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<sup>66</sup> David Chaney, *lifestyles*, Routledge, New York 1996, p. 11

independence, and the collective responsibility at the same time. That helps each member of the society to be responsible and understand the duties towards society. We learn these concepts in Sweden and reconstruct ourselves according to these concepts. I tried to transfer this information to Iraqis inside Iraq, in order to tell them that, a collective work of the society brings stability and prosperity.”

Second, cultural remittances that explain the relationship between citizens versus the state and politicians as a form of mutual political and social relation that effect at the end on the political life in the country. Same interviewee says, “Politically, I make a comparison between the function of the Swedish parliament and the parliament in Iraq. There is huge difference between the parliament in Sweden and Iraq.” Eckstein states, “Immigrants transmit back home values and norms that they learn where they resettle, dubbed cultural remittances, such that cultural differences between migrants and nonmigrants may dissipate”<sup>67</sup>

Interviewee number 2 explains to the people in Iraq what democracy mean, and how it can be practiced. He gives examples for some of the democratic practices in the liberal countries. Demonstration is one of these practices, he explains also that citizens need to do constructive criticism that aim for the development and avoid criticism that some people basically do be consider as criticism, but with no benefits. Interviewee number 4 from his side talks about the social cooperation, and that citizens must think about the interests of others in the same way they think about their interests. He explain also the importance of the concepts of social solidarity through the money that citizens pay to the state in the form of taxes, which at the end goes the service of the citizens.

Interviewee number 6 talks about rights of women in Sweden, so as the social welfares system that protect any individual lives inside Sweden from starving, and how this system provides shelter to everyone. From their side, interviewees 7 and 8 use art in order to consolidate liberalism as basic foundation of real democracy. These interviewees says, “What we were mostly able to transfer is the ideas of healthy social relations, respecting the other and the social system that support the citizens through social welfare and the workable organizations”.

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<sup>67</sup> Eckstein, Susan et al. 2013, ‘Immigrants from Developing Countries: An Overview of Their Homeland Impacts’ in *How Immigrants Impact Their Homelands*, Duke University Press, p.21

Examples of the second category that concern the relationship between citizens versus the state and politicians can be seen also through numerous interviewees. Interviewee number 1 says that he talks to the people in Iraq and, "...makes a comparison between the function of the Swedish parliament and the huge differences between the parliament in Sweden and Iraq. I even criticized some practices the candidates for the Iraqi parliament do, for example giving money or gifts to the people to gain their voices. I told them this is wrong and illegal at the same time".

While interviewee number 4 explains that he talks sometimes to the population and sometimes to the officials. He explains to the people how the relationship between citizens and people needs to be, "On the other hand I used to explain to people I met, that, a person who has an official position does not mean he is in a superior position over other citizens. Officials in high positions must be treated normally as any other normal citizen, and they need to treat people in a polite and respectful way". Same interviewee talks about a meeting he attended, he says, "As I talked to normal people in Iraq, I talked to some of the officials whom I met there. At these meetings I tried to present issues which serve the interests of the community. For example, there was a meeting with the governor and the council of the governorate. The meeting aimed to discuss issues concerning the public services at the governorate. There were big number of attendances; most of them presented personal issue that serve their personal interests. When my turn came, I did not present personal issues, rather they were issues concerning the interests of the community. When I finished my discussion, some people around me started murmuring, they did not like the way I brought up these issues, while they focused on personal benefits. The officials from their side recognized that my speech was different from those of others. As we were going outside the hall, one of them approached me and asked you did not talk like the others; do you really live here in our city? That means they recognized the difference between presentations and that is due to the difference in life style between the others and me."

While interviewee number 5 who has secular orientation talks about the role of unions in balancing the relationship between the people and the government. Same interviewees talks about meeting that he attended, "

Interviewee 2 explains that, “Concerning transferring the cultural capital to Iraq, I talked to the Iraqi people about democracy and the civilized conversation. I explained to them the reason behind the existence of democracy and democratic practices. I gave them several examples of some positive practices of democracy, such as public demonstration that demanding for a right to the people or asking for a service from the government. I told them democracy does not mean irrational criticism that is based on personal hatred, rather it is criticism that seeking the development and the progress of the democratic proses and the development of the public services.”

While interviewee 6 participated in political debate about the Iraqi election law, “I participated in some debates concerning the election law in Iraq. The election law that used since 2006 based on a closed list, where names fixed in a list and the head of the list has control over its members. That law rooting for a sectarian division in the society. Each sect or ethnicity formulated it won list of parliament candidates, which ends up with a weak and divided parliament. Debate that I participated with was fruitful by adopting a new election law that give more flexibility to create small coalitions and alliances that may help to push some liberal candidate to the parliament.”

Religious and political rituals are the main occasions that the interviewees used to transfer the cultural capital they have to the people inside Iraq. The short-term visitors to Iraq from the Iraqi diaspora who have religious orientation, used to use the opportunities that the ritual of Ashoora provides to have direct approach to people inside Iraq. While those who have secular orientation of the members of the Iraqi diaspora, used to use political rituals and activities to talk directly to the people, and transfer the cultural capital they possess. Art and music is an important tool for them as it is the case of the man in interviewees 7 and 8 who belong to the Iraqi communist party. He uses such tool to spread the concepts of united and collective responsibility inside the society.

The impacts that each interviewee has made is different from one to another. Some of them sees that they could not make any change and even affect on the society. For example interviewee number 1 blames the construction of the community he visits, which prevent any change, “...I could not succeed to make any change. This is for various reasons. First, the characteristic of the community I spent my visit among. Members of the community are from one sect”. While interviewee number 2, who is from the same

city interviewee number 1 belong to, says that, the community accepted the ideas that he presents, but the general frustration towards the situation in the country and especially towards the officials. This story that, this interviewee may narrate may explain the reason behind this frustration. He talks about a young architect who lives in Sweden and was in a short visit to same city. This young architect presented a workable and effective solution that helps the city to reduce the difficulties that citizens face when they visit different governmental department. But, because of the corruption this effective project was never completed. Violence is one of the reasons that prevents the society from accepting new ideas as interviewee 6 says, “The security issue effected too much on the way Iraqi people look at things. This violence pushed people to abandon the trench sectarianism. That made my mission very difficult”.

Despite these negative impacts still there are positive side, interviewee number 3 says, “I still feel that there is hope for change to the better in Iraq. The change cannot be done by part of the Iraqi population [he means the migrants], but rather by a real cooperation between a wide range of population from different classes and categories”. This interviewee sees that he was able to make change. The change is temporary change that he could achieved because he was able to reach the real consciousness of the people that have been misled due to the circumstances Iraq went through. The same happened to interviewee 5, who sees that, people accept his ideas but, there is not seriousness for adopting and implementing these ideas to achieve the change for the better. Interviewees 7 and 8, who are a married couple live in Denmark assess their experience in transforming cultural capital by saying, “If we want to assess our experience in transferring the cultural capital that we have from Denmark to Iraq, we would say it failed in some parts and succeed in others”. Their statement can give good picture on how much success or failure can be result from the efforts for transforming cultural capital from Sweden and Denmark to Iraq.

## **10. Conclusion**

The aim of the thesis is to investigate the ability of the members of the Iraqi diaspora, from Sweden and Denmark, to transfer cultural capital they possess during exile to Iraq after the fall of the regime of Saddam’s Husain in 2003. As Iraq moves towards

democracy, a bottom-up approach is needed for the democratization process, in addition to the top-down approach that already exist since 2003. It was not difficult to reach members from Iraqi community in Sweden and Denmark, especially for a researcher who is originally from Iraq. In addition to that, there are many Iraqi associations established in these two countries, which facilitate making contacts with members of the Iraqi community. The difficulty was in finding the interviewees that match the requirements of the research. The requirements are, the member of the diaspora has to be living in either country not less than 15 years at time of the research. He or she needs to make regular visits to Iraq since 2003, and participate in transferring cultural capital to Iraq by using different occasions, such as religious, political rituals or political activities.

De facto Iraqi society inside Iraq, and part of the Iraqi diaspora could not come to a common agreement on the Iraqi situation after the change of Saddam Husain's regime. This disagreement comes from the fact that, there are two contradict political powers try to control the political scene in Iraq. The religious Islamic power, and the secular power. For that reason it was very important to combine these contradicting powers in the thesis, to examine the performance of each power.

Throughout the interviews, interesting facts were raised to the researcher. Two of the most important facts are, the geographical and regional affiliations of the people who were interviewed are diversified. The other point is that, despite the fact, that the political parties that have Islamic orientation ideologies dominated the political scene nowadays in Iraq, but there is dissatisfaction from some of the interviewees, who follow the same ideology on the general situation in Iraq after 2003. These facts help any organized efforts in the future that want to benefit the Iraqi society from the cultural capital that members of diaspora possess.

Why I say organized efforts, because this research dealt with individuals and their efforts to transfer cultural capita to Iraq. Despite their number, individuals cannot reach same achievements that organizations can achieve. If we want to benefit the society inside Iraq from the cultural capital that Iraqis that live in a liberal society have, we need to organize this effort in formal or semi-formal way, or even by non-governmental organizations. The formal, semi-formal and non-governmental organizations, have more resources and

ability to reach larger number of components of the Iraqi society, which increasing the benefits of remitting cultural capital.

### **11. Suggestion for farther research**

This research can be enriched more in the future throughout long term research that follow up specific number of the members of the Iraqi diaspora, who regularly visit Iraq and participate in various rituals or activities. The aim from following up these members form the Iraqi diaspora is to assess the achievement they can reach in terms of remitting cultural capital.

Another suggestion for the future to increase the remitting cultural capital is, formulating some type of cooperation between Iraqi organizations from Iraq and the country of settlement. The aim from such cooperation is to enrich the culture of democracy inside Iraq by using Iraqi human resources. Such cooperation is going to facilitate the acceptance of any new ideas the Iraqi society my feel unfamiliar with.

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## Appendix 1

Questions and points presented at the general discussion meetings to collect the research samples.

The meetings with the Iraqi associations in Sweden and Denmark started by presentation done by the researcher to present the research idea and the theoretical part of the research. The researcher presented to the audience the importance of this research, in term of building up a bottom-up approach of democratization in Iraq after 2003.

The meetings covered these points and questions.

1. The importance of the participation of the population, and in particular the diaspora in the democratization process.
2. In your opinion, to what extend was the participation of the Iraqi diaspora inside Iraq after changing the regime in 2003?
3. How much difficult fort the members of diaspora who spend more than 15 years in Sweden or Denmark to be embedded in the society in Iraq?
4. Do you think the social network that you had or have now in Iraq is useful to present democratic ideas when you visit Iraq?
5. Is it easy for the members of diaspora who visit Iraq to talk about the culture of democracy in Sweden and Denmark? What were the difficulties or/and opportunities?

## Appendix 2

### Questions for the interviews

1. Your age?
2. From which city in Iraq are you?
3. When you left Iraq? To where?
4. When you arrived to Sweden or Denmark?
5. Your political orientation?
6. During Saddam's regime, have you visited Iraq after your left it?
7. When was your first visit to Iraq after 2003?
8. Were you able to be embedded in the Iraqi society after these years of diaspora?  
What were the challenges or/and opportunities?
9. Have you maintained your social network that you had inside Iraq when you left the country? Did you build new social network in the country of exile?
10. How useful was your social network in transferring the cultural capital that you possessed from Sweden or Denmark?
11. How useful was your social network inside or outside Iraq to introduce you to the local society in Iraq?
12. Were you able to transfer the cultural capital to the Iraqi society? If No, why? If Yes, how, and what the effects of this transformation?
13. How do you assess your experience in transferring the cultural capital to the inside Iraq?