

Halmstad University  
Department of Political Science and International Relations  
School of Social and Health Science (HOS)  
Supervisor: Jonna Johansson  
Examiner: Thomas Knoll

---

**Disability  
in  
Kurdistan**

**2012**

---

A Study Seen From a  
Human Security  
Perspective

Author: Reving Amedi

---

## Abstract

This paper is concerned with the developed area of Kurdistan, the Iraqi Kurdistan, and this paper will try to underline the situation of persons with disabilities living standards in Kurdistan. The research problem concerned with this topic is, what is being done by the different actors who have the power to influence the living standards of persons with disabilities in the region of Kurdistan. The purpose and aims of this paper is to highlight the importance of these living standards for these persons and how they feel they are being treated by the society as whole, both from the society (the people around them), and also the government, authorities and organizations at place for aid and assistance to those people.

The main course of this paper has been laid on interviews with official persons from government and associations in Kurdistan. On the authorities and similar side, Salah Yousif Mohammed, the directorate of Disabled Care Duhok has been interviewed, together with Nassrat Mohammed Salem, the director of ZheenHandi Capped Association, Wahid Saeed Chicho, the director of Little People of Kurdistan Association and Khabat Islam Muhamad, Dohuk Program Manager for the Voice of Older People (VOP). These interviews together with interviews with persons with disabilities have laid forward a comprehensive matter of facts at hand to study.

Social Constructivism, Human Security and Disability have been chosen as theoretical framework of this paper to help for better understanding of the purpose of this paper. Both Social Constructivism and Human Security help to define and better understand the concept of Disability in Kurdistan. The Social Model of Disability in Sweden has also been included in Disability for better understanding of a successful example.

Keyword: *Disability, Social Constructivism, Human Security, Social Model of Disability, participation, accessibility, accountability*

## Foreword

The years spend in University of Halmstad, have been great experience and I have come to learn a lot from the different professors we have had. I have had the opportunity to study in Hong Kong for one semester and this has given me the experience I will long carry with me; experiences such as communication and cooperation with different people, which I find as key characteristics for any type of job, so for that I am grateful to have studied at Halmstad University. During the years at the university, we have had studied many different international topics that have had great influence on how I look upon the international system we live in. Areas such as, international human rights law, international law to actors in the international arena, have led me to study disability.

Secondly, there are some persons I would like to mention for their help and support during the process of this paper. Without my dear friends in Kurdistan that conducted the interviews and sent the recordings have been one of the reasons I could write the way I have. Without their help, I would have a hard time to find equivalent information on the topic of disability in Kurdistan because of my location, time and space of this paper. My dear friend, Dr. Rabee Asmat Saadullah Oramari has studied at Animal Production Department where he got his PhD in Animal Breeding and also studied at Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry at the Univeristy of Duhok. He together with his team, Tara Ameen Hussein and Asma Abdullah Easa has conducted the interviews with official persons in Kurdistan and for that, I am very thankful for. I would also like give my thanks to Zeravan Jalal Sadullah, instructor at Amedy Technical Institute (BSC in English Language) has helped with the conduction of interviews with persons with disabilities in Dohuk. I would also like to give my thanks to my supervisor and examiner Jonna Johansson, who have commented on my paper and helped me throughout the process of the paper. And finally, I am very grateful for my interviewers' willingness for sharing their stories with me and being so open with the answers. I am very grateful for that and I wish them the best.

**Table of Content**

- Abstract .....2
- Foreword .....3
- 1. Introduction .....5
  - 1.1 Background .....6
  - 1.2 Purpose and Problem formulation .....9
  - 1.3 Delimitation ..... 11
  - 1.4 Disposition ..... 12
- 2. Theoretical Framework ..... 14
  - 2.1 The concept of Human Security ..... 14
  - 2.2 Social Constructivism ..... 20
  - 2.3 Disability and Social Model of Disability ..... 23
  - The Disability Law: Sweden ..... 28
  - The Social Model of Disability: Sweden ..... 30
- 3. Methodology ..... 32
  - 3.1 Interviews ..... 34
- 4. Result ..... 38
  - 4.1 Integration with the society, thoughts (feelings) and comments? ..... 39
  - 4.2 Obstacles to this integration ..... 42
  - 4.3 In order to live an everyday life, any assistance offered for disabled persons which would help to maintain a sustainable life? ..... 49
  - 4.4 What more can be offered? ..... 51
- 5. Analysis ..... 55
- 6. Conclusion ..... 63
- 7. Reference List ..... 65

## 1. Introduction

There is no such thing as perfection and this is most rightly entitled to say about disability and the social services provided in a developing state, such as the region of Kurdistan in the Northern Iraq. The complications the region faces today are by far more complex than ever before and this is because of the vast growing economy. The economy lays down the path for further development, but can also lead to further misadventure for the region because of the people coming from outside Kurdistan for investments and such, especially in the field of oil. Having that said, the complexity, the region of Kurdistan is facing is no doubt very interesting to study and how the persons with disabilities are experiencing in times like these. Regarding the development in the economy and the economic growth in the region of Kurdistan, it is necessary to highlight the need and the situation of persons with disabilities in the society. With a rapidly growing economy comes great responsibility, these persons are easily forgotten in a society on the move and therefore it is a necessity to notify the importance of not forgetting these persons as they are equally important and they should be equally respected as the rest of the society. This paper will underline what is done by the different actors, who have the power to help, assist and improve the situation for persons with disabilities in the region of Kurdistan.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities where there are 82 signatories to the convention, making it one of the highest numbers of signatories in history to a UN Convention.<sup>1</sup> Having that said, this convention is legally bonded and therefore the basic needs and accessibility stated in the convention is something that all countries have to carry out in their own communities. The Convention provide as a human rights instrument in the field of social welfare, aiming to help for ensuring the human rights and fundamental freedoms for persons with all types of disabilities. The convention also has in mind the bio effects for development and improvement in the field of disability and to ensure that these rights are well known everywhere in the world.<sup>2</sup> The region of Kurdistan, is however under the laws of Iraq and whereby most accordingly must adhere to those laws in the context and thus; making this paper not only applicable to the Iraqi Kurdistan, but also the whole Iraq as a whole

---

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Official Site, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, un.org, <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Therefore it is important to raise this question, because all too often, there is no one to raise their voices as they go unheard and forgotten. Therefore I would like to illustrate the situation disabled persons in Kurdistan and that this paper will hopefully provide with adequate information about disabled persons in Kurdistan and how the situation could be improved. In the theoretical framework chapter, the concept of disability is being discussed and the social model for disability which have had great influence on the disability situation in for example, Sweden.

## 1.1 Background

Due to my origins I come across the progresses happening in the Northern Iraq, Kurdistan on regular basis through newspaper and TV channels and I can see the development changes happening in the region. The country's growth is not only economic but also other fields such as communities making it possible for the questions of disability and the rights for persons with disabilities. These social questions are shown everyday on the Kurdish channels to mainstream the importance of how a troubled society needs the adequate help to improve and give better life standards for the Kurdish people. Such programs on the channel Kurdistan TV are Zoom In; reporting from different troubled areas in the Iraqi Kurdistan and giving information about what is wrong and how the help should be given.<sup>3</sup> It can be all from criminals; interviewing them of why they did the crime to car accidents where the problem have perhaps laid on the infrastructure and proving with motion picture that for example, two cars cannot pass each other on that specific traffic lane. I believe those programs offer a lot to the society and especially for us living abroad, we get a hunch of what kind development and improvements are needed at the current time.

The fall of Saddam Hussein was perhaps the starting point for Kurdistan's developments as we see it today, leading even to a comparison between the capital of Kurdistan, Erbil and Dubai, because of the new shopping malls, flats that are built in most extraordinary rates and the hotels of course.<sup>4</sup> This in itself have led to a further developments in desirable strives for a welfare state among the people. It is important to see how this economic development reflects on the structure of the welfare state. It is for these reasons I

---

<sup>3</sup> Kurdistan TV, Zoom In, <http://www.kurdistantv.net/video.aspx?id=67517>

<sup>4</sup> Woolf, Nicky, (2010) "Is Kurdistan the next Dubai?" guardian.co.uk, Retrieved in 2012-05-14. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/may/05/kurdistan-next-dubai-iraq>

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

---

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

got interested in the subject of disablement in Kurdistan because that many Kurds have been injured for life during the wars Kurdistan have participated in and the crimes by the former Iraqi government on the Kurdish people, such as the well-known gas attack on the city of Halabja where 5000 Kurds lost their lives and over 9000 seriously injured<sup>5</sup>. This attack was by the former Iraqi President and his cousin, Ali Hassan Al-Majid who eventually took the leading role of the so called, *Al-Anfal Campaign* against the Kurds in Halabja. This is when he was named as “Chemical Ali” (Ali Kimyawi). The aftermath of the attack, many of the injured died at the hospital, others had live with severe diseases for the rest of their lives, and even if they survived these diseases, it wouldn’t mean that their life would improve or stabilize in any ways, because they could found themselves sterilized, or that their children would be disabled. It is therefore in the interest of the author to find out how disability is seen in Kurdistan and how this field is being developed. The author also believes it is highly important to see how high on the political agenda the question regarding disability and social welfare is. Having that said, it is not in the mind of the author, to answer this question, but rather to take into consideration that the level of which this question is on, does matter and the author believes it does make a difference.

To clarify my research, the focus will be on how the region of Kurdistan deals with disability as a whole, and how persons with disabilities get certain types of help. Having that said, this is an essential issue which is often forgotten, especially during the beginning of a welfare state. It is almost like that those most in need, in a developing country, has to suffer further before their voices are being heard. This is also discussed among International Relations scholars, stating that the economic growth in a developing state does have bad side effects as well. In the work done by Clark and Senik, at Paris School of Economics and IZA, and as the title of their book states it, “will GDP growth increase happiness in developing countries?”, and that economic growth does not necessarily mean greater happiness, providing a greater wealth to the societies<sup>6</sup>, but certainly have pushing factors for the societies to develop further. That process can however take a long time and therefore it is mind of the author to ensure that disability continues to get the mainstream audience it deserves.

---

<sup>5</sup> Ala’ Aldeen, Dlawer A.A, Death Clouds: Saddam Hussein’s Chemical War Against the Kurds, Retrieved-05-14. <http://www.dlawer.net/?q=node/79>

<sup>6</sup> Clark, Andrew E., Senik, Claudia, (2011), “Will GDP Growth Increase Happiness in Developing Countries?”, (Paris School of Economics and IZA, Discussion Paper No. 5595, March 2011), <http://ftp.iza.org/dp5595.pdf>

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

The region of Kurdistan, is however under the laws of Iraq and whereby most accordingly must adhere to those laws in the context and thus; making this paper not only applicable to the Iraqi Kurdistan, but also the whole Iraq as a whole. When taking a look at the Iraqi Constitution and the Kurdistan Constitution; they are very similar and seem to be copied of each other. However, this is the authors' observation of the constitutions, available in English language, meaning, they can be different in the Arabic language, but that seems to be very odd, if so. It is mentioned in the article 1 of the Draft Constitution of Kurdistan Region – Iraq,

“The Iraqi Kurdistan Region is a region within the Federal State of Iraq. It is a democratic republic with a parliamentary political system that is based on political pluralism, the principle of separation of powers, and the peaceful transfer of power through direct, general, and periodic elections that use a secret ballot.”<sup>7</sup>

This means that the region of Kurdistan is as mentioned earlier under the laws of the Federal Constitution of the Republic of Iraq. However, the parliament has the power to enact laws if they do not infringe laws of the Federal Constitution. It is also stated under the Social and Economic Rights that:

“The Government of the Kurdistan Region shall be responsible for the welfare of the families of the martyrs of the Kurdistan people's Liberation Movement and the welfare of the families of the Peshmerga martyrs. The Government shall also be responsible for the welfare of the families of victims of AL-Anfal campaign, and victims of the chemical attacks and those affected by permanent disabilities as a result thereof. Qualified individuals from these groups, and their children, shall be given priority in accessing work opportunities, in accordance with the law.”<sup>8</sup>

Having this said, the Government of the Kurdistan Region has the responsibility and shall be accountable for the persons with disabilities, especially to those victims of the AL-Anfal campaign and the chemical attacks. It is also stated in the next article (article 24 of the Social and Economic Rights of the Constitution) that “everyone shall have the right to social security, especially in cases of motherhood, sickness, unemployment, injury, disability, old

---

<sup>7</sup> Kurdistan Parliament, Article 1 of the Constitution of Kurdistan, <http://www.kurdistan-parliament.org/default.aspx?page=Constitution&c=Constitution-Kurdistan>

<sup>8</sup> Kurdistan Parliament, Article 23 of the Constitution of Kurdistan, <http://www.kurdistan-parliament.org/default.aspx?page=Constitution&c=Constitution-Kurdistan>

age, displacement, and loss of one's means of livelihood in circumstances beyond one's control.” This means that not only the Government of the Kurdistan Region shall be accountable for the victims of the wars, but also those in sickness, disability and loss of one’s means of livelihood in circumstances beyond one’s control, giving us the other side of the disability, as those born with disabilities and those getting disabilities along the way as they grow up, sickness or wars. This would also mean that the government shall not only take care of its victims to wars, but also those born disabilities, giving no excuses why to prioritize one group higher than the other.

## 1.2 Purpose and Problem formulation

As the research problem is concerned with the developed area of Kurdistan, the Iraqi Kurdistan, improvement have been made at many stages, such as in the economic areas and this paper will try to underline these perspectives, but more specifically the situation of persons with disabilities living standards in Kurdistan. The research problem concerned with this topic is what is being done by the different actors who have the power to influence the living standards of persons with disabilities in the region of Kurdistan. The purpose and aims of this paper is to underline the importance of living standards of persons with disabilities and how they feel they are being treated by the society as whole, both from the society (the people around them), and also the government, authorities and organizations at place for aid and assistance to those people. How do politicians in Kurdistan prioritize the question of disability? What are the organizations (NGOs) doing to improve the situation for these persons? And how they are receiving this help? What is being done by the government to help and improve the situation concerning persons with disabilities? And how do they appear themselves to these persons? These questions raise even more questions than answering any of posed questions and rightly so, are the case with disability in Kurdistan. The purpose of this paper is to define the assistance persons with disabilities get in the region of Kurdistan and how this assistance helps to prove to be crucial for some to be able to live a sustainable life. Having this said, the purpose is also to the extent that this paper helps to provide for new and hopefully project development in this field for future development in the area of Social Science and foremost disability and human rights. And the research questions are as followed:

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

- I. *What is being done by the actors involved in the process of disability in the region of Kurdistan? What is being done by the Government of Kurdistan Region, NGOs at place and also different authorities? What is being done to help and improve the situation concerning persons with disabilities?*
- II. *How is disability seen in Kurdistan from the different angles, such as the persons with disabilities, government and authorities?*

In order to get the adequate information on the concerned questions, it is necessary to look at disability at several angles, as mentioned earlier. We have to know how the persons with disabilities experience the help they get so far, and how they are being treated in the society for having one or more disabilities. Interviews with the involved actors have made it possible to be more personal in their answers and therefore I would think that interviews were best used for accomplishing this goal. Therefore the use of interviews with disabled persons but also organizations and authorities in Kurdistan help to give better understanding of the posed questions. The questions are reasonably simple to ask, but far more for the development in such area as Kurdistan region. This is due to the possibility of forgetting these questions in a developing state. As mentioned earlier the region of Kurdistan is in terms of economic growth and economic well-being radically vast growing and people have more money to spend than before. An example of this issue is the housing “problem” as people buy houses and lands for ridiculous amount of money compared to just a few years back thus; this is because of the economic boom the region have had recent years. Therefore I would argue that in these times, when economically, the country is doing well, the questions of human rights are entitled to a greater extent because they easily can be forgotten and pushed aside thus; here the first question lays its importance for a developing effect in the field of social science as well, and particularly in the field of disability and persons with a disability. The first question posed will underline for assistance given by the authorities at place in Kurdistan for development and improvements to ensure the safety and equality for persons with disability. The main actors here are the three stages of actors, which include of the Government of the Kurdistan Region, NGOs and the different authorities in the society. The assistance from the government and other authorities is different because of the separation of the power in the Constitution of Kurdistan Region, as they constitute different task at different levels. The first question also depicts the planning of these persons by these actors and how these actors feel they are helping the persons with disabilities in Kurdistan. It is essential to find out what these

actors plans in order to get a picture of how Kurds with a disability really sees these actors help and assistance.

This leads us to the second question, which depicts the importance of how the persons with disabilities experience the society they live in, and how they feel they are being treated in that society. The position which this question is prioritized is of much interest to the author because of the perception of the persons with disabilities and how they experience the prioritization they are getting in the society. This question refers to the theory, Social Constructivism, where the perception of disability and how the persons with disabilities feel perceives this concept.

## 1.3 Delimitation

As mentioned earlier, this research will only focus on the matter of for persons with disability, who live in Kurdistan and live with a disability on everyday basis. The family structure in Kurdistan is one of the corner stones in the societies for a better life; making the family life and the family structure of great importance to study and its essentiality for understanding how disability is seen and how the people look upon disability would make this paper a rather too big and because of the time and space of this paper, this question will be excluded as much as possible.

When in a developing status and in developing phase, you cannot take into account the development in social welfare and exclude the economic development the country have had as the economic boom have laid down the path for a further development in other fields as well and therefore any economic events will be excluded, even though that particular economic event have pushed the disability questions further.

The author have had many talks and interviews with different politicians and persons with disabilities who are Kurds living in Sweden in order to get as much information as possible for better understanding the situation when doing interviews with persons with disabilities in Kurdistan. However, the interviews made in Sweden will not be included in this paper as they answer questions of the perception among the interviewers of disability and how they believe disability is seen in Kurdistan.

The perception of disability as whole in the society is also of great importance to study and how Kurds experience this concept could have proven to extend this papers conclusion. Even though the actors included in this paper are of a wide range, providing us with the most equivalent information and an ability to compare the different answer from different actors is enough and gives the necessary information we have to know at first about disability in Kurdistan, we cannot assume that the job and the collection of information is enough by including, Governmental, NGOs, Kurdish Authorities, and the persons with disabilities. We must also assume that the possible information from interviewing ordinary people about disability and how they perceive the concept would mean a lot for the outline of this paper. With them included as well, we would probably have a complete set of information about disability in Kurdistan and the concept of disability is seen by the different actors in the society. However, because of time and space of this paper, this last piece, the ordinary Kurds in the society and how they experience disability have been excluded and this choice have been made by the author. The author chose to exclude this, having in mind that the parts included, are far more valuable to study and by including this part as well, would raise the reliability of this paper even further.

This paper can also be further developed into a comparative thesis of the views of disability in Kurdistan and Sweden. In some part of the thesis the reader will have the chance to think of this issue during the process of the paper. It is not meant that this paper, yet, will be applicable as a comparative approach to disability in Kurdistan and Sweden, but can as mentioned earlier, be developed into such. The reader will have the opportunity to note these facts and the differences between the views of disabilities in the two regions. This is however, limited because of the outline of this paper and the limitations on space and time of this paper.

## 1.4 Disposition

This paper starts with the introduction as the first chapter of this paper and includes a background of the problem at stake. It also includes the research and problem formulation and the different delimitations of this paper. Chapter two will present the theoretical framework. Here, human security, social constructivism and disability will be presented including the social model of disability in Sweden. The third chapter consists of the methodology and the use of the interviews has been presented. Here, the material used in this paper has also been presented. Chapter four consists of the result from the interviews; it is divided into four main

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

question areas, such as; integration with the society, obstacles to the society, assistance offered currently and what more can be offered to persons with disabilities in Kurdistan. Chapter five presents the analysis of the results from the interviews and the research questions combined. And finally, the sixth chapter summarizes and presents conclusions of the analysis, and the chapter six is devoted to the list of reference.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the basic concepts and theories of this paper will be discussed and it is also of great importance to make them compatible with each other. Social Constructivism, Human Security and Disability will be discussed more thoroughly to help for better understanding of the purpose of this paper. Both Social Constructivism and Human Security helps to define and better understand the concept of Disability in Kurdistan, but it is also important to know the concept of Disability as we see it in the Western countries as well. As this paper is more of guideline and hopefully helping to improve the field of disability in a developing state, such as the region of Kurdistan. However, it does not mean that it cannot be applicable in the western countries as well. Social Constructivism will help us to understand the society in Kurdistan and Human Security will help us to define the importance of human security in the region, and as mentioned earlier in background chapter, the region of Kurdistan is characterized with economic growth and economic well-being. I hope to combine these three in hopes to provide with an overview of disability in general but also most importantly disability in Kurdistan. The Social Model of Disability in Sweden has also been included in Disability for better understanding of a successful example. By following the way social model of disability in Sweden and how it has developed, we can enforce laws and develop and improve the situation for persons with disabilities in Kurdistan.

### 2.1 The concept of Human Security

Because of the notion that human history has been characterized with wars, human crimes and war crimes, the need of military security cannot be denied nor criticized, as this is still a part of the human survival development and the development of the nation-states we see today. In regard to this, as for the development till today, we can argue that military security is not the only type of security which we have to take in consideration when talking about securitization. Earlier we could argue that we have to build a strong defence and a better weapon industry for surviving on the international arena and at the same time get a greater sphere of influence, as referred by classical realism. Here, the main focus will lay on the increase of own military defence. This is not the case today as we cannot by only military means have a great power in the world as the world today is much more complex and comprehensive than of earlier times, and not much earlier, just going back a few decades. Today's human security include many ingredients and some of them are; human rights,

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

political, economic, society and environmental security, but also military security, because it is still important, but now we can argue that the means of human security have changed and all these security methods have to be included in order to understand the means of the securitization of today. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that human security has gotten so much attention nowadays as it highly affects the whole human kind in one or another way, especially in the sphere of International Relations as negotiations, agreements, and cooperation between the nation-states. Today we are for instance talking about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on a complete another level than before and the influence CSR have gotten these days just implies of that human security is seen from a complete different angle now, making human security a phenomena worth hard work and sacrifice for improvements and development in the field of human rights. The concept of Human security is therefore an excellent study field for any human rights activists which indicates clearly in the ACT file, by International Amnesty in 2011; Security with Human Rights<sup>9</sup>, that Securitization with Human Rights is needed and therefore it is in the mind of the author that Human Security would be extremely influential in developing and improving human rights. Having this said, the concept of human security contains many mechanisms which would help to promote human rights and the development of the nation-state.

Human security can shortly been described as of the description we can find on the Commission on Human Security (CHS) website and the concept of human security is defined as:

“...to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people’s strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.”<sup>10</sup>

By only this description, we can argue for the mentioned areas in which the meaning of security have changed in the recent years and the focus on the political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural agenda have reshaped the thinking of those in power. The

---

<sup>9</sup> Amnesty International, (2011) “Security with Human Rights”, (Amnesty International, ACT 30/001/2011), Published: 6 April 2011, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ACT30/001/2011>

<sup>10</sup> CHS: 2003: 4, <http://ochaonline.un.org/Default.aspx?alias=ochaonline.un.org/humansecurity>

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats has been fluently discussed since the Cold war referring to the concept of “the right to live in peace”.<sup>11</sup> This concept refers to the concept we know of; Freedom from Fear and Want. In article 25 of the UDHR we can see this concept discussed as well;

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.<sup>12</sup>

The description laid by the CHS, is mere of a general definition of human security giving room interpretations and more definitions to look upon. Therefore it is necessary to look inside the box of the concept of human security to really understand and fully comprehend this phenomenon.

“The threats to human security are no longer just personal or local or national. They are becoming global: with drugs, AIDS, terrorism, pollution, nuclear proliferation. Global poverty and environmental problems respect no national border.”<sup>13</sup>

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994), came with four aspects of human security points to a threshold or severity solution to the previously mentioned paradox. Here, there are four essential characteristics of the concept of human security; first characteristic is that human security is a universal concern, as it is also the first and foremost essential of the four aspects. It means to the extent that no matter where you live, rich or poor, you are concerned with the threats to human security and human right development, because the threats to human beings in the world are many, such as drugs, crime, pollution, and human

---

<sup>11</sup> Okubo, Shiro, (2007) “Freedom from Fear and Want” and “the Right to Live in Peace”, and “Human Security” (Institute of International Relations and Area Studies Vol.5, pp.1-15, Ritsumeikan University, 2007)

<sup>12</sup> United Nations, "Universal declaration of Human Rights"

<sup>13</sup> United Nations, Human Development Report 1994, pp. 2.

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

---

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

rights violations and therefore only a universal solution will help to solve or decrease these threats. However, there is no such thing as one solution to all problems. Each and one of the problems have to be dealt internationally to be able to fully control the situation. The next are that the components of human security are interdependent, not only making the threats interconnected, but also all nations are likely to get involved as mentioned earlier, these threats are universal and hence to travel the globe. The threats most obvious here would be; famine, pollution, terrorism, social disintegration, disease, drug trafficking and ethnic disputes. The third characteristic relates to the solution of the threats and how to solve or decrease these threats, whereas these threats are easier to prevent at first rather than a later intervention. Here, the ambitions of preventive-work have an important role in the stabilization of one state. This would mean that before the problem have occurred; it is importance to start preventive methods making it easier to deal with the upcoming threats. As stated in the Human Development Report, the “direct and indirect cost of HIV/AIDS (human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome) was roughly \$240 billion during the 1980s. Even a few billion dollars invested in primary health care and family planning education could have helped contain the spread of this deadly disease.”<sup>14</sup> The fourth aspect to human security is that it is people-centred as it concerns the living standards of the people and the breath of the societies. It also relates to the opportunities and possibilities for how the people exercise their choices in life, the access to the market and the social opportunities in the society where they live. It is also relevant to take in account whether the people live in conflict or in peace as that also defines the possibilities and opportunities for their lives and to the life standards. During the time these aspects came to mainstream as most important in the UN, was during the war in Rwanda in the fight between the Hutu and Tutsi and where millions of Tutsis got killed brutally and the UN forces had no choices than to surrender to the fact they could not help and failed to accomplish any stability in the country.<sup>15</sup> The UN came later to acknowledge the failure of the help, and also admitting in 2000 that they have could have done more to help to improve human security in country.<sup>16</sup> This terrible war came to be an example for the work UN does and how to make sure that stability is ensured before things go out control.

---

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Peace Pledge Union, "Rwanda 1994" Retrieved on 19 May 2012, [http://www.ppu.org.uk/genocide/g\\_rwanda1.html](http://www.ppu.org.uk/genocide/g_rwanda1.html)

<sup>16</sup> "UN admits Rwanda genocide failure". BBC News. 2000-04-15. Retrieved 2012-05-19.

Having this said about human security, there is also the field which this concept is divided in the narrow definition of human security and the broad definition which sets the platform for defining human security. As for the definition in the narrow mind, it cites “pragmatism, conceptual clarity, and analytical rigor as reasons to focus human security on violent threats”.<sup>17</sup> Having this said, the narrow definition underlined the means for the potential threats that can happen and things that can threaten the well-being. The scholars such as Krause, Mack and Macfarlane belong to the narrow definition of human security and an important point in their common idea of the narrow definition is that they “argue forcefully for the inclusion of violence into traditional security thinking and point to the normative success of violence-based human security initiatives.”<sup>18</sup> As for the broad definition, we find scholar such as Leaning, Alkire, Thakur, Axworthy, Bajpai, Hampson and Winslow & Eriksen. They argue that human security means being safe from those violent threats. The common denominator for these scholars is this and that unlike the narrow definition, not only take into account the wider range of issues (such as poverty, diseases and environmental disasters) but “also by arguing that in shifting the referent of security, these issues necessarily fall under the human security umbrella.” Having this said, each of these scholars have contributed their part to the broad definition of human security and for example the scholar, Leaning and Alkire widen the definition even further by including the social, psychological, political and economic aspects of vulnerability.

Going back to the description we have in hand from Commission on Human Security (CHS), where the freedoms that are the essence of life are discussed, we find the protection of people from critical and pervasive threats. As mentioned earlier, this is referred to the concept of “freedom from fear, and freedom from want”. This was stated by the US secretary of state in 1945;

“The battle of peace has to be fought on two fronts. The first is the security front where victory spells freedom from fear. The second is the economic and social front where victory means freedom from want. Only victory on both fronts can assure the world of an enduring peace... No provisions that can be written into the

---

<sup>17</sup> Owen, Taylor, (2004) “Human Security - Conflict, Critique and Consensus: Colloquium Remarks and a Proposal for a Threshold-Based Definition, (Security Dialogue 2004; 35; 373), pp. 375

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 375

Charter will enable the Security Council to make the world secure from war if men and women have no security in their homes and their jobs.”<sup>19</sup>

By looking upon this clarification, we can find that according to the UNDP, both these securities offer victories in one way or another. By victory it is meant that when reached in both fields (freedom from fear, freedom from want), it is when we have a complete enduring peace at our hands. This is much applicable for both people in rich nations and people in poor nations. An example would be that in the rich nations, the people would want to feel secure from not losing their jobs, removing the drugs from their streets, and the spread of HIV/AIDS. In poor nations, the threats to the people would be such as hunger, poverty and diseases. Having this said, threats such as poverty in poor countries tends to bring other problems as well and we can assume that poverty can be the cause of many things, such as diseases and drugs, illegal migration and terrorism. This makes this threat global and must therefore be dealt internationally.

What is interesting about the general overview of human security is that human security tends to inflict on other fields as well. The concept hits points such as the political system, the social life, the common belief and of course the well-being of human beings in a society, and not to mention the safety people feel in a society depending on the shape, the construct and the means to security in that society. If we were to reduce human insecurity, we must not only look at the threats and the possible solutions to the threats, but also the society's ability to counter them.

The issues human security addresses include several elements as mentioned earlier, and there have been many examples that support the means to the concept in the post-cold war era. This does not necessarily mean that humans are more secure today than before the Cold War, but there are better means of protections to ensure the safety of humans today. For example, today, we have better opportunities to handle the disasters that have occurred. The improvement of media have definitively helped us to better aid with the help needed throughout the disaster such as Haiti for example, where people from everywhere could donate money by sitting on their couches and only making one call. The media has been very successful in delivering the needed message for the development of human security and the different ways of making sure that people get the help they need. The foremost message by the media is the awareness of

---

<sup>19</sup> United Nations, Human Development Report 1994, pp. 24

the concept of human security and giving the people a chance to see what they usually doesn't see on the other side of the globe. As mentioned earlier, the concept of human security includes several elements and media is just one of them. Other issues Human Security addresses are organized crime and criminal violence, human rights and good governance, armed conflicts and intervention, genocide and mass crimes, health and development, resources and environment. As we can see, human security is not a small concept and therefore the use of human security as a method to ensure the safety of people should not be criticized.

## 2.2 Social Constructivism

There is a reason why I have chosen to include Social Constructivism in my theory after the Human Security concept. As human security provides us with the adequate information about Human Rights and why the human security is also one of the concepts we have to take into consideration when talking about Securitization and what and who to secure. Social Constructivism will help us to better understand the situation in the society; what people think is relevant to discuss in the society in matter of disability and how this have worked as a double-sided story to the society in general. Having this said, it is not meant it is only bad but rather how the sides of peoples thought of the society and the reflection which the society has had on the people.

The Social Constructivists would argue that everything we see is there because we believe it is there, and making the same assumption as recalling something of not existing, then frankly it does not exist. Having this said, nothing is absolute, giving us also different ways of looking at things and therefore; we all have different truths. Also there are no absolute truths out there to seek, because it is all in the eyes of the beholder to argue what is "the" truth for each and one of us. This is one of the arguments always being used by Social Constructivists to illustrate the difference and ability in our perception. In matter of Kurdistan and disability, this is much underlined how the society looks upon disablement and aid to persons with a disability. The author have made this choice, to look at disability through Social Constructivism, because of the reasons of how Sweden, the current place of the author looks upon disability. The development of disability in Sweden has not only functioned to promote the rights of disabled persons even further, but have also influenced the view of disability in the society. For example the word, used to be called for disabled persons, was

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

“handikapp, later changed to funktionshinder, and now it is “funktionsnedsättning” which is the correct definition of disabled in the society.<sup>20</sup> As these three definition used to be synonyms to each other, is not the case any longer, because they now have different meanings. The word “handikapp” is removed in lookup thermally, and is meant that the handicap is in the person itself. The word is discouraged to be used as synonym for both “funktionshinder” and “funktionsnedsättning”. “funktionshinder” has a complete new definition now, and refers to “a limitation as a disability means for a person in relation to the environment or the society”.<sup>21</sup> ”Funktionsnedsättning” in this aspect will help to promote the values in the society and giving persons with a disability the chance of being seen as any other person in the society, and not be recalled as a problem in the society. This would also give complete different approaches to the “solutions” for better life standards for persons with disabilities.<sup>22</sup> The theory of Social Constructivism helps us to underline this issue in the region of Kurdistan and how the perception of disability is seen and its reflection on the society. The research question posed in this paper, are as mentioned in previous chapters, acknowledgement of the situation persons with disabilities experience the way they are being treated and how they feel this treatment is reflected in the society. Persons with disabilities, organizations working for improving the situation for persons with disabilities in Kurdistan and the Kurdish authorities perception of the help and assistance given to persons with disabilities, is very interesting to compare and how these all see different truth is most applicable with Social Constructivism. It can be all from that the authorities aren’t doing enough to that of they are doing everything in their powers to ensure that as many possible are getting the basic need for basic life standards, can be interest to look from several angles; first the Government angle, then the organizations and last but not least the persons with disabilities themselves. This way, the question about how Social Constructivism plays its role in the perception of the different actors involved might even give us a guideline for improving and developing the situation for persons with disabilities in Kurdistan. The awareness of how economic growth and other factors get a greater room in a society that is still in its early stages and the notions of human rights are more or less forgotten or infringed, the perception or the essentiality of help for disabled and developing the social welfare as a whole is of great importance, when looking around it in a mere Social Constructivist perspective. Therefore, I

---

<sup>20</sup> Socialstyrelsen (2012), ”Funktionsnedsättning och Funktionshinder, användning av begreppen” Retrieved on 19 May 2012. [http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/fragorochsvar/funktionsnedsattningochfunktio#anchor\\_11](http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/fragorochsvar/funktionsnedsattningochfunktio#anchor_11)

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

would argue that Social Constructivism is best use for this paper and the reasons go back to the purpose and problem formulation as the posed questions are hopefully for project development and development in the field of disability rights, accessibility and accountability for the region of Kurdistan. It is whereby of most importance to take into account the possibility by raising these questions can affect the development of social welfare.

Short about the theory; Social Constructivism really gained its recognition throughout the 1980s and the 1990s. The world situation that occurred after the Cold War could not be explained by the old and dominant theories, realism and liberalism. As the end of the war did not met anyone's predictions, the place for social constructivism in international relations and on a global scale could now be considered. It was time for a new and fresh theory that could explain the outcome of the Cold War. Social Constructivism is a social theory and stating that the reality is socially constructed by the involving human beings.<sup>23</sup> In relation to the state, Social Constructivists means that the state is something comforting for people to acknowledge with feeling secure and feeling satisfied. Let's say if people didn't believe that the state is a state and didn't experience it as such, its importance, institution and territory mean little. By this said it means that everything around us is somehow constructed by ourselves.<sup>24</sup> Some important assumptions of Social Constructivism are the ideas of that "the national is eternal", that norms which the world possesses, rules and so on, effect the actor's behaviors and acts exist even in the international system e.g. democracy and human rights, but also identity which affects the individuals and the states behavior.<sup>25</sup> The system is also as in realism anarchic, because of the reason that the actors expect it and believes it to be anarchic, but however, this must not be true at all times. The best examples would be European Union and the United Nations whereas the international system as well can be organized such as in states' system. To end this chapter I will say that "it is not the factual reality that is essential but it is how the actors perceive reality"

---

<sup>23</sup> Orjinta, Ikechukwu Aloysius, (2010), *Social Constructivism in international relations and the Gender Dimension: International Relations and Gender made simple*, Published by Grin Verlag. Achieved Through Google Books.

<sup>24</sup> Baylis, John. *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, 4e. 2008. pp.162-171

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

## 2.3 Disability and Social Model of Disability

This subchapter will hopefully provide us with understanding of the concept of Disability and the Social Model of Disability in both Sweden and UK, but UK will be excluded because of the time and space of this paper. According to the Encyclopedia of Disability, published by SAGE Publications in 2006, the Social Model of Disability has been most successful in these two countries.<sup>26</sup> I will in this subchapter, use the many definitions of Disability and the Social Model of Disability given by the Encyclopedia. I am very glad for the possibility of being able to read so much about disability in one single book. The information given in the Encyclopedia is by far complex and conclusive, which gives a wide range of information about disability. This wide range of coverage was designed “to bring current knowledge and experience with disability across a wide variety of places, conditions, and cultures to both the general reader and the specialist.”<sup>27</sup> The main editor of this work is Albrecht (University of Illinois at Chicago), but a range over 500 authors have contributed with more than 800 entries in the book. This is just one of the definitions of the Social Model of Disability:

“In disability studies, there is much controversy about the status and meaning of impairment and disability. The social model concentrates on the socially constructed nature of disability, treating it as a loss of social rights. The social model has criticized the medical or individual model, which treats disability as a personal tragedy for which professional care and personal adjustment can provide solutions. The social model perceives disability as oppression for which collective action and full entitlement can provide social equality and social participation. Disability politics have in response asserted the need for the redistribution of resources to achieve equal citizenship and recognition of disability as a special social and political category. Whether recognition can result in enforcement will depend on a set of justiciable rights, state support, and political action.”<sup>28</sup>

Having this said, the Social Model of Disability offer us to understand the needs for development and improvement in the field of disability and the situation for persons with disabilities, especially in the Kurdistan Region, as this thesis has its focus in the region.

---

<sup>26</sup> Albrecht, Gary L., (2006), *Encyclopedia of Disability* (5 vols) (SAGE Publications, Inc. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006) BBS,

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. ISBN: 9780761925651,

<sup>28</sup> Turner, Bryan S. “Citizenship and Civil Rights” in Albrecht, Gary L., (2006), *Encyclopedia of Disability* (5 vols) (SAGE Publications, Inc. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006) BBS, pp., 265

It is stated that in the disability studies, it is not clear to define disability and how it is constructed in the society. Disability comes with a huge amount of aspects and therefore, there are no absolute truths of how to deal with disability. It makes the concept of disability a very complex matter to discuss, but most essentially, very hard to improve. This is due to that disability comes in many different ways, both physical and psychological. There are those born with disabilities and those who because of war, suffering, or other disaster have become disabled in one way or another. It is therefore very hard to conclude that one solution would be able to work for every kind of disability, as disabilities comes in many forms. It is also interesting how we as human beings can have the ability to generalize people, especially in the content when talking about disability. When talking about disability, there seems to only one type of disability and therefore we, human beings, would argue that there is one universal solution for improving the rights, the situation and the life of persons with disabilities. What do we do, when one person have several disabilities at once? Can we by that information argue for one solution that would mean an improvement for his/her life? It is therefore in the mind of the author to highlight the importance of the many sorts of disabilities, and some of the major disability conditions are; amputation, hearing loss or deafness, visual impairments or blindness, immune dysfunction syndrome, chronic fatigue, muscular dystrophy, diabetes, etc. These are just some of the conditions of disability which have to be taken into consideration when discussing solutions, improvements and developments for persons with disabilities. According to the Encyclopedia, there are a huge amount of terms that are very much connected with disability, for example; accessibility, accountability, democracy, empowerment, emancipation, education, humanities, human rights, inclusion, exclusion, isolation, mainstreaming, participation, poverty, etc. These terms offer us to understand disability in a more complete form of it and give us the ability to define the problems with disabilities in certain countries or regions. Having this said, each and one of the terms stated above are of great importance for understanding disability and how to deal with disability. For us to be able to define and know the principles of disability, we have to take a look at the following terms one by one to fully understand and comprehend the concept of disability.

“Accessibility is a term with no precise definition. In the disability field, the concept of accessible environments is used to describe environments that are approachable, obtainable, or attainable. Often this means that the environment can be altered to enhance the individual’s probability to participate in that environment in a way that is meaningful to the individual. Such environments are

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

thus viewed as accessible... Accessibility is not an act or a state but a liberty to enter, to approach, to communicate with, to pass to and from, or to make use of a situation.”<sup>29</sup>

Having this said, it is quite interesting how this term defines its importance in the field of disability as, if a society does not have the accessible means for persons with disabilities to participate in or the environment lacks to offer the simplest instruments for them to “hang on to” in the society, the society have failed to give by accessible means a fair chance to the persons with disability to fully participate in the society. The discussion over accessibility in the environment is when its discussion is about, education, employment, health care, information technology, medical offices, public transportation, websites, communication system, housing, etc. The list goes on much longer. As stated in the citation, the accessibility is not an act, but a liberty for persons with disability to be able to participate in the society without any restriction. Accessibility is also by its nature about the interaction in the society. “An environment that is accessible to one person may not be accessible to another”. It is also important to not violate another person’s rights just to make sure the society is as accessible as possible. This is due to the interaction in the society, for example, you can make linguistic communication accessible for persons who are blind, but these persons must know how to use the sense of touch to access you. Having this said, again, it’s about the interaction in the society; to make the information possible and accessible for those in need. This phenomenon can also be seen from a multidimensional perspective, as it is not only applicable for disability, but also other fields such as health care. The classification of accessibility can be viewed as such of trying to understand or comprehend how the society interacts with persons with disabilities. This can be all from how they are treated and how they are seen as fellow human beings. The question of accessibility can also be referred to accommodation, resource availability, social support and equality. It is for these reasons the term accessibility have the huge impact on disability.<sup>30</sup>

The term accountability refers to the responsibility which, government bureaucracies, politicians, teachers, physicians, public school systems, and health care organizations carry and are being demanded to take the responsible for the well-being of persons with disabilities.

---

<sup>29</sup> Brown, Scott Campbell, “Accessibility in Albrecht, Gary L., (2006), *Encyclopedia of Disability* (5 vols) (SAGE Publications, Inc. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006) BBS, pp. 9

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. pp. 12

“To have accountability, three mechanisms are required: the identification of the specific responsibilities given to an individual or organization, the provision of information about the actions that were or were not taken, and the availability of appropriate sanctions. Accountability provides a set of constraints on actions or omissions because someone or some organization is held responsible. Accountability also implies an implicit or explicit set of criteria against which comparisons are made, and then penalties or rewards are applied.”<sup>31</sup>

The term accountability offers us to be able to hold an individual or an organization responsible for the development of disability. As for the region of Kurdistan, no one but the wars can be accountable for a huge amount of disabled persons, but the government, the authorities and the NGOs at place working with this question would be held responsible to deliver development means for persons with disabilities. However, in order to be able to hold someone or organizations accountable, they have to meet the three requirements stated here above (see three mechanism), such as NGOs working at the place. There are many types of accountability which they influence the processes of improving the situation for persons with disability, such as the political, legal, bureaucratic, economic, moral and ethical, and professional accountability. These refer to their respective areas and are therefore of interest in each of their own way. For example the political accountability refers to the state of the nation and how the elected officials submit to their past actions to an electorate. “If a political official is viewed as having increased the public’s well-being through appropriate actions and services, he or she will be elected to office again, if not, the person will be voted out of office.”

Another term very important to disability is democracy, and how the government actions depending on the democratic level of those actions influence those persons with disabilities. Democracy is known as the best governmental system in the world, because of its meaning. “Demos” mean the people and “cracy” originates from “kratos” which is meant governing as this together becomes “governing by the people”.<sup>32</sup> Democracy was first and officially introduced by the Greeks in Ancient Greece. This democracy was called city-state democracy. Democracy has not changed so much in theory since the Ancient Greece; it has

---

<sup>31</sup> Mullner, Ross M., “Accountability” in Albrecht, Gary L., (2006), *Encyclopedia of Disability* (5 vols) (SAGE Publications, Inc. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006) BBS, pp. 22

<sup>32</sup> Dahl, Robert, (1967), “the City in the Future of democracy”, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 61, No. 4, December, pp. 954.

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

rather changed the way democracy is performed. In 1787 the design for modern democracy was introduced to the world. Democracy is a system involving effective competition between political parties for positions of power. In a democracy, there are regular and fair elections, in which all members of the population may take part”.<sup>33</sup> This is a good explanation, by Anthony Giddens in his book “Runaway World – How Globalisation is reshaping our Lives”, to the new and modern democracy being carried out. James Mill, one of the most philosophical political inventors of all time, said that a democracy doesn’t have to be small as the city, it might even be gigantic. Today democracy is not a single thing as it means many different things, such as global democracy, representative democracy, direct democracy, etc. in recent years democracy has faced some difficulties such as corruption scandals in politics around the world and the improvement of communication technology have helped to show these scandals. This has been a negative thing for the democratic governmental system as more and more have lost their faith in politicians. This is also due to that many issues or difficulties putted forward cannot be dealt within the nation-state as they go above the nation-state and become global issues. Some of these are human rights including rights for persons with disabilities, environment, economic etc. Today, democracies are challenged by the concern of disabled people and the word participation “tries to cover both the sphere of political freedoms and a part of the sphere of distributive justice.”<sup>34</sup> Secondly, democracy must bring together the diverse multicultural societies to live in a common space where religions, languages, ethnic origins, traditions and custom do not matter anymore. Having this said, there are two challenges that complicate and that are vulnerable to democracies; participation and multiculturalism. Many other minorities or groups of people, the disabled people for instance, have throughout the history been denied their right to participate in the democracies.

“Disabled people, sensitive to the weight of past exclusion and the risk of pre-sent individualism, demand to be the actors in their own existence and thus not only to be consulted but also to be implicated in the processes and policies that affect them. Beyond even their personal destiny, they increasingly want to become citizens concerned for the general life of their cities and their countries. Gaining such recognition is a difficult struggle, even if it is supported by the international

---

<sup>33</sup> Giddens, A. 2000, ”Democracy” in “Runaway World – How Globalisation is reshaping our Lives”, (Profile Books, London), pp. 68.

<sup>34</sup> Stiker, Henri-Jacques, “Democracy” in Albrecht, Gary L., (2006), *Encyclopedia of Disability* (5 vols) (SAGE Publications, Inc. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006) BBS, pp, 380.

community, for example, through the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health.”<sup>35</sup>

Having this said, the struggle the persons with disabilities have made to ensure their rights to vote, and participate in the society have been as many other groups such the slaves, blacks or for example the past history of Kurds in Turkey. Above this, imagine the doubled effect of being both disabled and belonging to another minority group. This leads us to the second problem democracies face; multiculturalism. Today's democratic countries consist of a population with ethnically, religiously and culturally diversity and the question of inclusion becomes a whole other issue than it used to be.

“The principle of non-discrimination provides a response to this challenge. But it cannot alone be sufficient. We need the daily exercise of proximity, integrated neighbourhoods, reciprocal recognition, and understanding. Here, disabled people can play an emblematic role. They exemplify a difference in comparison with average citizens, each in his or her own way. They highlight the question of living in proximity. By increasingly refusing separate treatment, special institutions, denials of or limitations on activities and participation, they force all those sites where social life takes place to be receptive and equipped so that every person, just as he or she is, finds fulfilment there. Disabled people can show the way toward democratic inclusion.”<sup>36</sup>

These persons can actually push the development of inclusion and accessibility even further and accomplish “physical accessibility to spaces of every kind, educational accessibility to schools, the establishment of support measures, and the techniques to practice the arts, to play sports, to travel, and to live without obstacles in their own homes.” This way they can present the facts and point out the differences with needs to be changed or developed.

## The Disability Law: Sweden

There are as stated earlier many other terms related to disability and each of them are important to understand to fully comprehend the concept of disability and how it is constructed in different societies. The region of Kurdistan, being a part of the third world, give us the idea of the difference of standard level of life for persons with disabilities living in

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, pp. 381-382.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, pp. 382.

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

Kurdistan or those living in Sweden. As Sweden is much more developed in these matters is nothing new but the interesting part here is what the reasons are for the success of the Swedish model of disability and how it is constructed.

The Swedish Disability Act (Lag om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade, SFS 1993:387) came into force in 1994, also called the LSS. It is for complementing the universal legislation such as the Social Service Act and the health and Medical Services Act, only to give the priority to the social needs of persons with disabilities, difficulties for persons with disabilities in the their daily lives.<sup>37</sup>

“LSS has a higher level of ambition (“good living conditions” as opposed to the “acceptable standard of living” as decreed by the Social Services Act), there is an unconditional right to support when needs are not met, applications for support may not be turned down on the grounds of insufficient funding, and LSS measures are free of charge.”<sup>38</sup>

Having this said, the local authorities and the county councils are responsible for 10 different support measures and because of the act being one of the human rights statutes, this has to be in accordance to not only the basic needs of living conditions, but rather “good living conditions”. Also if there is a need for support, the application cannot be denied because of insufficient funding, giving the idea, there should be unlimited resources to support the needs of the people. This is a huge different between Sweden and many other countries, where there is an consensus on no matter the amount of resources, it is supposed to be aiming at helping anyone that needs the support. However, there have been many issues at stake in Sweden when it comes to the participation for persons with disabilities and thus the persons with mental disabilities are representative in this respect. Many persons with severe disabilities have had trouble to experience their full legal rights and some officials in the municipal level at the social welfare departments, both officers and physicians have not been fully cooperative and seemed to not be able to understand the intentions of LSS. Therefore, there have been several cases where the state has been fining disobedient municipalities by using sanctions. It’s not only the legal rights of these persons that are being harmed when municipalities try to

---

<sup>37</sup> Lewin, Barbro, “Disability Law: Sweden” in Albrecht, Gary L., (2006), *Encyclopedia of Disability* (5 vols) (SAGE Publications, Inc. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006) BBS, pp. 451-452.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, pp. 453.

overturn the intentions of the LSS, but their rights to “good living condition” are also being affected, which is one the main intentions of the LSS.

### **The Social Model of Disability: Sweden**

The social model of disability in Sweden have been a part of the Swedish politics since the 1970s, but it came to arise from the thinking of the “the relative concept of handicap”, which meant that no persons is handicapped, but it’s the society that creates these obstacles for these persons, and there they are not able to act, live and participate like any other citizen. This thinking came to become the Swedish way of seeing the ways of persons with disabilities have to live their lives. Growing up in Sweden, this way of thinking about the persons with disabilities has shaped the way “we should think” about disability. Because, if we ask ourselves, what is it that makes the obstacles to other people, the people it self. If we built buildings, infrastructure, etc. adjustable for every person in the society, even capable for persons with disability, we wouldn’t even be having these conversations, nor would any of us have to work for organizations for these projects as well. But the world is not a perfect place and neither are the people in the world, because we create our own world and therefore it is of great importance that we keep working towards a progressive development in field of human rights for everyone, no matter place, origin, class, or ethnicity. To not lose focus on the current subject, the word “handicapped” came to be defined as in official documents would argue “in terms of substantial difficulties they experienced in their daily living.”<sup>39</sup> From this definition, the social model of disability came from and gave room for the further development, where the next step was the realization of the issue that these impairments wasn’t the individuals fault, and the need to look deeper in the society they live in had risen to become a huge part of this development.

“In response to the general definition of handicap, organizations for groups with different impairments/disabilities came together during the 1970s and formed an “umbrella organization” that most energetically argued for a relative definition. If the environment is adjusted to the capabilities of disabled people, there will be no handicap. So, this organization argued, general reforms to change the environment are the most effective way of reducing the problems for people with impairments.

---

<sup>39</sup> Söder, Mårten, “Social Model: Sweden” in Albrecht, Gary L., (2006), *Encyclopedia of Disability* (5 vols) (SAGE Publications, Inc. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006) BBS, pp. 1465

The creation of “a society for all” should help eliminate or at least diminish problems of handicap in society.”<sup>40</sup>

Having this said, the need for changes in the society was necessary and to keep up to date the following years meant to make the societies stronger in the sense of imposing demands for several reforms, such new buildings be made accessible according to law, and the same came to be true for employers work environment; to be adaptable for persons with disabilities and giving the transport services in the municipalities. The school reforms came also to be very handy for the development for the situations for persons with disabilities. These reforms laid down the path for better research development as well, in the medical and clinical research, because of the evaluating reforms that focused on these reforms affected the persons with disabilities, not only their daily lives, but also their relations to the society. Another law that came into power was the “right law” that meant that persons with disabilities could apply for specific services that they are entitled to. Another development in the Swedish social model that promoted the rights to good living conditions for persons with disabilities was the redistribution of the resources from collective labels to individuality. This meant that individuals could direct their own lives in the direction they wanted and services become better used because of the needs of each individual. This is meant by empowerment for individuals.

Some of the key words to remember when it comes to the social model of disability in Sweden are; environment, empowerment, participation, influence and individual identities.

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 1466.

## 3. Methodology

In this chapter, the method of this paper have been discussed and analyzed for best possible outcomes on the subject of disability in Kurdistan. The conduction of interviews has been the main source for this paper. This chapter has also been the hardest and most problematic chapter for the author to accomplish as the interviews have not been easy to achieve, but with a huge amount of calls to both inside of Kurdistan but also outside the region, for at first; better understanding of Kurdistan as a region, which have later turned these calls to a closer contact with persons with disabilities and persons in charge for the assistance for these persons. Farhad Jahanmahan, who is a Kurd originated from the Iranian part of Kurdistan, living in Sweden, with polio which he got from early ages. Mr, Jahanmahan, has spent his adult life in promoting and improving the rights for persons with disabilities in Sweden, but has also had contacts and lectures in Kurdistan for development of that area. He is just one of the many persons contacted for brain storming and developing the authors' sphere of ideas. This paper started first with the question, what the Government of the Kurdistan Region is doing to help and improve the situation for persons with disability, but came to be much more than just that. As deeper I got in the subject, the more I realized that the government is not the only actor trying to assist to these persons. Here there is a chance to improve on the comparative approach for a development of this paper, but as mentioned in the delimitation, this has to be excluded. However, it is not said that the reader cannot benefit from this aspect as well, but the topic is rather too big to be included in paper, yet. This aspect has actually more beneficial for the reader, but as mentioned, this cannot be included more than that for now, due to the delimitations of the paper.

The main course of this paper has been laid on interviews and how the interviews have been conducted. The second part of the paper has been laid on literature regarding the concept of Disability, the Social Model of Disability, Social Constructivism and Human Security. It is necessary to mentioned the importance SAGE Publication of the Encyclopedia of Disability have had on the paper, as it have proven to be greatly useful in defining the concepts, Disability and the Social Model of Disability. The concept of Disability have been discussed for better understanding of disability in general, but also how it is applicable for the Kurdistan Region. Also, the Social Model of Disability has been discussed for better understanding of how to be able to improve the situation for persons with disabilities in Kurdistan Region. Why I have chosen to include the Encyclopedia of Disability published by SAGE Publications,

have had its roots in the overall information in the release as it is in the mind of the author that this encyclopedia offer a huge collection on disability and social model of disability.

By using the qualitative method to study human security and disability is better rather than the use of quantitative method, because the quantitative method uses statistic as its best and head road to study the different phenomenon, and here the use of in depth analysis is better to really understand the situations. However, it is not said that by using quantitative method, there would be a dead end, but it is of importance to understand the issue in depth and then find other issue similar to that issue when working on quantitative method. Quantitative method is more preferable to use when the variables are such as statistics, and whereas the research question in this case would mean to pose different hypothesis and try each hypothesis to see which is more accurate. Quantitative method is applicable when studying a set of variables and combining them to see where the patterns differ. This would lead in many cases to generalization which makes the author to oversee details. Similar to this actually discussed by the Oxford University professor Bent Flyvbjerg with his article "Five misunderstandings about case-study research"<sup>41</sup>. He meant that by studying qualitative method and case-study research does not mean that you could not generalize and from only one case you cannot generalize, therefore you could analyse and go into depth of several cases and from there, you could generalize; giving you a more comprehensive understanding of the problems at stake. It would mean that the study would be efficient and effective, but however, it would take a greater amount of time to do so. I also think that case-study research is best used to study human security and disability. The definition of case study in the *Dictionary of Sociology* is;

"Case Study. The detailed examination of a single example of a class of phenomena, a case study cannot provide reliable information about the broader class, but it may be useful in the preliminary stages of an investigation since it provides hypotheses, which may be tested systematically with a larger number of cases. (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1984, p. 34)."<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Flyvbjerg, Bent (2006), "Five Misunderstandings About Case Study Research." *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 12, no. 2, April, pp. 219-245.; Bent Flyvbjerg, 2011, "Case Study," in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4th Edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage), pp. 301-316.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 220

In the Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, Flyvbjerg wrote “An intensive analysis of an individual unit (as a person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to environment.”<sup>43</sup> This is stressed to the facts of the great importance case-study method have on one single analysis, as the research goes into studying the phenomena in depth and giving no room for falsification in that individual unit. He also stresses on the fact that it is the falsifications that characterizes the case study, and not so much the verification.

Case study methods allow us to make a deep analysis of the processes as mentioned and it has been discussed by several professors and authors. The case study methods concentrated on the particular case narrowing possible conclusion. Similar to the Flyvbjerg, Andrew Bennett states: “Case study findings are usually contingent and can be generalized beyond the type of case studies only under specified conditions, such as when a case study shows that a variable is not a necessary condition or a sufficient for an outcome, or when a theory fails to fit a case that it appeared most likely to explain”<sup>44</sup>

According to Robert K. Yin: “A case study is an empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real –life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used”<sup>45</sup>

## 3.1 Interviews

The main method of this study has been laid on interviews, as different persons with disabilities have been interviewed on how they perceive the help and the system in which they live in. The interviews have been recorded and made transcription of for the author to be able to follow every step the interviews have taken. Because of the struggle for me as a resident of Sweden, and the time of this paper, have not made it possible for me to do the interviews myself, but through two close friends, who have conducted the interviews in the way I have wanted them. These friends have been at great help and I find the conduction of the interviews being the exact way I wanted them, and also I could not ask for more or better. Because of

---

<sup>43</sup> Bent Flyvbjerg, 2011, "Case Study," in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4th Edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage), pp. 301-316.

<sup>44</sup> Bennett, Andrew, 2004, “Case Study Methods: Design, Use, and Comparative Advantages” in Detlef F. Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias, *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations*, University of Michigan Press, Michigan, pp. 19

<sup>45</sup> Yin, Robert K, 2003, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Third Edition, Applied Social Research Methods Series, Vol. 5, Sage Publications, Inc, pp. 23

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

---

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

that, I am very pleased and glad about the conducted interviews. However, if I had more time, I would most certainly have traveled to Kurdistan myself and make the interviews myself, because of the reasons that this paper is mine and I don't hope to be of a burden to anyone, except myself. To be able to answer the first question, interviews have been made with the authorities in Kurdistan. There are several organizations that many contacts have been made with and this has mostly been to enhance my knowledge of disability in Kurdistan and in general.

The persons being interviewed are located both in Sweden and Kurdistan, but only those in Kurdistan have been chosen to analyze further. The selection of the interviews with persons with disabilities, have however, been completely random, because here, one of my close friends, Zeravan Jalal Sadullah, who teaches English at Amedye Technical Institute in Kurdistan, have been asked to interview either his students (with a disability), or interview his students relatives who here as well, live with at least one disability on everyday basis. The interviews have been recorded and sent to my email. A transcription has been made with each and one of the interviews to be able to study the interviews more concrete on paper. The other selection of interviews have been made at three levels; the Governmental, Social Services Department and the Organizational. Here another close friend who have studied PhD level, have the ability to get close to those higher up at the hierarchy of the power in these three levels. Dr. Rabee Asmat Oramari, have made it possible for me to get full detail interviews at this three levels and giving me best possible information at my disposal for delivering a more reliable and concrete paper on disability in Kurdistan. I can for sure say that without his help, the information given to me would be much more restricted, because of his PhD and his contacts, he is very much respected in the society and therefore it is easier for him to do full-detail interviews with representative of the three levels. That, I am very grateful for and these two friends have made the impossible, possible and made me to write the paper precisely the way I want to.

There have been many interviews and talks with representatives outside Kurdistan as well. For example, the Handicap International in UK and France have been contacted through email at several occasions and have proved to be useful when making use of NGOs influence in the region of Kurdistan and how they are helping those in need. Contact have also been made with the Federation of Kurdish Associations in Sweden (Kurdiska Riksförbundet i Sverige), the Council of Kurdish Associations in Sweden (Kurdiska Rådet i Sverige) and the

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

---

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

Kurdish Union (Kurdiska Unionen) in order to be able to get a clearer vision of the situation for persons with disabilities in Kurdistan and how these organizations see the development of disability in Kurdistan and how the government is dealing with this issue. These organizations are similar to unions for the Kurdish people in Sweden and therefore I think it is necessary to be interviewed for better understanding of Kurdish people's situation in Sweden, but also the development in Kurdistan. However, there are other organizations in Sweden, focusing on disability and working as unions for disabled persons (of Kurdish origins) in Sweden and they are; Institute of Kurds with disabilities in Sweden (Institutet för kurder med funktionshinder i Sverige) (IFKF). Kurdiska handikappföreningen i Linköping have also been contacted in Sweden of what they do, and it turned out to be that they only deal with Kurds, living in Sweden with one or more disabilities. They offer assistance in the mildest way, such as activities; outdoor and indoor, festivals, or just a place to be with other persons with disabilities and just have a good laugh. These types of organizations may be not as important in the matter of assistance in accordance to the governmental need, but they most definitely make a difference in the lives of those involved.

These interviews together with interviews conducted in Kurdistan with the persons with a disability help to provide an inclusive and comprehensive matter of facts on the table to discuss, delivering the posed questions at multiple levels and hopefully providing for improvements in the fields of social welfare and social services in Kurdistan.

First of all, as mentioned in the earlier, all relevant interviewees that have been analyzed in this chapter live in Kurdistan. Salah Yousif Mohammed – Directorate of Disabled Care Duhok have been interviewed for understanding what they do to help on a county level. Nassrat Mohammed Salem – director of ZheenHandi Capped Association have also been interviewed in order to see what is being done by them. Wahid Saeed Chicho – director of Little People of Kurdistan Association is another person being interviewed and finally contacts have been made with Khabat Islam Muhamad, Dohuk Program Manager for the Voice of Older People (VOP) and questions have been send and gotten back with answers. This organizations aims at helping older people and their focus remains on older people but according to Khabat Islam Muhamad, there are many older people who are disabled in one way or another and when they seek help from them, they are often more anxious to help them because, these people are not just old, but they have disabilities too. This chapter will also be emphasized on the interviews from persons with disabilities and how they see their situation.

Here, there are four persons with disabilities that have been selected and analyzed for further information about how the situation is constructed for persons with disabilities in Kurdistan.

For privacy reasons, I have chosen to name persons with disabilities different names, but have chosen to have the actual names of official persons that have been interviewed. The interviewees were well informed about their rights of participating in this paper. They were informed that it was completely voluntary and that their privacy would be well protected. They were also informed that these interviews were to be handed to me, as the author of this paper.

On concluding remarks of the methodology, I would like to highlight the problem of this paper with the “indirect” interviews, as this is something that I am aware of. I have also taken into account the differences in answers if these interviews were made directly and personally by the author. Questions such as what kind of answers I would get as a person coming from Sweden and conducting interviews in Kurdistan. Would it be differences in the responses to those interviewed because of that? I am aware of the personal contact when doing interviews and that this part makes a huge impact on the answers, because during the interviews if personally conducted, many other issues can arise and give the answers to why they have answered in a certain way. An extreme example would be if they are lying for example. This is easily seen from the way the interviewees would act and how they respond to the questions. This is a problem that I am aware of as the author of this paper.

## 4. Result

In this chapter the interviews have been compiled and put together of how they see the environment they live in. The interviews are as mentioned earlier both persons with disabilities but also government representative, NGOs and authorities. Each interview has been presented by itself in order to be able to collect the necessary data needed for this paper. It is also important to note that some of the interviews are very long and other are very short depending on how much the interviews felt to answer on each question. Therefore, it would be best to compile them all and from there analyze how the situation really is constructed. This papers have tried to underline the influence different actors have had on how disability is seen in Kurdistan, but also what is being done to help and improve the situation concerning persons with disabilities. This chapter will show us the answer given to the posed questions in the interviews and how each and one of the interviewer sees the situation. I hope that this will raise the questions and awareness of persons with disabilities in Kurdistan and how they live their everyday lives.

The following subchapters consist of the questions asked during the interviews. The questions were divided into three main questions. The first question was; can you describe your situation today? which included questions such as their name, age, gender, occupation and where they lived. The first question also included questions of their personality and how their experiences have shaped them as persons. The second question was: what is it like to be one of those taking care of disabled persons in Kurdistan, your thoughts (feelings) and comments? This question included how the interaction is between the interviewer and those who needed the help and also how the society receives persons with disabilities. Thoughts and prejudice, positive or negative from the society about disability and how they see disabled persons was also asked during the interview to see their perspective of persons with disabilities. Here, the interviewers also answered questions about discrimination, exclusion, inclusion and obstacles for the integration in the society such as shopping, taxi, buses, school, etc. They also answered what has been working well the last years and what has not been working. The third question was: in order to live an everyday life, any assistance offered for disabled persons which would help to maintain a sustainable life? This question included what needs to be done to improve the situation for persons with disabilities in Kurdistan and how it could develop. The interviewer also answered what other authorities or organizations are there for persons with disabilities and what more could be offered in their mind, and also what resources the government is offering. Last but not least, here again they answered what has

worked well and what has worked less well. These questions were asked representative of authorities and similar, but the questions asked the persons with disabilities did differ at all, only adjustable for persons with disabilities. For example, the second question: what is it like to be one of those taking care of disabled persons in Kurdistan, your thoughts (feelings) and comments? was asked in a different way in order to be able to compare the answered, depending on who you asked; what is it like to live as a disabled person in Kurdistan, your thoughts (feelings) and comments?

### 4.1 Integration with the society, thoughts (feelings) and comments?

Here, the four interviews with authorities and similar will be presented depending on how they answered this question. First we have, Salah Yousif Mohammed, directorate of Disabled Care Duhok, and have studied at University of Mosul – College of Arts – Social Services Department. Second, we have, Nassrat Mohammed Salem, the director of ZheenHandi Capped Association and has studied at University of Mosul – Department of Translation. Third, we have, Wahid Saeed Chicho, the director of the Little People of Kurdistan Association and he is also a little person himself and has worked up his way up the association. He has a commerce high school education. And forth, we have, Khabat Islam Muhamad, Dohuk Program Manager for the Voice of Older People (VOP). Persons with disabilities that have been interviewed are, with regard to their privacy, given another name than their own, and they are: Haifa, Imad, Metin and Selma.

The thing that seemed to link these interviewers was the fact that things used to be so much worse and development is taking path, which is meant that many of persons with disabilities are better off now than earlier times. This is how the interviewers answered on how persons with disabilities are received by the society. Salah Yousif Mohammed, directorate of Disabled Care Duhok, talks about the need to educate the society rather than blaming the government for being insufficient, he said:

*“The government side is good. They are taking many progressive steps. Now there is a law in parliament signed by the Government and the President about the rights of disabled people and their proficiency. Society on the other hand is very behind with their understanding and acceptable of disabled people, I would say less than 0. As a member of society, they look at disabled people with a very bad view. They think they are unable of anything, and as if a disabled person is a*

*block on their chest. Many are embarrassed if there is a member of the family that is disabled. They don't view them as full human beings. Now the biggest problem with disabled people is with the society, not the government. There should be media interested in this to show disabled people what they can do, what they need. The government gives cars to take them to courses to learn skills. But the problem with females is that families don't allow them. All companies, organizations, and rich people help orphans but don't help disabled people. Nawzad Ali Shingali, Kurdish from Sweden. He is the first rich person to organize the 1<sup>st</sup> picnic / journey for all disabled people and institutions which was on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May. It would help people meet and interact with each other, will also lead into the integration of disabled people into society, and maybe other rich people will decide to imitate him and help disabled people. There are other NGO's that help with disabled people. They have a relationship with us but still do work separately. The government side is good, but the society side is bad. Not everything is perfect with the government side but it is progressing, and working forward."*

Nassrat Mohammed Salem, the director of ZheenHandi Capped Association is on the same page as Salah Yousif Mohammed and pointed out the need for making persons with disabilities available in the society and making them a part of that society. He argues that the society needs to accept them as anyone else and therefore, the best way to do so, is making them "activated" in the society by saying:

*"Before 1991, the situation was very bad, even for me. I was afraid to meet a disabled person in the street. People often gaze at them in a strange way. But later the government started trying to make society aware and be ok accepting disabled people as members of society. Before 1991, the political situation was so bad in Kurdistan. So people couldn't speak up, and couldn't ask for rights of disabled people. Now we are making disabled people more activated in society, giving lessons with sewing and how to live their lives. It's still not enough, but day by day it gets better."*

Wahid Saeed Chicho, the director of the Little People of Kurdistan Association emphasized on the relationship they had with persons with disabilities and about the interaction with the society, he meant that things just started to improve by saying:

*“The relationship between us is very good. We are very open and comfortable with each other, especially because we have things in common and go through the same struggles. We understand their struggles and they understand ours. It’s getting better but not that positive. It just started to improve.”*

Khabat Islam Muhamad, Dohuk Program Manager for the Voice of Older People (VOP), argued that there is much more to do when it comes to what the governmental institutes can do and said:

*“Society looks upon disabled with pity. I think disabled need more governmental institutes, because society can’t create permanent solutions.”*

This question was also answered by persons with disabilities, how the interaction between themselves and the society looks like and what is it like to live as persons with disabilities on an everyday basis in Kurdistan. The first person, “Haifa”, a girl at age of 20, lives with her family, has her disability in her legs, both legs. She is also a fulltime student. She says:

*“As a disabled person you are very limited in Kurdistan, but also to live an everyday life, it is very hard to live a normal life. I would only hope to have the ability to live as anyone else and to be able to have a life by myself had, not dependent on others. My relation to the society is locked. I am very much respected and I am treated like anyone else by the persons around me”*

“Imad” is man whose disability is his legs, both legs. He is 24 years old and has studied, but not higher education. He is also concerned with this issue and says:

*“It’s a locked society for me, to live in. I feel locked out. I don’t feel that I can do anything I want, if that’s what you are asking. People look upon me with a great respect without any regards to my disability.”*

“Metin” is a man who has fallen from a high ground, causing blindness to eyes, mild head injury and mild dementia. He has also not been in school because of his blindness. He, however, talks about the life Kurdistan being satisfactory for him, but still some problems are there for him to encounter on everyday basis. He says:

*“Life in Kurdistan is satisfactory for me, because I like it very much to live and to be a part of my people (the Kurdish people). I do feel the difference between me and everyone else, and I can feel how other are looking at me because of my blindness. How I have been received by the people, is to a certain degree good,*

*and how they treat me is to certain degree good. But there are some people who look down on me, and I feel that they degrade me just because I am blind.”*

“Selma” is a lady at an age of 70 and has not studied at in her life. Her disability is one of her legs is broken from the hips, and never got treated properly, and the other leg is dysfunctional. She lives with her family who have taken much suffer because of her. She feels a lot of guilt for letting her family to go through so much because of her. She talks good of the society and that everyone respects her very much and says:

*“All I can say is that they help us, in any matter, for us to be able to a dissent life and be able to provide for ourselves. Alhamdulillah (an islamic phrase meaning "Praise to God"), it is not bad. They are also good to me, Alhamdulillah. They are very good to me, and they treat me very good, they respect me and they also offer help to me. Alhamdulillah, they respect me very much and give me space to be with everyone.*

***How have your experiences shaped you as a person?***

*I have experienced so much pain in my because of my disability, (with tears in her voice,) My family have suffered so much also because of my disability. One of my legs is broken from the hips and the other is dysfunctional. I only wish to survive each day.”*

### 4.2 Obstacles to this integration

In this subchapter, the interviewers tell us about their view of the society and what kind of obstacles persons with disabilities face in that society. We seek their thoughts, prejudice and how they feel about discrimination, if persons with disabilities are discriminated against.

Salah Yousif Mohammed argues for the inability of the society to consider persons with disabilities and feels that they are discriminated by both families and the society as a whole. He wants changes in this regard. Here again, the question of improving education in social science department seems to be a difference, according to the Directorate of Disabled Care Duhok. He says:

*“Society doesn’t take into consideration thoughts, opinions, feeling of disabled people. Especially with females, it is double the obstacles and trouble with them because of traditions of society. They can’t go out and take courses to improve their selves because their families don’t allow it.*

***Do you feel they are discriminated against? Excluded? Included?***

*There's a theory that disabled people are separating themselves from society because they are shy, or "weak". But in reality, it is opposite. Society doesn't allow them to be involved. A man I know, his name is Nawzad, and he is a little person. The government told him to go sit in his house and they would give him his salary. But he refused because he wanted to work. He graduated from a commerce high school and now works for an accountant. This establishment also has a good example. We hired a paralyzed person that uses a wheelchair. It was difficult for him to get in a car and come here to work every day. So he was transferred to an establishment close by to his house. At first the establishment wouldn't accept him, they discriminated against him and wouldn't give him work, but he had a lot of help from the government. He went one day and cried. He wanted to come back to our establishment because people treated him so badly at that establishment. What people didn't realize is that he is in fact very intelligent, even smarter than me. After I saw what he was capable of, I gave him a very important duty. He writes the names and the salaries of all of our staff, which this is something that needs to be very precise.*

***Are there obstacles for the integration in the society? If so, what?***

*There are many obstacles that disabled people face in society and in everyday life. One important thing to realize is that law, religion, and the mind all don't say that disabled people are different, but society traditions do. In society, there are people with MA's, PhD's, yet society still thinks like people used to live in the village. But we are optimistic. My point of view is different from my parents, and my kids' point of view will be different from mine, hopefully better than mine and it will continue to improve. The environment in Kurdistan itself has many obstacles. All of our facilities here don't take into consideration disabled people and their needs to get around and function on a daily basis including universities, schools, mosques, streets, hospitals, and more.*

***What has worked well?***

*Before a long time ago, there were no institutes in Duhok for blind people. Now there is. There are also institutions for people with down-syndrome. When I became a director here these didn't exist. But I asked for them. This year there will be a new center for autism opening.*

*Also, salaries of disabled people have improved. Before, there were just 5 kinds of disabled people recognized and received salaries. Now there are 11 kinds. And before there were about 4,000 people who received salary, now there are 31,000 people. Imagine how many more there are without salary. Our buildings are old but now we are making a new city area for all institutions for disabled people to be in the same area, in Etit, near the beginning of Duhok.*

### ***What has worked less well?***

*In educational point of view, deaf and mute people just go until their 3rd year of high school of education and cannot continue. The Ministry of Education doesn't have resources to help them continue. The Ministry of Education wants to help them, so we need to make a new different curriculum for disabled people. We also want to make a dictionary for deaf and mute people.*

*There also is no brail establishment for blind people in all of Kurdistan. This definitely needs to be created. The governor Tamar Ramadan promised to make brail copies for curriculum. We want the entire school curriculum available in braille, but it will cost 300 million dinars and we cannot afford it."*

Nassrat Mohammed Salem also thinks that the societies norms and values has to change in order make room for persons with disabilities to live a normal life. He goes as far as even stating that even highly educated people in the society thinks bad of persons with disabilities, because of the norm in the society;

*"The view on disabled people by society is not very good but it's getting better. Handicapped people now have more confidence and society is becoming more and more aware about disabled people and their situation. There are degrees of disabled people. Some handicapped people are even doctors, engineers, have MA's, teachers, and are able to live normally. But people still treat them differently. They are people with special needs.*

### ***Do you feel they are discriminated against? Excluded? Included?***

*A little but not much for the time being. We are not like Europe for the time being in terms of our progress and development. It is especially hard for females with disabilities. Before females weren't even able or allowed to go out of the house. But now some females even have permanent jobs. Discrimination is not*

*that much. With families that have disabled people, they don't want to discriminate against their own family member. So they try not to with others.*

*The government gives salary of 150,000 Dinars for disabled people but before this their parents were raising them without this salary in a very good way.*

***Are there obstacles for the integration in the society? If so, what?***

*There are many obstacles. The busses don't have room for wheelchairs. There needs to be sidewalks. Things like elevators. If this new law was made formal, there is part of the law that would require that when a new building is being made, they need to take into consideration disabled people, or else will be fined. There are also many problems with schools, toilets in buildings and schools, roads, sidewalks. All of these things and places are not considering handicapped people.*

***What has worked well?***

*The awareness side is good. We are improving the society and ourselves about views of disabled people.*

***What has worked less well?***

*Equipment and treatments (physical) are very limited. The resources are limited but we are definitely in need of these. Even though they don't have these things, many still do many activities on their own, like playing sports."*

Wahid Saeed Chicho feels that persons with disabilities are being discriminated on a everyday basis and wants more changes in the infrastructure;

*"There is about 80%, in the society that discriminate little people in the society. Usually, our ideas gets to work well, about 40% of our ideas have worked well. But we need an official building, cars, and more funding to improve."*

Khabat Islam Muhamad argues for the need for other in the society to help persons with disabilities and says:

*"Disabled people are seen positive in the society and I believe that no blames them for having a disability. I think people are not alike and nobody is perfect, so we should help the disabled people and not just leave them because they are part from our society.*

***Are there obstacles for the integration in the society? If so, what?***

*Yes, they don't get enough encouragement from society or government to do so. The need more help with their self-confidence, because I believe many are able to take care of themselves with just a little help. They need help for shopping, taxi, buses and schools.*

***What has worked well?***

*Disabled grants for living*

***What has worked less well?***

*Integration in the society*

“Haifa” feels that the society is good to her and doesn't feel discriminated or excluded. She says:

*“I have only positive things to say to the society I am living in, as the thoughts and prejudices are only good to me. When I am with people I know, or especially my friends, I feel like anyone else in the group, but when I am in a place when there is strangers, I can see how they are looking at me, and how they are judging me, because of my handicap. I can't say what they are thinking but they are of course thinking of my handicap.*

***Do you feel discriminated? Excluded? Included?***

*I don't feel discriminated only excluded sometimes because of my handicap, but I have no problems with the persons I know.*

***Are there obstacles for the integration in the society? Is so, what?***

*No, because those in the society I am living in, are my friends and family, so therefore for me there are no obstacles. Actually, when it comes to get me somewhere, especially to the school, or to any other places, it is very hard for me, I would need something that would make it possible for me, to by myself take me anywhere I want without anyone else helping me to that place.*

***What has worked well?***

*I can live my life, only to the depth of my surrounding people, and those are the ones making it going well.*

***What has worked less well?***

*There has been nothing done for me in order for me to sufficient from.”*

Imad tells us that there good and bad people everywhere and that there is nothing wrong with the society:

*“Bad people are everywhere and I have even heard some bad words, but I have learned to live with my condition.*

***Do you feel discriminated? Excluded? Included?***

*I don't feel the discrimination and most of the times, I feel included in the society, but sometimes, excluded as well.*

***Are there obstacles for the integration in the society? Is so, what?***

*None. My only wish here would be the need for a tool that would make it possible for me to get the places you ask.*

***What has worked well?***

*I do get 150,000 as a salary for being disabled and it does help me a bit.*

***What has worked less well?***

*The help have however not been enough.”*

Metin tells us that there are some problems in the society such as that some seems to think that they are more valuable than persons with disabilities and says:

*“There are some who look down on me, and think that they are more valuable than me. When it comes to positive or negative from the society, I most certainly get both, some pity me, and gives me discount and that, but there are others who seem to think very bad of me. Especially with regard to my salary nowadays, that I get money for doing nothing, but how would I otherwise make it?*

***Do you feel discriminated? Excluded? Included?***

*Everything in my exclusion in the society is due to my blindness and people (some) seem to forget that I still have a brain, and can make argumentation and have a good laugh. Just because I am blind does not mean that I am dumb. I do feel discriminated some times, but other times, some people give a helping hand for surviving in the society, such as to help across the streets or to get home, when I need to. I do wish I could be more included in the society. People think badly of me because of my blindness.*

***Are there obstacles for the integration in the society? Is so, what?***

*People think, just because of my blindness I cannot do anything, and that is not true, and People think that they can do everything and because of my*

*blindness I can do nothing. I don't feel that I have the same value as any other person without disabilities. I need the kind of help to get me to places with friends and families. This type of help would help me a lot in my life, because now, I am very much locked out and cannot whenever I want, to go to "Bazaar".*

***What has worked less well?***

*I have not gained any help that I have made use of.*

***What has worked well?***

*I have gotten nothing, except the salary I get, but even that doesn't help much, because it's too little."*

Selma, being an old lady tells us about the respect people show her and she feels nothing more can be done about the society, because it's good the way it is. She also says that no one sees her as a disabled person and says:

*"Ne Walla (Kurdish Islamic phrase for "By God, No"), they never see me as a disabled person, and they treat me very well. They come and visit me to see how I'm doing.*

***Do you feel discriminated? Excluded? Included?***

*I do feel excluded because of my disabilities and how it restrains me to do some certain things. We need to be taken more serious and give us more for us to live like everyone else. Everyone seems to be able to buy houses, or to build their houses, or going on many trips, but us, the disabled, we can't afford any of those things, not alone, and not with other. We are disabled!*

***Are there obstacles for the integration in the society? Is so, what?***

*No, no one stands in my way for my integration in the society. I don't go anywhere, with any help given to me, and when I go to "bazaar" I go with my family, and they are there for my sake. I can't go alone.*

***What has worked less well?***

*I haven't got any help that have been beneficial for me. Nobody has else than my family has done anything to help my situation.*

***What has worked well?***

*No, nothing have been for been,"*

## 4.3 In order to live an everyday life, any assistance offered for disabled persons which would help to maintain a sustainable life?

Here, the highlighted answered have been chosen to answer the question of what have been done for persons with disabilities and what resources are there for these persons to seek to.

Salah Yousif Mohammed says:

***“Which authorities (organizations) are there for these people to turn to? (Those with a disability)***

*There are many semi-governmental institutions including for blind people, for deaf and mute people, for little people, for paralyzed people, for people with autism, and for people with mental and psychological issues. The government supports these organizations but the institutions are free in their decisions and what they decide to do. Because of the pressure of these organizations, they made this new law about the rights of disabled people. It's too bad that there are other organizations that are NGO's but aren't really being active and doing that much. Although they are private, they are not doing much, maybe because of limited funding. They are independent.*

***What resources is the government offering?***

*The government is doing a lot to be involved. Our institution is backed up and funded by the government. Not only do they give us a lot of financial help, but they approve of our cause and are also very progressive and forward thinking with helping disabled people in Kurdistan. One of the very important moves they made was this new law in Kurdistan for disabled people. They also give salary to 31,000 disabled people, which do help them and their family a lot.”*

Nassrat Mohammed Salem says:

***“Which authorities (organizations) are there for these people to turn to? (Those with a disability)***

*The other governmental organization has courses with funding but they ask us if we have people they need or want to be involved in these. They include them to take computer classes, sewing, and other handcrafts classes to improve potential skills. So we have good communication with them. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2012, we had a picnic for disabled people with the help of the other institute, and we do this every year. Every disabled person has the right to bring their family.*

*It's always a good way to bring the institutions together. Before now there was a UN organization. They helped with awareness. They were helping open courses for hand crafts. But this UN organization isn't here anymore.*

***What resources is the government offering?***

*The governor Tamar Ramadan is doing a very good job with getting involved and helping. Until now the government gives land to disabled people for free. But now the land is limited, and given to the most needed ones. My association is writing a request for the government, we are writing down names of disabled people who need a house, and are writing the degree of the disability, and then the government gives land for them to build a house on it."*

Wahid Saeed Chicho says:

*"The government doesn't help an organization as us that much, because much of the times, the jobs are not suited for us and we can't work as any other person."*

Khabat Islam Muhamad says:

*There are many institutes and NGOs, but as said they are not enough and may be not well organized to make a real change. The government did very well lately specially offering them monthly money, but they need also social support for integration."*

"Haifa" says:

*There have been no organizations to help me in any way. And I don't even know how to get in contact with any organizations that would help me. The government offer 150,000 Dinars to all disabled persons."*

"Imad" says:

*"I have only come across the government and they give me my salary. The government have assistance programs and there are resources available laid for this help."*

"Metin" says:

*“I have not come across any organizations that would help me. I have gotten nothing, except the monthly salary I get.”*

“Selma” says

*“The government has not offered us any other help and we haven’t been directed to any other place as well.”*

## 4.4 What more can be offered?

Here, the interviewers answered what more could be offered and how things could develop. Salah Yousif Mohammed emphasizes on making the society more aware of the different conditions of disability and medical education should be improved. He says:

***What needs to be done to improve the situation for disabled persons in Kurdistan?***

*The awareness of society needs to be improved. People don’t even know what these disabilities or conditions are. And staff needs to be more educated. It is rare to find staff to work in these institutions that are actually educated and trained correctly to work with disabled people. For example, a doctor has an autistic son and she treated him with medication for mentally disabled people. This made conditions worse for him. Because of her lack of knowledge of what autism is, she wrongly prescribed him. It can be developed by more awareness with society, training for families with disabled people. If we offered courses for families with disabled people so they could actually learn and understand the disability their family member has. We need teams of doctors, teachers, government people; psychologists all trained and educated to work in all these institutions to improve the situation.*

***What more can be offered, do you think?***

*Classes can be offered, more resources to people with disabled people. More training and education for staff can be offered in these institutions so that they are effective in their work.*

***What has worked well?***

*The set-up of the institutions and the community for disabled people has worked well. We have set up a good foundation to work foreword from including*

*the institutions we have available for disabled people but also the relationship between the institutions and the government.*

***What has worked less well?***

*We really need to improve the relationship between these institutions and society. And disabled people are the connecting link between these two. They are and should be involved with the institutions and they are part of society. But it's difficult for them. We need to help them and society needs to help them but more importantly learn more about them."*

Nassrat Mohammed Salem talks about educating the society of respecting persons with disabilities and says:

***"What needs to be done to improve the situation for disabled persons in Kurdistan?***

*Disabled people need respect from all government establishments and buildings. They need to not distinguish between disabled people and normal people and treat them less but at the same time where there are lines of people waiting to be seen, disabled people shouldn't have to wait.*

*Their salary needs to be raised but more importantly their opportunities for work. If the disability degree is very high, they should give more salary so they can take care of themselves.*

***What more can be offered, do you think?***

*The government, they have to continue their help and support, not just one time help us and our associations and disabled people. Much of the equipment we receive will eventually break and then is not replaced. We need these replacements to continue so we can keep running. There is no factory in Kurdistan to make wheelchairs. But if we open a factory here, we would give salary to those workers, who could potentially be disabled people, and then we also would produce the products ourselves.*

*If rich people help us, they will show off and brag that they did something good, and that will take away from disabled people, put them down. But if the support comes from the government, this shows it is their right. And the fact that the government is giving shows this. But if its private support, it's like charity. There needs to be help without mentioning names."*

Wahid Saeed Chicho emphasizes on finding jobs to persons with disabilities and says:

*“We need the government to help little people find jobs. When they want a permanent job, they need to take into consideration that we are little. The government should give some discounts to little people as well because of our limited job availabilities. The government sometimes gives loans to newlyweds, with the intention of that being paid back to the government. But it is difficult for us to pay this back because of limited jobs, so we should not be obliged to.”*

Khabat Islam Muhamad talks about the need for integration and specialized institutions for special needs;

***“What needs to be done to improve the situation for disabled persons in Kurdistan?”***

*Integration and capacity building courses with capital and medical support. It will develop their activity in the society and make their life better .*

***What more can be offered, do you think?***

*Establishing specialized institutes supported with all needs.*

***What has worked well?***

*Monthly money support*

*What has worked less well?*

***Institutes and schools.”***

“Haifa” talks about the accountability for taking care of persons with disabilities:

***“What needs to be done to improve the situation for disabled persons in Kurdistan? And how can it develop?”***

*There is a need for accountability from either the government in Kurdistan or people outside Kurdistan. And also the cooperation within the state and outside the state can develop the assistance to those in need, such as me.*

***What more can be offered, do you think?***

*The medical help is the most important if you ask me, especially good doctors who are aware of disability are of great need more here within the country than those outside the country, because if they are doctors here working within the country, they would know the society as well, and not by foreign measures and values.”*

“Imad” argues that the salary given at the moment is not enough and therefore there is need to improve that. He says:

*We need to taken care of better and an improvement in the salary, because its not enough for these days. No one should be locked out of the society or excluded whether you are disabled or not and it should not matter when it comes to aid or services. That should never be the question.*

***What has worked well?***

*I have gotten a wheelchair, of which have helped me enormous.*

***What has worked less well?***

*I haven't got anything that has not helped me."*

“Metin” talks about the need for changes in the environment to make it more adjustable for persons with disabilities to live in. He says:

*“The need of places suitable for us to go, much like parks, and that stuff. And also other places have to be opened with staffs that have the experience and the quality to take care of persons with disabilities. And also places that have to be opened are those for education, and how we can learn to live better in the society. As a blind man, there are a lot of things I reckon I can learn to live a better everyday life and to gain more from the society. Also the education for us to learn to read and write, even though I am blind, I can still learn from going to school and in a class. I don't have to maybe read, because I can't see, but I can learn from hearing. The salary is the first thing, I think must increase for us to live a better life.*

***What has worked less well?***

*Nothing else than the monthly salary.*

***What has worked well?***

*No, nothing."*

“Selma” talks about the need for improving the medical treatments and giving better aid to persons with disabilities. She says:

*“Give us the assistance that we need and give us the necessary medical treatment, such as doctors, medicine and such, take us to the doctors.*

*She could not answer all my questions because she has not been offered any help, according to her, and in her mind, this is just one of the problems in the Kurdish society, as some can get the help but others cannot. This in her mind is due to contacts and who you know does make a remarkable difference in the life standards for persons with disabilities."*

## 5. Analysis

This chapter intends to discuss the interviews at stake and try to see the reasons behind interviewers' thoughts of disability in Kurdistan. This paper as a whole has made the author to really think of the way to be able to help and try to understand the ways persons with disabilities live in Kurdistan. Before discussing the above-mentioned facts and analyze the interviews, there is a need of understanding how the randomness of selecting interviewers have to be taken into consideration. This randomness gives the absolute best answers to the location where these interviews were made, Dohuk. There are as mentioned earlier four interviews with officials or authorities and four interviews with persons with disabilities. This selection have been made because of the delimitation of this paper and more interviewers would make this paper a rather too big to comprehend at the moment. However, this lays a path for further investigation in this topic.

The way the interviewers had answered the questions, raise many issue that had to be dealt with. How the government or authorities are going to deal with these issues is another problem and it is also hard to decide what the government should do more to improve the situation for persons with disabilities in Kurdistan. I would like to start this analysis by the definition of human security provided by the Commission on Human Security (CHS):

“...to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.”<sup>46</sup>

In order to be able to make any changes in the field of social and health science, this is something that has to be taken into consideration and that freedoms that are the essence of life have to be the first things that has to be accomplished for a better, respectable and fair society. No matter how the persons looks like or what conditions the persons has to live with on everyday basis, there should not be any comprise in above-mentioned rights.

By using the Social Constructivist way of thinking as everything around, is there because we decide to believe so, and has its point where we have to start look at disability in

---

<sup>46</sup> CHS: 2003: 4, <http://ochaonline.un.org/Default.aspx?alias=ochaonline.un.org/humansecurity>

Kurdistan in another way than we have till now. As mentioned earlier in the theoretical framework chapter, Social Constructivism argues for the meaning of life being something we have constructed and nothing is absolute; giving us different ways of looking at things. Therefore, we all have different truths and that are no absolute truths out there to seek, because it is all in the eyes of the beholder to argue what is “the” truth for each and one of us. Having this said, this is linked to integrating persons with disabilities with the society and making them a greater part of that society. This can also be linked to human security as; people would not feel secure if they are not participating in the society. The word “participation” seems to be a key word for development in the social and health science. Participation, whether it is being able to vote for a person that they can relate to, or the ability for them to interact with the society in forms of activities seems to be of great importance for a better society. The social model of disability in Sweden also talks about this issue and as mentioned in that chapter, the key words being; environment, empowerment, participation, influence and individual identities. These terms also goes back to human security and social constructivism in way for a better societal environment. This leads to the term of “a society for all” which was one of the ideas for the Swedish social model of disability and one of the factors for the success the Swedish model.

This is also highlighted by the answers given by the interviewers when answering questions such as; how persons with disabilities are received by the society and whether persons with disabilities are being discriminated against in the society. Salah Yousif Mohammed, directorate of Disabled Care Duhok, talks about the need to educate the society rather than blaming the government for being insufficient. It is the society that needs to change its attitude towards persons with disabilities and that a change in prejudices of these persons is necessary for improving the situation for persons with disabilities in Kurdistan. As mentioned earlier in disability in the theoretical framework chapter, this issue is also related to the ways of changing the society to provide with more opportunities for persons with disabilities.

“The principle of non-discrimination provides a response to this challenge. But it cannot alone be sufficient. We need the daily exercise of proximity, integrated neighbourhoods, reciprocal recognition, and understanding. Here, disabled people can play an emblematic role. They exemplify a difference in comparison with average citizens, each in his or her own way. They highlight the question of living in proximity. By increasingly refusing separate treatment, special institutions,

denials of or limitations on activities and participation, they force all those sites where social life takes place to be receptive and equipped so that every person, just as he or she is, finds fulfilment there. Disabled people can show the way toward democratic inclusion.”

Having this said about the measures for inclusion for persons with disabilities and making them a part of the society is a great democratic step. In regard to what Salah Yousif Mohammed says, Khabat Islam Muhamad, Dohuk Program Manager for the Voice of Older People (VOP), argued that there is much more to do when it comes to what the governmental institutes can do. She continues by stating that persons with disabilities need more governmental institutes, because the society itself cannot create permanent solutions. This is something that backfires on Salah Yousif Mohammeds’ statement that the government isn’t supposed to be blamed. She is not alone in this statement whereas all of the persons with disabilities who have been interviewed agree when it comes to their influence in the society and how they are received by the society. For example, “Haifa” talks of her inability of being a part of the society the way she wants and that her relation to the society is locked, even though she is much respected by persons around her. Her wish is to live a life where she doesn’t have to depend on others. “Imad” also mentions this and urges that he cannot live the life he would like to live. By just looking upon these answers we can find that there is room for improvements in the situation for persons with disabilities in this regard, thus; making it able for them to take care of themselves, rather than giving them a possibility of feeling sorry for themselves and that they would be a burden either their families or the society, as “Selma” tells us about the experiences that have shaped her as a person.

*“I have experienced so much pain in my life because of my disability, (with tears in her voice) my family have suffered so much also because of my disability. One of my legs is broken from the hips and the other is dysfunctional. I only wish to survive each day.”*

This is something that keeps the persons with disabilities locked out in many ways. A person can become very anxious of even asking for help because of their acknowledgment of being a burden to others in the society. Nassrat Mohammed Salem, the director of ZheenHandi Capped Association says;

*“If rich people help us, they will show off and brag that they did something good, and that will take away from disabled people, put them down. But if the support comes from the government, this shows it is their right.”*

This is something that really caught my intention because of the argument for saying that rich people would brag about doing something good and that intention would put down those who receive the help. If the help comes from the government, people would argue that it is their right to be offered that specific help and also minimize the prejudices for persons with disabilities; that they are not able of anything.

When asking about their view of the society and what kind of obstacles persons with disabilities face, there are some very interesting comments from both official persons and persons with disabilities. Here again, from the governments perspective, Salah Yousif Mohammed argues that there is a need for educating the society to be more acceptable of persons with disabilities. He also tells us about females having it even harder to make it in the society, because they are not allowed by the families. This way of thinking is also viewed by Nassrat Mohammed Salem: hoping to change the view people have on persons with disabilities. He also tells us that there are some persons with disabilities who are doctors, engineers, have master degrees or teachers and are able to live a normal life like anyone in the society, but still are being treated differently because of their disabilities. However, this is not what the persons with disabilities that have been interviewed tell us about their relationship with their families and the obstacles that they face in the society. Many of them argue for the opposite actually, and that their families are the ones making the integration and their lives easier. For example, “Selma” says that no one stands in her way for her integration in the society, and when she goes to “bazaar” (market), her family takes her there. She never goes there by herself which she would like to be able to at some point. Here again, we can take into account the importance of having a law such as LSS (Lag om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade) in Kurdistan as well. Here, the law such the LSS is not necessary to be met at the same point as it is in Sweden but rather to enforce a similar to make sure for further development. A similar law to LSS is however intact, according to Salah Yousif Mohammed; “they are taking many progressive steps. Now there is a law in parliament signed by the Government and the President about the rights of disabled people and their proficiency” says the directorate of Disabled Care Duhok. As to the fact that in LSS, if there is a need for support; application may not be turned down due to lack in resources or funding. A law such

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

is would be very satisfactory for persons with disabilities, because they would know that they are entitled to it by law.

However, according to Qassim Khidhir, writer at Kurdish Globe, there are more than 100,000 persons in the region of Kurdistan that have one or more disabilities.<sup>47</sup> The amount of people are being helped by the region seems to be 31,000 and that amount is not near the total amount of persons with disabilities in Kurdistan, and also the directorate of Disabled Care Dohuk, says: imagine how many more there are without salary”, gives the idea that the total amount of persons with disabilities in Dohuk is a lot more than just 31,000, thus those who receive a salary. Now that we are talking about the salary, we can see from the interviewers’ answers, that persons with disabilities are entitled to 150,000 dinars, and according to currency exchanges, we can see 150,000 dinars are 128usd, which gives us 890 Swedish kronor. To illustrate how little this amount is, we can see on the same article by the Kurdish Globe, a father and a son who both have disabilities, get a total of 300,000 dinars and are just able to pay the rent to their landlords for that amount of money, and without the help of their families and friends, they would not be able to live. Often in economics, we talk about the relative economics, the relative of receiving for making it in Sweden or Kurdistan should differ because of the relative prices in the market for things such as housing. Here again, either, the government seems to be lacking in identifying the actual amount of salary for those who deserve it, or they seems to believe it is the family members job of those who need the help to help their family members and that familial bonds are stronger than anything. Here, the critics would be that many are not able to aid their family members, and provide with the help needed for those persons in need. The government however is, making a new city area for all institutions for persons with disabilities in one and same area, and more institutions are to be built for the different types of disabilities, according to Salah Yousif Mohammed. This is a good thing which will bring more jobs, but also better social services for persons with disabilities.

In accordance to this, the interviewers also answered what other institutions, organizations they have come across that helps persons with disabilities and what the government is offering. Except the salary of 150,000 dinars, there is not much more that is actually being offered after listening to the interviews, especially those interviews with persons with disabilities. Here, Khabat Islam Muhamad, talks about that there are institutions

---

<sup>47</sup> Khidhir, Qassim (2011) "Handicapped: Government not a good listener", The Kurdish Globe, Pulished in 13 February, 2011, Retrieved in 15 May, 2012. <http://www.kurdishglobe.net/display-article.html?id=ECDD3A5B32ACF77CBEB94E7A2AE95408>

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

and NGOs, but they are not enough and Nassrat Mohammed Salem also talks about the need for an organization such as UN to be there for awareness of these problems and hopefully solutions to better standards of living for persons with disabilities. Awareness takes us back to the theoretical framework where environment is one of the key words for a better society in accordance to the social model of disability. Environment has to change in order to make room for changes in fields such as these. Often, another environment or changes in the environment lays down paths for development in fields such disability and the social model in the country. With changes in the environment comes also improvement for different needs, and the need we have seen to be desirable, is the need of education and educating the society of the different means of disability. Nassrat Mohammed Salem says that the government side in this regard is good, because they offer courses with funding, whereas these operations are led by the different associations, and that the government offer classes, sewing, and other handcrafts classes for improving potential skills for persons with disabilities. However, this help seems to be either invincible or the help is not being able to reach everyone in the society that needs it, because of the interviewers comment on the question; what government offer. “Haifa”, “Metin”, “Selma” are all in the same page when it comes to this question and says that they don’t know of any other way the government can help them and the only help that they seem to know of is the monthly salary, but “Imad” says that he has come across other assistance programs given by the government, and that there are resources available for this help, but still he is only getting the monthly salary. So, sometimes, it is not about that the persons with disabilities doesn’t know what’s out there for them to grab on to, or to seek help for and from. There are simply not enough of ideas of what to do with those who need the help. For example, “Imad” whose disability lies in his legs, meaning he would need a wheelchair which he has gotten. That might be the difference with knowing of the different programs the government offers to those of special needs. “Haifa” who also has her disability in her legs, would probably be more positive towards the government if gotten her a wheelchair as well. This is just an example of the difference in knowing the facts in the society and how knowledge also comes to play its role for beneficial of those in need. This is also related to the question of what obstacles these person face in the society. “Imad” says that there are no obstacles for him whereas “Haifa” says, even though her family is there for her anytime she wants, she does wish to be able to take herself around or more specifically she says: “when it comes to get me somewhere, especially to the school, or to any other places, it is very hard for me, I would need something that would make it possible for me, to by myself

take me anywhere I want without anyone else helping me to that place.” This statement makes it clear that “Haifa” clearly is being a burden to her family and friends, even though her family and friends are willingly taking care of her.

The fourth subchapter of the result has been the chapter that has in one way or another answered the research questions of this paper and thus, what have been offered and how the situation for persons with disabilities can improve. Salah Yousif Mohammed argues for making the society more aware of the different conditions of disability and that the medical education has to improve in order to tackle this issue. Nassrat Mohammed Salem, to this regard talks about the respect from government to persons with disabilities. He argues as all of the persons with disabilities who have been interviewed, that the monthly salary is too low and therefore, there should be a way to improve this. He says; “if the disability degree is very high, they should give more salary so they can take care of themselves. Having this said, we are talking about the percentage of a person’s disability and how much they can do and how much they are restricted to. A person like “Haifa” who is paralyzed in both legs, but with a wheelchair and a little help, she would be able to work in an office like anyone. With a little help, it is meant that she would have trouble in many office buildings in Kurdistan because they are not adjustable for persons with disabilities. This would mean that “Haifa” probably has a disability of 50%, and that she should get the salary according to that percentage. This might be a hard and explicit example, but most of persons would rather work than being dependent on others. This is also discussed in the human security regard to freedom from want. It means the social threats being minimized and that the person can live in peace. Peace is not always the opposite of war, whereas in this matter, it is meant for a peaceful mind. Salah Yousif Mohammed also believes that there are many areas that have to change for a better situation for persons with disabilities, thus the need of doctors, teachers, government people and psychologists that are all trained in the right way to be able to make a difference. There are many persons sitting on posts that they are not qualified for and that minimizes the effects of making a difference. “Haifa” talks about the accountability for persons with disabilities, and that this accountability shouldn’t be restricted to within the country and she argues that it should come from the outside world as well. This would also mean a better cooperation between the government and the outside world, thus, this way it would help to develop the assistance to those in need, by for example imitating other successful countries. This would also be of great importance to bring in doctors from other countries and learn from them. The constructions of the societies in Kurdistan are built more adaptable for

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

collective work and group identities seem to be of more importance than individual identities. This is something we can see from the interviewers' answers. For example, Salah Yousif Mohammed argues that the help given to persons with disabilities benefits both persons with disabilities and their families. Having this said, the argument is laid to be of importance to the family as well and not just the individual. If thought of persons with individual perspectives, the benefits for these persons would be greater and this way, the special specific needs would be highlighted, as noted in the theoretical framework about empowerment for individuals in the society.

## 6. Conclusion

Finally, there have been many reasons for the selection of this topic whereas persons with disabilities are easily forgotten in times of economic boom and growth. We have to take into consideration the factors for a humane society, and what it is that makes us human beings. The economic growth, the region of Kurdistan is having is good and can lead to further development in the social welfare, but it can also lead to enormous gaps between rich and poor, whereas rich people get richer and poor people remains poor, and the struggle for making it on everyday basis keeps getting harder and harder. Having this said, there is the double effect of being both poor and have one or more disabilities. The answer here would hopefully be that the government will do their best to ensure the safety of those people. I would argue for the Swedish Model of Disability, being a perfect example to follow, not stating that the Swedish model is perfect, but for time being, it is a very good example. For example, the law of support as in the Social Act in Sweden should be applicable in Kurdistan as well, where if a person need support from the government; application may not be turned down due to lack in resources or funding. This way, the government has to find a way for making the support available for persons with disabilities.

The result of the interviewers combined, have had one thing in common, which is the need for education. Education seems to be very desirable for the society as a whole, and not just for persons with disabilities and their families. Educating the society for the different aspects of disabilities and the different conditions of disabilities is in great need for the Kurdish society, especially in times such as these, when the region is prosperous in economics and is doing well, economically. The good economic stand, should lay down paths for improvements and development in the social welfare system.

The purpose of this study is to see how persons with disabilities live in Kurdistan, and how the society receives these persons. On concluding remarks, we can see the essential role the families have for the living standards of persons. From the basis of the interviews, the family is a big part of the survival of persons with disabilities and how they are able to live their lives. For example, the interviewers would argue that “the integration to the society is good, because in that society they have their friends and family members”. Therefore, it would be interesting to see how the result from the interviews would differ if the interviewer lack the support from families, friends, and relatives. Would other factors be highlighted then? How would the results differ from those I have come across? Not until we have

## Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

considered all the different situations people live in, I don't think we can speak of a general picture of how it is to live as a person with disabilities in Kurdistan.

## 7. Reference List

"UN admits Rwanda genocide failure". BBC News. 2000-04-15. Retrieved 2012-05-19.

Ala'Aldeen, Dlawer A.A, Death Clouds: Saddam Hussein's Chemical War Against the Kurds, Retrieved-05-14.  
<http://www.dlawer.net/?q=node/79>

Albrecht, Gary L., (2006), *Encyclopedia of Disability* (5 vols) (SAGE Publications, Inc. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006) BBS

Amnesty International, (2011) "Security with Human Rights", (Amnesty International, ACT 30/001/2011),  
Published: 6 April 2011, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ACT30/001/2011>

Baylis, John. *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, 4e. 2008

Bennett, Andrew, 2004, "Case Study Methods: Design, Use, and Comparative Advantages" in Detlef F. Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias, *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations*, University of Michigan Press, Michigan

Brown, Scott Campbell, "Accessibility" in Albrecht, Gary L., (2006), *Encyclopedia of Disability* (5 vols) (SAGE Publications, Inc. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006) BBS

CHS: 2003: 4, <http://ochaonline.un.org/Default.aspx?alias=ochaonline.un.org/humansecurity>

CHS: 2003: 4, <http://ochaonline.un.org/Default.aspx?alias=ochaonline.un.org/humansecurity>

Clark, Andrew E., Senik, Claudia, (2011), "Will GDP Growth Increase Happiness in Developing Countries?", (Paris School of Economics and IZA, Discussion Paper No. 5595, March 2011), <http://ftp.iza.org/dp5595.pdf>

Dahl, Robert, (1967), "the City in the Future of democracy", *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 61, No. 4, December

Flyvbjerg, Bent (2006), "Five Misunderstandings About Case Study Research." *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 12, no. 2, April, pp. 219-245.; Bent Flyvbjerg, 2011, "Case Study," in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds., *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4th Edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage)

Giddens, A. 2000, "Democracy" in "Runaway World – How Globalisation is reshaping our Lives", (Profile Books, London)

# Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

Khidhir, Qassim (2011) "Handicapped: Government not a good listener", The Kurdish Globe, Pulished in 13 February, 2011, Retrieved in 15 May, 2012. <http://www.kurdishglobe.net/display-article.html?id=ECDD3A5B32ACF77CBEB94E7A2AE95408>

Kurdistan Parliament, Article 1 of the Constitution of Kurdistan, <http://www.kurdistan-parliament.org/default.aspx?page=Constitution&c=Constitution-Kurdistan>

Kurdistan Parliament, Article 23 of the Constitution of Kurdistan, <http://www.kurdistan-parliament.org/default.aspx?page=Constitution&c=Constitution-Kurdistan>

Kurdistan TV, Zoom In, <http://www.kurdistantv.net/video.aspx?id=67517>

Lewin, Barbro, "Disability Law: Sweden" in Albrecht, Gary L., (2006), *Encyclopedia of Disability* (5 vols) (SAGE Publications, Inc. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006) BBS

Mullner, Ross M., "Accountability" in Albrecht, Gary L., (2006), *Encyclopedia of Disability* (5 vols) (SAGE Publications, Inc. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006) BBS

Okubo, Shiro, (2007) "Freedom from Fear and Want" and "the Right to Live in Peace", and "Human Security" (Institute of International Relations and Area Studies Vol.5, pp.1-15, Ritsumeikan University, 2007)

Orjinta, Ikechukwu Aloysius, (2010), *Social Constructivism in international relations and the Gender Dimension: International Relations and Gender made simple*, Published by Grin Verlag. Achieved Through Google Books.

Owen, Taylor, (2004) "Human Security - Conflict, Critique and Consensus: Colloquium Remarks and a Proposal for a Threshold-Based Definition, (Security Dialogue 2004; 35; 373)

Peace Pledge Union, "Rwanda 1994" Retrieved on 19 May 2012, [http://www.ppu.org.uk/genocide/g\\_rwanda1.html](http://www.ppu.org.uk/genocide/g_rwanda1.html)

Socialstyrelsen (2012), "Funktionsnedsättning och Funktionshinder, användning av begreppen" Retrieved on 19 May 2012. [http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/fragorochsvar/funktionsnedsattningochfunktio#anchor\\_11](http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/fragorochsvar/funktionsnedsattningochfunktio#anchor_11)

Stiker, Henri-Jacques, "Democracy" in Albrecht, Gary L., (2006), *Encyclopedia of Disability* (5 vols) (SAGE Publications, Inc. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006) BBS

Söder, Mårten, "Social Model: Sweden" in Albrecht, Gary L., (2006), *Encyclopedia of Disability* (5 vols) (SAGE Publications, Inc. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006) BBS

# Disability in Kurdistan- A Study Seen From a Human Security Perspective

---

Reving Amedi

Halmstad University 2012

Turner, Bryan S. "Citizenship and Civil Rights" in Albrecht, Gary L., (2006), *Encyclopedia of Disability* (5 vols) (SAGE Publications, Inc. University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006) BBS

United Nations Official Site, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, un.org, <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=150>

United Nations, "Universal declaration of Human Rights"

United Nations, Human Development Report 1994

Woolf, Nicky, (2010) "Is Kurdistan the next Dubai?" guardian.co.uk, Retrieved in 2012-05-14. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/may/05/kurdistan-next-dubai-iraq>

Yin, Robert K, 2003, Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Third Edition, Applied Social Research Methods Series, Vol. 5, Sage Publications, Inc,