

# **The Politics of Low Capacity: The Case of Kurdistan**

**by**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines governing capacity in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq. It focuses on a few key political conditions and reforms that are necessary for this regional government to achieve greater governing capacity in Kurdistan. The first key area is political environment, defined as political leadership that is willing and flexible to conduct any reform that is necessary to improve the KRG's governing capacities. A second reform is institutionalization of the public sectors in Kurdistan, following the example of Singapore. This refers to establishing agencies with clear agendas and responsibilities to achieve increased performance in its civil service. Two other key elements for capacity development that the KRG needs to adopt are effective promotion and recruitment systems. The paper builds on various literatures that detail the different paths for providing these conditions and conducting reforms for developing better governing capacity. Additional factors found in this study include the lack of clear agendas by its political leadership, poor partnerships between the KRG's agencies, and a unique type of corruption that the existing literatures have not explained enough. Using the literature and Singapore's governance successes, this paper suggests ways to improve governing capacity in Kurdistan.

**Keywords:** Kurdistan Regional Government; capacity building; promotion; recruitment; Nepotism; corruption

*To my family.*

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## List of Acronyms

CSC	Civil Service College
CPIB	Corruption Practices Investigation Bureau
DCC	Development Coordination and Cooperation
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
DPADM	Division of Public Administration and Development
ETTC	European Training Technological Center
INGOs	International Non-Government Organizations
ITE	Institute of Education
JICA	Japan International Agency
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
KIPA	Kurdistan Institute for Public Administration
KOICA	Korean International Cooperation Agency
KNA	Kurdistan National Assembly
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
KRRC	Kurdistan Regional Reform Commission
MHESR	Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
MOE	Ministry of Education
NSG	National School of Government UK
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFFP	Oil for Food Program
PAP	People's Action Party
PSD	Public Service Division
PUK	Patriotic United Kurdistan
POCA	Prevention of Corruption Act
PSC	Public Service Commission
TICI	Transparency International Corruption Index

## **Executive Summary**

This study examines governing capacity in Kurdistan in northern Iraq. It uses the regional government (KRG) as its empirical case study in comparison with Singapore to understand the reasons behind some of the deficiencies that the Kurdistan Region Reform Commission (KRRC) has reported in 2012. These problems include corruption, partisan loyalty in the government's institutions, poor public services, and many other outstanding problems with the Iraqi federal government over territorial disputes and natural resources (Oil). In particular, this research project aims to understand if these problems are related to human resource capacity and the recruitment system within the KRG's institutions, specifically looking at the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of High Education and Scientific Research of the KRG.

This paper compares the KRG's Ministry of Planning (MOP), and Ministry of High Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) with Singapore's Ministry of Education, Public Service Commission, and several other institutions that operate under these two major ministries. There are some important reasons for comparing the KRG with Singapore. First, Singapore has a similar population size to Kurdistan. Singapore makes for a good success case, based on its classification as a developed nation and ranks as one of the lowest corruption levels in the world (Corruption Index, 2011). The main reason behind Singapore's success, this paper argues, is its strong political leadership, which placed the development of Singapore as its main responsibility. Singapore's governing model has been effective due to many reforms, like the creation of key institutions (The Council for Professional and Technical Education, Human Capital Leadership Institute, Civil Service College, and so on) that jointly work together to maintain the recruitment system based on merit, and the promotion techniques that develop further capacities. In contrast to Singapore, the KRG's low level of governing capacity results from political parties' interference in the public sectors, poor levels of institutional organization, and issues of corruption that have undermined the recruitment and promotion systems in Kurdistan.

# 1. Introduction

Similar to many developing nations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq is challenged by several governance problems. This research paper seeks to understand the reasons behind some of these problems as reported by the Kurdistan Region Reform Commission (KRRC) in March 2012. According to this report, the KRG is still experiencing poor governing performance in its civil service, facing corruption, partisan loyalty in government's institutions, and weak agendas for developing its nation. The report also mentions many other outstanding problems with the Iraqi federal government over territory disputes and who should manage natural resources, specifically oil, in the areas under the KRG's control. Beyond this report, many Kurdish cities have recently experienced demonstrations and protests against the KRG's governing performance. To understand the nature of these problems, this research paper examines some of areas that are relevant to the ways the KRG has been managing these issues. These areas include the level of political stability, political leadership will, and the political environment that the KRG has established. It also includes the ability of public agencies, organizations and boards to function with clear responsibility, based on quantitative evaluation systems. The KRG's personnel management system, specifically the recruitment mechanisms and the training programs are our next topics. Understanding the influence of these key elements on governing capacity is important because lacking of any one of these elements will not only undermine the governing capacity for presenting better civil services, but can also cause further corruption and problems.

By examining the level of governing capacity in Kurdistan, this study contributes to furthering research on governing capacity in developing nations in two ways. First, it enables us to better understand public policy processes in the new developing regions. This is achieved by looking at developing regions/nations' political structures that have been shaped by conflicts that have limited the establishment of effective systems of public policy. Second, this study identifies the nature and the types of negative

phenomena, specifically unique types of corruption that exists under the KRG's authority in Kurdistan. The type of corruption that exists in Kurdistan is unique because it involves not only the ruling elite but also ordinary citizens. It is a general knowledge that in developing nations the ruling class abuses authority for personal gains, while ordinary citizens suffer and complain about it. However, under the KRG's leadership, while the ruling class has been accused for its involvement in corruption, ordinary citizens have also become a part of this negative phenomenon by providing support to the corrupt ruling elite and in return receive free salaries, and different types of grants. This relationship between the officials and citizens has given corruption a different meaning in Kurdistan. It has become a way of exchanging favors between citizens and officials under the KRG's leadership. The existing literature lacks any type of explanation for this phenomenon. The current literature has identified this phenomenon as being associated with the ruling elites, but it ignores the social support for such negative phenomena.

The key research questions of this paper are: What is the nature of the political conditions? How do public agencies, boards and recruitment systems function? And what types of reforms has the KRG been conducting for building a competent civil service in Kurdistan? To answer these questions, this paper examines the political environment and stability, and political leadership for building more effective governing capacity in Kurdistan through comparison to Singapore's experience. The main motivation behind choosing Singapore as a comparison case study to Kurdistan is that Singapore is an ideal case, one of the few developing countries that has had consistently low levels of corruption. Thus, to understand the level of the KRG's agencies and organizations, we will examine the Ministry of Planning (MOP), and the Ministry of High Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) policies and educational training programs in association with Singapore's Ministry of Education and Public Service Commission (and a few other agencies and boards that have been used for the same purposes by Singapore's government). Through this comparison, this paper has two important objectives. First, it attempts to identify how the Singapore government was able to build its effective and responsible model of governing, what in turn, the KRG has been missing in the reform processes. Second, to identify the nature of the challenges and the type of corruption that the KRG has been facing. Besides examining these issues, this paper attempts to understand what other factors may have contributed

to these challenges in Kurdistan. This paper argues that without improving its political conditions, generating stronger political will for reform, and adopting more efficient recruitment and promotion systems, the KRG will not be able to improve its governance performance.

## **1.1. Agenda**

The second chapter provides and reviews some important literature regarding the definitions and different approaches to governing capacity. It reviews some approaches regarding political preconditions that foster strong political leadership and will, as well as approaches that encourage the establishment of various organizations and boards with clear responsibilities and functions that are vital for presenting better governing capacities. It also presents literature on the required criteria for recruitment and promotions systems, and educational preparation that are necessary for developing capacities within the governments' institutions. Reviewing these important literatures and their concerns is important because it allows us to establish a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, particularly corruption and nepotism, that have limited governing capacity development in Kurdistan in northern Iraq.

Chapter three reviews the successful process of governing capacity building in Singapore. This chapter will highlight the tasks and reforms that the Singapore political leadership conducted to develop their nation. This chapter will shed some light on the nature of these achievements by looking at the major public boards and agencies that the Singapore government created to play active roles in building a strong human resource capacity. These public agencies include Singapore's Ministry of Education, Singapore's Public Service Commission (SPSC), and several other boards and agencies that are created by these two major actors. Each of these boards and organizations has different roles in designing and implementing governments policies and agendas.

Chapter four will provide a brief background of the creation of the KRG. Providing this background is significant for this study because it places these problems in their historical context. This chapter will touch on the key areas that have been shaped by past events and address the ones that remain relevant to the challenges that

the KRG is currently facing. In particular, this paper will discuss the type of political leadership that has been running the KRG, the nature of the KRG's organizations, in particular MOP, MHESR, and any other boards or agencies' responsibilities and functions regarding capacity development. It examines the governing capacity development programs, such as training courses, educational activities, and evaluation programs under these public entities.

Chapter five presents the analysis and discussion of data and information from both Singapore and the KRG. The final chapter (six) will conclude the study and suggest some realistic recommendations that are essential for the KRG to implement in the process of building greater governing capacities, and to overcome its challenges in providing a competent civil service.

## **1.2. Methodology**

This research paper uses all the three types of sources: primary, secondary, and tertiary. I used secondary data to understand how the existing literature have theorized the components of governing skills, and to what extent these components exist under the KRG and the Singapore's models of governing. These secondary sources include journal articles, government websites, reports, and official documents that are issued by particular commissions and organizations on the KRG and Singapore. This research project also uses some tertiary data, like short articles and reports by scholars and journalists that have been published in the local Kurdistan media. For primary data, I conducted field research in the region, Kurdistan, during September 2012. In this field research, over 40 employees from the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of High Education, and Scientific Research, and some other public directories of the KRG, were interviewed. These employees were from three different levels: (1) High rank officials, these included ministers' advisors, general directors, and senior managers: (2) Middle level employees contained directors and public managers: (3) Lower level employees involved public servants below managerial positions. From these interviews, I attempted to grasp a better understanding of the three key areas. First, I needed to understand the nature of the political conditions under the current administration of KRG, the nature of organizations and boards and their responsibilities and functions in process of improving



capacity development in Kurdistan. Second, I needed to understand how the recruitment and promotion system are functioning under the KRG. Finally, I had to better understand the extent of the relationships between the KRG governing capacity and the challenges they have been facing. Table (1.1) in the index section (A) shows the questions that were asked during the interviews that I conducted in my field research.

The survey was conducted, using a sample selected from the KRG employees, who were then given structured interview questions. The purpose of this survey was to test my claim and examine to what extent the KRG's problems were related to the political conditions, the way the KRG's agencies and boards function, human resource management and the promotion programs such as educational and training courses, and scholarship rewards the KRG offers to the public employees and university students in Kurdistan.

## **2. Literature on Governing Capacity**

### **2.1. Introduction**

There are numerous literatures that explain and provide different perspectives regarding governing capacities. One of these perspectives on governing capacity building is that capacity is often about empowering the authorities' institutions to be capable of providing civil services for their targeted population affectively (Eade, 1997). However, some other views elaborate and expand on this view further by claiming that a high capacity for governments during the twenty-first century means not only strengthening the institutions of the public sectors to deliver public services effectively, but also to meet the needs and desires of specific conditions that emerge unpredictably in different societies. The process of establishing these boards and organizations in the public sector is complicated by social and political conditions, specifically in the developing regions. Governments in the developing nations face many challenges; often having to start from the scratch to build new public organizations or institutions, and develop good skills for managing these organizations (Rizavi, 2008).

Eade (1997) mentions that capacity building and its components cannot be examined separately from political, organization, and even personal levels of action. For example, governments that present sustainability in their development programs "have a long-term potential for continuation and growth" (Hira and Parfitt, 2004, p. 17). Bourgon (2010) argues that sustainability in development programs is also important because it creates a circumstance in which actors, other than the public servants, can also be involved in government's activities in a way that supplements state's responsibilities. Therefore, in a sustainable circumstance, which is an important political precondition, authority can shape and direct the choices and actions of its citizens to support its policies and agendas affectively. Providing such a political environment is important because, as Webb (2005) explains, the general expectation on who should be held accountable for dealing with the implementation of public policies has shifted from the

state's shoulders or its institutions alone to society as a whole once democratization takes hold.

## **2.2. Corruption, a Major challenge to Capacity Building**

According to scholars, some communities have difficulty with developing capacity building due to “their structural, political and resources impediments in their way” (Kenny and Clarke, 2010, p. 9). Other literature considers corruption as one of the roots of this weakness in the governing performance (Lengeth, 2006; Brown, 2006). Before reviewing literatures on how deep the effect of corruption is on a government's performance, it is necessary to provide some definitions of corruption and its different types. According to Brown (2006), “corruption is the abuse of public and private power for private, personal, unlawful, financial, pecuniary profit, benefit and gain” (p. 59). Even though there might be a universal basic understanding of corruption, for the purpose of this study, I review some detailed acts of corruption as major challenges towards capacity building.

According to Lengeth, these acts of corruption include: (1) grand and petty, (2) active and passive, (3) embezzlement, theft and fraud acts of corruption. The petty and grand acts of corruption are challenging the capacity building process because while the former involves the distortion of the central functions of government, the latter exists in the context of established governance and social frameworks. Petty corruption is about receiving a small amount, and in return granting or making favours to civil servant's relatives using public position (Langseth, 2006).

The active and passive acts of corruption perhaps do not need much explanation. While active corruption is about a payment of an offer that is accepted, passive is about an attempt that has not been accepted. The components of this type could be anything from giving out valuable documents or inside information, to sexual or other favours in return for direct or indirect benefits to the public employee. This is also a challenging phenomenon because one incident of corruption in one organization can encourage similar acts in other institutions. It could even become an acceptable act in the society (Langseth, 2006). Last but not least, the “embezzlement” act of corruption

involves conversion of cash, property or any valuable items by an individuals who are not in entitled to them, but due to his or her position, he or she has access to them (Langseth, 2006). These sorts of corruption are challenging because they slow down the attempts for establishing openness, justice, and efficiency in the public sector's institutions (ADB/OECD, 2006).

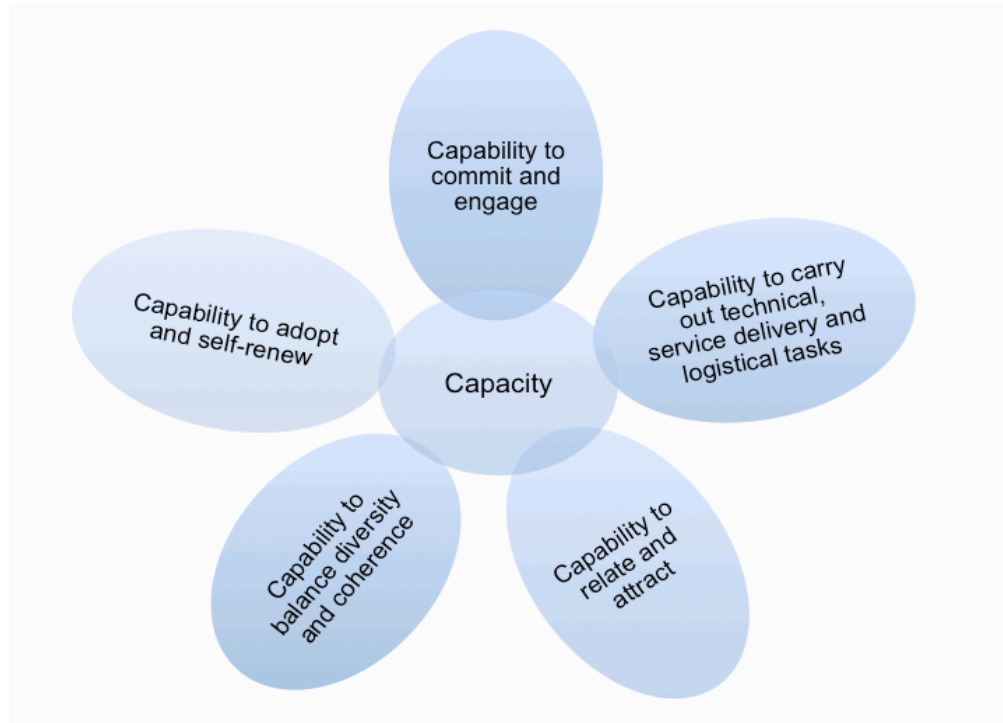
### **2.3. Meanings and Approaches of Capacity Development**

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) suggests that capacity development means teaching citizens how to conduct their daily tasks better. Developing capacity is not only about improving the existing public organizations and institutions but also creating new ones, while putting additional focus on establishing better management systems through educational and training programs. It is a process of maintaining and strengthening the capabilities of individuals, organizations, and public institutions to reach their selected development goals (2010; 2009). Michael Howlett mentions some procedural instruments that should be implemented to affect policy outputs and reform policy processes, authorities use these “organizational resources of government, (personnel, staffing, institutionalization and internal procedural, etc.), to alter or affect policy processes in order to better achieve general government aims or specific program activities” (2011, 72). This ability can be achieved by strengthening government's institutions, establishing local markets, recognizing local interest groups, enhancing productivity, and using natural and human resources wisely (James, 1998).

However, Dool (2005) points out that governance capacity building shouldn't mistakenly assume that training of individuals, or other preparations, will automatically improve the performance of the government organizations and institutions. There are other factors such as commitment, time, and most importantly well-defined capacity requirements that are necessary for presenting better capacity development or good governance. Some other approaches take this argument further and claim that the existing approaches of capacity building have not been able to provide a comprehensive definition that includes all the necessary conditions for building better governing capacities. These authors' approach to capacity, which is summarized in Figure (1),

explains that capacity development includes the development of some core interconnection capabilities.

**Figure 1**      ***Elements of Capacity***



Note: adopted from Dool (2005).

As the figure shows, these core elements of capabilities include the ability of actors to commit and engage in mobilizing financial, human, and organizational resources. It is about improving the capability to adopt and self-renew, to balance diversity and coherence, and to gather and mobilize public supports behind targeted policies. Furthermore, they explain that capacity development comes down to combining all objectives and goals that should be implemented incrementally in the long run as a part of altering conditions, education, and social values. Finally, and most importantly, it is about capability to balance diversity and coherence in the resources that government organizations and boards manage (Brinkerhoff, 2010; Baser and Morgan, 2008; Smith, 1973).

All these definitions and approaches are important because they consider some core elements of governing capacity. However, as Baser and Morgan (2008) point out,

since the level of complexities of some issues relevant to public policy are different from one place to another, it could be a challenging assignment to identify a single approach that fits in all the environments. For example, public organizations and boards contain different types of actors with different types of skills that can affect the impacts and activities of these boards on the society. Thus, each nation's development must be studied in the light of its own circumstance (Hira and Parfitt, 2004; Smith, 1973). The point that these scholars embrace is important because the factors that affect governing capacity building are different under the political conditions of the developing regions in which developing an effective capacity is the target (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Hira and Parfitt, 2004). Therefore, it is important to review some of the literature on these political conditions and how they affect capacity development differently.

## **2.4. Political Conditions for Capacity Development**

There are three important political conditions that are necessary for developing good governing performance, as well as diminishing the challenges that the government faces in developing nations. These preconditions include a strong political leadership that has a clear vision and agendas for developing its nation, a strong political will that is eager to conduct all the necessary reforms, and a willingness to apply the rules that are necessary for developing a good model of governing. The third condition, political stability, is perhaps the most important one because it offers enough opportunities for the political leadership to establish a responsible and effective government without any disturbance.

According to Dwivedi (2002), there are several characteristics that good political leadership should contain. These characteristics are showing responsibility and accountability not only for administrative procedures but also respecting the rule of law, and avoiding illegal activities. By being ethical, responsible, and accountable, the political leadership will be able to ensure that the public servants and officials fulfill their responsibilities and prevent the abuse of power. Some other authors explain political leadership in the context of not only responsibilities, but also the need for leaders to be good, effective, and ethical (Masciulli and Knight, 2009). According to these authors, good political leadership should be determined and use efficiency in achieving its

targeted goals. It should be a robust democratic ideal that depends on soft power, using culturally attractive vision with high communication skills to indirectly influence the performance of other. It should be adaptive, using different means in responding to its challenges, and considering the short and long-term consequences of their actions. These characteristics of political leadership are important because they enable leaders to generate new perspective and invent new rules for new situations. According to Rotberg (2012), political leadership in developing nations plays a critical role because it “makes much more of a difference in every realm, in particular the political realm” (p. 16). However, even though some of the political leaders in the developing nations have been able to provide some level of stability, seeking private gains is still a visible phenomenon.

Another condition for better governing capacity in managing the challenges that governments face is political will. According to Brinkerhoff (2000), political will is a complicated matter because it incorporates individuals, organizations, and governance systems and activities. Individuals’ political will involves motivations and capacities that they possess and practice through the governance systems of public institutions or organizations. For example, open democratic countries are more likely to have leaders with strong political will for reforms due to accepted rules of accountability and responsibility as foundation of their political systems. However, under authoritarian regimes, political leaders are less willing to conduct reforms because they have leaders “whose will to tackle corruption is limited, superficial, or cynical” (Brinkerhoff, 2000, 244). In addition, under such regimes, there are limited chances to express concerns about corruption, and its negative impacts on the public in general.

Another condition for presenting a better governing capacity is a stable political environment. This is because public institutions and public servants do not perform their duties in a political or cultural vacuum (Brinkerhoff and Johnson, 2009; Eade, 1999). The state’s institutions or personnel duties are determined by the extent of collaboration that exists within the political conditions that they have created. According to Eade (1998), a stable environment is one of the vital preconditions for capacity development because capacity building is a slow process, not a shortcut for development. Political stability is necessary because actors and organizations need a suitable operation space where legitimacy and political support are secured and not disrupted. According to Duit

and Galaz (2008), the Western democratic governments have been able to present good governing performances due to their stable political conditions upon which their “explorative and exploitive” capacities can flourish. Furthermore, Bourgon (2010) points out that this is the case because they have been able to create rules and principles without which it is impossible to present a good level of governing capacity:

- A respect of the rule of law and public institutions
- Fairness, transparency and accountability for the exercise of powers and the use of public funds
- Public sector values, including the expectation that public servants, in serving the public trust, will exhibit integrity, probity and impartiality. (p. 205)

Because of these values and principles, democratic governments have been able to create a stable environment upon which building further capacities is possible (Brinkerhoff and Morgan, 2010; Baser and Morgan, 2008).

However, most developing nations lack political stability, which is making governing capacity development a difficult task. This is because, as Baser and Morgan (2008) point out, the political systems that are more focused on their survival under unstable conditions lose the interest of pursuing the process of capacity development (Baser and Morgan, 2008). For example, fragile states could have capacity deficits because of ongoing ethnic, religious, and class-based groups deep divisions and conflicts that have offered limited opportunities for stability (UNDP, 2010). When these negative phenomena exist in these fragile states, stability moves towards failure, and the process of policy implementation faces more challenging environments (Brinkerhoff, 2010; Hira and Parfitt, 2004). Thus, according to the UNDP (2010), political stability is one of the conditions for continuing the process of capacity development in the developing nations. Fred-Mensah (2004) mentions that unstable political environments encourage limited trust among public servants and politicians. In such distrusted political environments, there will be a very limited interaction between not only the government organizations and agencies but also between the public servants and ordinary citizens. In addition, if government organizations and agencies lack trust, they will not be able to act effectively in managing the challenges and difficulties that they face (Fred-Mensah, 2004). Furthermore, Berg and Hjerm (2010) refer to three types of political trust, but the most important of these is institutional performance. This is



important because it explains trust in association with the tasks and performances of public organizations in unstable environment. This trust can only be built as a consequence of government's delivery of the services that the public's demand. However, what determines the capability of public organizations and their functions is the type of political structures that they function with. As Brinkerhoff argues (2000), the central agenda for good governance is responsiveness to citizens' demands because citizens do not tolerate a political structure that does not foster accountability and transparency. This seems to be possible only in a stable political environment that can foster all the above requirements.

## **2.5. Establishing Organization with Clear Responsibility**

One of the important conditions for presenting a strong governing capacity is having various organizations and boards with clear responsibilities and functions. According to Salamon (2002), Western democratic countries' governments went through a massive wave of organizational reforms to achieve their public policy targets better. This reform included employing a new set of tools with "its own operating procedures, skill requirements, and delivery mechanism" (p. 5). In many developed countries, designing these new organizational instruments with clear policies and skills for governing public sectors have "become major agents of new policies and approaches" (Stoker 1999, 42). Also, these new organizational designs are considered as important instruments for governments because each one of them is "a tool for involving non-partisans in decision-making on the bases of their expertise, or their involvement in relevant private or voluntary sector activity" (Stoker 1999, p. 43).

Howlett (2011) notes that these forms of procedural organizations and public instruments are not necessarily about the direct or indirect delivery of a service that governments should provide. They are about restructuring policy agencies' behaviors through network management efforts. Furthermore, these organizational tools can be divided into two categories: direct and quasi-government instruments. While governments that practice command and control systems use direct governing instruments, authorities that depend on corporatist governing models use indirect government instruments. Besides these two types of organizational instruments, there

are different forms of substantive instruments (Howlett, 2011), which depend on public resources to serve government goals and agendas (Hira and Parfitt, 2004).

Many scholars argue that capacity building involves introducing a wide range of networking processes between government institutions and agencies on one side, training institutions, and International Non Government Organizations (NGOs) on the other side (UNDP, 2010). Organizational targets for capacity development include structuring a networking system among these new boards, rearrangement in the civil services that are delivered by these agencies or boards, and establishing innovative personnel management system. These structural organizational reforms are essential for capacity development because they enable the governments to pursue its policies effectively by using different boards and agencies (Brinkerhoff, 2010; Eade, 1998). According to Agranoff and McGuire (1999), these reforms have created an atmosphere of interconnection that has helped governance to perform better. In addition, these reforms in governing have not only enabled the administrative bodies to provide sufficient public services (Flinders, 1999), but also to develop various procedural instruments. According to the UN (2005), this reform in the ways public sector institutions function is about developing a bureaucratic organizational model that was “built around clearly defined and predictable tasks” (p. 17).

However, by only considering these structural reforms or the establishment of more agencies alone for better governing capacity, as Hira and Parfitt (2004) mention, one can misunderstand the deeply entrenched and complicated nature of the public organizations in developing countries. This is due to the fact that in the developing nations, the effort of specific reorganization is matched by the nature of the reaction that such a reform would face. Thus, it is important to consider the possibility of changes in governance performance of policy implementation by looking at its reaction from important groups in that society (Thomas and Grindel, 1991). Furthermore, Crosby (1996) mentions that in developing nations many of the major factors that are behind the public institution’s failure are of war, repression, and migration, and shortage of skilled human resources.

According to Howlett (2009), one way to promote better performance by public managers is through the use of evaluation. This is important because policy actors are

required to collect and aggregate information in order to be able to develop proposals and plans for future activities in affective ways. By compiling this information and knowledge resource, the managers and employees will be able to not only perform the tasks in more sufficient ways, but also to spot the errors that need to be corrected. Furthermore, it is important to have assessment systems that welcome advice and feedback. This feedback system is vital not only for appraising the regular performance, but also for helping the public employees to design plans and realize aspirations that they recognize as necessary for further accomplishments through the public agencies (Bossaert, 2003). As some scholars argue, even though sometimes the effectiveness of these techniques is determined by the cultural differences within different workplaces, it is still important to look for sufficient performance criteria across different occupations. To make effective performance appraisals, it is important to ensure that performance is appropriately outlined, evaluated, and rewarded based on the nature of the occupation (Greene, 2011). In addition, it is essential for public organizations to function well to have clear and extensively accepted rules; and to have dedicated and skilled leaders to undertake effective reforms (UN, 2005). By following these procedural reforms, and using these tools with all the required skills and evaluations systems, governments will be able to introduce various preconditions for managing human resources.

## **2.6. Human Resource Management: Recruitment and Training Programs**

According to Berman et al. (2011), to a great extent, the process of capacity building involves some issues that are relevant to human resource management. Managing human resources in the 21<sup>st</sup> century involves definitions that include core values of human resources, performance and results, hiring, nurturing, and promoting talents to the appropriate places. It is about understanding the relationship between the individuals and their motivation for contributing to the system. In addition, these authors mention that to guarantee these values in the process of good human resource management, it is important to have a good recruitment system with enough information of the type of human resources that are available (Berman et al., 2011). It is also important to have effective promotion systems that use merit based wages, and reward higher positions for better performance in the public institutions (Leman, 2002).

Howlett (2011) explains recruitment in association with organizational instruments by referring to “Weberian ‘monocratic bureaucracy form of organization” (2011, p. 64). The characteristics of the “Weberian” model of recruitment system, according to Howlett (2011), include merit systems of appointment retention and recruitment, based on which public servants are hired. These public servants do not occupy their positions continually but remain in their ranks as long as their skills are fulfilling the requirements of the public service and the goods that they provide. For example, these public servants, who deliver services through direct tools, follow the rule of law, are highly paid, and are unionized in developed countries.

In addition, Lindquist and Desveaux (1998) point out that for establishing a good system of recruitment, there are three strategies that the public institutions should follow. These strategies include: in-house system, internal policy think tank system, and consulting strategies system. The in-house system depends on attracting external knowledge outside of the public service or the department, then promoting or building on it for future skill developments. The think tank system counts on its own employees, but it also seeks external talents from other departments of the public sectors. Lastly, the consulting strategy relies strongly on a talented staff as brokers of the work of external and free agents. This includes specialists working for advising firms, think tanks, universities, and independent contractors. However, while each one of these systems has its own advantages, it is important for the public managers to evaluate the cost of each strategy at the expense of others. To make this reform possible, public managers need to identify or define the skills and expertise that are needed. This need for identifying the individuals who should have certain skills should take place within the agencies in the public sector, regardless of individuals’ hierarchical positions (Agranoff and McGuire, 1999; Baser and Morgan, 2008). Having such a high objective standard not only for the existing employees but also for recruiting the new ones is significant because it limits favoritism and the level of political appointees in the public sector agencies (Leman, 2002).

However, some of the literature argues that having a good recruitment system is almost unattainable without having some effective techniques for promotion within the government’s agencies (Bossaert, 2003). By having these effective techniques of promotion, public agencies will not only be able to develop high performance but also

discourage negative attitudes towards low performance within the public agencies. Therefore, to have a high level of performance in public institutions, these techniques should include regular assessment of performance appraisal or extra time off must be assigned to employees according to their capabilities. It is also important for these public managers to encourage good performance through official or written recognitions to their civil servants (Bossaert, 2003; Leman, 2002). In fact, these recognition rewards designed in way “to enhance emoluments and reward good performance” (Agere, 2002, p. 11).

The literature on capacity building, e.g. OECD (1997), also mentions that to ensure the demanded capability of the public servants, the skills and talents of these public employees need to be constantly updated in terms of formulation and implementation. Thus, various types of educational training to increase government’s capabilities are important. These training programs should be designed in a way to generate further capacities that government’s policies are effective, and to encourage “stability, predictability and adaptability” (p. 15). Overall, they should be designed in away to increase the level of capability and responsiveness of the public servants within public institutions (Klingner, 1996; Caiden, 1991). However, according to the United Nations’ Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2008), the success of educational and training also relies on responsible agencies that identify and address the training needs for all the government’s ministries and institutions inclusively. Conducting the training under such agencies is necessary because they can provide inclusive training and support for all the administrative units that are required and expected to demonstrate different types of skills and talents.

These training programs should be designed in a way to cover three areas: First, they should deliver preliminary training for junior and senior staff in the targeted public institution: Second, they should train these individuals for specific administrative occupations: Finally, they should not only provide these training programs continuously, but also to reinforce professionalism through these educational courses incessantly (UN-Department of Economic and Social Affair, 2008). According to UNDP, there are some other procedural activities that should be conducted in the process of educational reform for capacity development. Table (1) illustrates some of the details that such educational programs should consider.

**Table 1.        The outputs and indications of educational program set up by UNDP**

<b>Illustrative Outputs</b>	<b>Illustrative Output Indications</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Education reform strategy for professional learning implemented</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Existence of a shared vision of effective professional learning articulated in a formal strategic plan endorsed by public, private and civil society leaders</li><li>• Approval of policies that directly support targeted professional learning opportunities in sectors most in need of improvement</li><li>• Number of stakeholder entities in a cross-sector education coalition that advocate for increased investments in, and improved quality of professional learning Launch of a mechanism for dialogue on national strategy for professional learning</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in education sector established</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Approval of policy guidelines for PPP for provision of professional learning</li><li>• Number of PPPs developed</li><li>• Number of students able to take advantage of programs through new PPPs</li></ul>

Note:     Adopted from (UNDP, 2010).

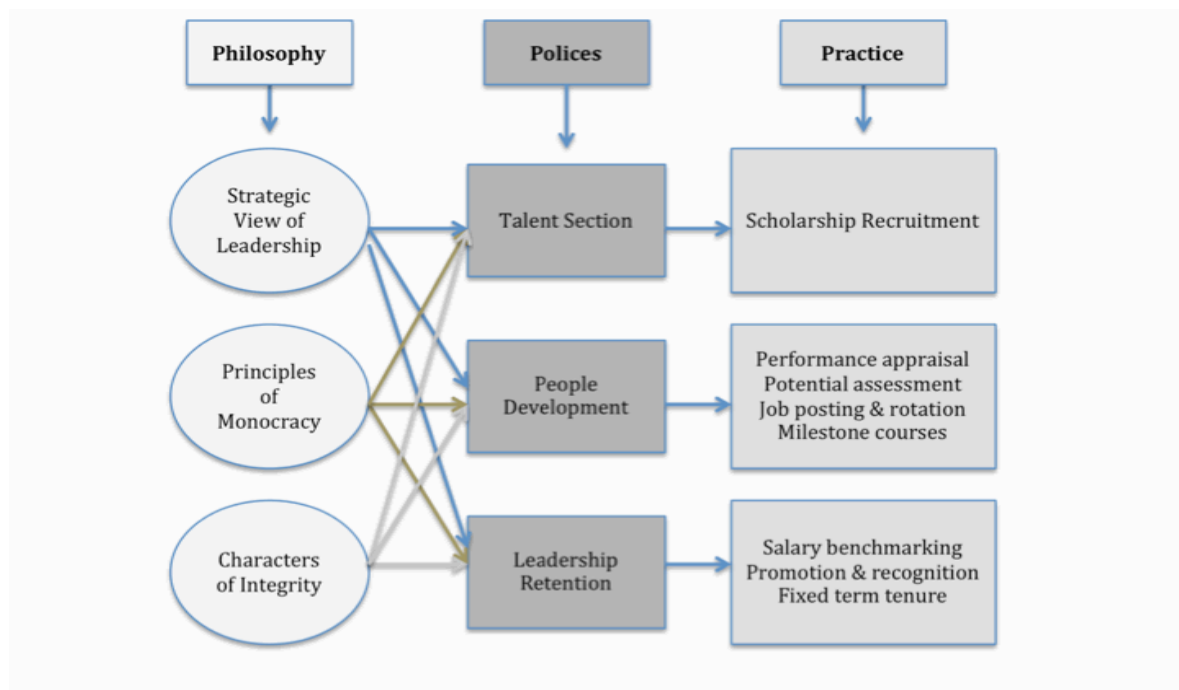
The preparations for professional learning that the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has provided are important for several reasons. First of all, it embraces a shared vision of learning as one of the core elements that should be supported by all the involved public and private actors to develop better capacities. Based on this shared vision, this form suggests that capacity development can be achieved through team working through a cross-sector education process: Public and Private Partnership (PPP) (UNDP, 2010).

However, there are several conditions that could limit the impact of this educational training on the public servants to learn how to perform better within the public sectors organizations. According to the UN (2005), some of these challenges can come from the fact that each level in the public sector's organizations requires different capacities that cannot be learned from general training programs. Furthermore, in the developing nations, the subjects and agendas in the training programs and courses sometimes are poorly related to the activities and challenges that the public organizations and institutes conduct or face. Therefore, it is vital for the governments and agencies that provide these training programs to make sure that all actors that involved in these educational preparations agree on the target objectives of the need to be accomplished.

## 2.7. Conclusion

From the literature that I have covered on capacity building in this section, it has become clear that there are many factors involved in the process of governing capacity building. However, each factor has an impact on the process of governing capacity building differently. Low level of governing capacity can be due to insufficient staff, lack of motivation for performance, or not having clear agendas for building and expanding on the existing capacity level (Brinkerhoff, 2010). Attempts to turn these shortages in the process of capacity building could be challenged by different dynamics. Through this literature, this section has attempted to explain and introduce some of the dynamic conditions that are necessary for capacity development. Figure (2) illustrates a general framework that covers most of the points that have been discussed by the literature on developing a robust governance (Neo and Chen, 2007).

**Figure 2. The Steps for Presenting Dynamic Governance**



Note: adopted from Neo and Chen (2010).

These steps can be identified as dynamic procedures for presenting high level of governing capacities. These measures and activities are essential because they enable the public servants to develop good leadership in the public sector. Furthermore, by

establishing various agencies and boards with clear agendas, recruitment system that depend on employees' expertise, and educational training, the public sectors agencies will be able to improve the performance of public servants and potentials (Neo and Chen, 2007). To understand to what extent these assumptions have been implemented, and to provide some answers to questions of *What is the nature of the organizational reforms, the recruitment and promotion systems, and educational preparation that the KRG has conducted in managing its challenges, and building a competent civil service in Kurdistan*, the following two sections examine Singapore and the KRG governing experiences. While Singapore is considered an example of a successful model of governing that fulfilled all these procedural reforms, the KRG presents a failure case for most of these reforms.



## **3. Singapore Governing Capacity**

### **3.1. Introduction**

Examining and presenting Singapore as a case study in comparison with the KRG is important for several reasons. First of all, Singapore has been ranked as fifth best country in transparency and corruption (Transparency International Corruption Index, 2011). Singapore has earned such a reputation through introducing and implementing some clear and effective policies. It has a high wage system for its civil service employees, established several well organized commissions, and uses a merit based promotion and recruitment systems (DPADM and DESA, 2005). In addition, the political leadership in Singapore has been able to provide most of the necessary political conditions that are essential in the process of achieving the targeted objectives for developing better governing capacities (Ashton et al, 1999). Singapore has historically had a solid political leadership that has been able to demonstrate a strong will to put nation building in the heart of its agendas. The way Singapore established these preconditions is important for transferability as they will be subject to a great deal of examination by other nations (Fritzen, 2010). This point that Fritzen raises is important because unlike many developing countries, stability has been one of the driving forces behind the success of Singapore's governing model. While political stability offered better opportunities for the politicians to design their policies and agendas more effectively, it also allowed Singapore's rulers to develop government institutions and agencies that have played vital roles in the process of developing further governing capacities (Quah, 2010). Furthermore, Singapore was also able to manage its human resources by recruiting the right sets of skilled employees in its institutions that changed the performances of the government in the long run (Soon and Tan, 2003).

Therefore, it is important to examine Singapore's governing capacity development by looking at the features of its political leadership, and the institutionalization reforms within the government sectors and agencies. It is especially important to examine its

recruitment system, and educational training programs through its two key agencies, the Ministry of Education and Public Service Commission. These two agencies seem to have played a significant role in improving Singapore's governing capacity.

### **3.2. Political Conditions for Capacity Development**

Singapore has been able to provide most of the political conditions that are necessary to not only develop a good model of governing, but also to continuously improve its performance. These political conditions are a reliable political leadership that is willing to pursue all the necessary steps for developing its nation, and a stable political environment that guaranteed further development in the performance of the government institutions and employees.

Not very long after its separation from Malaysia, Singapore's government, under the leadership of People's Action Party (PAP), was able to tackle various important issues. This capability to consider these various issues at this very early stage was due to "the quality of leadership shown by its political leader, civil servants, and employees of the statutory boards" (Quah, 2010, p. 7). The Singapore government has been credited for this success because of possessing three unique capabilities: thinking ahead, thinking again, and thinking across (Neo and Chen, 2010). While thinking ahead has allowed Singapore's government to be more prepared for the upcoming skill requirements in its civil service, thinking again has enabled the authority to come up with its best policies for reorganizing and reconstructing its institution and agencies. According to Quah (2010), this political leadership and its public servants were willing to learn from the successes stories of other countries and design various organizations or institutions with similar policy solutions to suit Singapore's political and social environments.

Singapore's political leadership and its government was capable of maintaining stability and continuity that empowered them "to focus more on meeting the long term goals instead of being constrained by short-term considerations" (Quah, 2010, p. 8). Establishing a stable governing system was important because it inspired Singapore's political leadership to focus some of its attentions upon industrialization to create jobs for

its citizens outside of the public sector. According to the OECD (2010), the government of Singapore, particularly its political leadership, should be credited for providing this stability because of its high level of efficiency, transparency, and flexibility. In addition, behind this stability is Singapore's strong focus on integrated strategic preparation and detailed performance in the public sectors.

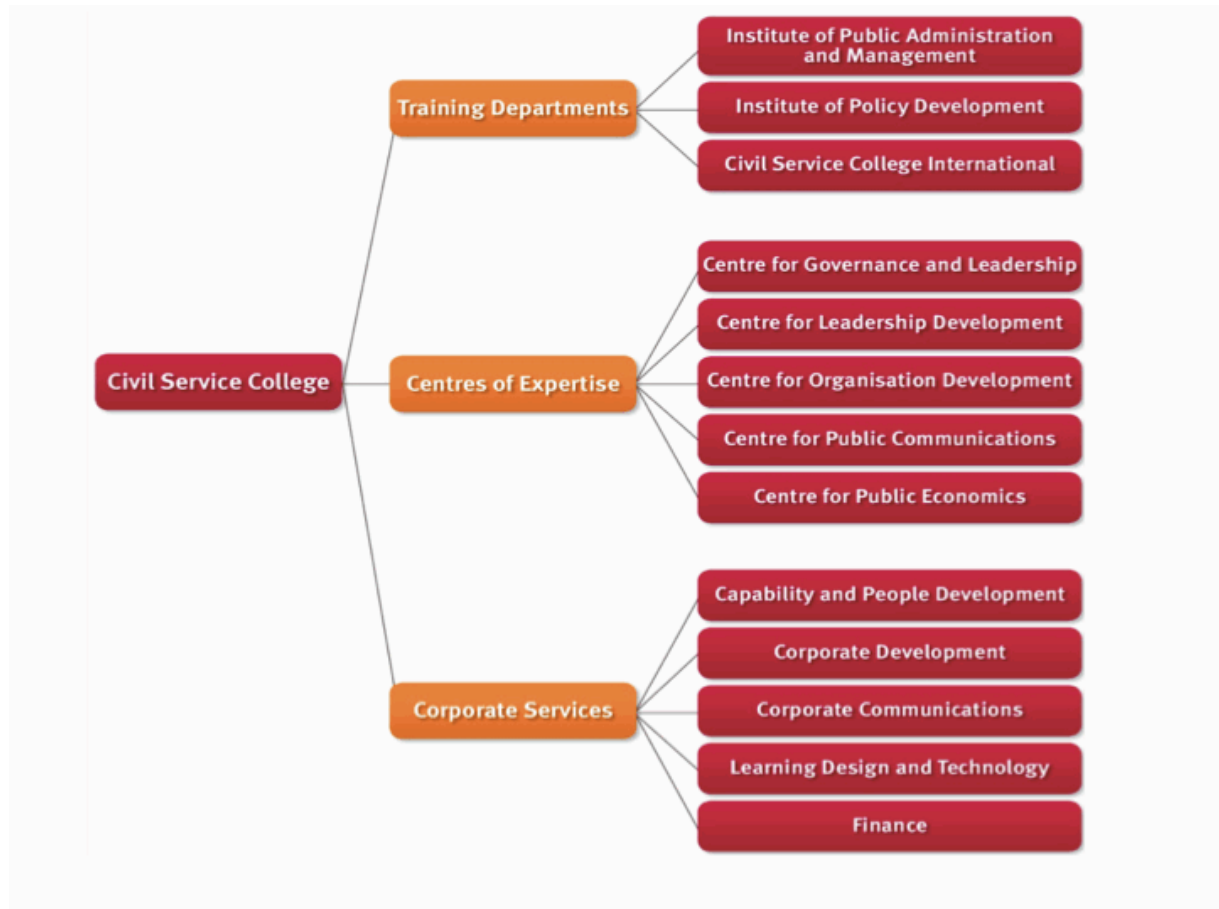
### **3.3. Establishing Organizations with Clear Responsibility**

Besides these necessary political conditions that have been provided as a result of the capabilities of its political leadership, the Singapore government was able to institutionalize its public sectors effectively. Singapore's leadership elite was able to establish various organizations that played major roles to not only improve the tasks of government but also limit the extent of corruption and increase the level of transparency in the public institutions (Soon and Tan, 2003). This institutionalization reform in the public sector enabled the Singapore government to empower its public service employees and managers' through planning and preparations for better performances in the government institutions (Singapore-MND, 2001).

Some of the most significant achievements from this process of institutionalization reforms in the public sector were creating various organizations and boards with some clear agendas and different responsibilities. The Ministry of Education, Public Service Commission, Singapore Institute of Planners, Civil Service College, Public Service Division, Human Resource Groups, and many other boards and agencies became more heavily involved in these reorganizational reforms. Each one of these institutions was assigned with different responsibilities and functions to advance the performance of the government in Singapore. For instance, while the Ministry of Education manage several colleges and institutions that graduate many skillful students for different fields each year (Singapore-MOE, 2012), the Public Service Commission in Singapore has been supporting the development of professionals through promoting and appointing senior public servants and making decisions regarding disciplinary issues and issuing scholarships. Its missions include upholding integrity, and transparency to guarantee the process of development in Singapore's public service to match future requirements (Singapore-PSC, 2012). Also, each one of these government's institutions

created different organizational tools to be more effective. For example, the Civil Service College, one of the most effective agencies, has established many boards and centers under its supervision (see Figure 3.).

**Figure 3. Singapore's Service College Structures and Boards**



Note: adopted from CSC annual report 2011-2012.

The above figure explains the organizational structures of this important institute. Through each one of these boards and centers this institute has been able to improve and develop a relevant skill sets for the government agencies. These skills include employee commitment, establishments of training framework through various roadmaps and programs.

In sum, these necessary political conditions, and the establishment of various institutions and organization in the public sector helped Singapore's government

managing its challenges more efficiently. For example, as a part of its political will, Singapore's government established an agency under the name of Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB). This board has been empowered by some clear responsibilities and authorities according to the Prevention of Corruption Act (POCA) to combat corruption and increase the level of transparency within government institutions (Quah, 2010). According to the Prevention of Corruption Act, a public servant is not permitted to accept any bones as a reward for:

(a) Performing or not performing any official act, or helping to get done, haste, delay, hinder or prevent any official act; or (b) helping to get or to prevent the giving of any contract or advantage to any person. "Gratification" includes: (i) money or any gift, loan, fee, reward, commission, valuable security or other property or share in any property; (ii) any position duties, employment or contract; (iii) any part or full payment, release from or discharge or any obligation or other liability; (iv) any other service; favours or advantage. (DPADM and DESA, 2005, p. 13)

The CPIB in collaboration with many other agencies has helped the Singapore government to design specific policies to limit corruption. The POCA has also empowered the CPIB to not only review and investigate all the complaints against the civil servants in all the public sector's levels but also to investigate the suspected individuals and their family members, including their assesses. Under the POCA, any public servant or employee found to be involved with corruption, even in the past, he or she will be penalized (Worthington, 2003). Furthermore, to strengthen this act, the Singapore government introduced a code of conduct to which all the civil servants, regardless of their appointments, are obliged (DPADM and DESA, 2005).

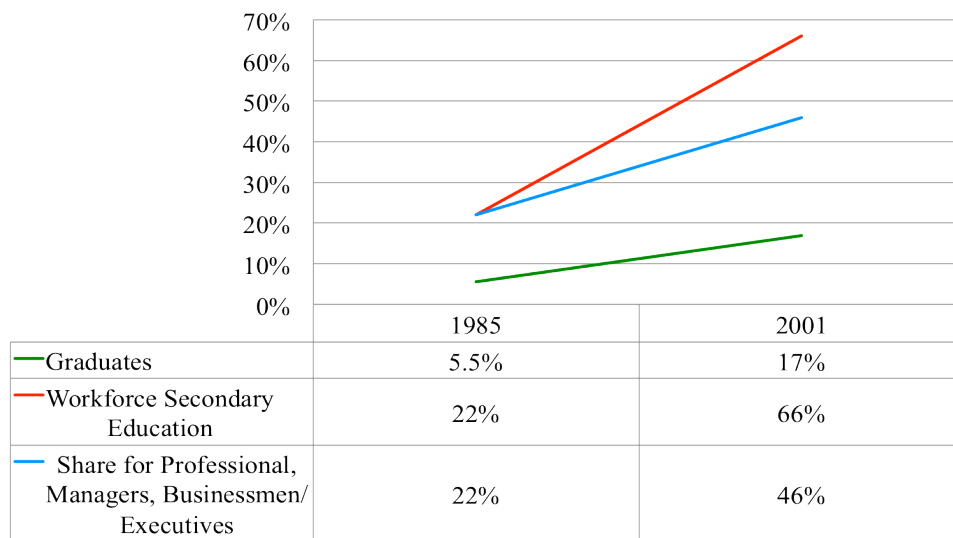
### **3.4. Promotion and Education Training: Ministry of Education**

Singapore's Ministry of Education (MOE) seems to be one of the major driving forces behind governing capacity building through many educational institutions that are under its management. Among these institutions are: Civil Service College (CSC), Institute of Technical Education (ITE), and Human Resource Groups (HRG), Vocational and Industrial Training Board, Tata-Government Training Centre, and many other

“government-to-government institutions” (Neo and Chen, 2007, p. 98). It is important to mention some activities of these boards. For example, while the CSC has been responsible for developing people for first class civil servants (Singapore- CSC, 2001-2012), the ITE creates opportunities for adult learners to develop “skills, knowledge and values for employability and lifelong learning in a global economy” (Singapore-MOE-ITE, 2012). HRG also provides solutions regarding capabilities, and human resource development through clear strategy and effective leadership (Singapore-MOE-HRG-Singapore, 2012).

The Ministry of Education in Singapore has also been successful in ensuring good skills and talents are generated for future capabilities through universities, vocational, and technical institutions. Through these schools, Singapore has not only been able to prepare professionals for its public sector institutions but also educated its workforce to be more productive. The numbers of employers and employees who hold a degree from post secondary schools went through a good increase (see Figure 4.).

**Figure 4. Education in Singapore Workforce**

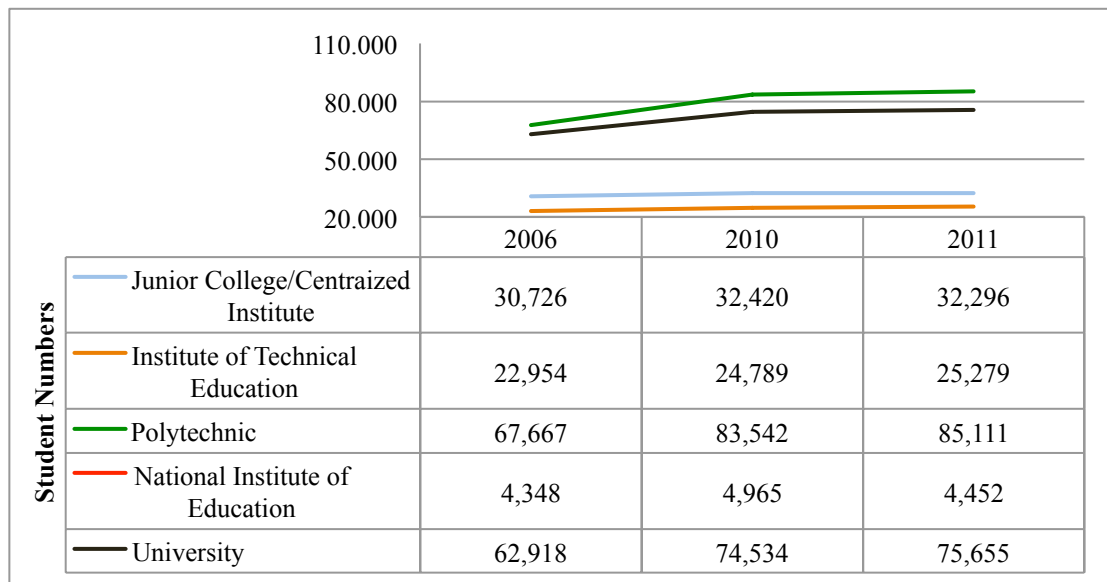


Note: adopted from Neo and Chen (2007).

To ensure integrity within its post-secondary institutions, Singapore has also adopted the top ranked international universities’ systems of certification (Neo and Chen, 2007). According to the Singapore Department of Statistics (2012), from 2006 to 2011,

more than half of the college students enrolled in diploma programs were approved by high-ranking overseas universities (see Figure 5.).

**Figure 5**      **Number of Students in Post Secondary Institutions**



Note: dopted from Department of Statistics Singapore.

Even though these universities are not under the full control of the public sector, they still have a very high standard for accepting their students. All these universities conduct various types of researches and provide scholarships to their students based on student's performance and GPA (MOE-website, 2012; Singapore Management University, 2012; and Singapore University of Technology, 2012).

Promotion in the civil service has also been a driving motivation behind good governing performance in Singapore. For instance, increasing public salaries is a policy implemented from 1972 onwards, to bridge the gap between salaries in the private and public sectors. By 1995, salaries in the civil service were equivalent to the salaries of the top earners of the private sector professions. This increase in wages also included the salaries of talented scholars, bureaucrats and general directors (Quah, 2010).

These regulations and efforts by Singapore's Ministry of Education, recruitment system, and their promotion polices are major factors behind the development of

governing capacity (Singapore Department of Statistics, 2012; Quah, 2010; and Hamilton, 2002).

### **3.5. Singapore's Recruitment Policies**

Good human resource management is another factor that has contributed Singapore's high level of governing capacities. According to Neo and Chen (2010), Singapore has been able to establish a good system of management in its public institutions by establishing strong and adequate systems of hiring. This recruitment system first depended on the tradition of meritocracy that was introduced by the British, but later the Singapore government adapted and further developed it. The Singapore government emphasized its citizens' capacities as key factors that have made its model of governing to be identified a "dynamic government" (p. 319).

This system of recruitment and promotion of civil servants is perhaps one of the major reasons that Singapore's public institutions have been able to attract the most talented citizens to work in the civil service (Neo and Chen, 2010; Quah, 2010). For example, the Public Service Commission (PSC), and Commissions to Personnel Boards in Ministries are two important entities in the recruitment process. The appointment of all civil servants, except in the Administrative Service, was devolved from the PSC and other Commissions to Personnel Boards in Ministries. This is to give line managers greater authority and flexibility in personnel management functions. For example, within this institution, there are three levels of personnel boards: "Special Personnel Board, Senior Personnel Board and Personnel Board; each taking charge of different divisions of officers" (DPADM, 2005, p. 10). Through this organized and divided process in the recruitment systems of the public employees, the government has been able to apply the right skills to the right tasks.

Besides these activities by PSC, a second agency that is responsible to design policies for recruitment in the public sector is the Public Service Division (PSD), which belongs to the Prime Minister's Office. The PSD coordinates a mass recruitment exercise for graduates once a year. Other than these yearly coordinated recruitment exercises, Ministries run their own recruitment when they are short of skilled workers.



The preparations for Ministry process of recruitment follow closely those agendas set by the PSD, but with easier procedures for the lower level of officers:

- a. Inviting applications through press advertisements
- b. Shortlisting candidates based on objective criteria
- c. Interviewing shortlisted candidates
- d. Recommending selected candidates to the Personnel Boards for appointment. (DPADM, 2005, p. 10)

Open selection for recruiting candidates in the civil service in Singapore is conducted based on certain criteria and standards in the hiring process. One of the selection criteria for appointment is based on educational qualifications. Ministries may also draw up their own objective criteria to further shortlist applicants from those who satisfy the entry requirements. Mainly, the process of recruiting these new employees controlled by the Director of Personnel of the Ministries (DPM) that has the authority to approve these short-listing conditions through a simple process. The applicants who possess the short-listing criteria have to be selected and interviewed by an interview board that makes the final decision, and suggests these candidates to the Personnel Boards for recruitment (DPADM, 2005).

Even though the Singapore government has a mass recruitment system in its public sectors, it has been able to maintain a stable balance in its civil service's size to match its needs. According to a report presented before the Singapore parliament, the number of Singapore's public servants was 105,439 in 2000, and it reached 112,113 employees in 2009 (see Table 2.). In addition, another significant point is that close to half of the number of the public employees in Singapore are working for the Ministry of Education, 50,036 employees (Singapore Parliament, 2009). Education seems to be the main area that the government of Singapore is investing in for further development in its capacities (see Table 2.), which shows the distribution of the public employees in Singapore.

**Table 2. Number of Government employees in Singapore's ministries**

Ministries	2000	2009
Presidential Councils	5	10
Public Service Commission	9	12
Cabinet Office	11	12
Parliament	48	55
Civil List	45	56
Auditor-General's Office	150	158
Attorney-General's Chambers	212	329
Prime Minister's Office	558	564
Judicature	739	796
Ministry of Law	820	826
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1,062	1,315
Ministry of Health	1,670	1,306
Ministry of Defense	1,525	1,524
Ministry of Manpower	1,020	2,196
Ministry of Trade and Industry	1,970	2,998
Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts	1,454	3,408
Ministry of Finance	3,569	3,280
Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources	4,958	3,963
Ministry of Transport	3,979	4,247
Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sport	3,968	4,393
Ministry of National Development	10,601	7,476
Ministry of Home Affairs	18,135	23,153
Ministry of Education	48,933	50,036
<b>Total</b>	<b>105,439</b>	<b>112,113</b>

Note: adopted from Singapore Government FY budget for 2009.

### 3.6. Conclusion

Singapore has been identified as one of the nations that have developed impressively in the last few decades. This development seems to be mostly due to Singapore's strong political leadership that has been able to demonstrate a high level of efficiency and flexibility. According to Neo and Chen (2007), this political leadership was behind the success of Singapore governing model because of its three unique capabilities: thinking ahead, thinking again, and thinking across. While thinking ahead enabled the Singapore government to design its policies and proper its nation for future developments in the future, thinking again provided opportunity to review and reconsider

these policies to be more effective and generate further positive outcomes. Thinking across has allowed the leadership and public managers in Singapore to be capable of learning from other nations' experiences to better develop Singapore as a nation. Therefore, to show briefly what other types of political conditions this political leadership has provided in the process of its development, it is important to explain the institutional reforms that contributed the development of governing capacity in Singapore.

Another reason for Singapore's successful model of governing is political stability due to which its politicians, and public managers have been able to not only design affective policies but also to monitor the impacts of such policies on the targeted objectives (Neo and Chen, 2010; Quah, 2010). Furthermore, through its Ministry of Education, Singapore's government has been able to create various institutions and agencies to produce the skills that improve its nation both politically and technologically. Last but not the least, by having clear agendas for its recruitment and promotion systems, Singapore has created more transparency, and limited the level of corruption in its civil service.

## **4. Governing Capacity in Kurdistan**

### **4.1. Introduction**

To examine the extent of the political conditions, the necessary institutional reforms in the public sectors, and the types of recruitment and promotion systems for developing better governing capacity under the KRG, it is important to first review how this region has been shaped under the influence of its two main political parties, the KDP and the PUK. Reviewing the political background of these two main actors is important because it helps us to identify the nature of the complicated phenomena that have been generated as a result of the political leadership, and the efforts that these political parties have offered for better performance in the public sectors in Kurdistan. Many studies and sources indicate that the KRG has been able to provide stable political conditions, however political party competition over powers and resources is still a major issue that this region is experiencing (Denise, 2010). To understand the nature of these challenges, this section examines the type of political conditions that the KRG has created, and the necessary institutional reforms in the public sectors. It focuses on the recruitment process, training, and educational preparation by the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of High Education and Scientific Research of the KRG. It is true that the Kurds have never experienced success in terms of providing security and maintain the region in peace. However, the lack of some of the other conditions has also limited the KRG's governing performances.

### **4.2. Political Conditions Leadership that Created unpromising Conditions**

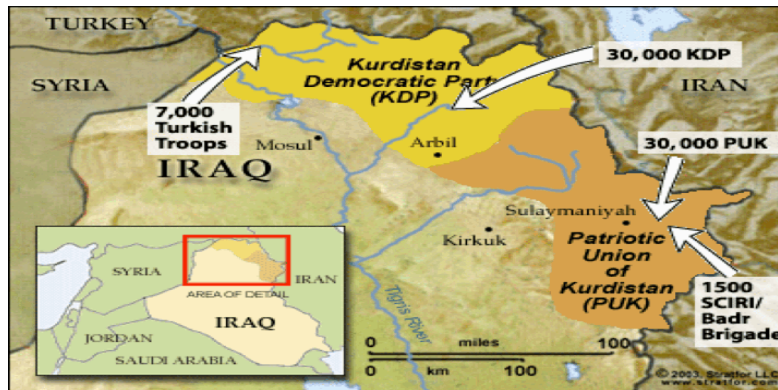
Some of KRG's governing challenges have deeper roots that have started with the arrival of two main political parties to power. After a Kurdish uprising in 1991, the Ba'ath regime, which was in power until 2003 in Iraq, withdrew from the Kurdish cities.

After this withdrawal, the Kurdistan National Front (KNF), which included all the Kurdish political parties but dominated by the KDP and the PUK, took control over the Kurdish region. However, the KDP and the PUK's political differences affected the performance of the KNF negatively from this early stage. Even though the PUK and the KDP agreed to form a decentralized government, the KRG, they both remained loyal to their parties and their "politburos" (Denise, 2010). For instance, the KDP collected 85% of its revenues from taxation and customs generated by trade at the Iraqi Kurdish-Turkish border, estimated at \$750 million annually. As well, the PUK in the Sulamaniyah cigarette factory increased production from 1,200 to 144,000 packs from 1991 to 1997, and collected tariff from the goods entered to the region through its border with Iran (Denise, 2010). However, neither returned these revenues to the KRG. Both of these two parties also concentrated their efforts to enrich their parties through selling heavy construction machines of the state.

In fact, disagreement over the distribution of these revenues intensified competition between the KDP and the PUK. After not reaching an agreement, the KDP and the PUK launched a civil war against each other in 1994. At the beginning of this conflict, the PUK was able to expel the KDP from the city of Erbil, the current capital city of the Kurdistan province, but this victory did not last very long. In 1996, with help from the previous Iraqi army, the KDP was able to defeat and expel the PUK out of Erbil, forcing it to retreat to the city of Sulaymaniyah. Figure (6) illustrates the territories that each party controlled. The map shows the territories divided between the two parties (Denise, 2010).

After this conflict, both parties established two different cabinets of ministries, one in Erbil under the KDP, and the second in Sulaymaniyah under the PUK (McDowall, 2000). However, the difference between these two cabinets was that while the PUK's included some small political parties in its new cabinet without ministerial structure, the KDP governed its cabinet in Erbil in which some level of governing structure existed (Stansfield, 2003).

**Figure 6**      **The KDP and PUK Territories Control**



Note: Adopted from UNSAID.

This situation lasted until 1998, but in the wake of the U.S.'s invasion, the KDP and PUK agreed to create one single government. Nevertheless, the attempt to create this unified government lasted until the invasion of Iraq without any achievement. In 2005, the KDP and the PUK participated together as one list in the first election in Iraq. They mixed some ministries of their cabinets, and created a new government under the leadership of Nechervan Barzani, who is the nephew of Masuod Barzani, the leader of the KDP, and the current president of the KRG, with a deputy from the PUK (Denise, 2010). Under a power sharing deal the important positions were split 50/50, the KDP received the Presidency of Kurdistan. The KDP agreed to nominate Jalal Talabani, the leader of the PUK, as their presidential candidate for the sovereign post of the Iraqi Federal Government (Unification Agreement, 2006). Even though both cabinets were mixed, the PUK and the KDP pursued their party interests through the KRG's institutions (Denise, 2010). Technically, there were two cabinets within the KRG. This division within the KRG was probably one of the major factors that limited the government's capacity of delivering services and presenting a sufficient model of ruling.

In 2009, the Kurdistan region held its second election in which the KDP and the PUK run jointly as one list. Another fact about the 2009 election (see table 3.1) was that 24 lists ran for 111 seats of the Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA). Along these political parties, three individuals, Masud Barzani, Kamal Merawdali, and Husain Garmanyani, ran for the position of the president of Kurdistan. Barzani won the victory with

70% of the votes (KNA, 2012). However, from the 24 political blocks, only 11 gained enough votes to receive seats in the KNA.

As (Table 3.) summarizes, a major power shift occurred between the two previously dominant political parties on one side and the new emerging groups on the other side after the 2009 election. Even though the KDP and the PUK won the majority of votes, the numbers of their seats were not enough to exercise the same extent of authority they had previously while governing Kurdistan. Due to the emergence of these new political actors, and pressures from the public, the two political parties promised another wave of reforms, however this new wave of reforms seems not to have been very effective due to the lack of political will for changes from both political parties (Interviewee # 13).

**Table 3. Results of Kurdistan Election in 2009**

Name of the Political Block	Number of Votes	Percentage of the seats
Kurdistan Alliance (PUK-KDP)	1,076.370	57.37%
Change	445.024	23.72%
Services and Reform (KIU)	240.842	12.84%
Islamic Movement in Kurdistan	27.147	1.45%
Democratic Movement of Turkmen	18.464	0.98%
Freedom and Social Justice	15.028	0.80%
Assyrian and Cheldanian Council	10.595	0.56%
Turkmen Reform	7.077	0.38%
Rafidain Block	5.690	0.30%
Aram Shaheen Dawed	4.198	0.22%
Erbil Turkmen Block	3.906	0.21%

Note: Kurdistan Parliament Website (2012).

For a long time, the KDP and the PUK managed the public services in Kurdistan through administrators who were members of these two major parties. Due to this system of direct political appointees, the civil service functioned very poorly and there were shortages in services in almost all the institutions in Kurdistan (Denise, 2010). This dysfunctional nature of both cabinets was perhaps because changes in the central agencies and ministerial departments were decided upon directly by the political leaders

from both political parties, the KDP and the PUK. For instance, without considering skill or required capacity, these changes were taking place in the public institutions under both cabinets. This type of mismanagement of human resources diminished these proposed policies and “the initial identification of the policy direction” (Stansfield, 2003, p. 167). This means that, even though both cabinets claimed that they attempted to improve their administrations by assigning qualified individuals to the public service positions, inefficiency, and the lack of designated budget and professionalism let down any attempt to reform the administration systems (Stansfield, 2003).

Despite all these faltering attempts at building better administrative capacities, both cabinets of the KRGs were appreciated by the international organizations for maintaining peace and showing interest for solving their conflicts through peaceful means. This provided a better environment for both parties to step towards unifying their cabinets. However, the full unification of both cabinets remained a major challenge due to the lack of transparency in the budget that they were collecting from tariffs and disagreements over who should govern the ministry of defense, finance, and interior (Denise, 2010).

With the Iraqi election in 2005, Kurdistan also held a general election. After this election, the KRG had 33 ministries under the leadership of Nachervan Barzani from the KDP. Except for three ministries, they mixed their administrations as one regional government, and formed institutional mechanisms that enabled them to distribute the ministerial and high-level positions in the public sectors between the two main parties and give some to the Islamic groups (Denise, 2010). After these shifts in power and due to these new actors’ participation in governing system of Kurdistan, the KRG shifted its attention toward more reforms in its governing capacity. In 2009, Dr. Barham Salih, who is one of the most influential political figures from the PUK, was appointed as the Prime Minister of the KRG’s seventh cabinet to lead this process of reform. In his term as Prime Minister, he designed a scholarship program for sending hundreds of young students abroad, reformed the universities, modernized schools, introduced social security program, issued laws for granting small loans to the youths, and introduced new regulations for the benefit of women’s status in Kurdistan. He also surrounded himself with technocrats and professionals from all the fields. These traits indicated the emergence of a strong political motivation for change. However, due to the lack of any record by the KRG, it is not clear out of all the mentioned promising policies what was



actually accomplished. According to the Prime Minister's report upon his departure from the prime minister office, Dr. Salih recognizes that he was unable to limit political parties' interference in the government institutions and activities that challenged his attempts for reforms. He also reports that he was unable to fully unify the two former administrations (Dr. Barham Salih, 2012).

#### **4.3. Poor Institutional Structures have Resulted Poor Performances**

Under the KRG's leadership, there have been seven ministry cabinets (KRG, 2012). However, due to the lack of enough records about the KRG's institutional reforms in public sector before 2005's election, we will only be able to discuss some changes that have taken place under the KRG's sixth cabinet, from 2005 to 2009, and seventh cabinet from 2009 to present. These attempts for improving its performance include establishing two ministries, the Ministry of Planning (MOP) and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR).

As one of the major attempts to improve its performance, the KRG established the Ministry of Planning in 2006. There are several directorates but only Human Resources Development and Development Coordination and Cooperation (DCC) are directly involved with improving or developing capacities. This directorate has established an institute under the name of Kurdistan Institute of Public Administration (KIPA). The establishment of KIPA seems to be important for the KRG, however, except for some training courses; it is not clear what has been accomplished through this agency regarding governing capacity development. Even though the Director of Human Resources has provided a map (see Figure 7. below), which indicates the structure and boards of this directorate, it seems that its activities are focused on training. Within this Ministry, its directorate functions at a very slow rate (Interviewees # 11, #2, and #6).

**Figure 7. Prospective Structure for General Directorate of Human**



Note: adopted from MOP's website.

The MOP's official website provides some basic information about the KRG attempts to institutionalize its public sectors. However, as many of our interviewees reported, these boards are just names without an impact or functions.

The KRG attempted through establishing the MHESR to put some quality in the performance of the education system in Kurdistan. However, this Ministry's impact on governing capacity development has been very limited due to the lack of clear responsibilities and programs for developing governing capacities through the universities that function under its authorities, let alone technical schools or colleges. According to my interviewees from the Ministry, there is one college, College of Kharadax in Sulaymaniah city that teaches its students some subjects that are relevant to public policy and administration. The rest of the universities cover some general topics in political science (Interviewees #9 et al.). Even though the KRG has attempted to establish some important agencies to improve and update the skills of its employees through the MOP, it seems that the absence of clear responsibilities and agendas have limited the impacts of these institutions. In addition, the MHESR has not considered establishing new institutions or training colleges that could generate particular skills or expertise to produce the right skills for the public institutions under the leadership of the KRG.

#### **4.4. Promotion and Educational Training**

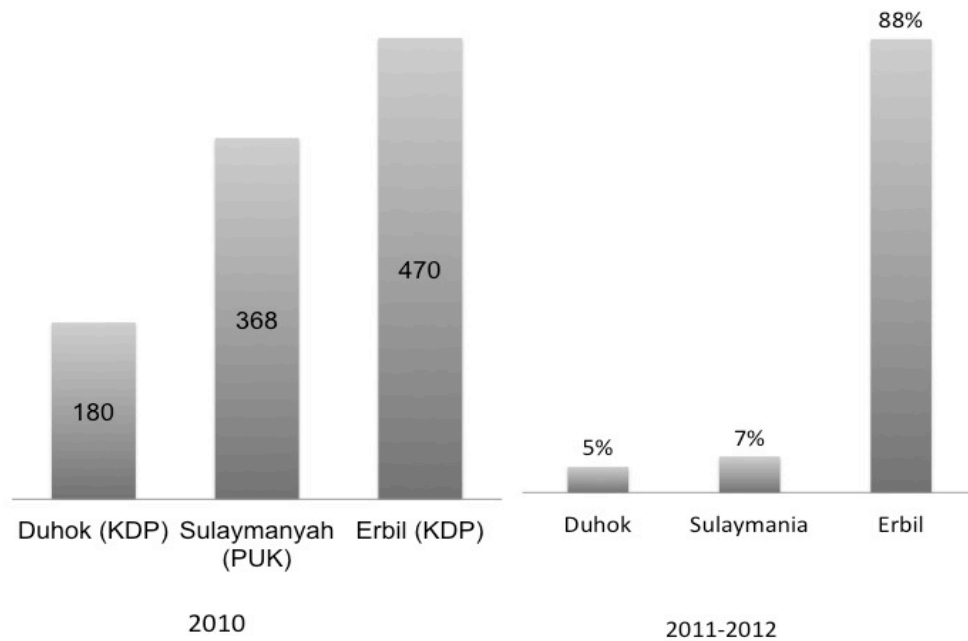
As mentioned earlier, the establishment of the Ministry of Planning put it in charge to provide training and programs for improving the performance of the employees

in the public institutions. The central objectives of the training were developing the foundations of progress, and upgrading the skills of the public employees to administrate better capacities throughout the public institutions in Kurdistan (KRG-MOP, 2012). Furthermore, to achieve these goals, the Ministry of Planning was supported and helped by some international agencies. These agencies included the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the United States Agency International Development (USAID), the United Nations Development Programs (UNDP), the European Training Technology Center (UTTC), and the National School of Government (NSG) from the UK. While some of these NGOs have provided training and workshops for capacity building, others have helped the KRG to implement various projects to improve its governing capacity. These projects included:

- Improving the education system,
- Improving the healthcare system
- Reforming the electricity
- Reforming the water and sewage system
- Improving the traffic system
- Opening language centers in the universities
- Opening advanced laboratory for quality control
- Building new emergency rooms in the hospitals
- Establishing new hydropower projects with a total budget of 80 million US dollars. (MOP, 2012)

These NGOs have also helped the KRG by offering MA or PHD programs through the MOP for the KRG's public managers. As a part of this promotion process, the MOP itself has offered training courses through its own agencies, DCC and KIPA, to improve the KRG's governing capacity. These agencies have been conducting similar programs and training courses for the KRG employees and public servants since 2010. The following Figures (8 and 9) show the numbers of courses and training programs that the KRG has received from the MOP and the INGOs.

**Figure 8. Participants from all the three cities in training courses offered by MOP through KIPA or DCC, 2010-12**



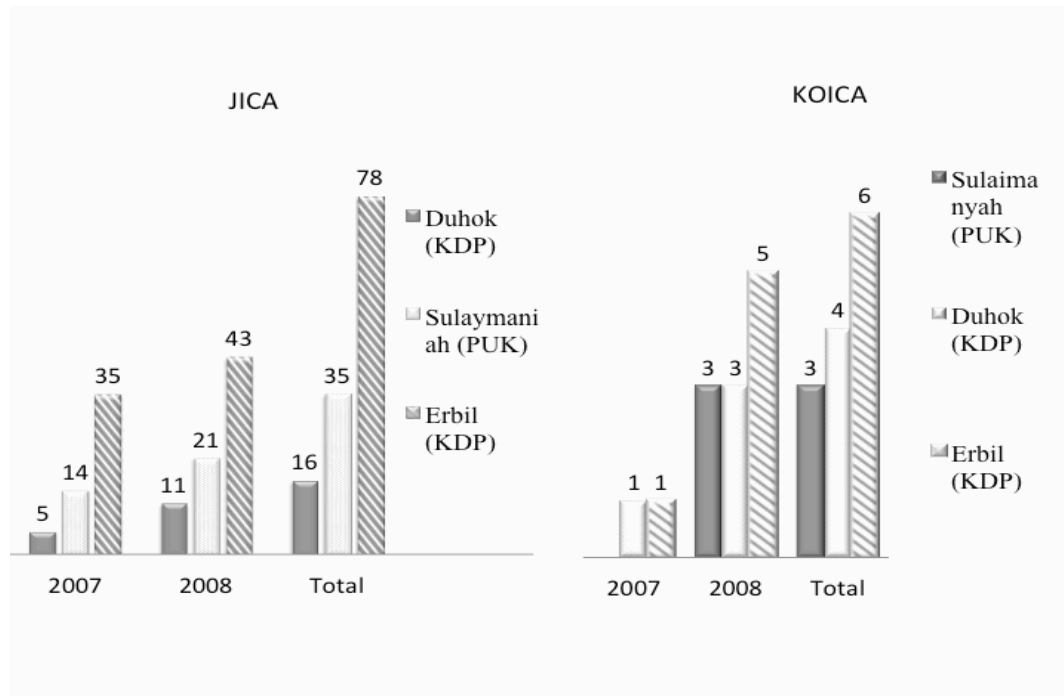
Note: created by the author.

Other agencies such as USAID and UNDP have also provided advice and help for reforming not only the infrastructure, respecting the rule of law, promoting transparency, but also design programs that educate and inspire the public the manager to change in mind set for better commitment to implementation (USAID-Iraq, 2008; Denise, 2010; MOP, 2008; UNDP, 2008).

Despite conducting all these courses and training programs, according to most of our interviewees from the middle and lower level positions, these training courses have not been effective due to several reasons. First of all, the process of appointing the public servants to participate in these programs is insufficient. Officials in the KRG's institutions show little attention for sending the targeted employees to attend these programs. Many of these interviewees also mentioned that favoritism in selecting the employees has created another major challenge, the high rank officials send ordinary employees to these local training courses but reward their friends or family members with the scholarships programs that send employees to study abroad. Some of these

individuals have traveled to many countries several times just because they are related to the general directors or high rank officials (Interviewee #6).

**Figure 9. Participants by governorate in the training courses offered by JICA and KOICA**



Note: Created by the author.

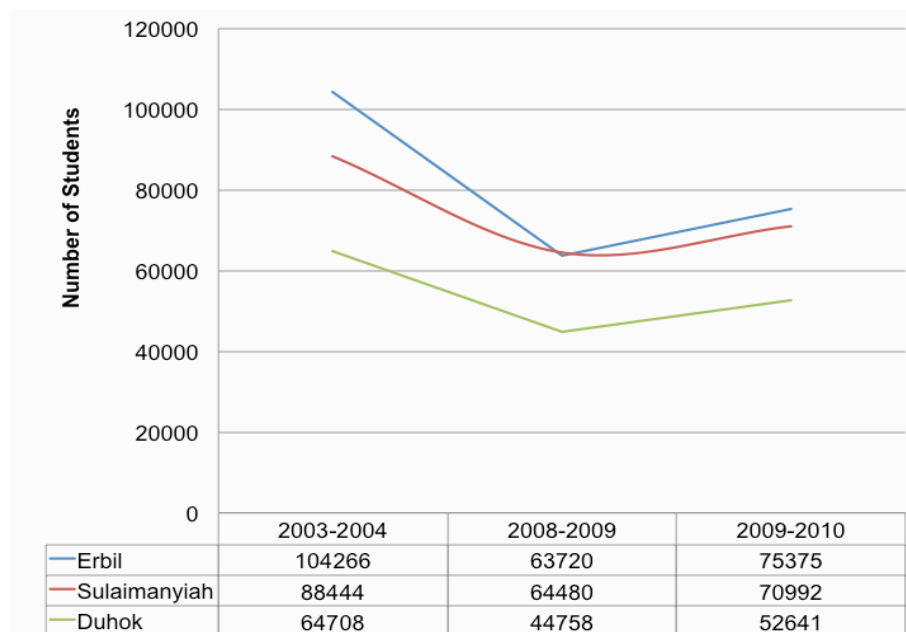
Another reason that has made these training courses to not be productive is a shortage of the trainers with updated knowledge of public policy or public administrations. As an observer, I participated in three sessions of two different types of training workshops in the MOP in August 2012 in Erbil. However, I noticed that the subjects and the materials that were covered in these training courses were irrelevant to what the KRG is short of or outdated. This lack of updated knowledge has undermined these training courses, as some of our interviewees informed us, in two ways. First, some public managers and high rank officials do not send their employees to participate in these programs because they do not have any faith or interest in the programs. Second, if a public manager from different cities sent employees to these training courses, which are taking place in Erbil, they need to provide the financial needs for their employees. This represents an “additional budget request for them” (Interviewees # 9).

Finally, there are two other reasons that have limited the governing performance of the KRG's institutions. First, the KRG practices a fixed system for promoting its employees each four years. Second, public employees in Kurdistan are poorly paid. In regards to promotion, each employee is promoted after four years of serving in one of the public offices. During these four years, the employees can also receive a financial bonus. However, as many of my interviewees from the middle and lower levels have informed us, this bonus in the public institutions is rewarded in two ways. One way is that if the employee is a close friend with the general manager or director has a high chance to receive it continuously. The second way is that the manager or the general director gives the bonus to different employees each month regardless of the level of their performances. This is done to avoid conflict (Interviewee #6 and #8).

In terms of the public sector employee's salary, according to the KRG's Ministry of Finance, from the 2012 budget, 45.1% goes to the total salaries of the civil servants in Kurdistan (2012a). However, due to the high number of the KRG public servants, an employee in the middle or lower levels receives a salary ranging between \$250 to \$1500, and a high level civil servant is paid somewhere between \$1500 to \$2500 (KRG-MOF, 2012b). Several of our interviewees informed me that they have second jobs beside their government careers.

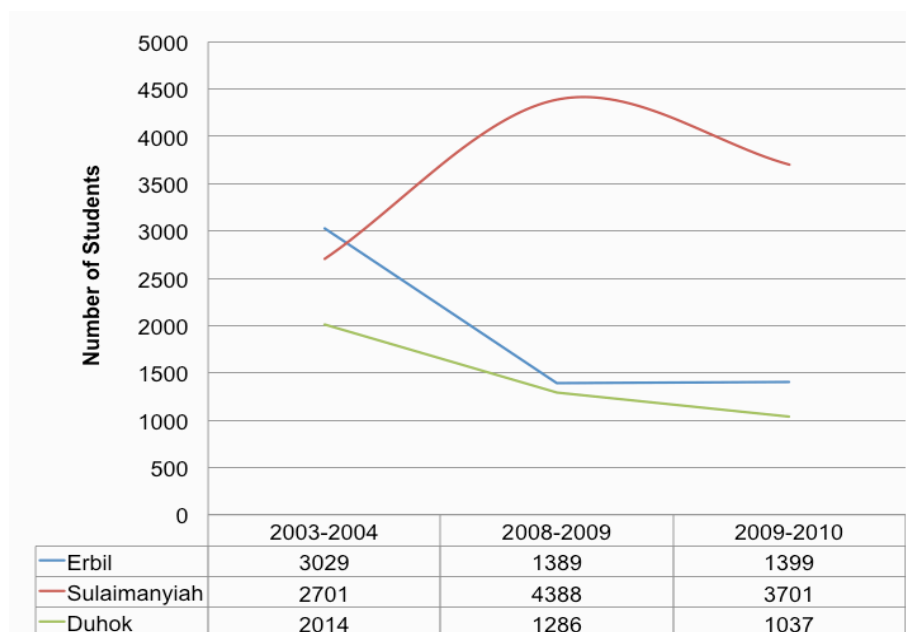
Before 2009, the main attention focus within the MOP was for promoting capacity through the mentioned training and workshop programs. However, some of this attention shifted towards the education system in Kurdistan. To make it more effective, the education system went through some changes. Among these developments was opening a number of private universities and institutions. These private schools were the American University, and College of Capacity building in Sulaymanyah; Goethe Institute, Jehan University, and Ishik University in Erbil. Due to these new private universities, the number of students in higher education increased from 21,670 in 2008 to 26,080 in 2009 with a growth rate of about 20.3%. However, one explanation for this increase has been the high number of the students who attended the private universities, from 2,742 in 2008 to 4,363 in 2009 at an increasing rate of about 60% (MOE, 2009). While the number of students who attended public schools, which requires higher GPAs, has decreased, the number of students in vocational institutions and technical colleges also decreased (KRG-MOP, 2011) (see Figures 10. and 11.).

**Figure 10. Numbers of Students in Public Universities by Governorate in Kurdistan**



Source: Note: MOP

**Figure 11. Number of Vocational Education Students, by Governorate in KRG**



Note: adopted from MOP

These universities have decreased the quality of education because they accept

students with a very low GPA, fewer than 2.0. This easy admission by these private universities can possibly be the reason that “the percentage of the students enrolled in public and private higher education (universities and institutes) compared to the number of students in secondary and vocational education increased from 13.06% in 2008 to 14.17% in 2009” (KRG-MOE, 2010).

After becoming the Prime Minister in 2009, Dr. Salih put extra stress on the rules of the MHESR in improving human resource capacity in Kurdistan. From 2009 to 2011, and under the leadership of the former minister Dr. Dlawar Aziz, MHESR purposed several reforms to make the education system play a stronger role in developing the needed capacities for Kurdistan. The main aspects in these reforms included:

- Training in science and technology
- Developing human resources that are capable to meet the present needs of Kurdistan
- Promoting scientific research
- Awarding scholarship and sending students abroad
- Encouraging private universities and giving more autonomy to the education system
- Allocating scholarships for the children of martyrs. (KRG-MHESR, 2009).

To implement these goals, three different boards were established. First, the Implementation Board designed to assist the implementation process of this program. Second, the Supreme Board, which is the highest decision making committee for decision and policies making (KRG-MHESR, 2009). According to one of our high-ranking interviewees, the Ministry has a plan to send 4500 students abroad, but so far just over 2500 students have been sent under the program of capacity building. However, one interviewee also informed us that many of these students are studying in fields other than the ones the ministry has recognized as important to the program of human resource capacity building. This is due to the fact that they did not have any boards to evaluate the quality of the programs that the ministry should fund. In addition, he also informed us that the students have equal right for applying for the scholarships. When I asked the same high-ranking employees about the effects that these students would have on capacity building, their response was that many of them have not been successful due to lack of a good board of evaluation during the process of selecting the



student. However, when I interviewed employees from the middle and lower levels, they stated that favoritism and nepotism are still two negative phenomena that are conducted in the process of issuing these scholarships.

Another policy that Dr. Aziz introduced was quality assurance in the KRG's public education system. The policy of quality assurance contains two aspects. The first is establishing a system of evaluating the performance in the public sector, and the services and products that are delivered or produced in Kurdistan. The second, adopting a systematic procedure to build confidence in fulfilling client's expectation on the service providers (KRG-MHESR, 2012). However, there is neither an evaluation board in MHESR nor there is anyone to evaluate the activities of these established boards or institutions (Interviewees # 11). In our visit to University of Al-Salahadien, we noticed that the quality of teaching was very poor and the facilities of the university were in very bad shape, let alone having evaluation systems that could evaluate the performance of the instructors in the universities in the Kurdistan. According to some of the interviewees from two major universities (#14 from Al-Salahadien in Erbil and #17 from Sulaymanyah in Sulaymanyah city), the quality of teaching is poor due to the lack of professors with updated skills, limited research activities, old facilities, and not having access to modern technologies. These teachers also informed me that the universities' programs have not been updated in the last two decades. Finally, it seems that even though the ministry have posted some proposals on its website about updating the teaching system in the post secondary institutions, in reality most of these agendas and decisions have not been implemented.

#### **4.5. The Recruitment System of the KRG**

The recruitment system is one of the major challenging issues in front of the process of capacity development in Kurdistan. This is due to the fact that "the KRG has become the largest employer in the region, providing monthly employment stipends to an estimated 1.5 million people in the public sector" (Denise, 2010, p. 91). However, due to lack of information, and despite asking officials in both ministries, the MOP and the MHESR, it is not clear where all these employees are positioned. Despite this lack of information about where these employees are positioned, it seems that mass

recruitment in the public sectors is still conducted through the Prime Minister's office once a year. In the recruitment process, decisions are mostly made based on who need jobs but not on the skills that the KRG's Ministries are in need. This is due to the fact that there is no job description within the KRG's institutions. Because of this system of mass recruitment, the government has become so big that any transaction in the public institutions has to go through many channels and faces a great deal of delay. Until 2010, it has been reported that individuals found about public positions through their personal connections or relative who are officials in government offices (Interviewee # 2, # 11, # 7).

However, this process of mass recruitment in the KRG institutions has witnessed some reforms. For instance, according to the KRG's Ministry of Labor and Social Affair (2012), more than 50,000 new employees were recruited in 2011, and close to 20,000 in 2012. When I asked some of these new employees, (Interviewees # 12 and # 16) who were just recruited, about the process of their recruitment, they informed us that they heard about the positions in the public media then they applied for the position. They had to send in CVs and later they were called for interview. However, when we asked our interviewees from the middle and lower level employees, who have been working more than tow years in the public sectors, they informed us that "even though the KRG has been recruiting its employee through CVs and interview process, many people are still appointed to public positions due to their relationships with the high ranking officials, regardless of the employees merit level" (Interviewees # 11, # 33, #4, #23). For example, the office of the KRG's Prime Minister has even conducted nepotism. On October 8<sup>th</sup> 2012, through an official document (see the document in index B) that has been issued by the Prime Minister office, it has been ordered recruiting some new employees without consulting or following the procedural process or the legislations that have been established by the KRG for recruiting new employees in the public sector.

To obtain a better understanding about these issues, in my interviews with about 45 employees from all the three levels, low, middle, and high, of the two ministries of the KRG, the MHESR, and the MOP, I asked several important questions relevant to some activates that we think are essential for developing a good level of governing capacity (see Tables 4. and 5.). However, the answers include only those employees who provided an answer yes or no to the questions. Those who were not sure about some

questions did not respond, thus they are not included in some answers.

**Table 4. The Employees Responds on MOP Recruitment Process**

Employees from MHESR/ MOP	Do they organize annual conference?		Do they conduct research Seminars?		Do they conduct workshops?		Is there corruption in promotion and recruitment?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
High Level	10	0	5	7	14	0	12	3
Middle Level	8	1	4	9	14	0	14	1
Lower Level	N/R	N/R	3	8	15	0	15	0
Total	18	1	12	24	43	0	41	4

Note: Created by the author.

**Table 5. The KRG employees Responds on Promotion and related tasks**

Employees from MOP	Do they Identify Demanded Skills?		Do they Advertise to Find the Right Skill?		Do they have Merit or Skill Assessment Program?		Do they Provide Equal Opportunity for competition?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
High Level	3	12	3	11	0	13	4	10
Middle Level	3	13	3	12	0	14	3	12
Lower Level	2	13	3	12	0	15	3	12
Total	8	38	9	35	0	42	10	32

Note: Created by author.

The responses in the tables above show a pattern that while the top employees' answers were mostly provided positive answers, the lower and middle staffs were more negative, and their answers supported the critical report that KRRC has published.

## **4.6. Conclusion**

It seems that despite the deep differences between the two main political actors and the poor political leadership that they showed for a long time, due to some political pressures, the KDP and the PUK, have been attempting to provide a better atmosphere for the KRG's governing capacity building. These two political actors have made these attempts individually or with some helps from the INGOs to improve the performance of the KRG since the invasion of Iraq.

They used two major ministries, the MOP and MHESR to influence this process of reform. These two institutions have implemented various methods of promotion such as training public employees, rewarding scholarships to students, and public employees to study abroad. However, as some of our interviewees have informed us, these institutions' proposals were challenged by an unfriendly atmosphere within the public institutions, corruption, the lack of transparency, and not having evaluation systems and skillful trainers. In addition, due to lack of these conditions and not clear vision, it seems that the KRG has become the largest employer in the region (Denise, 2010). Despite these reforms, these two ministries' activities have not resulted in a better performance.

## **5. Analysis and Discussion**

### **5.1. Introduction**

Based on the literature that has been provided, and the information on the political conditions that have developed under the leadership of Singapore's government, it seems that the KRGs' challenges are rooted in the political environment that has been created by its political leadership. Due to the hostile political conditions, and poor political leadership, the establishments of the new agencies or institutions, and the recruitment mechanisms that the KRG has conducted for improving its governing capacities, have not been successful. While Singapore's governing model represents a success, the KRG's experience signifies a failure.

### **5.2. Corruption as a Major Challenge**

Unlike Singapore, which has been celebrated for being one of the least corrupt countries in the world (TICI, 2011), the KRRC's report regarding corruption is still true (see table 4.). The KRRC (2012) has looked at this negative phenomenon at a wider range, by examining various institutions or agencies. However, most of the interviewees reported the existence of a specific type of corruption that is similar to what has been identified as "grand" corruptions by Langseth (2006).

It seems that Singapore has used institutional tools to detect corruption, specifically by applying some conditions and high standards of responsibilities towards the authorities and the political leaderships. Singapore also has enforced swift, strong, and public punishment to limit the level of corruption within its institutions (Neo and Chen, 2007). However, over 90% of the interviewees informed me that grand corruption is practiced by high ranking officials in the ministries or by the members on the boards or commissions that are in charge of rewarding the scholarships or of recruiting the new

civil servants in Kurdistan. I have come to realize that these public servants are involved in grand corruption because this is a norm. It is socially expected that these high-ranking employees should provide support for the people they know, not only for financial gains but also for showing loyalty to their relatives and friends (Interviewees #11 et al.). In addition, this type of corruption is not just a fact that exists in the process of recruitment and promotion systems in Kurdistan, but as some scholars have mentioned, it is one way that leads this process of reform (Caiden, 1991).

### **5.3. Political Conditions that Foster Different Political Leaderships**

Arguably, some of the major reasons behind Singapore's success in its development can be summarized as the following: Singapore's strong political leadership was able to provide a political condition, which fostered a strong government that was willing to conduct all the necessary reforms for improving its nation. Due to these characteristics, Singapore's government has been able to establish many institutions and directory boards with clear responsibilities that have practiced some sufficient recruitment and promotion systems. Most importantly, many studies indicate that Singapore's government has been successful for bringing together all the three important players, private, public, and educational actors to play their roles in the process of developing and improving its governing capacities (Baser and Morgan, 2008; Ashton et al, 1999).

However, unlike Singapore, Kurdistan has lacked a strong political leadership and as a result was not able to provide a friendly environment that encourages reforms in the structure of the public institutions for better performance. The political rivalry between the two main political actors, the KDP and the PUK, prevented the flexibility required to enact reforms. This poor political leadership that has presented itself through political party competition within the public institutions has created an environment that is discouraging transparency and encouraging corruption within the KRG's agencies and institutions (Interviewees # 6, #11, and # 42).

## **5.4. Organization with Clear Responsibilities and Evaluation Systems**

My discoveries from the KRG also indicate that due to this lack of good political leadership, very limited reforms have been conducted in the public sector's institutional structures. As I have explained in the previous sections, Singapore has been able to conduct a wide range of organizational reforms in all the areas that have been identified by the literature as major factors behind improving governing capacities of the state through its public institutions. These elements include providing, and establishing many agencies or institutions, and reforming its existing ones (Quah, 2010; Neo and Chen, 2007). In addition, Singapore's government has been successful in implementing its policies due to establishing many boards or as some scholars (Howlett, 2011; Peters, 2002; Kettle, 2002; and Salamon, 2002) have called them, organizational or indirect tools for governing. The ability to use these organizational tools is connected to the political leaderships' wider vision that has created these institutions in advance to make government's tasks more organized. By implementing different policies regarding governing performance, these boards have collectively contributed to the development of Singapore's effective government capacities (Kuruville et al., 1999). In addition, building these boards and institutions in the public sector has had significant influence in helping Singapore's government its goals for governing capacity development. For example, the MOE and the CSC implemented their policies relevant to capacity building through the ITE, the HRGs, Vocational, Industrial Training Boards, and Tata-Government Training Centre. One important fact about the usefulness of these tools is that they have collectively provided different types of support and promotions to Singapore's governing model (Neo and Chen, 2007, p. 98). Another example is that while the CSC has been in charge of educating first class civil servants (Civil Service College Singapore, 2001-2003), the ITE gives opportunities for the adult learners to develop modern skills (MOE-ITE-Singapore, 2012). Finally, the HRGs have been able to propose agendas regarding capabilities, and human resource development to maintain Singapore's labor skill at a high standard (MOE-HRG- Singapore, 2012).

However, the KRG seems to still be struggling to conduct the same reforms due to a slow and incomplete process of organizational reforms within its ministries (Denise, 2010). The results of my research show that there are several reasons that have slowed

down this process of reforms. First of all, the KRG's government is lacking sufficient or clear agendas for reforming the way its existing institutions function. Its policies for making its existing institutions more effective in the process of developing capacities have not been very successful due to the absence of clear responsibilities based on an effective networking management system. This connection is important not only within its public institutions but also to give the private actors more active roles by involving them in the process of capacity development. For example, there is a very limited partnership between the MOP and the MHESR in regards to what type of capacity development should have priorities. It is also not clear in what extent each one of these two important actors plays their roles to properly achieve the targeted goals of such development (Interviewees # 11, # 34, #7, and # 6). One of the main reasons for this lack of cooperation is political party obedience by bureaucrats within KRG's agencies. In addition, my findings indicate that this lack of collaboration has prevented bureaucrats and managers from playing stronger roles that some literatures have suggested, being able to have enough room for maneuvering, coping and scheming to achieve the intended goals of their designed policies (Wu, M. Ramesh, Howlett, and Fritzen, 2010: 70-1).

Another reason such a system of integration might not exist is due to disruption in the process of skill development within the KRG's institutions. For example, if some bureaucrats or managers develop some skills, they will not be very beneficial or effective because when the two political parties exchange their institutional shares, they also appoint new individuals and replace the senior managerial positions (Interviewee # 7). Most of our interviewees referred to Dr. Aziz, the former minister of the MHESR, as "a man of vision with clear agendas for reforming the education system by making it an effective source for producing human resources in Kurdistan" (Interviewees # 11, # 9 and # 7). However, due to political parties' pressures, he was replaced with another minister, Dr. Ali Said, the current minister. Because of these challenges that the bureaucrats and the KRG's institutions have to deal with, the process of capacity development functions at a very low level, particularly, in the two ministries, the MOP and the MHESR, that this study has examined (Interviewees #11, # 9, and # 7).



## 5.5. Promotion and Training

I need not re-list the activities of Singapore's public institutions regarding promotion and the vast amount of training courses or programs they provide (see map 3.3) to demonstrate the contrast with the KRG. However, I have demonstrated that the KRG's promotion systems have not been very productive in regards to governing capacity building due to various reasons. For example, from the training courses that have been offered by the MOP, the MHESR and some INGOs, one can see a great deal of inequality among the public employees who have received these courses from the three major cities (see Figures 8., and 9.). As part of my research field, and to gain a better understanding, I participated in one of these training courses. I noticed that the participants who attended this training course were not really engaged, and the trainers were not optimistic about the results of these workshops. This is because the public managers do not send the individuals who need to learn these lessons. In addition, while the effects of the MOP have been limited due to the lack of good trainers and of adequate mechanisms for selecting the targeted employees that should receive these promotions; there are several issues, such as a fixed system of promotion that discourages any type of competition, the lack of research, shortage of training, and technical institutions that have limited the roles that the MHESR can play in the process of capacity building.

Based on these findings, it seems that the MHESR has attempted to put the process of capacity building on its right path, particularly after Dr. Aziz was appointed as the minister of the institution (Interviewees #6, # 11, # 12, and # 9). Many students have been sent abroad under the capacity building program. However, it seems that this institution also has limited abilities in conducting its programs based on research results in regards to the shortages of skills and capacities that are needed to be fulfilled through these scholarship programs that students should study abroad (Interviewees # 6 and # 4). In addition, I have realized that due to not using research as a tool for identifying the roots of the existing shortages in the public institutions, the universities in Kurdistan have not been capable to promote programs based on the demanded skills that the KRG needs. This limited role that the university programs play in Kurdistan is due to the fact that they are designed according to the number of students who need to study in post-

secondary institutions, and the fact that they are mostly interested in bachelor degrees (Interviewee # 11). Finally, despite the fact that the KRG seem does not have many vocational or training colleges, easy access to the universities could be one the reasons for the decline of the number of students in the vocational or technical schools (see Figures 10. and 11.).

It seems that there have been some reforms in the last two years, and the universities now provide equal opportunities for students to receive scholarships (Interviewees #11, and # 9). However, the KRG does not have clear objectives that it wants to achieve through these scholarship programs. They randomly send students to study mainly science, IT, and engineering programs. Despite this random selection of these programs, I was informed that many of the students who have reached their destinations and study in these programs have not been very successful because of low capabilities of English language skills or low performance in the programs in general (Interviewees # 4, # 11, and # 6). Another point that has limited the impact of the MHESR's capacity building is that the public universities do not teach public policy or public administration programs. In fact, even if they do, they only cover some general political science subjects or teach only basic knowledge in regards to the subject of management (Interviewees # 17 and # 14). Even though there are some private universities, such as the University of Erbil and the University of Kharadaxh, that teach important subjects relevant to governing capacity, attending these private universities are too expensive, they have not been very productive (Interviewees # 17, # 14, and # 18).

## **5.6. Recruitment System that has made the KRG a Financial Source**

Perhaps the evidences from Singapore's techniques for hiring its public employees are some good practical examples that the literature suggests. Taken together, all these suggestions and examples lead us to realize that merit-based recruitment has been one of the core criteria that have been respected in the process of hiring public servants in Singapore. This has been guaranteed through several procedural steps that have been stated by the DPADM (2005): Calling for accepting

application through the public media, selecting the desired skill from these applications and interviewing them are some of the major preparations before appointing the new civil servants.

However, our findings from the KRG indicate that as a result of the two political parties' competitions through appointing their members to work in the limited numbers of the public institutions, the KRG has created a culture through which its citizens see the government only as a source for financial gains (Denise, 2010). Perhaps this is one of the main reasons that unlike the Singapore, which has a very reasonable number of public servants (see Table 2.), the KRG has become the largest employer in the region that has employed over 1.5 million employees (Denise, 2010). However, despite this high numbers of public employees, no one knows where these employees are positioned. It seems that a new process of hiring public employees has been introduced by the KRG. There have been advertisements for the new job opportunities in the public sector through local medias, CVs have been collected from new applicants for the public positions, and even interviewees have been conducted before hiring (Interviewees # 16, and #18). However, according to many interviewees, this process is still not sufficient due to many reasons. Since there is neither exams for the civil servants to take nor are there evaluation systems within the public institutions to keep track on the capacities and performance of these new employees, the performance of the public institutions have decreased further (interviewees # 11, #6, and # 17). In terms of political appointees for the senior managerial or high rank positions, all the interviewees conformed that, only individuals whom are whether members of or have close relationships to one of the political parties are appointed to these posts (Interviewees # 11, # 6, and # 16). Even in the lower levels, it seems that there are still some level of corruptions. For example, even though two of the interviewees, (#13, and # 15), informed me that they were hired through a similar procedural process that Neo and Chen (2007) have suggested, some others, (Interviewees #6, # 7, and # 14), conformed that many applications are selected due to their kinships or connection with the senior managers in the public institutions. Again it is worth to mention that this political appointee has limited consistency and effectiveness in the agendas and the programs of capacity building in the KRG's institutions in various ways.

## **5.7. Conclusion**

Based on the literature review, and the information in regards to our cases studies, I have concluded that unlike Singapore, the KRG's governing capacities have been limited due to various factors. These factors include unfriendly political environment that has been created by the two dominant political parties, the KDP and the PUK, the lack of clear and affective polices for presenting a better performance through improving its existing institutions and creating new ones. Insufficient human resource management and promotions have also been two major reasons that have generated further corruption in the KRG's public institutions' activities. Finally, even though there have been some attempts through the MOP and the MHESR to develop better capacities, due to political parties intervention, poor research and promotion has proved these attempts to be fruitless. Overall this low level of governing capacities can be blamed on the political environment that the two political parties, the KDP and the PUK, created. In addition, unlike the PAP, that has been able to lead the government of Singapore through the right directions, the KRG's institutions are still very in their ability to reform.

While one major factor behind Singapore's success for improving its capacity is that it has fulfilled all the necessary steps that Neo and Chen, Dool, UNDP, and Bourgon suggest for a dynamic governance with a high quality of performances (see chapter 2), the KRG's policies have been undermined by the deficit of most of these recommendations, a strong political leadership with clear vision, clear policies and practice relevant to recruitment, and effective promotion systems to increase transparency and decrease corruption (see Figure 2.).

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **6.1. Conclusion**

This paper has examined the KRG's governing skills relevant to the existing challenges that have been conformed to by one of the KRG's commissions, KRRC, and protested against by the public in Kurdistan. Some of these problems are the existence of a high level of corruption within the KRG's institutions, low performance of its civil servants, and political parties' intervention into public institutions' tasks (Dr. Barham Salih, 2012). Therefore, this paper has attempted to understand the natures of the organizational reforms, the recruitment and promotion systems, and educational preparation that the KRG's has been conducting in managing the mentioned challenges, and building a competent civil service in Kurdistan.

To answer the above question, I first reviewed the relevant literature that has explained that there are several factors that can affect the performance of governances profoundly. These factors include a responsible political leadership that is willing to provide a stable political environment. This stability in political environment is important because it offers more opportunities for the government's institutions and agencies to function and design its agendas regarding its short and long goals. This is important because it allows the public agencies to consider these changes through a wider vision through which designing the necessary policies and agendas for further developments will be more effective (Howlett, 2011; Neo and Chen, 2007; Hira and Patiff, 2004; Salamon, 2002). However, having a stable environment, and having organizational procedures also do not always produce the expected outcomes, particularly in the developing nations. This is because of the shortage of demanded skills and the possibility of the reactions towards the changes that such institutional reforms would generate (Agranoff and McGuire, 1999).

By considering the mentioned steps such as reforming the existing institutions or designing new ones with more clear responsibilities of skills required (Neo and Chen, 2007; Howlett, 2011; Salamon 2002; Hira and Patiff 2004;) a developing nation could have a high chance to increase its level of governance performance. These reforms include establishing various institutions and boards with clear responsibilities and functions, and adopting effective mechanisms of recruitment that depend on merit for hiring the employees for the public sectors' institutions. Finally, even though in some developing nations, corruption is a way that exist along public servants tasks (Caiden 1991), by conducting and following these tasks, the chances for emerging transparent and less corrupt governance seems to be possible.

This paper has identified Singapore's governing model success that has aggressively developed its service. I argue that this improvement is due to Singapore's political leadership that has exposed a strong will for reforms through its high level of efficiency and flexibility. Singapore's governing model has been successful model in providing political stability that has enable its politicians, and public servants to be able to design their objectives through clear agenda and policies (Neo and Chen, 2010; Quah, 2010). Furthermore, by using its Ministry of Education, and CSC, Singapore government has been able to present a high level of governance. Through these two important institutions, it has created various institutions and agencies that generate different types of skills and talents for Singapore. Last but not the least, the techniques that Singapore's government has used for its recruitment and promotion systems, have been very productive because they have generated more transparency, but diminished corruption in its civil sectors.

I have examined the KRG's governing capacity in northern Iraq, in comparison with Singapore experience of governing. One of the main reasons for comparing the KRG with the Singapore is that the Singaporean government has been able to increase the level of transparency and reduce the rate of corruption to a great extent in the public institutions (Soon and Tan, 2003). Another reason for comparing KRG to Singapore is the political will that the Singapore's leadership has exposed. As some scholars have mentioned, one of the main reasons that have made Singapore to survive after gaining its dependence from Malaysia were its strong political leaderships. More specifically, the flexibility of its political leadership for learning, and the ability of establishing and

involving many agencies to robust its organizational reforms (Neo and Chen, 2007), are some of the factors that have made this political leadership vital.

## **6.2. Recommendations**

This study recognizes that the Kurdish region is still in the process of development. However, to make this process more fruitful, KRG needs to build the foundations of a stronger governing model at this early stage. One can appreciate that the KRG has conducted some limited reforms in the political structure. However, the KRG must focus its attentions on further reforms in its structural organizations. This should include introducing and applying stronger regulations and effective policies to deal with corruption and to increase the level of transparency in the public institutions. The KRG should create more agencies and institutions to make the implementation process of government's policies easier.

It is perhaps not necessary to elaborate on how the KRG should introduce more regulations in regards to corruption and transparency; however, the KRG needs to design new institutions with clear policies for educating its public servants. These policies should introduce improved emphasis on ethics within the KRG's institutions. Even though some might argue that this is a long-term process, the KRG can accomplish this objective by using different techniques and instruments. For example, one way to reduce corruption within the public institutions is by appointing individuals based on their merit and skills. This will become an ideal image that encourages others to earn the same positions. Another way is to introduce new regulations through some new agencies to keep track and monitor negative phenomena in the public sectors. To make these agencies more effective, professionals and experts, who have clear understanding of the threats that this phenomenon can impose on the society as whole, should govern these different institutions or agencies.

The KRG should consider building further agencies for developing better capacities. For example, to make the MOP's and MHESR policies more effective in this process of governing capacity development, it is important for the KRG to use more organizational instruments, create new agencies, or add additional training institutions.

The ministry must advise and consult with the ministry of MHESR in regards to the necessary skills that are needed in Kurdistan. Another change that the MOP should consider is the way it conducts its training courses. Even though training these new employees in the public sector by the MOP should be appreciated, the training of the new employees should take place by the institutions that hire these new public servants. By doing this, the KRG will benefit in two ways; first, the new employee will be better prepared for the position he is hired for, and second, the government will save money and time for the MOP.

The MHESR can also be called upon for conducting similar tasks. For example, the MHESR should consider establishing more vocational and training schools. This can be accomplished by increasing the general grade point standard of getting to universities. Those who don't meet the requirements for getting into Universities should have options to pursue study in the vocational or training institutions. In addition, the MHESR should push the KRG to provide enough funds for opening research centers and introducing research as an important tool that should be practiced for improving the government's performances.

In regards to its recruitment and promotion systems, in addition to the reforms that have been introduced in the last couple of years, the KRG's institutions must implement merit-based criteria as the core standards in the recruitment and promotion process. It might be hard for the KRG to totally dismiss the mass recruitment and the fixed four-year promotion system. However, to reform these issues, the KRG should introduce various types of evaluation systems and encourage feedback from the public.



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## **Appendices**

## **Appendix A.**

### **Informed Consent Form**

**A Consent to participate in an interview on governing Capacity in Kurdistan**

**Application Number:** 2012s0625

**Dear Colleague:**

My name is Kawa Jabary, and I am a master's student at Simon Fraser University in Canada. I am asking you for your cooperation in conducting a few interview questions on governing capacity in Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq, and it has being supervised by Dr. Andy Hira and Dr. Michael Howlett. The purpose of this research project is to learn more about the governing capacity in the KRG. This study is not about individual officials rather it is about the governing model and governing capacity under the KRG. Thus, as you have already been informed earlier about the purpose of this research project, which is helping the governing model in Kurdistan to function more professionally, I would like to get your permission for recording the interview and using the inform that you provide to enrich the study.

The interview shouldn't take more than one hour, and the responses will be kept confidential and reported anonymously. There is absolutely no risk to anyone since this study is not about particular public servants or group within the government and no ones names will be released or mentioned. Once the study is completed, the response and the data will be stored on a CD and kept in a locked cabinet in a safety box in my house.

By agreeing to this interview, you are giving me verbal consent to use the information that we discuss through anonymous attribution. Your participation in this interview is important because this study's attention is to improve governing capacity in Kurdistan that benefit the KRG to provide better services in Kurdistan. If you have any question, or interested to know about the result of the study, you can contact: Dr. Andy Hira at Department of Political Science, Simon Fraser University 8888 University Drive Burnaby, BC V5A1S6 CANADA, e-mail: ( ), or Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director, Office of Research Ethics at or 778-782-6593.

Kawa Jabary



## Appendix B.

### Participant Questionnaires

<b>Ministry of Planning/ Ministry of EHSR</b>	<b>Do they organize annual conference?</b>		<b>Do they conduct research seminars?</b>		<b>Do they conduct research in governing capacity</b>		<b>Do they conduct workshops?</b>	
Promotion	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	How	Why	How	Why	How	Why	How	Why
<b>Ministry of Planning/ Ministry of EHSR</b>	<b>Do they identify demanded skills?</b>		<b>Do they advertise to find the right skill?</b>		<b>Do they have merit or skill assessment program?</b>		<b>Do they provide equal opportunity for competition?</b>	
Recruitment	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	How	Why	How	Why	How	Why	How	Why