THE HISSING SECTARIAN SNAKE:

SECTARIANISM AND THE MAKING OF STATE AND NATION IN MODERN IRAQ

Submitted by **Khalil Osman** to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics in September 2012

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signature: ……*Khalil Osman* ………26/09/2012…………………………………

To the memory of my mother, Hajjah Hana, a devoted wife, a loving mother and a wonderful grandmother, whose legacy continues to inspire

ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the relationship between sectarianism and state-making and nation-building in Iraq. It argues that sectarianism has been an enduring feature of the state-making trajectory in Iraq due to the failure of the modern nation-state to resolve inherent tensions between primordial sectarian identities and concepts of unified statehood and uniform citizenry. After a theoretical excursus that recasts the notion of primordial identity as a socially constructed reality, I set out to explain the persistence of primordial sectarian affiliations in Iraq since the establishment of the modern nation-state in 1921. Looking at the primordial past showed that Sunni-Shiᶜite interactions before the modern nation-state cultivated repositories of divergent collective memories and shaped dynamics of inclusion and exclusion favorable to the Sunni Arabs following the creation of Iraq. Drawing on primary and secondary sources and field interviews, this study proceeds to trace the accentuation of primordial sectarian solidarities despite the adoption of homogenizing policies in a deeply divided society along ethno-sectarian lines. It found that the uneven sectarian composition of the ruling elites nurtured feelings of political exclusion among marginalized sectarian groups, the Shiᶜites before 2003 and the Sunnis in the post-2003 period, which hardened sectarian identities. The injection of hegemonic communal discourses into the educational curriculum was found to have provoked masked forms of resistance that contributed to the sharpening of sectarian consciousness. Hegemonic communal narratives embedded in the curriculum not only undermined the homogenizing utility of education but also implicated education in the accentuation of primordial sectarian identities. The study also found that, by camouflaging anti-Shiᶜite sectarianism, the anti-Persian streak in the nation-state's Pan-Arab ideology undermined Iraq's national integration project. It explains that the slide from a totalizing Pan-Arab ideology in the pre-2003 period toward the atomistic impulse of the federalist debate in the post-2003 period is symptomatic of the ghettoization of identity in Iraq. This investigation of the interaction between primordial sectarian attachments and the trajectory of the making of the Iraqi nation-state is ensconced in the project of expanding the range and scope of social scientific applications of the nation-building and primordialism lines of analysis.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJC	Accountability and Justice Commission
AMSI	Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
DPWG	Democratic Principles Working Group
HNCDB	Higher National Commission for de-Ba^{c}athification
IAF	Iraqi Accordance Front
ICP	Iraqi Communist Party
IDC	Iraqi de-Ba^{c}athification Council
IFND	Iraqi Front for National Dialogue
IGC	Iraqi Governing Council
IHEC	Independent High Electoral Commission
IIA	Iraqi Interim Authority
IIP	Iraqi Islamic Party
INA	Iraqi National Alliance
INAM	Iraqi National Accord Movement
INC	Iraqi National Congress
IRDC	Iraq Reconstruction and Development Council
ISCI	Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq
IUC	Iraq Unity Coalition
KA	Kurdistan Alliance
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
NA	National Alliance
NCHP	National Council for Higher Policies
ORHA	Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance
POW	Prisoner of War
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
RCC	Revolutionary Command Council
RL	Regional Leadership of the Arab Ba^{c}ath Socialist Party
SCIRI	Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq
SLC	State of Law Coalition
TAL	Transitional Administrative Law
TNA	Transitional National Assembly
UIA	United Iraqi Alliance

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Introduction

"When you set out on your journey to Ithaca
pray that the road is long,
full of adventure, full of knowledge."

Constantine Cavafy (1863-1933), "Ithaca,"
translated by Rae Dalven

News of Iraqi-on-Iraqi violence and turmoil has become a permanent feature of media headlines. Amid the flood of coverage of near-daily killings, kidnappings, car bombs, and mayhem, there remains little doubt that the fall of Saddam Hussein's brutal regime did not mark an end to the suffering of a people that has long found itself sinking ever deeper into a cesspool of agony, anguish and despair. If anything, the fall of Saddam has brought Iraq face to face with a cruel irony. It is an irony that is as much cruel in its violence that has plunged the country into a whirlpool of sectarian and ethnic bloodshed as it is cruel in the cynicism of the fact that efforts to devise a political order in post-Saddam Iraq have opened a Pandora's box of sectarianism, communal hatreds, and intractable political struggles.

Coming some nine decades after laying the foundations of a modern state system in Iraq, the current turmoil in this country highlights the failure of the process of nation-building and state formation in crystallizing a common national identity. In fact, communal strife in Iraq has been fuelled by contradictory and divergent conceptions of political community, collective identity, national interest, historical memory and frameworks for the country's future. Despite the existence of a large body of popular lore disparaging sectarianism with open disdain and applauding communal diversity and inter-communal harmony, a lasting social peace seems to have eluded Iraq. In times of national distress and severe political crisis that gripped the country following the overthrow of Saddam, primordial attachments and old communal suspicions resurfaced intensely and the country teetered on the brink of all-out civil war and fragmentation.

I.   Purpose of Study

> "All men by nature desire to know."
>
> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*

This is a study that examines the relationship between sectarianism and the making of state and nation in Iraq. The main concern of the study is to investigate the interaction between sectarianism and the ongoing and unfinished process of the making of the modern Iraqi nation-state. A homogenizing, unitary nation-state never emerged in Iraq, despite the tyranny of a secularized modern state. Hence, the persistence of sectarianism and primordial sectarian affiliations in the Iraqi socio-political landscape, along with its concomitant distorting effects on political life, is a puzzling socio-historical and political phenomenon.[1]

The basic contention of this study is that sectarianism has been an enduring feature of the state-making trajectory in Iraq due to the failure to resolve the inherent tensions between ubiquitous primordial non-state, including and above all sectarian, ethnic and/or tribal identities, on the one hand, and concepts of unified nationhood and a uniform citizenry inherent in building a nation-state, on the other. The foundations of the modern state system in Iraq were laid down in an institutional vacuum when the country was cobbled together out of the rump of the Ottoman Empire. While inter-denominational hostilities had at times characterized interactions between various sectarian communities living in those geographic areas, the framing of politics and political life based on sectarian allegiance was an

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[1] On the important role of "puzzles" and "puzzlement" in opening up vistas for cumulative research and knowledge in the international relations subfield of political science, see James N. Rosenau, *Scientific Study of Foreign Policy*, Revised Edition (London: Frances Pinter, 1980), especially Chapter 2 "Games International Relations Scholars Play," and Chapter 9 "Puzzlement in Foreign Policy."

'unintended consequence'[2] of the integration project of the modern state. Therefore, an analysis of how sectarianism compounded, and continues to compound, the rise of a rational state in Iraq ultimately serves as a heuristic device to shed light on the process of state-making in this country.

Compared to the vast literature on political sectarianism, or "confessionalism," in Lebanon, very little analytical political science, social science or historical research has addressed the question and processes of sectarianism in Iraq. Four research questions seem to be highly pertinent in this regard: What are the conditions that helped propel sectarianism into such a prominent place in the process of state-making in Iraq? What factors help explain the survival of sectarianism in Iraq despite the existence of a strong secular intelligentsia and a highly educated populace? How did sectarianism shape the contours of political life and influence state-society relationships in Iraq? To what extent did sectarianism facilitate or impede the evolution of modern state institutions in Iraq?

II.   Case Study as a Comparative Strategy

"'Our young friend seems to be getting into deep waters,' said [Sherlock] Holmes, thoughtfully, as he finished the letter. 'The case certainly presents more features of interest and more possibility of development than I had originally thought. I should be none the worse for a quiet, peaceful day in the country, and I am inclined to run down this afternoon and test one or two theories which I have formed.'"

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of the Solitary Cyclist,"
The Complete Sherlock Holmes

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[2] The law of "unintended consequences" refers to the unanticipated effects of the actions of individuals, collectivities, organizations and governments. The concept was popularized in 1936 by American sociologist Robert K. Merton in his "The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 1, Issue 6 (December 1936): pp. 894-904. The "security dilemma," which manifests itself in a chain of actions-reactions over security concerns that lead to a spiraling arms race, and possibly war, is one example of unintended consequences. See Bruce Russett, *The Prisoners of Insecurity: Nuclear Deterrence, the Arms Race and Arms Control* (New York, NY: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1983). Although the term "unintended consequences" is mostly used to denote negative and perverse effects of certain actions, unanticipated consequences of actions need not be always disadvantageous or unfavorable. Free-market economists would characterize Adam Smith's concept of "invisible hand" as a positive unintended consequence. Smith argued that the individuals' self-interested pursuit of profit ends up being in the public interest. See his 1776 magnum opus *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, edited by R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

By seeking to answer how and why questions about the phenomenon of sectarianism in the context of Iraq, this research falls within the qualitative case study mode of inquiry. According to John Gerring, a case study is "*an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units. A unit connotes a spatially bounded phenomenon – e.g., a nation-state, revolution, political party, election, or person – observed at a single point in time or over some delimited period of time.*"[3] Notwithstanding its utility in shedding light on complex social phenomena,[4] case study research is not without its limitations. Primarily, critics have been skeptical about the generalizability of the results of case study research beyond the specific case or country under examination. This has led some to assault case study research as having "no scientific value," thus dismissing it as unsuitable for the development of cumulative epistemic theoretical knowledge.[5] In a similar vein, case study research has been criticized as being "essentially intuitive, primitive, and unmanageable."[6]

Nevertheless, a host of social science research methodology writers have shown that this disdain for the knowledge claims of case studies stems largely from misunderstandings about case study research.[7] As Flyvbjerg has aptly pointed out, the case study mode of inquiry "produces the type of context-dependent knowledge that research on learning shows to be necessary to allow people to develop from rule-based beginners to virtuoso experts."[8] In the light of this, I would argue that case study research provides an appropriate approach for investigating, and revealing rich insights on, the interrelations between primordial sectarian affiliations and state-making and nation-building in Iraq. The findings of this case study can be taken up by future researchers and policy practitioners to engage in relevant applications and draw analytic generalizations in other contexts, particularly in the Arab East. Identity problems and their relation to the making of nation and state in Iraq discussed in this case

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[3] John Gerring, "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for," American Political Science Review, Vol. 98, No. 2 (May 2004): p. 342; italics in original.
[4] See Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 4th Edition (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2008); and Arch G. Woodside, *Case Study Research: Theory. Methods. Practice* (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2010).
[5] Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research* (Chicago, IL: Rand McNally, 1966): p. 6.
[6] Mathew Miles, "Qualitative data as an attractive nuisance: The problem of analysis," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 24 (1979): p. 597.
[7] Bent Flyvbjerg, "Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research," *Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (April 2006): pp. 219-245; and Robert K. Yin, "The Case Study Crisis: Some Answers," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (March 1981): pp. 58-65.
[8] Flyvbjerg, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

study are common to other cases in the Middle East and beyond. The topic is not normally accessible to social scientists, mainly due to the continued fragility of the security situation in Iraq. As such, a qualitative case study of the interaction between sectarianism and the making of nation and state in modern Iraq serves purposes that can be described as "revelatory" in the sense articulated by Robert K. Yin.[9]

Still, to address some of the challenging and most serious questions marshaled by the critics this study applies triangulation techniques which are often used by social scientists to overcome the limitations of the case study approach.[10] Triangulation affords researchers a "more detailed and balanced picture of the situation."[11] The study uses triangulation techniques identified by Norman K. Denzin. It adopts data triangulation through the use of multiple types of sources of information and evidence – namely, primary and secondary sources, interviews, field work and close first-hand observation of politics and society in Iraq – as well as theoretical triangulation through the use of multiple theoretical and conceptual perspectives to guide analysis and interpret the data.[12] While primordialism provides the general theoretical framework guiding this study, other conceptual and theoretical categories, such as political elites, masked forms of resistance or hidden transcripts, and discourse analysis, have also been employed to enrich the overall theoretical framework. As James F. Hatley argues, theoretical and conceptual frameworks help infuse meaning into the descriptions provided by social science researchers.[13]

As a case study, this foray of qualitative research is associated with the comparative strand of social science.[14] By opting for an investigative stance anchored in qualitative methods of

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[9] Robert K. Yin, *Applications of Case Study Research* (Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications Inc., 2012): p. 49.
[10] Wendy K. Olsen, "Triangulation in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Method Can Really Be Mixed," in Martin Holborn, ed., *Developments in Sociology* (Ormskirk: Causeway Press, 2004): pp. 103-121.
[11] Herbert Altrichter, Allan Feldman, Peter Posch and Bridget Somekh, *Teachers Investigate Their Work: An Introduction to Action Research across the Professions* (London: Routledge, 2008): p. 147.
[12] Norman K. Denzin, *The Research Act in Sociology: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods* (London: Butterworth, 1970).
[13] James F. Hatley, "Case studies in organizational research," in Catherine Cassell and Gillian Symon, eds., *Qualitative methods in organizational research: A practical guide* (London: Sage, 1994): pp. 209-229.
[14] On the nature of case studies, their uses in and importance for the cumulation of knowledge in comparative research, see Charles Ragin, *The Comparative Method* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1987); and Charles Ragin and Howard Becker, *What Is a Case?* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992). See also Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), esp. Chapter 2 "Descriptive Inference," which devotes a special section for "Comparative Case Studies." In fact, King, Keohane and Verba's book makes a strong argument for qualitative research, while at the same time showing that the same logic of inference underpins quantitative and qualitative research designs.

inquiry, this study is from the outset methodologically committed. Such a methodological decision helps demarcate the parameters of the inquiry and the methods to be employed. In addressing the question of "why should a scientist, in particular a behavioral or social scientist, take any interest in these [philosophical] questions," Alexander Rosenberg argues that,

> "Though the sciences cannot answer philosophical questions, individual scientists have to take sides on the right answers to them. The sides scientists take on answers to philosophical questions determine the questions they do address as answerable by science and the methods they employ to answer them … Without a well-established theory to guide inquiry, every choice of a research question to address and every choice of method to tackle it is implicitly or explicitly a gamble with unknown odds."[15]

By virtue of highlighting verisimilitudes, case studies can contribute both to parsimonious causal inferences[16] or positivist analyses[17] and to interpretive or hermeneutic analyses of

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[15] Alexander Rosenberg, *Philosophy of Social Science* (Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1995): pp. 3-4.

[16] For a thorough discussion of the notion of "parsimony" in the social sciences, see Elliot Sober, *Reconstructing the Past: Parsimony, Evolution and Inference* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988). For a discussion of "causal inference," see Paul W. Holland, "Statistical and Causal Inference," *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, Vol. 81, No. 396 (December 1986): pp. 945-960.

[17] The positivist (sometimes also referred to as "naturalist" or "scientific") model of political inquiry seeks to structure political science in terms of the methodological principles of the natural sciences in order to establish causal sequences and nomothetic generalizations. Positivism's quest for purely nomological, ahistorical and acultural social sciences, is inspired by David Hume's account of causation as the operation of empirical laws. By reducing the logic of social inquiry to a *mathesis universalis*, the various strains of positivism treat social phenomena as having objective properties. For a probing exploration into the positivist model, see J. Donald Moon, "The Logic of Political Inquiry: A Synthesis of Opposed Perspectives," in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science*, Volume I, *Political Science: Scope and Theory* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1961); Carl Hempel, *Philosophy of Natural Science* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966); Carl Hempel, *Aspects of Scientific Explanation* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1965); and Richard Rudner, *The Philosophy of Social Science* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966). For philosophical excurses in support of this approach, which regards explanations of all phenomena – whether physical or social – as fundamentally of the same logical structure, see David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding: A Letter from a Gentleman to His Friend in Edinburgh* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1977); David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, edited by David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University Press of the Pacific, 2002), especially Book 6, "On the Logic of the Moral Sciences;" and Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, translated by Sarah A. Solovay and John H. Mueller, edited by George E. G. Catlin (New York, NY: Free Press, 1965).

social and political phenomena.[18] According to Harry Eckstein, the comparative approach involves the examination of a variety of cases along similar lines. A primary objective of comparative studies is to identify and interpret numerous measures of the same variables for and patterns of variation over different entities.[19] Comparative analysis need not be conducted only across space, that is, "synchronic comparisons." It is equally valid to conduct a comparative analysis on the same entity across multiple points of time or a continuum of different time points. These comparisons are known as "diachronic comparisons."[20] On the basis of the resulting comparative judgments and insights, it would be possible to draw inferences and arrive at general conclusions regarding the properties of social, historical, political and other phenomena. The identification of cross-entity similarities or regularities and differences or variations will inform social scientific explanation and allow direct

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[18] See Ann Chih Lin, "Bridging Positivist and Interpretivist Approaches to Qualitative Methods," *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Spring 1998): 162-180. It should be noted that in the light of the hegemonic dominance of positivism as a methodological approach informing research in the various sub-disciplines of contemporary social science, especially in North America, recourse to interpretivism or hermeneutics may seem methodologically unorthodox and even 'heretical.' But interpretive social science is a tradition that goes back to the 19th century. R. G. Collingwood traces its genealogy and provides a cogent defense of its methodological claims in his *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946). Interpretivism goes beyond merely providing parsimonious causal inferences that attempt to explain political phenomena. It draws a distinction between the nature of the knowledge of social phenomena and the nature of the knowledge of natural or physical phenomena. As such, it is ensconced within the broader agenda of securing a space for the human and social sciences as distinct from that of the natural sciences. This agenda proceeds from recognition that whereas nature is subject to causal explanation, social phenomena and human experience in general are only amenable to interpretive understanding. As Alexander Rosenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 19, observes, "Unlike the natural sciences, which aim at causal theories that enable us to predict and control, the social sciences seek to explain behavior by rendering it intelligible. They uncover its meaning, or significance, by interpreting what people do." For an in-depth discussion of the distinction between the nature of knowledge of social phenomena and that of natural phenomena and its philosophical and methodological implications, see Peter Winch, *The Idea of a Social Science and Its Relation to Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958).

[19] See Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby (eds.), *Strategies of Inquiry* (London: Addison-Wesley, 1975): pp. 79-137.

[20] The literature on the comparative method is abundant. For examples see: Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65, No. 3 (September 1971): pp. 682-693; Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (April 1980): pp. 174-197; David Klingman, "Temporal and Spatial Diffusion in the Comparative Analysis of Social Change," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (March 1980): pp. 123-137; Charles C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; and London: University of California Press, 1987); David Collier, "The Comparative Method," in Ada W. Finifer, ed., *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II* (Washington, DC: American Political Science Association, 1993): pp. 105-119; and David Collier and James E. Mahon, "Conceptual 'Stretching' Revisited: Alternative Views of Categories in Comparative Analysis," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, No. 4 (December 1993): pp. 845-855. For a more recent and up-to-date compilation of insights into comparative analysis, see James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). See also Evan Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 99, No. 3 (August 2005): 435-452.

analysis of social and political processes,[21] thus paving the way for investigating analogous phenomena in other settings and/or time frames.

Therefore, on a broader disciplinary level, an investigation of the role of sectarianism in shaping the trajectory of the making of the nation-state in Iraq is obviously ensconced in the project of expanding the range and scope of social scientific applications of the nation-building, state-formation and primordialism lines of analysis. By contributing to the efforts of bringing out similarities and contrasts across different national contexts, this study seeks to both draw upon and contribute to the wealth of insights into the patterns of nation-building and state-formation in the developing world in general.

III.   In Search of a Method

> "Pray that the road is long.
> That the summer mornings are many, when,
> With such pleasure, with such joy
> you will enter ports seen for the first time;
> stop at Phoenician markets,
> and purchase fine merchandise,
> mother-of-pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
> and sensual perfumes of all kinds,
> as many sensual perfumes as you can;
> visit many Egyptian cities,
> to learn and learn from scholars."

> Constantine Cavafy (1863-1933), "Ithaca,"
> translated by Rae Dalven

This research project relied on a number of distinct forms of data collection and resources. Primordial sectarian attachments and how they shaped and continue to shape the political system in Iraq have not been studied extensively by political scientists, sociologists and historians. Secondary sources in the form of books and journal articles on political sectarianism in Iraq are scarce. There has been no solid, systematic theoretical or historical study that addresses the relationship between sectarianism and nation-building or state-

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[21] The philosophical seeds of this line of analysis which seeks to identify corresponding and contrasting patterns lie in the articulation of inductive reasoning by nineteenth-century British philosopher and political economist John Stuart Mill in which he describes five basic methodological modes of induction: the method of agreement, the method of difference, the joint or double method of agreement and difference, the method of residues, and the method of concomitant variations. See Mill, *op. cit.*

formation in contemporary Iraq. Whenever the phenomenon of sectarianism figures in writings on the contemporary history or politics of Iraq, it is dealt with as a peripheral or secondary rather than a central or fundamental subject of research. This difficulty is compounded by the descent of the country into a vicious cycle of chaos, anarchy and violence since the toppling of Saddam. Most archival material in the country has been looted, set on fire by looters, arsonists or armed groups, or moved to secret, safe locations.[22]

However, that does not necessarily mean that investigating the relationship between sectarianism and the making of state and nation in Iraq amounts to a quixotic exercise in futility. Material on sectarianism in Iraq could still be gleaned from a variegated assortment of sources. While not dealing with sectarianism *per se* as a core topic, studies examining aspects of the modern history and politics of Iraq either touch on sectarianism, albeit in a rather non-methodical manner, or are dotted with data that can be useful for a systematic study of sectarianism. This prolific literature was extremely useful for this research in understanding how sectarianism shaped and reconstituted the various stages in the formation of the state in Iraq. As Strauss and Corbin state:

> "The literature can be used as secondary sources of data. Research publications
> often include quoted materials from interviews and field notes and these

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[22] During a reporting assignment for the BBC Arabic Service in southern Iraq in February 2005, I tried to do radio and online features on the famous Bash Aᶜayan Library in Basra, which contains a treasure trove of archival material and records documenting various aspects of the history of the city, especially during the Ottoman period. Ghazwan Faysal Fadhil, the caretaker of the library, told me that all the archives had been moved shortly before the war started in March 2003 to an undisclosed, safe location in order to protect the material from the ravages of war, the depredations of anarchy, and the insatiable appetite of greedy looters. Mr. Fadhil was very nervous, in fact even panicky and frightened, when I met him over tea in the lounge of the fortified Al-Mirbad Hotel in Basra, and refused to take me to where the archives were stashed away. The library's building in the old quarter of Basra was locked and stood as an empty shell when I went to visit it. So, the features never materialized. Interview with Ghazwan Faysal Fadhil, Caretaker of the Bash Aᶜayan Library in Basra, Basra, February 2005. The Iraqi national archives in Baghdad, which contain the national library known as the Books and Documents House (*Dar al-Kutub wa al-Watha'iq*), was a prime target for looters and arsonists during the wave of anarchy and lawlessness that gripped major Iraqi cities in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Saddam. The sacking of the library began on April 11, 2003, and continued for three days during which American soldiers refused to intervene, telling library staff who requested their protection: "We are soldiers, not policemen," or "our orders do not extend to protecting this [building]." In an interview to *The Nation*, library director Dr. Saad Eskandar estimated that over these days as many as "60 percent of the Ottoman and Royal Hashemite era documents were lost as well as the bulk of the Ba'ath era documents… [and] approximately 25 percent of the book collections were looted or burned." (R.H. Lossin, "Iraq's Ruined Library Soldiers On," *The Nation*, April 09, 2008; available at: http://www.thenation.com/doc/20080421/lossin; accessed on Monday, November 16, 2009). A program aired on April 4, 2008 by *Al-Rafidain* satellite TV station, the mouthpiece of the Sunni Muslim Scholars Association in Iraq (*Hay'at ᶜUlama' al-Muslimin fi al-ᶜIraq*), which is vehemently opposed to the US occupation and the post-Saddam political order, reported that the national library, which was re-opened in July 2004, lost around 25 percent of its stocks during the April 2003 wave of looting, whereas the archival material lost some 80 percent of the documents from the republican period.

quotations can be used as secondary sources of data for your own purposes. The publications may also include descriptive materials concerning events, actions, settings, and actors' perspectives, that can be used as data using the methods described."[23]

The genre of political memoirs provides students of modern Iraqi history and politics with an indispensable source of primary data. A significant number of Iraqi politicians and political activists have produced a voluminous amount of literature in the form of political memoirs. It is true that these writings are open to criticism for their bias, as their authors usually aspire not only to record facts and provide personal accounts but also to vindicate their political careers.[24] Notwithstanding these shortcomings, political memoirs still provide crucial windows into different episodes in the historical trajectory of nation-building and state-making in Iraq. Data culled from memoirs of the members of the political elite were complemented with structured and non-structured interviews conducted with decision makers, academic experts, clergymen, representatives of various communities, political party officials, and other influential or informed individuals.

Online material provided excellent sources of news and other material and information for this research. The spectrum of online resources is not limited to parallel web editions of print publications. There is an abundance of Iraqi websites where documents, news updates, press releases, policy analyses, leaders' statements, audio-visual material, and other archived information about the parties are posted. The massive amount of information provided by these online sources presents the researcher with serious challenges. Filtering mechanisms were necessary to reduce the information overload, which exerts immense pressure on researchers. Utilizing online material for rigorous academic research purposes is fraught with other more momentous challenges. It is sometimes difficult to source the published

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[23] Anselm C. Strauss, and Juliet M. Corbin, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques* (London: Sage Publications, 1990): p. 52.

[24] There is a growing literature on the politicians' use of autobiographies and memoirs to justify their deeds and vindicate their careers. A good analytical study is George W. Egerton's "The Lloyd George *War Memoirs*: A Study in the Politics of Memory," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (March 1988): pp. 55-94. More recently, some Iranian authors argued that Iranian Diaspora women's memoirs are "complicit" in superpower efforts to "build a case for military attack or "regime change" in Iran." See Niki Akhavan, Golbarg Bashi, Mana Kia and Sima Shakhsari, "A Genre in the Service of Empire: An Iranian Feminist Critique of Diasporic Memoirs," *ZNet* (Internet Publication), February 2, 2007; http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?itemid=12010; accessed on Saturday, March 01, 2008. See also Hamid Dabashi, "Native informers and the making of the American empire," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, Issue Number 797 (1-7 June 2006), Internet Edition; http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2006/797/special.htm; accessed on Saturday, March 01, 2008.

information and distinguish between the accurate and the inaccurate, the valid and the invalid. The fact that many of the libel, slander and defamation laws regulating traditional print and broadcast media do not regulate the Internet has allowed cyberspace to become an arena of personal attacks, vilification and what can be characterized as 'combative exchanges' between political adversaries. Some of the published material might be motivated by malicious intentions aimed to denigrate, malign and disparage political opponents, both individuals and groups, and/or ethnic, religious or tribal communities.

The use of websites as cyber platforms for poisonous attacks against political opponents or faith and ethnic communities takes on acute proportions with websites focusing on Iraq, where outrageous, and even distasteful, attacks on individuals, political groups, and communities might figure as a common feature. The current wide use of bitter and acrid personal attacks, mudslinging, mutual recriminations and visceral criticism on Internet resources focusing on Iraq reflects a deeply rooted phenomenon on the Iraqi political scene. Contemporary political discourse in Iraq has always been colored by a revolting 'rhetoric of repugnance.' In an analytical article on the crisis of the opposition to the regime of Saddam Hussein, I pointed out that,

> "The rhetoric of opposition in Iraq has always been uncompromising, but for the most part vacuous. The use of rhetoric has become a substitute for action. The absence of channels of dialogue has only compounded the difficulties. In some cases, reasoned debate has given way to obfuscation. Political debate often leads opposition groups to turn against each other with accusations of treason, betrayal and complicity in the regime's plots and conspiracies. This venomous atmosphere has led many activists to withdraw and watch developments from a distance, partly to avoid tarnishing their prestige and sullying their names."[25]

Consequently, sourcing online information was problematic and challenging. This information was evaluated in terms of quality and screened for reliability. The content of the material was subjected to a number of credibility tests such as checking the credentials of their authors, the availability of evidence of quality control by the publishing websites (such as in the case of the websites of established and credible institutions and media outlets), and

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[25] Khalil Osman, "Factionalism and ineffectiveness: the crisis of the Iraqi opposition," *Crescent International* (April 1-15, 2001); http://www.muslimedia.com/archives/special01/irq-oppos.htm; accessed on Sunday, November 9, 2009.

corroboration, whereby information is cross-checked with other sources. Finally, while the material adopting the 'rhetoric of repugnance' might not be useful in understanding the groups and individuals targeted by their trenchant and, sometime, hateful attacks, they would still be illuminating when it comes to understanding the mindsets, attitudes, and prejudices of their authors or the groups they belong to.

The abovementioned sources have been complemented with information gained from non-structured interviews and discussions conducted with decision-makers, academic experts, clergymen, representatives of various communities, political party officials, and other influential or informed individuals inside Iraq and abroad. Iraqi Diaspora communities grew steadily during the long years of Baᶜath Party rule and following the US-led war in 2003. They include countless members who belong to the intelligentsia or activists in the ranks of groups of different political shades in Iraq before they fled the country or were forced into exile. Interviewing some of them, either in person or via email or telephone, certainly enriched the corpus of data collected for the purposes of this research. Opting for non-structured interviews was useful in filling informational gaps identified in secondary and primary sources. It also allowed the researcher to obtain the perspectives of the interlocutors on topics and issues related to this study. In other words, the use of unstructured interviews afforded the researcher the opportunity to ask "a preponderance of open questions, [and] a focus on specific situations and action sequences in the world of the interviewee rather than abstractions and general opinions."[26]

IV. Sectarianism and Its Discontents: Approaches to the Study of Sectarianism in Iraq

> "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?"
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> *The Bible*, Luke 15:4

A comprehensive analytical study of the problem of sectarianism in modern Iraq has yet to be written. Part of the reason for this lacuna is that unlike in the case of Lebanon, where

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[26] Nigel King, "The Qualitative Research Interview," in Catherine Cassell and Gillian Symon, eds., *Qualitative methods in organizational research* (London: Sage, 1994): p. 15.

sectarianism was explicitly institutionalized in the makeup of government and the structure of the state, a subtler form of sectarianism prevailed throughout most of the modern history of Iraq. Sectarianism in Iraq remained a rather implicit affair, hidden behind a thicket of saccharine-coated rhetoric about coexistence, communal harmony and diversity that predominated in the public political discourse. Political correctness reduced the incidence of overt expressions of sectarian prejudices and hatreds. As Iraqi writer Salim Matar observes, Iraqi political elites have latched to the "naïve and superficial belief" that steering clear of "discussions of the linguistic, religious, and sectarian diversity of society would automatically lead to unification."[27] However, this tendency towards obfuscation backfired. It produced a double discourse whereby issues of social diversity became subjects of discussion within, rather than between, communities. "Consequently, each community began to feel deep inside alienated from other communities and from the common Iraqi national identity."[28]

On the rare occasions when sectarian and racial sensitivities and fears seeped into public discourse it was disguised as political polemics mainly through communiqués issued by political parties, partisan literature and statements made by politicians where charges of sectarianism were leveled freely, either explicitly or by innuendo, at political adversaries. The following quote from Ahmad Fawzi, an Iraqi Arab nationalist writer and journalist, accusing ᶜAbd al-Karim Qassim, the first republican ruler of Iraq, of sectarianism is symptomatic of this trend:

> "ᶜAbd al-Karim Qassim has laid the foundations of his rule and consolidated it on the basis of sectarian hatreds. .
> And sectarian hatreds mean absolutely nothing but to metamorphose in the near future into clashes and endless vendettas. … ᶜAbd al-Karim Qassim did not in any way work to eliminate the differences between the sects, but rather deepened and multiplied them many folds."[29]

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[27] Salim Matar, *al-Dhat al-Jarihah: Ishkaliyyat al-Hawiyyah fi al-ᶜIraq wa al-ᶜAlam al-ᶜArabi "al-Sharqmutawassiti"* [The Wounded Self: Identity Problematiques in Iraq and the "Eastern-Mediterranean" Arab World], 2ⁿᵈ Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Mu'assasah al-ᶜArabiyyah lil-Dirasat wa al-Nashr, 2000 [1997]): p. 352.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 351.
[29] Ahmad Fawzi, *Qissat ᶜAbd al-Karim Qassim Kamilah* [The Complete Story of ᶜAbd al-Karim Qassim], 1ˢᵗ Edition (Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt: Dar al-Kitab al-ᶜArabi, March 1963): p. 246.

a. Understating Sectarianism

The tendency to consign the discussion of sectarianism as an obstacle to Iraqi national integration to the realm of taboos has led some social scientists and writers dealing with Iraq to underrate sectarianism in their work. In this vein, Peter Sluglett and Marion Farouk-Sluglett reject the notion of an inter-communal, Sunni-Shi^cite conflict as a driving force of political life in modern Iraq.[30] They contend that the preponderance of Sunni Arabs in the corridors of power stems from their disproportionate demographic concentration in urban centers. "Political power," they aver, "resides where political decisions are taken, in the towns, especially Baghdad, where the population is largely Sunni."[31] The authors acknowledge the fact that the British authorities and the Iraqi monarchist state "did attempt to make use of the conflict potential which such sectarian divisions do contain."[32] But they still assert that the 1958 revolution pushed aside the possibility of sectarian conflict or animus.[33]

This theme is reiterated, albeit with a slightly more polemical accent, in the writings of Reidar Visser, who underscores the existence of an Iraqi national sentiment that cuts across ethno-sectarian categories.[34] Visser denounces what he calls the "sectarian master narrative" which has gained prominence as "the dominant framework for discussions of Iraqi politics in European and North American media, academic and policy-making circles."[35] He weaves threads of conspiracy theory into his explanation for the prevalence of this narrative. He argues that, in some instances, the grafting of the sectarian master narrative on Iraqi politics "is the result of deliberate efforts by Western governments to manipulate and exploit sectarian identities in order to further their own interests." This is compounded, according to Visser, by the workings of "a Western media industry attracted to sectarianism because of the simple, but effective drama it adds to news stories."[36]

In rejecting the utility of sectarianism as an interpretive and analytical tool, Visser seeks to ground his argument in history. On the one hand, he directs attention to "the dearth of

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[30] Peter Sluglett and Marion Farouk-Sluglett, "Some Reflections on the Sunni/Shi'i Question in Iraq," *Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1978): pp. 79-87.
[31] *Ibid.*, p. 80.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 86.
[34] Reidar Visser, "Ethnicity, federalism and the idea of sectarian citizenship in Iraq: a critique," *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 89, Issue 868 (December 2007): pp. 809-822.
[35] Reidar Visser, "The Western Imposition of Sectarianism on Iraqi Politics," *Arab Studies Journal*, Vol. XV, No. 2/Vol. XVI, No. 1 (Fall 2007/Spring 2008): p. 83.
[36] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

sectarian patterns" in the history of the political and administrative components that had emerged in the lands that would later become modern Iraq.[37] Yet, on the other hand, the scope Visser's skepticism of the historical rootedness of sectarianism in Iraq encompasses the modern nation-state period. He maintains "that only rarely did sectarianism transmute into ideology in Baghdad politics after the Iraqi monarchy was formally established in 1921."[38] Relinquishing the sectarian master narrative, Visser takes up the cudgel of what can be described as a 'regionalist master narrative.' He defines regionalism as "an approach that puts geography centre stage. It is a sentiment that brings together citizens of a given territory despite other social factors that may set them apart, like language or religious sect."[39]

Visser's skepticism toward the role played by sectarianism as a factor behind the fragility of integration in Iraq is flawed and lacks internal logical coherence or consistency. Upheavals like the 1991 post-Gulf War rebellion in Iraq signify the elusive quest for national integration in Iraq. Even if one were to accept Visser's dearth-of-sectarian-patterns thesis at face value, that does not logically distract from the possibility of the emergence of such patterns at present or in the future. However, primordial solidarities, such as sectarianism and ethnic loyalties, do not have to manifest themselves in political ideologies or to transmute into a separatist quest in order to be at play in a certain society. Notwithstanding its flaws, Visser's line of reasoning is undoubtedly scholarly sophisticated. This sets it apart from other works underrating sectarianism in Iraq that are out of touch with the explanatory and de-mythologizing élan that lies at the heart of social science. Amid the painful bleakness of the political landscape in Iraq, rife as it is with setbacks and attendant furies and passions, some social science research examining the aftermath of the US-led invasion has drifted into the hallucinogenic haziness of grand conspiracy theory.

Among the group of writers propounding lines of analysis congenial to grand conspiracy theory is by ʿAbd al-Ilah Bilqziz, who argues that the collapse of the Iraqi state in 2003 was not a "side effect" of the toppling of Saddam's regime. It was "rather premeditated and carefully calculated … to put Iraq's entity again on the colonial surgical table: in a

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[37] Reidar Visser, "Historical Myths of a Divided Iraq," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (April 2008): pp. 95-106.
[38] Visser, "The Western Imposition of Sectarianism on Iraqi Politics," *op. cit.*, p. 83.
[39] Reidar Visser, "Introduction," in Reidar Visser and Gareth Stansfield, eds., *An Iraq of Its Regions: Cornerstones of a Federal Democracy?* (London: Hurst & Company, 2007): p. 1.

resumption of earlier surgeries that hacked the Arab world into pieces."[40] The US project in Iraq, Bilqziz avers, consists in a purposeful design aimed at the fragmentation of the country. He makes no systematic effort to provide documented evidence to make his case. Instead, his line of argument gains traction through a host of dogmatic certainties regarding a presumed role of the US-led coalition in deliberately unleashing sectarianism in Iraq. In such a scheme, the slide of Iraq towards an ethno-sectarian inferno is an outcome of a conscious policy on the part of the "occupation forces." Bilqziz believes that, from the very beginning, the coalition engaged in attempts "aimed to drive a wedge between the Shi^cites and the Sunnis of Iraq, and to prepare the conditions for sectarian discord in the country."[41]

The arguments advanced by Bilqziz suffer from the typical pitfalls of conspiracy theory ratiocination. In-depth speculative analyses of conspiracy theorizing have been offered elsewhere.[42] Suffice it to say here that conspiracy theories do not emerge in a social or political vacuum. The rhetorical chestnuts of the anti-war movement are particularly pronounced in the line of reasoning adopted by Bilqziz who does not hesitate to make political statements against the US-led war and its consequences. However, on a higher level of abstraction, mono-causal analysis permeates his reasoning. As such, it falls short of providing an appropriate explanation of a multifaceted phenomenon such as sectarianism. Such socio-political predicaments can never be a byproduct of an accident of history. They are rather expressions of the burden of history. No single event, even a major war of the magnitude of the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq, can solely give rise to them.

b. Rethinking Sectarianism

During the 1990s, the problem of sectarianism in Iraq figured prominently in the discourse of the Iraqi opposition. As observed by an astute specialist on Iraq, the opposition's "discourse, which centered on the problem of sectarianism (*al-ta'ifiya*), broke the 'politics of silence' on

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[40] ^cAbd al-Ilah Bilqziz, "al-Mashru^c al-Mumtani^c: al-Taftit fi al-Ghazwah al-Kolonyaliyyah li al-^cIraq," [The Impossible Project: Fragmentation in the Colonial Onslaught against Iraq], in Muhammad al-Hazzat, *et. al.*, *'Ihtilal al-^cIraq: al-Ahdaf – al-Nata'ij – al-Mustaqbal* [The Occupation of Iraq: The Objectives – The Outcomes – The Future] (Beirut, Lebanon: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahdah al-^cArabiyyah, May 2004): p. 115.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

[42] For examples, see Steve Clarke, "Conspiracy Theories and Conspiracy Theorizing," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (March 2002): pp. 131-150; David Coady, "Conspiracy Theories and Official Stories," *International Journal of Applied Philosophy*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (2003): pp. 197-209; and Brian Keeley, "Of Conspiracy Theories," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 96, No. 3 (March 1999): pp. 109-126.

this subject, making it impossible for any serious Iraqi intellectual to ignore it."[43] With the deceptive wall of silence on sectarianism blasted, the 1990s witnessed a sudden outburst of literature dealing with the problem of sectarianism in Iraq. It was concerns over the virulent and deadly manifestations of sectarian violence during the uprising that prompted ᶜAbd al-Karim al-Uzri, a former finance minister under the monarchy, to put forward an analysis of the political and legal institutionalization of sectarianism in Iraq since the formation of the monarchy. He argues that the Iraqi Basic Law of 1925 set the stage for "an experiment in liberal democratic politics in a backward society divided along sectarian and ethnic lines." The consolidation of this fledgling liberal democracy was stunted under the monarchy by "an army the majority of whose officer corps belongs to a dominant ruling minority overwhelmed by fear for its positions and power."[44]

Uzri adopts a narratological approach through which he highlights the various ways in which sectarianism manifested itself in official forms of discrimination against the Iraqi Shiᶜite community during the monarchist and the republican periods. He puts forward a list of proposals aimed to effect a political transformation necessary to write the epitaph of sectarianism in Iraq. Amid this welter of recommendations the notion of sectarian quotas rears its head. Uzri, for instance, calls for restructuring the armed forces, especially the officer corps, in a manner that reflects the numerical weight of communities in the total population.[45]

Echoing Uzri, Saᶜid al-Samarra'i, an Iraqi Sunni Arab convert to Shiᶜism, sets out to investigate the deep political roots of sectarianism and the expressions of sectarian feelings on both sides of the major Muslim sectarian divide in Iraq, the Sunnis and the Shiᶜites. As in the case of Uzri, it was the suppression of the 1991 Shiᶜite post-Gulf War uprising in southern Iraq that prompted Samarra'i to write on the "sensitive topic" of sectarianism in Iraq.[46] This episode, and the "indifference" to the plight of the Iraqi Shiᶜites shown by non-Shiᶜites,

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[43] Eric Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2005): p. 257.

[44] ᶜAbd al-Karim al-Uzri, *Mushkilat al-Hukum fi al-ᶜIraq: Tahlil li al-ᶜAwamil al-Ta'ifiyyah wa al-ᶜUnsuriyyah fi Taᶜatil al-Hukum al-Dimuqrati fi al-ᶜIraq wa al-Hulul al-Dharuriyyah li al-Taghallub ᶜAlayaha* [The Problem of Political Governance in Iraq: An Analysis of the Role of Sectarian and Racist Factors in Obstructing Democratic Governance in Iraq and the Solutions Necessary to Overcome Them] (London: no publisher, 1991): p. 2.

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 335-342.

[46] Saᶜid al-Samarra'i, *al-Ta'ifiyyah fi al-ᶜIraq: al-Waqᶜi wa al-Hall* [Sectarianism in Iraq: The Fact and the Solution], 1st Edition (London: Mu'assat al-Fajr, 1413 A.H./1993 C.E.): p. 18.

revealed to the author "the intense, if not even violent, sectarianism gripping Sunnis, Iraqis and non-Iraqis alike."[47] Samarra'i, however, does not place the onus of the sectarian attitudes and sentiments in Iraq solely on the Sunni community. He argues that the perpetuation of sectarianism in Iraqi society cannot be disconnected from collective complexes prevalent among both the Shiᶜite and Sunni communities. As socially constructed phenomena, these complexes undermine the possibilities for genuine inter-communal dialogue and interaction. "They inhibit," Samarra'i writes, "the possibility of real cooperation based on trust, friendship, sacrifice, altruism, and all that usually results from the absence of abhorrence, suspicion, and hatreds."[48] But sectarianism in Iraq, according to Samarra'i, is not a mere reflection of thinly concealed communal phobias. It is also politically constructed. For him, it is the utilization of sectarian dispositions and prejudices in the realm of political authority that imputes a new, political meaning on sectarian consciousness and solidarity and, ultimately, gives rise to sectarianism. But the dynamics of sectarianism in Iraq consist of "sectarian action" on the part of Sunni Arab elites ensconced in the sanctums of power, as well as "a reaction on the part of the Shiᶜites in their attempt to change the sectarian course of the Iraqi state."[49]

By the same token, Hassan al-ᶜAlawi argues that a latent sectarianism which privileges Sunni Arabs and discriminates against the Shiᶜites lies at the heart of the modern Iraqi nation-state.[50] He highlights sectarian considerations that preoccupied the Sunni Arab urban notables and political elite and the British mandate authorities as they embarked on the effort of laying the foundations of Hashemite monarchist rule in the 1920s. ᶜAlawi's narrative documents the fact that the Shiᶜites had been given token, and largely toothless, representation in the higher echelons of power. The only exception to this rule is during times of national crises when Shiᶜite politicians assumed positions of meaningful and real political authority only to step down or be removed when the crisis had faded away. Examples cited by ᶜAlawi of prominent Shiᶜite politicians appointed as prime ministers during times of crisis include former interior minister Salih Jabr, who was appointed to implement the unpopular Portsmouth Treaty signed in January 1948.

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[47] *Ibid.*
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 118.
[49] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[50] Hassan al-ᶜAlawi, *al-Shiᶜah wa al-Dawlah al-Qawmiyyah fi al-ᶜIraq* [The Shiᶜites and the Nation-State in Iraq] (Paris: CEDI Press, 1989).

The notion of the historical persecution of the Shiᶜites in the modern Iraqi state also constitutes the starting point for ᶜAdnan al-ᶜUlayyan, who places the political plight of the Shiᶜites in Iraq in the broader context of the plight of Shiᶜites in the Gulf Arab countries and the Arabian Peninsula in general. In grappling with the particular problem of the political marginalization of the Shiᶜites in the modern Iraqi state, ᶜUlayyan emphasizes policies adopted by the British during the early mandate. He argues that by deliberately designing these policies to ensure the "political ostracism" of the Iraqi Shiᶜites, the British sought to punish the community for the role played by Shiᶜite religious and tribal leaders in the 1920 anti-British rebellion. ᶜUlayyan maintains that this policy dovetailed with the anti-Shiᶜite predilections of "a governing elite of Iraqis influenced by the Ottoman racist and sectarian approach."[51] He also pinpoints several factors which limited the Shiᶜites' ability to translate their sacrifices for the sake of independence and the community's numerical weight into political power and influence. These factors include the absence of a unified upper Shiᶜite leadership, the Shiᶜites' idealistic propensities and lack of political realism, and imbalance of material and other resources between the Shiᶜites and the British.[52]

Sectarianism figures among a host of sub-national loyalties and solidarities which, according to Liora Lukitz, have contributed to the amorphousness of Iraqi national identity and the fragility of Iraq as a nation-state from its inception in 1921. Relying mainly on British Foreign Office records, Lukitz sets out to establish that the creation of the modern state in Iraq did not lead to national integration but rather to the imposition of Sunni Arab hegemony over a reluctant population the majority of who was composed of Shiᶜite Arabs and Kurds. She points out that, "The institutionalization of Sunni dominance over the various ethnic, sectarian and linguistic groups … was meant to create a united and homogeneous society."[53] But the nature of the process of forging an Iraqi national identity was a space of contestation among a mosaic of communal identities. This directs attention to growing resentment toward Sunni Arab hegemony among Iraq's other communities, especially the Shiᶜites and the Kurds.[54] Lukitz, moreover, traces the evolution of an educational system meant to promote

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[51] ᶜAdnan al-ᶜUlayyan, *al-Shiᶜah wa al-Dawlah al-ᶜIraqiyyah al-Hadithah (al-Waqiᶜ al-Siyasi wa al-Ijtimaᶜi wa al-Iqtisadi): 1914 Miladiyyah -1958 Miladiyyah* [The Shiᶜites and the Modern Iraqi State (The Political, Social and Economic Reality): 1914 C.E. – 1958 C.E.] (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasat al-ᶜArif li al-Matbuᶜat, 1426 A.H./2005 C.E.): p. 25.

[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 351-360.

[53] Liora Lukitz, *Iraq: The Search for National Identity* (London; and Portland, OR: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 2004 [1995]): p. 14.

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-71.

Pan-Arabism as an element of cultural amalgamation in Iraq or a national doctrine. Hence, pedagogy, which went hand in hand with administrative centralism, sought to promote greater identification with the state by undermining particularistic communal solidarities. However, this "attempt to bring homogeneity through a monolithic education system did not elicit the expected response."[55]

But Salim Matar demonstrates that the tale of sectarianism in Iraq has a more tangled history. He argues that the Ottoman sectarian sedimentations, which ͨUlayyan and other writers have blamed for breeding sectarianism in modern Iraq, were the grist for the writing of Islamic, and Iraqi, history by "Ottomanized" elites (*al-nukhab al-mutaͨathminah*) in the Arab world. The discourse of this hegemonic cultural project sought to deploy the chronicling of past events in the service of the generation of collective memory and nostalgia. Hitched to an Arab nationalist dogma, it also wedded primordial mixtures of sectarianism and nationalism to a "'delusional and morbid' exaggeration of the role of the Persians" in Islamic history, in general, and Iraqi history, in particular.[56] With the formation of the modern Iraqi state, this hegemonic cultural project distorted national identity. It instilled in the Iraqi sub-consciousness what Matar describes as the "Iranian complex" (*al-ͨuqdah al-Iraniyyah*).[57]

The seeds of this analytical accent which maintains that a latent or blatant sectarian streak has imbued political life in Iraq under the monarchy and continued following its overthrow in 1958 can be found in the works of Kedourie,[58] Dann,[59] Khadduri[60] and Kelidar.[61] Those authors propound, throughout their work, the notion that the deep wells of sectarianism prevented the Shiͨites from attaining political power and enjoying privileges commensurate with their numeric demographic weight under the monarchy. These obstacles continued, to various degrees, to shape the configurations of power in the regimes that ruled the country following the revolution of July 14, 1958. This theme resonates in the fast-paced, but

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[55] *Ibid.*, p. 155.

[56] Matar, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

[58] Elie Kedourie, "The Iraqi Shi'is and Their Fate," in Martin Kramer, ed., *Shi'ism, Resistance, and Revolution* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press; and London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1987): pp. 135-157; and Elie Kedouri, "Anti-Shiism in Iraq under the Monarchy," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1988): pp. 249-253.

[59] Uriel Dann, *Iraq under Qassem: A Political History, 1958-1963* (London: Pall Mall, 1969).

[60] Majid Khadduri, *Republican Iraq: A Study in Iraqi Politics since the Revolution of 1958* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

[61] Abbas Kelidar, *The Integration of Modern Iraq* (London: Croom Helm, 1979); and Abbas Kelidar, *Iraq: The Search for Stability* (London: Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1975).

unsparing, historical account of modern Iraq written by Phebe Marr, who documents the steady failure of the modern Iraqi state to fully carry out its integrative unifying functions. Under the monarchy, Marr observes, "[t]he spread of secular education and the extension of administration to the countryside weakened the influence of religious and tribal leaders in the south." However, "Arab *sunnī* dominance continued in all areas of society" and much of the assimilation of Shi^cites and Kurds into the institutions of government "took place at the upper levels of the social and political structure and in the urbanized sector of society."[62] Much upward mobility of Shi^cite Arabs was made "outside of the government than in it."[63] Marr shows that the post-monarchic revolutionary era did not constitute a radical departure from this pattern when it comes to the sectarian bases of political power in Iraq. While the secular Arab nationalist ideology adopted by most republican regimes "made it easier to integrate the Arab *shī^cah* than the Kurds," Sunni Arab predominance in government and the military continued.[64]

Similarly, Charles Tripp provides another narrative of the political history and evolution of the structure of power in contemporary Iraq.[65] His account takes note of the vicissitudes of state-society relationships since the establishment of modern Iraq, where power was concentrated in the hands of a minority group associated with the defunct Ottoman Empire. The subsequent sense of insecurity on the part of the country's rulers bred a system of power based on patronage, which largely excluded underprivileged sects and ethnic groups, and imbued political life with the now all-too-familiar forms of violence. As the regime's social base became increasingly narrow, feelings of exclusion were reinforced on the part of a wider segment of Iraq's sectarian, ethnic and tribal mix.

Exclusion breeds social and political polarization. According to Eric Davis, the polarization embodied in the incomplete process of nation-building and state-formation in modern Iraq signifies the failure of Iraqis "to agree upon a commonly accepted model of political community."[66] Davis argues that efforts to fashion a modern state in Iraq unfolded against the backdrop of a struggle for hegemony between "two competing models of political community, one Iraqist and one Pan-Arab," whereby proponents of each trend attempted to

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[62] Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985): p. 143.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 145.
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 281.
[65] Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002 [2000]).
[66] Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

impose their irreconcilable definitions of the boundaries of political community. For Davis, "the inability of Iraqis to construct a viable model of political community explains to a large degree the country's political and social instability."[67] He shows that in the course of its efforts to appropriate historical memory, the Ba^cath Party sought to marry Sunni Arab and Mesopotamian cultural symbols to a cult of personality.

c. *Historical Approaches*

Having acknowledged the sectarian problem in Iraq, some writers have opted to map out the complex and deeper historical roots of sectarianism in Iraqi society. In this context, Hadi al-^cAlawi and ^cAla'a al-Lami trace the genetic roots of sectarianism in Iraq back to the crystallization of Sunnism and Twelver Shi^cism into well-defined sects and distinct schools of jurisprudence in the seventh century.[68] They adopt what they describe as a "historical critical method" (*al-manhajiyyah al-tarikhiyyah al-naqdiyyah*) to investigate the phenomenon of sectarianism in Iraq.[69] ^cAlawi and Lami provide a fast-paced, cursory account of Sunni-Shi^cite strife in Iraq during the latter parts of the ^cAbbasid period and the Safavid-Ottoman conflict, in addition to citing some manifestations of sectarian frictions since the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958. They are adamant that a solution for the problem of sectarianism lies in the establishment of an unreservedly democratic secular system of government.

For his part, in studying the rich religious plurality of Iraq, Rashid al-Khayyun begins by celebrating diversity and societal harmony as a defining constituent of Iraqi society since

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[67] *Ibid.*

[68] Hadi al-^cAlawi and ^cAla' al-Lami, "al-Dhahirah al-Ta'ifiyyah al-Diniyyah fi al-^cIraq" ["The Phenomenon of Religious Sectarianism in Iraq"], *al-Badeel al-^cIraqi*, no date; available at: http://www.albadeeliraq/showdetails.php?kind=dangerous&id=40; accessed on Friday, December 21, 2007.

[69] It should be pointed out that the methodological approach adopted by ^cAlawi and Lami is in fact inspired by a dogmatic, Marxist materialist conception of history. It should not be confused with the "historical-critical method" that is in vogue in the academic field of Biblical studies, especially the sub-field of exegesis. What the two approaches have in common, though, is the notion of the historicity and human authorship of the Bible and other religious texts. A classic exposition of the historical-critical method in Biblical studies is Edgar Kerntz's *The Historical-Critical Method* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1975). A landmark articulation of the historical materialist approach in the Marxian tradition by a contemporary and friend of both Karl Marx and Frederick Engels can be found in Franz Mehring, *On Historical Materialism* (London: New Park Publications, 1975). Z. A. Jordan surveys the origins and development of dialectical materialism in his *The Evolution of Dialectical Materialism: A Philosophical and Sociological Analysis* (London: Macmillan, 1967).

ancient times.[70] But such salutary assertions are mere well-worn clichés. A more complex, and mixed, picture of communal coexistence transpires as Khayyun proceeds to present a detailed and totalizing account of the varieties of religious experience in Iraq. It is a picture that reveals moments of both communal harmony and virulent forms of religious and sectarian tensions. In fact, Khayyun's narrative of the formative period of several Muslim sectarian communities during the ᶜAbbasid era resonates with the theme of recurrent tensions and conflicts. He provides a cursory overview of the progressive marginalization of the Shiᶜite community in Iraq over the four centuries of Ottoman rule, especially during the Ottoman-Safavid conflict. Political life in the new Iraqi state was not able to retreat from, let alone bring forth a rupture with, this sectarian legacy and cultivate fully non-sectarian ways of politics. Khayyun acknowledges that,

> "Sectarianism was behind momentous events in Iraq, and it deserves nothing short of the appellation of the mother of all abominations. For it crept to the souls and parties, and power remained a white concubine monopolized by one sect."[71]

If Khayyoun's narrative unearths the centuries-old presence of Shiᶜism and Sunnism in Iraq, Yitzhak Nakash embarks on an inquiry into the history of the Iraqi Shi'ite community between the early 19th century and the demise of the monarchy in 1958. He advances and attempts to prove two main arguments. First, Nakash contends that Shiᶜism as a predominant faith for most of Iraq's Arab population is a relatively new phenomenon. "Iraqi Shi'is," he writes, "are by and large recent converts to Shi'ism, a result of a development which took place mainly during the nineteenth century as the bulk of Iraq's Arab nomadic tribes settled down and took up agriculture."[72] Second, Nakash emphasizes the distinct developments related to Iraqi Shiᶜites which set them apart from their coreligionists in neighboring Iran. Nakash highlights a crucial series of events that facilitated the conversion of nomadic Arab tribes into Shiᶜism, including reforms leading to the settlement of tribes, tribal migration towards the vicinities of the shrine cities of Karbala and Najaf engendered by ecological changes due to the construction of the Hindiyyah canal in the late 18th century, the depredations and fears caused by Wahhabi military incursions, and missionary activities

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[70] See Rashid al-Khayyun, *al-Adyan wa al-Madhahib fi al-ᶜIraq* [Religions and Religious Schools of Thought in Iraq], 2nd Edition (Köln, Germany; and Baghdad, Iraq: al-Jamal Publications, 2007 [2003]); especially the "Introduction to the First Edition," pp. 9-23.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 315.

[72] Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq*, 2nd Edition (Princeton, NJ; and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003 [1994]): p. 4.

organized by the clergy in the Shi^{c}ite shrine cities. Nakash argues that the conversion process infused the tribes with a more cohesive value system which triggered "a process of Shi'i state formation in southern Iraq, which was aborted following the British occupation in 1917 and the subsequent formation of the Iraqi monarchy in 1921."[73] He points out that new realities emerging out of the establishment of modern Iraq set the stage for coercive and *divide et impera* policies to crush the Shi^{c}ite challenge to the modern state.[74]

The tenor of Nakash's argument regarding an antagonistic relationship between the Shi^{c}ites and the state in both Ottoman and modern Iraq is sound. It requires a leap of faith, however, to accept his parallel contention that the emergence of a unified religious denomination and webs of alliances between the Shi^{c}ite clergy and the tribal chiefs amounted to a coherent impetus towards the formation of a Shi^{c}ite polity prior to the establishment of modern Iraq. Moreover, notwithstanding the freshness and originality of his book, by locating the starting point of modern Shi^{c}ism in Iraq in the nineteenth century, Nakash lapses into curious obliviousness to the deeper historical roots of Shi^{c}ism in Iraq. He is singularly oblivious to how the historical development of Shi^{c}ism, and, in turn, the Sunni-Shi^{c}ite rift, has been inextricably linked to Iraq.

Another work which sheds light on the social and historical roots of sectarianism in Iraq is Ali al-Wardi's monumental multi-volume work, *Lamahat Ijtima^{c}iyyah min Tarikh al-^{c}Iraq al-Hadith* [Social Glimpses from the History of Modern Iraq]. Wardi is not just a historian simply concerned with constructing a historical narrative, but rather a relentlessly sociological writer. He is at his best when he delves into a systematic analysis of the social pathologies of Iraqis, drawing inspirations from Ibn Khaldun, the Muslim world's greatest

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[73] *Ibid.*, p. 4.
[74] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

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social historian and philosopher of history.[75] From his historical-sociological perspective, Wardi highlights the historical rootedness of sectarian strife in Iraq. He contextualizes sectarian self-consciousness within the historical vicissitudes of sectarian conflict. "We must not forget," Wardi admonishes his readers,

> "that sectarian conflict had existed in Iraq since the early Islamic period. During the ᶜAbbasid era, Baghdad used to witness battles between the Sunni and Shiᶜite quarters in which many lives would be lost, houses and markets would be burnt down, and the sacred shrines would be desecrated."[76]

Exacerbating this discordant bent that is fraught with conflict potentials is the tribal structure of Iraqi society. Nomadic tribalism infused into Iraqi society a value system that celebrates contradictory values such as chivalry and waging incursions against other tribes, generosity towards guests and pillage and plunder. But the prevalence of tribal solidarity contrasted sharply with the expansion and consolidation of central authority. Seen from Wardi's perspective, the atomistic qualities, potentialities and propensities of Iraqi society are accentuated. However, tribal and sectarian solidarities shared the same essence. Wardi affirms that,

> "… they are the two sides of the same coin. Sectarianism is not a religion but rather a kind of a tribal allegiance to a sect or a certain person. When a sectarian individual latches in a bigoted manner to his sect, he does not care about the ethical or spiritual principles that the sect embodies, for this is beyond his thinking. All that he cares about is the loyalty to fellow members of his group and

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[75] Abu Zayd ᶜAbd al-Rahman bin Muhammad Ibn Khaldun [d. 808 A.H./1406 C.E.] is probably the most notable Muslim figure in the fields of history and sociology in the classical period. His main work falls in the category of "universal history" which prevailed in the classical Muslim period. This 7-volume book is entitled *Kitab al-ᶜIbar wa Diwan al-Mubtada' wa al-Khabar fi Ayyam al-ᶜArab wa al-ᶜAjam wa al-Barbar wa man ᶜAsarahum min Dhawi al-Sultan al-Akbar* [The Book of Morals and the Record of Beginnings and Reports from the Days of Arabs, Persians and Berbers and Their Contemporaries Who Possess Great Authority] (Cairo, Egypt; and Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kitab al-Misri and Dar al-Kitab al-Lubnani, 1420 A.H./1999 C.E.). The introduction to this book, *al-Muqaddima*, is considered as Ibn Khaldun's magnum opus. In it, the author provides deep insights into the dynamics of the rise and fall of kingdoms and civilizations. See, Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, translated by Franz Rosenthal, Vols. 1-3 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967). There are many treatments dealing with various aspects of the life and work of Ibn Khaldun. For examples, consult Mahdi Muhsin, *Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History: A Study in the Philosophic Foundation of the Science of Culture* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1957); Mahmoud Rabi', *The Political Theory of Ibn Khaldun* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1967); and Lawrence David, ed., *Ibn Khaldun and Islamic Ideology* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1984).

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

the enmity towards others, both of which are inspired by bigotry. He, in other words, looks at his sect in the same manner that the Bedouin looks at his tribe."[77]

Given its stress on the atomistic tendencies in Iraqi society, it is not surprising that images of communal tension, conflict, discord and antagonism permeate the work of Wardi. In the fragmented social order of Iraq, tribe is pitted against another tribe, tribe against urban centers, tribe against central government, city against city, town against town, city quarter against city quarter, and sect against sect.

In contrast to Wardi's approach, which emphasizes vertical divisions such as tribal and sectarian affiliations, Hanna Batatu zeroes in on horizontal, class-structured divisions. In his classical tome on modern Iraqi history, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*,[78] Batatu, a historian in the Marxian tradition, employs class analysis to show how the social structure of Iraq, laden as it is with sectarian, ethnic, tribal, regional and other primordial overtones, undermined and impeded efforts aimed at national consolidation. The forging of an Iraqi national community, according to Batatu,

> "was not only contingent upon the integration of the Shīʿīs into the body politic or the firm fastening of Shīʿīs and Sunnīs to one another, the voluntary unifying of their wills – even their intermarrying – but also upon the successful resolution of another historic conflict which lay at the very basis of many of the divisions bedeviling Iraqi society: the twofold conflict between the tribes and the riverine cities, and among the tribes themselves over the food-producing flatlands of the Tigris and Euphrates."[79]

The fragmented class structure of power became a source of uncertainty as it was plagued with episodic alliance building. Batatu demonstrates how the efforts to fashion a more consolidated political structure during the early decades of the monarchy were shaped by the

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[77] Ali al-Wardi, *Lamahat Ijtimaᶜiyyah min Tarikh al-ᶜIraq al-Hadith* [Social Glimpses from the History of Modern Iraq], Vol. 2 (Qum, Iran: al-Maktabah al-Haydariyyah, 1378-1379 S.H. [Solar Hijri Calendar]): p. 4.

[78] Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of Its Communists, Baʿthists and Free Officers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978).

[79] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

struggle "for power, prestige, and property" between the various socially dominant classes and status groups.[80]

In addition to analyzing the state of affairs and interactions at the upper echelons of authority, Batatu's monumental work also deals with developments underneath the superstructure of political and social power, namely the formation of the Communist Party of Iraq, the Ba'ath Party and the Free Officers who overthrew the monarchy in 1958. In the course of this socio-historical *tour de force*, the sweep and compass of Batatu's narrative offers useful glimpses into the progressive descent of successive ruling groups between 1963 and the mid-1970s down the slippery slope of sectarianism laden with regional, localistic and tribal overtones. Batatu notes that,

> "… there is no getting around the fact that the most advantaged – at least insofar as the informal functioning of the ruling system is concerned – have been the middle class families who live in the Arab Sunnī northwestern provincial towns, that is, the families that have since 1963 provided the principal recruiting ground of the decision makers or the holders of positions of responsibility in the government, the army, the bureaucracy, and the Ba'th party machine."[81]

Batatu's analysis is doubtless multi-dimensional and avoids the pitfalls of oversimplification. However, by accentuating the socioeconomic and class dynamics of Iraqi politics, he tends to stress class variables and their correlates in his explanation of differential relationships of social groups and political elites. While he recognizes the existence and dynamics of entrenched ethnic, tribal and sectarian ties in impeding national consolidation in Iraq, he is reluctant to take predisposition-based polarization along these primordial lines seriously into account. In anchoring his meta-narrative of historical change and development in Iraq in categories of social classes and status groups, Batatu's analysis encounters serious difficulties in determining the defining characteristics of other social forces and political agents at work. By privileging class and status as determinants of social stratification, class analysis loses sight of communal action and identity formation.

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[80] *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.
[81] *Ibid.*, p. 1133.

Interest in constructing a historical portrait of the story of sectarianism in Iraq has lured some Iraqi authors of late. Abd al-Khaliq Hussein provides a fast-paced and accessible historical account of the Sunni-Shiᶜite rift in Iraq from its primordial origins in the early history of Islam down through the centuries to the present days. He narrates how the blend of ostensibly secular, but totalitarian, Arab nationalism and Sunni Arab prejudice contributed to the ever-deepening sectarian cataclysm in Iraq. Hussein analyzes the fluctuating trajectory of sectarianism in Iraq in tandem with changes at the uppermost rungs of government until its "persistent skyrocketing rise under the rule of the Saddamist Baᶜath."[82] His account attempts to strike a balance by exploring how stands taken by Shiᶜite religious authorities unwittingly contributed to the under-representation of the Shiᶜites in government and the civil service. In this context, he highlights the Shiᶜite religious authorities' firm stand against the British invasion of Iraq during World War I, their opposition to the infant Iraqi state, and their hostility toward Iraq's first military ruler in the republican period, General Abd al-Karim Qassim. In an unorthodox twist, Hussein argues that these antagonistic stands *vis-à-vis* the establishment contributed to the political disenfranchisement and marginalization of the Shiᶜites as they dented their chances of getting a fair share of power resources.[83] Hussein's foray into the conflict potential of sectarianism in Iraq does not lose sight of attempts and proposals to address the malady of sectarianism.[84]

Proposals put forward to address sectarianism since the formation of the modern Iraqi nation state are cataloged, with lengthy commentaries, by Salah Abd al-Razzaq.[85] But Abd al-Razzaq's chronological documentary survey is shallow in terms of providing speculative analysis to diagnose the ills that had impeded the success of these proposals in extirpating the grim realities of sectarianism in Iraq. Moreover, the approach adopted by Abd al-Razzaq, an Islamic Daᶜawah Party activist and government official, throbs with a decidedly partisan and apologetic tone. As such, it serves to obfuscate the sense of disenfranchisement that swept the Sunni Arab community in the post-Saddam period.

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[82] Abd al-Khaliq Hussein, *al-Ta'ifiyyah al-Siyasiyyah wa Mushkilat al-Hukum fi al-ᶜIraq* [Political Sectarianism and the Problem of Governance in Iraq], 1ˢᵗ Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Dar Mesopotamia, 2011): p. 15.

[83] *Ibid.*, pp. 103-116.

[84] *Ibid.*, pp. 131-141 and 201-213.

[85] Salah Abd al-Razzaq, *Mashariᶜi Izalat al-Tamyiz al-Ta'ifi fi al-ᶜIraq: Min Mudhakkirat Faysal ila Majlis al-Hukum, 1932-2003* [Proposals to Eliminate Sectarian Discrimination in Iraq: From the Faisal Memorandum to the Governing Council, 1932-2003], 1ˢᵗ Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Muntada al-Maᶜarif, 2010).

d. *Political Geographic Approach*

To be sure, the potential allure of historical research into the relationship between sectarianism and the making of the nation-state in a given setting derives from the nature of the trajectory of state-making and nation-building as a process of becoming. But some researchers have still shifted the focus of analysis from contingent sequential patterns to predetermined geographic givens, without a complete rupture with history. Zoë Preston's examination of the obstacles to national unity in Iraq represents a foray into the terrain of geopolitical factors embedded in the geographical area of Iraq in the immediate aftermath of the First World War, namely the 1920s. The central feature of Preston's argument is that, "Iraq's pluralism, a result of its geographic location and turbulent history, as well as Ottoman practices of religious and ethnic tolerance, severely challenged British-imposed concepts of nation-statehood, citizenship and rigid territorial delimitations."[86] The upshot of this argument is that the fragility of social cohesion in Iraq is structural. It is a function of geographic determinants and the evolution of the relationship between the state and a fractured population espousing complex identities.

Preston draws on the theoretical formulations of twentieth century geographers such as Halford Mackinder, who drew a connection between historical geography and political history, including the process of nation-building.[87] She then sets out to demonstrate "how specific geographies of power at global, regional and local levels fundamentally fashioned the crystallization of the Iraqi State after the First World War."[88] By opting to shift the logic of political inquiry into a geographic framework of analysis, Preston sets herself up, so to speak. Her approach is from the outset exposed to attacks for applying static, deterministic concepts to probe dynamic, human and socio-political phenomena and relationships. It is precisely in this discrepancy between her conceptual framework and the nature of the problem at hand where Preston's approach becomes problematized. In many ways, this is an inherent scale and levels-of-analysis problem. Some aspects of relations between states and, to a lesser extent, between parts of states are amenable to explanation by the physical environment. But the utility of using the physical, geographic environment to grasp the

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[86] Zoë Preston, *The Crystallization of the Iraqi State: Geopolitical Function and Form* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2003): p. 25.
[87] See Halford J. Mackinder, "The Geographical Pivot of History," *Geographical Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (April 1904): pp. 421-437.
[88] Preston, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

essence of the continuities and discontinuities that lie at the heart of primordial solidarities, and how they become embedded in the process of state-making and nation-building in Iraq, is highly doubtful. Trying to bring history into the picture as an auxiliary to geography does not hide the pitfalls of the blatant forms of environmental determinism undergirding Preston's approach. It is not that this approach is wrong outright, but rather that its application as an explanatory tool of nation-building in Iraq is misguided.

e. The Archeology of Repression

The stress on the architecture of total systems implicit in the geographic approach contrasts with the perspective adopted by some Iraqi writers who stress the deep structures of meaning inherent in the conditions and relations of power which make the emergence of a certain problem possible. In this approach, which I characterize as 'archeological,' the problems of sectarianism and other predicaments undermining national identity in Iraq figure as epiphenomena of the crisis of the modern state in Iraq. Here sectarianism is bred and nurtured by the insecurity inherent in authoritarianism. "The contemporary history of Iraq," Maytham al-Janabi tells his readers, "has revealed the destructive peril and great damage to the structure of the state, society and culture inherent in radicalism."[89] Another writer, Karim ᶜAbid, argues that the modern Iraqi state was caught up in a web of ambiguities engendered by the politics of revolutionary parties and their lack of social legitimacy. Coming to power through military coups, the post-monarchical, putschist regimes lacked a popular mandate in their pursuit of transforming society into a collectivity that totalizes and unites.[90]

In the absence of a political culture based on legal rights, social groups were inclined to develop a "bunker mentality." Here, there are no accommodations for inter-communal harmony, but rather a fertile ground for "distancing oneself from, and even being terrified of, the different others."[91] ᶜAbid maintains that "sectarian tendencies do not appear arbitrarily, but rather appear as a result of the monopoly of one sect over power and privilege at the

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[89] Maytham al-Janabi, *al-ᶜIraq wa Rihan al-Mustaqbal* [Iraq and the Stakes of the Future] (Damascus, Syria; and Baghdad, Iraq: al-Mada Publishing Company, 2006): p. 8.

[90] Karim ᶜAbid, *al-Dawlah al-Ma'zumah wa al-ᶜUnf al-Thaqafi: ᶜIraq ma Baᶜada al-Hiqbah al-Thawriyyah wa As'ilat al-Mustaqbal* [The Crisis-Ridden State and Cultural Violence: Post-Revolutionary Iraq and the Questions of the Future] (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Furat, 2002): pp. 17-18; see also pp. 45-46.

[91] *Ibid.*, p. 56.

expense of other sects and groups." For him, a ruling class that is deficient in constitutional legitimacy resorts to "opening the gates to the public of its own sect so that it becomes caught up in its privileges and panic towards others, too. Consequently, this public becomes its first defense barricade."[92] Against the backdrop of this analysis, ᶜAbid pins the rise of the phenomenon of political sectarianism in Iraq squarely on the seizure of power by the Baᶜath party in 1968. In ᶜAbid's portrait of Baᶜath party rule, the atomization of society along ethnic and sectarian lines grew out of the centralization of the state with its attendant marginalization and exclusion of various sectarian and ethnic groups.

Echoing ᶜAbid's argument, Janabi launches an all-out offensive against the repressive bent of the Baᶜath Party rule in Iraq. He argues that that the policies of coercive unification adopted by repressive regimes have inadvertently led to the "destabilization" of national identity in Iraq. From Janabi's perspective,

> "… fragmentation, separatism, schizophrenia, narrow-minded bigotry, disputation, disagreement, in-fighting, disharmony, mutual distrust and other negative expressions are the natural outcome of totalitarian Baᶜathism and Saddamist dictatorship, which tried to make itself the fulcrum of solid unity in Iraq, while in fact it only led to the destruction of the reality of unity."[93]

Accordingly, the sectarian crisis facing Iraq intensified in the context of the political, social and economic changes that resulted from "the extent of destruction caused by totalitarian Baᶜathism and Saddamist dictatorship in the various fields and levels of existence."[94]

The absence of any explicit acknowledgement of the deeper historic roots of sectarianism in Iraq testifies to a glaring lacuna in the line of analysis adopted by ᶜAbid and Janabi. Viewing sectarianism as a by-product of premeditated Baᶜathist state policies designed to protect the regime is guilty of the pitfalls of a static, mono-causal and ahistorical analysis. It is not that the authors' theoretical perspective is anti-historical. In fact, they do not shy away from weaving historical accounts into their arguments. Yet they still attempt to reconstruct the roots of particular symptoms of crisis in the modern Iraqi state, such as sectarianism, by

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[92] *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.
[93] Janabi, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.
[94] *Ibid.*, p. 283.

effectively exiling history from their approach in favor of reducing the richness and multiplicity of factors shaping them into a single factor, *viz.* political repression.

f. The Post-Saddam Order

Countless books have been written to chronicle the sorrows and pains that have visited Iraq since the US-led invasion in 2003. But Ali A. Allawi's *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace* stands out amid this avalanche of publications. It provides a unique insider's perspective on the congeries of international forces, local passions and diverse personalities that converged to create a disastrous situation in post-invasion Iraq. Allawi's account of what went wrong in Iraq, which includes a candid exposition of the murky world of politics in the post-Saddam period, is unusually incisive, straightforward and dispassionate, and especially so given the fact that he held three consecutive cabinet portfolios – trade, defense and finance – in the immediate aftermath of the US-led invasion. Amid the sense of foreboding that pervades his book, he shows that the attendant sectarian mayhem was neither unleashed by the US-led coalition nor emerged in vacuum. Allawi contends that,

> "When the Coalition arrived in Baghdad in 9 April 2003, it found a fractured and brutalized society, presided over by a fearful, heavily armed minority. The post 9/11 jihadi culture that was subsequently to plague Iraq was just beginning to take root. The institutions of the state were moribund; the state exhausted. The ideology that had held Ba'athist rule together had decayed beyond repair."[95]

The picture of pre-invasion Iraq that emerges out of Allawi's book is one of a country on the verge of collapse, home to a society teetering on the precipice of implosion, and ruled by a state sliding down the slippery slope of total failure. Against this backdrop, "the fall of the regime confronted Iraqis with the question of where their true loyalties and identities lay."[96] Allawi blames Ba^cath Party dictatorship for adopting policies that contributed to the hardening of communal ethnic and sectarian identities as well as fuelling long-simmering

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[95] Ali A. Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace* (New Haven, CT; and London: Yale University Press, 2007): p. 16.
[96] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

animosities "and with the removal of the heavy hand of the dictatorship they emerged into the light of day."[97] The conduct of politics along sectarian lines in the post-Saddam period accelerated Iraq's slide towards an ethno-sectarian *cul de sac*.

ᶜAli Hassan al-Rubayᶜi offers a more pointed take on the formal power-sharing arrangements in the post-Saddam era. For him, the toppling of Baᶜath Party rule signifies "nothing but a transition from 'revolutionary' legitimacy to 'sectarian' legitimacy." He contends that "rebuilding the state in Iraq is not being carried out from the vantage point of devising it in accordance with the logic of the nation-state inasmuch as it is subject to the propensity for establishing 'the state of the sects.'"[98] Rubayᶜi suggests that these power-sharing arrangements subvert the essence of democracy and are complicit with a new form of political despotism. Such reproductive capacity for despotism finds its counterpart in a parallel longevity of sectarianism in Iraq. In approaching his topic, Rubayᶜi alludes to the fact that the sectarianism that has seeped into the institutional fabric of the state in post-Saddam Iraq represents a continuation of the sectarian character that has typified the modern Iraqi state since its inception. "Sectarian thinking," he says, "can never be founded on the promotion of rational social relations and is inseparable from the structure of the Iraqi state, manifesting itself in the practices of the successive regimes since its formation."[99] A didactic streak runs through Rubayᶜi's study. He is at pains to highlight the problematic aspects of the sectarian political system in Iraq, especially in its post-Saddam incarnation. He points out that the politics of sectarian mobilization "has wiped out … the feeling of loyalty to the state."[100] In the final analysis, the sectarian system stunted the development of the modern state in Iraq.[101]

The genie of sectarian strife was let loose in this 'state of sects.' Muhammad Madhlum, an Iraqi writer and poet, argues that a deep-seated "sectarian culture" resides *a priori* in the collective memory and psyche of Baghdad and has been shaped by a history of recurrent cycles of sectarian violence in the city since the 3rd century A.H. This culture, according to

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[97] *Ibid.*, p. 133.
[98] ᶜAli Hassan al-Rubayᶜi, "Tahaddiyat Bina' al-Dawlah al-ᶜIraqiyyah: Siraᶜa al-Hawiyyat wa Ma'zaq al-Muhasasah al-Ta'ifiyyah," [Challenges Facing the Building of the Iraqi State: Identity Conflict and the Dilemma of Sectarian Quotas], in Anthony Cordesman, *et. al*., *al-Ihtilal al-Amriki li al-ᶜIraq: al-Mashhad al-Akhir* [The American Occupation of Iraq: The Final Scene] (Beirut, Lebanon: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahdah al-ᶜArabiyyah, August 2007): p. 95.
[99] *Ibid.*, p. 89.
[100] *Ibid.*, p. 98.
[101] *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Madhlum, provided "the inherent and driving structure of political life" in the city.[102] It also nurtured what he terms as "unruly predispositions," which "despotism contributed to pressing deeply inwards," while political parties failed to channel into different directions.[103] It was such pent-up sectarian passions which erupted with a fury following the overthrow of Saddam. "Iraq woke up from the trauma of occupation," says Madhlum, "to find itself in a new geography, that is the geography of sectarianism whose horrifying terrain arose from its slumber, spreading nightmares of a harsh, merciless episode."[104] The ensuing cycle of violence shows

> "… clearly that sectarian thought is historically rooted in Iraq, that no sooner a civil disorder subsides than it reemerges with a more intense resolve and a more violent spin, and that Saddam, the American occupation or the current political class are nothing more than its exploiters, in terms of awakening, toying with or stoking it. A society that has not disposed of the heavy burden and black legacy of a history of civil tumult reinvents that past as a kind of a clandestine activity and an unconscious replication of conflict conditions in ancient Baghdad, instead of having the contemporary city reinvent life from its present rather than its past."[105]

Madhlum speaks of modern Iraq with a sense of grief and disappointment and is of the mind that the communal violence which gripped Iraq in the post-Saddam period is nothing short of an all-out civil war "camouflaging itself with the theses of liberation, jihad or building a new Iraq."[106]

In his outstanding study of the Iraqi insurgency, Ahmed Hashim attributes the root causes of insurgent violence in post-Saddam Iraq to an identity crisis stemming from "the reaction of the Sunni Arab community to the collapse of the regime and of their paramount position in the political configuration of Iraq."[107] The author's exposition of the insurgency details how its narrow social base, the infusion of *jihadist salafist* violence against civilian targets, and the unfolding of the political process in post-Saddam Iraq along ethno-sectarian lines

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[102] Muhammad Madhlum, *al-Fitan al-Baghdadiyyah: Fuqaha' al-Marinz wa Ahl al-Shiqaq* [Baghdadi Civil Discords: The Jurists of the Marines and the People of Disputation] (Damascus, Syria: al-Takwin, 2006): p. 138.
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 139.
[104] *Ibid.*, p. 107.
[105] *Ibid.*, p. 135.
[106] *Ibid.*, p. 116.
[107] Ahmed S. Hashim, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca and New York, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006): p. 18.

combined to exacerbate latent communal prejudices. Foremost among these prejudices is "the traditional disdain" that the two sectarian Muslim communities "hold for each other and their respective rituals."[108] Hashim, moreover, notes that the Sunni Arab identity crisis "has also exacerbated a latent prejudice against the 'unwashed' Shi'a hordes and alien Shi'a forces."[109] He points out that, "This has been compounded by the Sunni Arab view of the Shi'a as either actual or potential fifth columnists for their coreligionists in Iran."[110]

The theme that the Iraqi insurgency stems from the intense aversion of Sunni Arabs in Iraq, and the broader Muslim world, to the rise to power of the Iraqi Shi'ite majority figures to varying degrees in a number of the latest avalanche of books on Iraq. This is one of the core arguments of a recent work by Fouad Ajami, one of the most outspoken advocates of the Bush administration's decision to go to war in Iraq. Within the interstices of his revisionist defense of the neoconservative position over Iraq, Ajami attributes the roots of the insurgency to an irredentist drive on the part of Sunni Arabs who loathe their new status as a minority within a democratic system of government based on the principle of one person/one vote after having formed the backbone of the country's political and military elite. He states: "[T]he insurgents fed off and worked with the anxieties of the Sunni Arabs, and their stubborn belief that Iraq was rightly theirs."[111] Born of this mood of defiance, the insurgency, according to Ajami, has been augmented and transformed by broader anti-Shi'ite phobias from elsewhere in the wider Muslim world. "This proud sense of violation," he observes, "stretched from the embittered towns of the Sunni Triangle in western Iraq to the chat rooms of Arabia and to jihadists as far away from Iraq as North Africa and the Muslim enclaves of Western Europe."[112] There are rather palpable polemical, finger-pointing overtones in Ajami's argument, as no single community solely maintains a monopoly over sectarian phobias and/or grievances, whether real or perceived. His line of analysis glosses over how the insurgency was spurred and boosted by misguided policies, such as the decisions to dissolve the Iraqi Army and to purge Ba'athists from public office or de-Ba'athification.[113]

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[108] *Ibid.*, p. 356.
[109] *Ibid.*, p. 70.
[110] *Ibid.*, p. 356.
[111] Fouad Ajami, *The Foreigner's Gift: The Americans, the Arabs and the Iraqis in Iraq* (New York, London, Toronto, and Sydney: Free Press, 2006): p. 135.
[112] *Ibid.*, p. xiii.
[113] An exposition of how misguided policies helped fuel the insurgency can be found in Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006).

Vali Nasr also subscribes to the notion that the insurgency in Iraq is an expression of a simmering, deeply-engrained, broader sectarian malaise in the Muslim world. The central thesis of his book entitled *The Shia Revival* is premised on a belief in the inevitability of confrontation between the two main branches of Islam; Sunnism and Shi[c]ism.[114] This is a vision that he expresses rather apocalyptically when he declares:

> "As war, democracy, and globalization force the Middle East to open itself up to a number of long-resisted forms of change, conflicts such as the Shia-Sunni rift will become both more frequent and more intense. Before the Middle East can arrive at democracy and prosperity, it will have to settle these conflicts … The overall Sunni-Shia conflict will play a large role in defining the Middle East as a whole and shaping its relations with the outside world."[115]

The centrality of inter-communal conflict imbues Nasr's argument with a quasi-millenarian pessimistic streak and a deterministic quality. However, by emphasizing the potential for inter-communal conflict he loses sight of the possibilities for inter-communal compromise. Projecting the image of an inevitable inter-communal showdown cannot provide a full and accurate portrayal of how inter-communal relations actually played out following the overthrow of Saddam. As Ali Allawi's insider account shows, the intensification of sectarian strife did not rule out the possibility of institutional development and consociational power-sharing arrangements aimed at inter-communal accommodation.

In a departure from Nasr's *a priori* determinism Fanar Haddad propounds an analysis of sectarianism in Iraq based on contextual factors that helped propel the issue of sectarianism onto the public domain in post-Saddam Iraq. Haddad begins his analysis of sectarianism in Iraq on a negative note. He debunks two widespread conceptions of sectarianism in Iraq: the 'Western" view which "inflate[s] the importance of sectarian identity in all things Iraqi" and the Iraqi nationalist tendency to "reduce the relevance of sectarian identity in Iraq to an historical side-note."[116] Instead, Haddad suggests a middle-of-the-road approach that aptly sees sectarian identities as being constantly negotiated. His contextual analysis seeks to

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[114] Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006).
[115] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[116] Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity* (London: Hurst & Company, 2011): pp. 1-2.

reveal how certain events result in the hardening of fluid group sectarian identification and the politicization of sectarianism. In this regard, he investigates the negative impacts of events that turned into "chosen traumas" for Iraqis across the Muslim sectarian divide and, in turn, contributed to the salience of sectarianism in Iraqi society. The post-Gulf War Uprising and the US-led invasion of Iraq nurtured polarized discourse, clashing myth-symbols and competing historical narratives. Haddad analyzes how the opposing sectarian myth-symbols, narratives and discourses figure in popular culture, especially folk poetry, or sectarian discourse 'from below.' Haddad's contextual analysis is indispensable for understanding the moorings of the problem of sectarianism and the hardening of sectarian identity in folk culture and oral lore. However useful Haddad's focus on how sectarian identity is construed in relation to the sectarian 'Other" is, it falls short of shedding light on the interaction between sectarian identity and the state, its official ideology, the structure of its elite and its policies. Absent from Haddad's analysis is an investigation of the competitions for rights, privileges, and the control of available material and symbolic resources between sectarian communities.

V.   Significance and Organization of the Study

"There are thus two interpretations of interpretation, of structure, of sign, of play. The one seeks to decipher, dreams of deciphering a truth or an origin which escapes play and the order of the sign, and which lives the necessity of interpretation as an exile. The other, which is no longer turned toward the origin, affirms play and tries to pass beyond man and humanism, the name of man being the name of that being who, throughout the history of metaphysics or of ontotheology – in other words, throughout his entire history – has dreamed of full presence, the reassuring foundation, the origin and the end of play."

Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*

It is from this review of the literature dealing, whether directly or indirectly, with the sectarian problem in Iraq that the broader significance of this study looms large on the research horizon and forces its way into our consideration. The review highlights the existence of a gap in the literature concerning a full analytical account of the relationship between sectarianism and the making of state and nation in Iraq since the formation of the modern Iraqi nation-state. The reviewed works have left many key aspects of this relationship

unexplored, and indeed neglected and abandoned. This study draws together threads of the above-mentioned studies related to sectarianism in Iraq and attempts to contribute to the body of research on this problem by engaging in a wide-ranging analysis of the relationship between Iraq's two largest Muslim sectarian groups, the Shiʿites and the Sunnis.

While the literature review points to a degree of analytical divergence on the question of sectarianism in Iraq, it also reveals marked convergence on recognizing that the process of nation-building in Iraq has failed to cultivate a new supra-communal national identity cutting across ethno-sectarian divides. The literature informs us that sectarian identities have reasserted themselves despite the growing autonomy and administrative strength of a secular state. A significant number of the works dealing with this issue have focused on the sectarian bases of political power in Iraq. The insights gained from this literature will be used to draw a portrait of the patterns of sectarian inclusion and exclusion in the trajectory of the modern nation-state in Iraq. The insights clearly indicate that these patterns, which privileged Sunni Arabs and marginalized the Shiʿites, worked to harden sectarian feelings. Authoritarianism and brutal repression as means to secure the power and primacy of the state in a deeply divided society like Iraq's undermined inter-communal harmony as it pushed communities to look inwards. I will build on this literature to construct a clear picture of sectarian power relations in modern Iraq. The extant literature provides ample information for charting the rhythms of the political elite's communal stratification in Iraq over time until 2003. This study will update this corpus of information on the association between sectarian affiliation and membership in the higher echelons of power to include the post-2003 period until the formation of the second Nouri al-Maliki cabinet in 2010. The analysis will then proceed to shed the light on how the institutionalization of differential access to the elite through power-sharing arrangements based on membership in ethno-sectarian groups has been contributing to identity conflicts in Iraq in the post-2003 period.

But sectarianism as a socially constructed phenomenon is more than a mere product of power relations. This study will attempt to develop a more complex interpretation of the relationship between sectarianism and the making of nation and state in modern Iraq. There are some hints in the literature on how educational curricula and contending visions of collective identity have contributed to the hardening of sectarian solidarities in Iraq. Lukitz, for instance, sheds light on the early stages in the development of the educational curriculum

under the monarchy and its relation to national identity.[117] On the other hand, while Davis analyzes divergent visions of collective political community,[118] Matar unearths the roots of anti-Iranianism and how it camouflaged anti-Shiᶜism,[119] whereas Haddad examines the clashing myth-symbols across sectarian lines.[120] While drawing on these sources, this study will seek to fill these lacunae by engaging in a critical and serious analysis of the evolution and content of educational curricula as well as the polarized discourses on collective identity along sectarian lines. It will show how educational curricula and polarized discourses have contributed to increasing identification with one's sectarian, and even sub-sectarian, community at the expense of the broader national community.

In melding these analytical threads – elite stratification, educational curricula, and visions of the collective self – together to plot the contours and parameters of sectarianism in Iraq, I also seek to link them to the primordialism line of analysis. The main focus here is to examine and add a new qualitative perspective on the complex interaction between primordial sectarian attachments and the ongoing process of state-making and nation-building in Iraq. It is hoped that by filling in some of the gaps in the literature dealing with sectarianism in Iraq, the findings of this study will constitute an impetus for further research in the future. Looking briefly at the historical past allows me to describe the ways in which interactions between the two communities before the establishment of modern Iraq contributed to the formation of repositories of divergent collective values and memories. This past also shaped the structure of power which favored the Sunni Arab minority following the establishment of the modern nation-state. I attempt to explain why sectarianism persisted in modern Iraq, rendering the formation of the nation-state incomplete. Ultimately, policies designed to strengthen the state, as a homogenizing commonwealth, versus a society that is deeply divided along sectarian and ethnic lines hardened particularistic sectarian and ethnic identities and, in turn, undermined the crystallization of a solid national identity coterminous with the modern nation-state. The analysis also entails an examination of the consociational power-sharing arrangements designed to bridge the sectarian and ethnic divides in the post-Saddam Hussein period. The central theme here is to explore if, how and to what extent the original amorphous sectarian patterns are being transformed by current attempts to draw up a host of institutional

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[117] Lukitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-121.
[118] Davis, *op. cit.*
[119] Matar, *op. cit.*
[120] Haddad, *op. cit.*

arrangements and the emergence of agreed on power-sharing rules and norms between political actors representing various sectarian communities.

In **Chapter 1**, I embark on a theoretical excursus on the social science literature on state-making, nation-building and sectarianism. The chapter consists of a critical review of major theoretical models of and approaches to the process of the formation of state and nation. Most of these lines of analysis do not attempt to address extremely important questions with regard to the relationship between sectarianism and the dynamics of state-making and nation-building. This makes my exploration into the nature of sectarianism as a socially-constructed primordial attachment meaningful not only for the study of the modern nation-state in Iraq, but also for the body of research on the formation of the nation-state. While much can be said about the nuances of sectarianism, I limit my observations to the emergence of sectarianism in the context of the social and political processes set into motion in the Arab East following the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. The introduction of the distinctively modern nation-state system crucially altered the relations of power and brought sectarian groups together in new ways.

In **Chapter 2**, "The Legacy of History," I attempt to portray the historical development of the Sunni-Shiᶜite sectarian rift in Iraq. The starting point of this cursory survey of a centuries-old history is the origin of the rift as a dispute over the succession of Prophet Muhammad. Reconstructing the past is important for understanding the historical context in which the Sunni-Shiᶜite sectarian divide in Iraq developed. The selective focus of the respective communities on certain aspects of this history influences sectarianism as it provides a repository of images about the self and the sectarian 'Other.' I then explore the increasing fragility of cross-communal coalition building as power relations in the process of nation-building in Iraq unfolded. I trace moves by the emergent state to integrate the Shiᶜites into the new polity and the Shiᶜites' efforts to renegotiate their inclusion in a polity characterized by Sunni preponderance of power. The scope of this exploration covers the period from the inception of the state down to the fall of the Baᶜath Party regime. Throughout these decades, the Shiᶜites concentrated their efforts on augmenting their representation in the civil service and state administration. The chapter shows how the failure of these efforts toward inclusion impeded the shift toward an overarching national solidarity and nurtured the resurgence of primordial sectarianism.

In **Chapter 3**, "Elite Makeup and the Politics of Stratification," I set out to examine how sectarianism was enshrined and embedded in the makeup of the country's political and military elite during the monarchic period. The chapter then looks into the increased concentration of power in the hands of rural Sunnis under republican regimes and how it exacerbated the isolation of the state from society. The hegemony of Sunni Arabs came to an end with the US-orchestrated 'regime change' in 2003. The chapter explores the structure of the new elite stratum in which the Shiᶜites enjoyed a significant share of positions at the helm of power in post-Saddam Iraq. It demonstrates how the implementation of de-Baᶜathification measures designed to bar Baᶜathists from holding public office amounted to an exclusionary mechanism restricting the access of Sunni Arabs to power. It also addresses how sectarianism was embedded into the structure of the state institutions and consociatoinal power-sharing arrangements in the post-Saddam political order. The power asymmetries resulting from the institutionalization of sectarianism in the body politic of the state hardened primordial ethno-sectarian affiliations. These solidarities became key determinants of political participation and differential access to power.

The use of education as a homogenizing tool designed to instill an associational solidarity that transcends societal segmentation is dissected in **Chapter 4**, "Education, Resistance and the Reproduction of Primordial Sectarian Identity." By probing the development and content of the educational curricula in the pre- and post-2003 period, I shed light on the failure of education in Iraq to fulfill its grandiose homogenizing promises. The injection of the hegemonic Sunni Arab discourse into the pre-2003 curriculum and the primacy given to the Shiᶜite narrative in the post-2003 curriculum provoked masked resistance that contributed to the awakening of sectarian primordial consciousness. Pedagogy, therefore, not only failed to erase or submerge primordial identifications in favor of a common overarching citizenship but also contributed to the cultivation of a schizoid national soul.

An investigation into the relationship between educational curricula and the heightening of primordial identification ineluctably directs attention to the ideational bases defining the contours of 'imagined community.' **Chapter 5**, "Contending Visions of Collective Identity," sheds light on the Pan-Arab discourse that inspired the ideological underpinnings of the Iraqi state established following World War I. It shows how the xenophobic anti-Persian streak in Pan-Arab discourse camouflaged anti-Shiᶜite sectarian attitudes which inadvertently alienated a large sectarian community and nurtured inter-communal mistrust. I map out the trajectory

of the foundational myths of collective identity in Iraq from a totalizing Pan-Arab ideology to the slide toward disintegration fostered by narratives of victimization in the post-Saddam period. I then probe the resultant atomistic impulse that crystallized in the debate over the formation of federal regions and how the federalist debate was symptomatic of the ghettoization of identity along not only sectarian but also intra-sectarian particularisms.

In closing, a **concluding chapter** summarizes the findings and discusses their broader theoretical implications for the primordialism line of analysis. In this context, I present some reflections on a set of thematic relationships in the light of findings emanating from this study of sectarianism and the making of nation and state in Iraq, namely, state-society, state-religion/sect, and national identity-primordial identification. I also present the limitations of this study and suggest directions and questions to be explored in future research.

CHAPTER 1

A Theoretical Excursus:
State-Making, Nation-Building and the Sectarian Problematique

"The natures of various forms of rule are not identical. To ascertain the fundamental differences let us begin at the beginning, with the genesis, or coming into being, of the state."

Aristotle, *The Politics*

Despite the abundance of research on the dynamics that led to the emergence of the modern nation-state as a polity distinct from traditional states,[1] such as empires, the concepts of "state-making" and "nation-building" remain highly contested. Like in the case of most normative social science concepts,[2] position-taking by social scientists and researchers has congealed into an impressive array of contending theoretical constructs proffered to plot the contours of these concepts. Stemming from the distinct interests of researchers in key ontological and epistemological aspects of politics, the state, and modernization, these conceptualizations gave rise to an array of approaches to the study of state-building that encompass political development, democratization, the post-conflict reconstruction of dysfunctional or "failed states," and peace-building.

Some social scientists have differentiated between the two terms of "state-building" and "nation-building." For instance, Carolyn Stephenson argues that, "[t]he term nation-building is often used simultaneously with state-building … But each concept is different, though their

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[1] For examples of works studying the process of the emergence of the modern nation-state, see Paul M. Sweezy, *Modern Capital and Other Essays* (New York, NY; and London: Monthly Review Press, 1972); and Rolf Torstendahl, ed., *State Theory and State History* (London; Newbury Park, CA; and New Delhi, India: Sage Publications, 1992).

[2] Normative concepts are value-laden notions in that they parallel ethical reasoning. They aim to contribute to value rationality and the understanding of important public values and normative ideals. In the case of state-making and nation-building, fostering an integrated national community is presumed to be an important public value and ideal. Such a discussion of state-building can be subsumed under what Aristotle, in his discussion of "practical wisdom," had termed as "the things that are good and bad for man." See his *The Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980): p. 142. An online version of Aristotle's book is available at: http://www.constitution.org/ari/ethic_00.htm; accessed on Sunday, June 29, 2008. One example of political science studies involving normative reflection is Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000).

evolution is intertwined."[3] Analogously, Mohammed Ayoob has stressed the "conceptual as well as real-world distinction" between the processes of nation-building and state-making.[4] However, Ayoob acknowledges the fact that these two process,

> "may sometimes run parallel to each other and may even interact with each other – but they may have their own separate dynamics and discrete end-products, even though in the ideal type the end products merge into a composite creature called the nation-state."[5]

In a similar vein, while conceding that "state" cannot be equated with "nation," I still opt, in this study, for using the two terms interchangeably.[6] The "evolution" of both processes is largely "intertwined" in the case of Iraq and, therefore, the study deals with the "composite creature called the nation-state" of Iraq. True, the courses of state-making and nation-building are in many ways historically and conceptually distinct, but they are still overlapping and somewhat inseparable processes. In many ways, the two processes describe similar activities designed to mould disparate ethnic, tribal and religious communities into an integrated citizenry within a shared polity and construct a functioning administrative state apparatus and governance capacities capable of managing society and societal change effectively.

1.1. State of Theory of the Making of Nation and State

"Your eyes come to my fancy with rain,
And across the Gulf's waves lightning burnishes
With stars and shells the coasts of Iraq
As if they are about to shine
But night covers them with a robe of gore.
I cry to the Gulf, "O Gulf,
O giver of shells and death."
I can almost hear Iraq gathering thunder
And storing up lighting in mountains and plains"

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[3] See her "Nation Building," *Beyond Intractability*, edited by Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: January 2005; available at: http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/nation_building/; accessed on Wednesday, June 11, 2008.

[4] Mohammed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995): p. 24.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[6] This is the same approach adopted by the contributors to a scholarly work on the topic of state-building in Africa. See Kidane Mengisteab and Cyril Daddieh, eds., *State Building and Democratization in Africa: Faith, Hope and Realities* (Westport, CT; and London: Praeger Publishers, 1999).

On the face of it, the concepts of "state-making" and "nation-building" are premised on an architectural metaphor which assumes the existence of a conscious and integrative political agent, strategy, and social force or dynamic bringing about societal change. This metaphor presupposes a teleological process which involves redefining the relationship between local communities and members of society, on the one hand, and the state, on the other, mainly through the expansion of education and the introduction of modes of political participation. Ultimately, in the resulting new forms of political association, the 'subjects' of the monarch are transformed into 'citizens' who have legal claims *vis-à-vis* the state. The dialectic of this expansion of the public sphere is rather hegemonic in the sense that it entails the subordination of sub-state loyalties and identities to a new civic culture and loyalty to a larger political entity – the state.[7]

Interest in state- and nation-building as a distinct "research programme"[8] in the social sciences first became fashionable in the aftermath of World War II and in tandem with the increasing pace of decolonization in the 1950s and 1960s. It was popularized by some prominent scholars in America such as Karl Deutsch,[9] Charles Tilly,[10] and Reinhard

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[7] In the words of two of the most prominent advocates of modernization theory, Gabriel Almond and Bingham Powell, nation-building entails a "process whereby people transfer loyalty from smaller tribes, villages, or petty principalities to the larger central political system." See their *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1966): p. 36.

[8] The concept of a "research program" was introduced and articulated by the philosopher of science Imre Lakatos. See his "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970): pp. 91-96; and *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1978). By introducing this concept Lakatos hoped to develop a tool for the comparative evaluation of scientific theories. A research programme provides a set of methodological rules that guide the development of theories and progress of research in a certain field of knowledge. Lakatos argued that theories are embedded in research programmes containing the "negative heuristic" or "hard core" assumptions, which delimit the scope of the programmes, and a "positive heuristic" or "protective belt," which is comprised of auxiliary or observational hypotheses and lays out guidelines for researchers as they embark on the effort of formulating additional hypotheses. He further distinguished between progressive research programmes and degenerative ones. A progressive research programme is one that produces occasional verifications that help unearth new facts and expand the frontiers of knowledge in a certain field, whereas a degenerative research programme is one whose forward movement is stunted as a result of constant refutations.

[9] Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* (Cambridge, MA; and London: The M.I.T. Press, 1969, [1953]).

[10] Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975).

Bendix,[11] who attempted to describe the processes of societal reconfiguration and national integration and consolidation that lie at the heart of the formation of modern nation-states.

1.1.1. *Historical-Sociological Approach*

"He who makes war for National independence must be enabled to count upon the union of all resources, all the wishes, and the concurrence of all the National authorities."

Napoleon Bonaparte

The prevailing social science thinking and theorizing on state-making evolved out of the study of the consolidation of strong political entities taking control of defined territorial units in Europe.[12] This is a process that accelerated with the intensifying rivalries between emerging monarchies which plagued Western and Northern Europe as feudalism began to crumble in tandem with the development of the Renaissance and the Reformation.[13] As Brian M. Downing observes, major causes of "warfare in early modern Europe lay in the agrarian transformations."[14] Throughout his work, Charles Tilly articulated a theory of state-making which points to a vital link between war and the emergence of the modern state in early modern Europe. For Tilly, "War made the state, and the state made war."[15] He highlights how the pressures of war and conflict, which require the mobilization of large standing armies, materiel, and economic resources on a massive scale, lead to the accumulation and concentration of coercion in the state. The modern nation-state is the product of the ensuing social mobilization in pursuit of citizenship rights and changes in government that foster bureaucratization.[16]

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[11] Reinhard Bendix, *Nation-Building and Citizenship: Studies of Our Changing Social Order* (New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons, 1964).

[12] See, for instance, Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, Volume 2: *The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760-1914* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[13] For a detailed account of this process consult Juan J. Linz, "State Building and Nation Building," *European Review*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (October 1993): pp. 355-369. See also Bruce D. Porter, *War and the Rise of the State* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1994).

[14] Brian M. Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Democratic Rule in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992): p. 65.

[15] Charles Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European State-Making," in Charles Tilly, ed., *op. cit.*, p, 42.

[16] Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and the European States: A.D. 990-1990* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

But the development of large standing armies also increased the capacity of the absolutist European state to collect taxes from its population. Samuel E. Finer identifies an "extraction-coercion cycle," whereby standing armies ensure the collection of taxes from unwilling, or unenthusiastic, subjects and channel it to the coffers of the state, which in turn uses these resources to boost its forces to coerce more resources from the subjects.[17]

The historical-sociological approach is an excessively statist perspective based on the dichotomous reification of state and society as independent entities, thus stripping the state of its broader social context.[18] It has been criticized for falling short of advancing the process of theory formulation. Instead of propounding an explanatory theory of state-making, it provides an analytical framework that facilitates the grasping of political outcomes in historically contingent cases. Such a shortcoming has prompted one leading exponent of structural functionalism to assail this approach for failing to make a major contribution compared to the approaches it intends to displace.[19] The preoccupation of the historical-sociological approach with the webs of relations and organizations inside the corridors of power corresponds to a curious obliviousness to the social forces and dynamics outside the state.[20] Ultimately, by concerning itself mainly with the narrow formal, often reified, organizational underpinnings of state institutions, this approach loses sight of the normative and ideational foundations embedded in institutions.

There is a global dimension, sometimes hidden and sometimes explicit, to the account of the link between war and state-making in the historical-sociological approach. But there are serious doubts that the portrait of state-making in early Europe presented by the exponents of this approach can be generalized to the non-European context. As shown by Georg Sørensen, the connection between war and state-making highlighted by the exponents of the historical-sociological approach "does not appear to be present at all in the weak states in the Third World." Turning their argument on its head, he points out that the incidence of war outside

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[17] Samuel E. Finer, "State- and Nation-Building in Europe: The Role of the Military," in Tilly, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, pp. 84-163.

[18] In his "Elements in a Theory of State-Building: An Inquiry into the Structural Preconditions for Successful State-Building in Europe," *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (1996): pp. 293-308, Pal H. Bakka has identified six factors that were conducive to state-building success in Europe, which might not necessarily be replicable in other historical and socio-cultural contexts.

[19] Gabriel A. Almond, "The Return to the State," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 82, No. 3 (September 1988): pp. 853-874.

[20] See Linda Gordon, "The Welfare State: Towards a Socialist Feminist Perspective," in Ralph Miliband, Leo Pantich, and John Saville, eds., *Socialist Register 1990: The Retreat of the Intellectuals* (London: Merlin Press, 1990): pp. 171-200.

Europe has not only "failed to produce any state-building worthy of the name, but also, in a large number of cases, it has led to state decay and failure."[21]

1.1.2. Ascendant Liberal Modernism

"Remember always that people do not fight in ideas for things that exist only in the minds/heads of individuals. The people fight and accept the necessary sacrifices in order to gain material benefits, to live better and in peace, to experience progress, and to guarantee the future for their children."

Amilcar Cabral

From its inception, the study of nation-building and state-making was shaped by a peculiarly Western monopoly over the theoretical formulations or conceptions articulated by modernization theorists and political development scholars and practitioners. It was conducted in the idiom of Western thought and carried a teleological imprint, whereby non-Western countries or cultures were expected to catch up with a *telos*, *viz.*, a postulated ideal-typical Western universalism derived from the historical experience of the West. Its genesis can be traced to the intense intellectual ferment in the field of political science spawned by the major research efforts launched in the decade following World War II.[22] These efforts sought to formulate "a doctrine of political development that would prove as powerful an analytical tool as economic theory had provided in its assault on problems of national poverty."[23]

At the time of its initial formulation, linear, multiple-stage models of nation-building were developed based on insights drawing on other social sciences, especially economics,

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[21] Georg Sørensen, "War and State-Making: Why Doesn't It Work in the Third World?" *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (September 2001): pp. 341-342.

[22] Nils Gilman traces the origins of modernization theory and its pivotal role in shaping the shift in US foreign policy toward a sort of missionary internationalism in the post-World War II ear in his *Mandarins for the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

[23] John D. Montgomrey, "The Quest for Political Development," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (January 1969): p. 287.

sociology and psychology.[24] Taking a leaf from neo-Darwinian conceptions of evolution and natural selection, the diverse ingredients of these models were, in large measure, influenced by the work of leading American sociologist Talcott Parsons, who elaborated the concept of "political system." Parsons viewed society as a holistic entity moving along a path of "evolutionary universals;" in other words, from pre-modern traditional belief systems with their strong mythic-religious bent and configurations of social-political organization to complex modern, Western-style cultural secularization and political structures.[25]

The profound influence exerted by Parsonian systems theory animates the work of Lucian Pye. In his *Aspects of Political Development*, Pye expounds a diffusionist approach to nation-building which views political progress as "one aspect of a multi-dimensional process of social change" which is closely linked "with other aspects of social and economic change." This process, "in which tradition-bound villages or tribal-based societies are compelled to react to the pressures and demands of the modern, industrialized and urban-centered world," results in a profound transformation of traditional ways of life. Pye terms this process as

> "Westernization, or simply advancement and progress; it might, however, be more accurately termed the diffusion of a world culture – a world culture based on advanced technology and the spirit of science, on a rational view of life, a secular approach to social relations."[26]

This exaltation of the historically specific values and institutions of the West as being beneficial for the Third World has also been advanced by Daniel Lerner who declares emphatically, if not unapologetically, that,

> "From the West came the stimuli which undermined traditional society in the Middle East; for reconstruction of a modern society that will operate efficiently in

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[24] Samuel P. Huntington has observed that liberal modernization theories were shaped by the evolutionary optimistic outlook of such Victorian evolutionists like Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer whose ideas had seeped into the sociological tradition. See his "The Change to Change," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (April 1971): pp. 283-322.

[25] See Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1951). See also his "Pattern Variables Revisited: A Response to Robert Dubin," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (August 1960): pp. 467-483; and "Some Considerations on the Theory of Social Change," *Rural Sociology*, Vol. 26, Issue 4 (October 1961): pp. 219-239. For a reappraisal of Parsons's influence on modernist thinking see Roland Robertson and Bryan S. Turner, eds., *Talcott Parsons: Theorist of Modernity* (London: Sage Publications, 1991).

[26] Lucian W. Pye, *Aspects of Political Development* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1966): pp. 8-9 and 44-45.

the world today, the West is still a useful model. What the West is, in this sense, the Middle East seeks to become."[27]

In a similar vein, Norwegian social scientist Stein Rokkan propounded a model based on an implicit assumption of a replicable Western path to nation-building. Rokkan's model is predicated on a "comparative macro-history of the territories of Western Europe."[28] In studying the emergence and crystallization of the first European nation-states since the fall of the Western Roman Empire, he identifies a linear sequential pattern moving from the unification of the central elites economically and culturally and ending in the expansion of the administrative and bureaucratic apparatus of the state and the establishment of nationwide public welfare services.[29]

Fundamental criticisms have been leveled against liberal modernism which has been denounced for its ethnocentric, namely Eurocentric, moorings. It is true that the idiom of liberal modernization theorists had been pruned of such unabashedly ethnocentric, if not even racist, concepts such as 'civilization' and 'barbarism.'[30] This fact notwithstanding, its worldview has still been shaped by what Ali A. Mazrui termed "the self-confidence of ethnocentric achievement,"[31] or what Bendix has labeled as "the Procrustese bed of the European experience."[32]

Given their underlying ethnocentrism, liberal modernization theories furnish "a subtle form of 'cultural imperialism', an imperialism of values which superimposes American or, more

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[27] Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1965): p. 50. A similarly defiant declaration appears on p. 79 of Lerner's book, where he writes: "What America is … the modernizing Middle East seeks to become."

[28] Stein Rokkan, "Un modèle géo-économique et géopolitique de quelques sources de variations en Europe de l'Ouest," ["A geo-economic and geopolitical model of some sources of variation in Western Europe"], *Communications*, Vol. 45 (1987): p. 75; quoted in Christohe Jaffrelot, "For a theory of nationalism," *Research in Question*, Center for International Studies and Research, No. 10 (June 2003): p. 6; available at: http://ceri-sciences-po.org/publica/qdr.htm; accessed on Sunday, June 29, 2008.

[29] Stein Rokkan, "Dimensions of State Formation and Nation-Building: A Possible Paradigm for Research on Variations within Europe," in Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975): pp. 562-600. A comprehensive compendium of selections from Rokkan's prolific scholarly writings on European political development can be found in Peter Flora with Stein Kuhnle and Derek Urwin, eds., *State Formation, Nation-Building, and Mass Politics in Europe: The Theory of Stein Rokkan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

[30] Dean C. Tipps, "Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A Critical Perspective," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (March 1973): p. 206.

[31] Ali A. Mazrui, "From Social Darwinism to Current Theories of Modernization," *World Politics*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (October 1968): p. 82.

[32] Reinhard Bendix, "Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (April 1967): p. 323.

broadly, Western cultural choices upon other societies."[33] As observed by one leading academic researcher on democratization in the Middle East, Eurocentric paradigmatic approaches fail to "fit comfortably in the milieus into which they are often transplanted, or always to be congenial to the different forms of interpretation on which they are imposed."[34]

In large measure, the formulations put forward by liberal modernization theorists are inherently defective. They suffer from the pitfalls of their dichotomous, zero-sum conceptions of the relationship between two polar types: 'tradition' and 'modernity.' There is an implicit or explicit assumption that a society ceases to be 'traditional' to the extent that it becomes 'modern.' In the writings of many liberal modernization theorists, this Manichean view coexisted with an inescapable romantic streak that verges on utopianism regarding the nature of modernity.

1.1.3. *Marxist and Neo-Marxist Perspectives*

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something entirely new, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from their names, battle slogans and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language."

Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*

To borrow the terminology of Newton's third law of motion, for every theory there is a counter theory. Much like the fray of politics, the growth of knowledge is not linear but rather dialectical. It moves forward along multiple paths fueled by recurring action-reaction exchanges and controversies. Accordingly, in their search for answers to questions regarding the emergence of the modern nation-state as a form of political power, the various strands of the modernization mode of theorizing – be they liberal, cybernetic, structural-functionalist or

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[33] Tipps, *op. cit.*, p. 210.
[34] Larbi Sadiki, "Popular Uprisings and Arab Democratization," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (February 2000): p. 72.

revisionist – had to contend with alternative perspectives and counter-theories from a Marxist standpoint.

Marxism did not propose a full-fledged, explicit perspective on the state and how it comes into existence.[35] It was rather more interested in exploring the conditions necessary for transcending the state as part of a seemingly eschatological process that culminates in the attainment of communism. The contours of Karl Marx's understanding of the state, therefore, must be drawn from ruminations and insights on the state scattered in his various works. It is a view that derives mainly from his dynamic, materialist view of history as an inevitable progression destined toward a latter-day stateless society passing through successive stages in tandem with the extent of social class formation. "Dialectical as well as evolutionary," as described by David E. Apter, "it [Marxism] had a preferred historical teleology, with socialism a last instance on a directional, systemic and purposeful scale demarcating irreversible modal stages – a transcendence from lower to higher material modes."[36]

Marx viewed the state as a manifestation of a foundational phenomenon, *viz.* the prevalent mode of production in society, which acts in the interest of the economically dominant class. Since "[t]he mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life,"[37] the state figures in Marxism as a constituent part of the superstructure in society. In other words, the state is an 'instrument' for the reproduction of the normative social order. Yet, at the same time, the state's relationship to society is one of dialectical opposition. "The state," Marx declares, "stands in the same opposition to civil society and overcomes it in the same way religion overcomes the restrictions of the profane world; i.e., it has to acknowledge it again, reinstate it, and allow itself to be dominated by it."[38] Within such a scheme of things, the state is captured by and

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[35] Numerous Marxist thinkers have acknowledged the fact that Marx did not engage in "a systematic study of the state." See, for instance, Ralph Miliband, "Marx and the State," in Ralph Miliband and John Saville, eds., *Socialist Register* (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1965): p. 278.

[36] David E. Apter, "Comparative Sociology: Some Paradigms and their Moments," in Craig J. Callhoun, Chris Rojek, and Bryan S. Turner, eds., *The Sage Handbook of Sociology* (London: Sage Publications, Inc, 2005): p. 106.

[37] Karl Marx, "Preface (to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*)," in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, introduction by Lucio Colletti, translated by Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton (New York, NY: Penguin, 1975): p. 425.

[38] Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question, " in *ibid.*, p. 220.

expresses the interests of the economically dominant class.[39] In his monumental work, *Capital*, Marx fleshes out this conception in relation to his theory of surplus capital, saying:

> "The specific economic form, in which unpaid surplus labor is pumped out of direct producers, determines the relationship of rulers to ruled … It is always the direct relationship of the owners of the conditions of production to the direct producers … which reveals the innermost secret, the hidden basis of the entire social structure, and with it the political form of the relation of sovereignty and dependence, in short, the corresponding specific form of the state."[40]

Notwithstanding its role in perpetuating exploitative social relations, the state in the Marxian perspective maintains relative autonomy. As John F. Sitton astutely observes, Marx and Engels conceive of the state as being

> "autonomous from society because its primary function is to ensure the unity of a fragmented whole … It is the condition of the rule of the bourgeoisie *as a class* and in order to serve the bourgeoisie as a class it must be free from the domination of the individual bourgeois or substantial factions of the bourgeoisie. It is not successful at this but this is its ideal vocation."[41]

European colonialism, according to Marx, would provide a spur for eventual industrialization in colonized societies. For instance, he considered the entrance of British capital into India as

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[39] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Communist Manifesto* (London: Penguin Books, 1985 [1848]): p. 82. Similarly, in *The German Ideology* (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1970 [1845-1846]): p. 80, Marx and Engels assert that the state "is nothing more than the form of organization which the bourgeoisie necessarily adopt both for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interests." This argument figures prominently in Vladimir I. Lenin's influential 1917 pamphlet *The State and Revolution* (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1974 [1917]): pp. 12-15, where the state is described "as an instrument for the exploitation of the oppressed class."

[40] Karl Marx, *Capital*, Volume 3 (New York, NY: International Publishers, 1974): p. 791.

[41] John F. Sitton, *Marx's Theory of the Transcendence of the State: A Reconstruction* (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 1989): p. 139, italics in original. In his *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, First Edition (Pekin, China: Foreign Languages Press, 1978 [1884]): p. 204, online edition; available at: http://www.marx2mao.com/M&E/OFPS84.html; accessed on September 2, 2008, Engels propounds an oblique view on the autonomy of the state while discussing the political system of Rome, saying: "But here was a society which by all its economic conditions of life had been forced to split itself into freemen and slaves, into the exploiting rich and the exploited poor; a society which not only could never reconcile these antagonisms, but had to drive them more and more to a head. Such a society could only exist either in the continuous open fight of these classes against one another, or else under the rule of a third power, which, seemingly standing above the warring classes, suppressed their open conflict and allowed the class struggle to be fought out at most in the economic field, in so-called legal form. The gentile constitution was finished. It had been shattered by the division of labour and its result, the split of society into classes. It was replaced by the *state*" (italics in original).

potentially advantageous to the development of the country. While refusing to valorize the European colonialist enterprise, Marx still maintained that "England has to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating – the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society."[42] By leading the struggle against colonialism in alliance with the nascent industrial proletariat, the rising indigenous bourgeoisie would achieve a bourgeois revolution.[43] This paves the way for a following stage in which the proletariat would then act as the vanguard of a socialist revolutionary struggle. Under socialism the erosion of class antagonisms in society due to the public ownership of the means of production culminates in the "withering away" of the state, as it is presumed to lose the rationale and underlying principles for its existence.[44]

Drawing on Marx but breaking away from the reductionist economism of traditional Marxism, Italian communist thinker Antonio Gramsci expanded the means of social control available for the state to include ideological means. For Gramsci, ideology is constitutive of social and political relations. Realizing that members of social classes may not necessarily be class-conscious, he advanced the concept of "hegemony" as a "mode of social control through which one group exerts its dominance over others by means of ideology."[45] As such, the bourgeoisie secures the consent of subaltern groups not only through coercion but also by instilling in them a "false consciousness" which requires an appeal to values and norms that transcend class interests such as nationalism. Gramsci's writings played a pivotal role in piquing the interest of a new generation of European Marxist thinkers in the nature of the capitalist state. Ralph Miliband and Nicos Poulantzas are perhaps the most notable figures in this generation of Euro-Marxist theoreticians who owed a considerable debt to Gramsci.

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[42] *Karl Marx on Colonialism & Modernization: His despatches and other writings on China, India, Mexico, the Middle East and North Africa*, edited with an introduction by Shlomo Avineri (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1969): pp. 132-133.

[43] Marx latched to a very low opinion of the peasantry and its capacity for shouldering the burdens of revolutionary struggle. He denounced what he described as the "idiocy of rural life" and saw peasant households as "potatoes in a sack" incapable of collective action as a cohesive class. See Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in D. Fernbach, ed., *Karl Marx: Surveys from Exile, Political Writings*, Vol. 2 (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1973): p. 239.

[44] It should be noted that socialism and communism are not conceived of in rupturist terms, i.e., as mutually exclusive stages. Socialism is merely a transitional period towards communism. See Etienne Balibar, *On the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (London: New Left Books, 1977): pp. 62-63.

[45] James Martin, *Gramsci's Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction* (Basingstoke, Hampshire; and New York, NY: MacMillian/St. Martin's Press, 1998): p. 66.

Despite the common Gramscian moorings of their standpoints, they arrived at contrasting positions, and criticized each other of adopting a deterministic view.[46]

Throughout his writings, Miliband employed a sociological analytical approach to demonstrate how the economically dominant class exerts and perpetuates its control of the state and its institutions.[47] In his words, the state is an "instrument for the domination of society."[48] Miliband's instrumentalism is anchored in the theoretical reading of Marxism articulated by Paul M. Sweezy, who argues that the state is "an instrument in the hands of the ruling class for enforcing and guaranteeing the stability of the class structure itself."[49] But in serving the interests of the capitalist class, the state, in Miliband's perspective enjoys a relative autonomy. Actually, building on the classical Marxian perspective on the relative autonomy of the state, Miliband espoused a line of analysis that accords the capitalist state more autonomy.[50] For him, this "relative independence makes it possible for the state to play its class role in an approximately flexible manner."[51]

Miliband's instrumentalism, albeit sophisticated and a far cry from the crude instrumentalism of traditional Marxism,[52] has been criticized by Poulantzas of being guilty of "the problematic of the subject,"[53] that is of latching to a reductionist view that relegates the state to interpersonal relations. Puolantzas propounded a Marxist theoretical formulation on the capitalist state based on Louis Althusser's structuralist epistemology.[54] Moving away from the preoccupation of classical Marxism with economic determinism, Poulantzas views the

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[46] For a review of the debate between these two neo-Marxist thinkers, see Ernesto Laclau, "The Specificity of the Political: The Poulantzas-Miliband Debate," *Economy and Society*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (February 1975): pp. 87-110; and Clyde W. Barrow, "The Miliband-Poulantzas Debate: An Intellectual History," in Stanley Aronowitz and Peter Bratsis, eds., *Paradigm Lost: State Theory Reconsidered* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002): pp. 3-52.

[47] See his *The State in Capitalist Society* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1969).

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[49] Paul M. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development* (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1942): p. 243.

[50] Ralph Miliband, *Marxism and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977): pp. 66-74.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[52] In the words of Bob Jessop, "it would be wrong to suggest that Miliband is committed to a simple instrumentalist position." See his *The Capitalist State* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1982): p. 15.

[53] Nicos Poulantzas, "The Problem of the Capitalist State," *New Left Review*, No. 58 (November/December 1969): 67-78.

[54] For a general overview of Althusser's thought consult Robert Paul Resch, *Althusser and the Renewal of Marxist Social Theory* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; and Oxford: University of California Press, 1992). For examples of Althusser's works, see his *For Marx*, translated by Ben Brewster (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1969). See also Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, eds., *Reading Capital*, translated by Ben Brewster (New York, NY: Pantheon, 1970).

state and social classes as objective structures that interact with each other through an objective system of regular connections.[55]

Echoing Gramsci, Poulantzas specifically takes account of the realm of ideology by positing a conceptualization of the state as a set of apparatuses that perform either repressive functions or ideological functions. He declares that,

> "the state is composed of several apparatuses: broadly, the repressive apparatus and the ideological apparatus, the principal role of the former being repression, that of the latter being the elaboration and incubation of ideology. The ideological apparatuses include the churches, the educational system, the bourgeois and petty bourgeois political parties, the press, radio, television, etc. These apparatuses belong to the state system because of their objective function of elaborating and inculcating ideology."[56]

Stemming from a belief in the interconnectedness of phenomena in the quotidian life-world, the grandiose sweep of Poulantzas's cavalier definition of the ideological apparatus is an obvious leap into the dark that renders it all the less credible. It is so all-encompassing, broad and sweeping to the extent that it subsumes under its rubric all social formations, institutions, relations and, indeed, all aspects of society. The breadth of its grandiose scope blunts the concept's analytical utility, rendering it ultimately a dull, rather than a sharp, analytical tool. It also fails to take account of cases of discord and conflict between the various apparatuses, for instance, when the church clashes with the state.

In general, neo-Marxist Althusserian structuralist approaches, such as that of Poulantzas, cling dogmatically to a mechanically deterministic base-superstructure model and, as such, have been disparaged for maintaining "deeply embedded society-centered assumptions."[57] By positing a conceptualization of social structures in terms of discrete, discontinuous factors, structuralists are prone to ignore the possibility that the state might sometimes act as an

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[55] Nicos Poulantzas, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
[56] Nicos Poulantzas, "On Social Classes," *New Left Review*, No. 78 (March/April 1973): p. 47.
[57] Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research," in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschmeyer, and Theda Skocpol, *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): p. 9.

independent structural organization or "as an organization for itself."[58] However, notwithstanding their differences, various strands of neo-Marxism share a common Marxian yearning, either explicitly or implicitly, for a stateless society. But Karl Marx's belief in the eventual transcendence of the state has been castigated by one critic as "an incredibly naive and utopian outlook,"[59] and likened by another to "a belief in miracles."[60] Moreover, far from showing any tendency to "wither away," the historical experience of the socialist systems, be they communist or non-communist, has, in practice, shown a tendency to expand the role of the state in society.

1.1.4. The Cybernetic Approach

"We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful): that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations."

Michel Foucault,
Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison

The influence of Parsonian systems theory on early modernization theorizing on nation-building and state-making had an equivalent in Karl Deutsch's cybernetic approach which emphasized the role of social communication and national integration.[61] In a pioneering work first published in 1953, Deutsch stressed the role of communication in the cohesion of modern states. He conceived of political systems as "networks of communication channels" which have processes and mechanisms for acquiring, collecting, transmitting, selecting and storing information. In such political systems, the level of social cohesiveness or integration is a function of the extent of communication flows between members of society. In Deutsch's view, it is the thicket of communications patterns rather than the messages themselves that

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[58] Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979): p. 27.

[59] Henry B. Mayo, *Introduction to Marxist Theory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1960): p. 172.

[60] Paul Tillich, *The Socialist Decision* (New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers, 1977): p. 76.

[61] See Deutsch, *op. cit.*; and his "Nation-Building and National Development: Some Issues for Political Research," in Karl Deutsch and William J. Foltz, eds., *Nation-Building* (New York, NY: Atherton, 1963): pp. 1-16.

help differentiate separate communities and determine their scope. With respect to the process of nation-building, the "desired result" of intense communications flows is to reduce disparities and disseminate common cultural ideas.[62]

The stance that links modernization to the development and proliferation of modern mass media has also been advanced by Daniel Lerner.[63] Starting from the assumption that modernizing societies must follow the same processes of social and political change followed by the West, Lerner argued that the development of a "mobile personality" reminiscent to that of the Western man is essential for the transition from traditional to transitional stages in the march towards modernity. He identified "empathy," that is "the capacity to see oneself in the other fellow's situation," as the key personality trait which enables people to "come to see the social future as manipulable rather than ordained and their personal prospects in terms of achievement rather than heritage."[64]

In Lerner's view, modernity is a participatory lifestyle that results from either a direct encounter of traditional societies with the modern world or via the mass media, which act as "mobility multipliers" expediting the cognitive transition necessary for traditional societies to move along the supposedly inexorable development trajectory. Exposure to information provided by the mass media infuses traditional people with "the tingle of wondering … which sounds the knell of traditional society, of routinized lifeways in which everyone knew what would happen next because it had to follow what came before."[65]

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[62] Deutsch, *Nationalism and Social Communication*, pp. 70-71. Deutsch makes a similar argument in his *The Nerves of Government: Models of Political Communication and Control* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1966): p. 150.

[63] Daniel Lerner is sometimes classified among the exponents of the liberal modernist approach. See for instance, Henry Bernstein's "Modernisation Theory and the Sociological Study of Development," in Charles Coopers and E. V. K. FitzGerald, eds., *Development Studies Revisited: Twenty-Five Years of The Journal of Development Studies* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1989): 504-524. But Lerner's lifelong career focused mainly on communications and propaganda research. His forays into development studies fall squarely in the development communication paradigm with its main concern with how modernity can be communicated to traditional societies. Umaru Bah discusses the influence of Lerner's earlier career as a World War II propaganda officer in the US Psychological Warfare Department on his later academic career, which spanned more than three decades (1949-1980), in his "Daniel Lerner, Cold War Propaganda and US Development Communication Research: An Historical Critique," *Journal of Third World Studies*, Internet Edition, (Spring 2008); http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_200806/ai_n25418589l; accessed on Wednesday, August 13, 2008.

[64] Lerner, *op. cit.*, p. 48-50.

[65] *Ibid.*, p. 62. It should be pointed out that interest in how new ideas and practices are adopted by cultures constituted a major research program for scholars in communication studies in the 1950s and 1960s. Perhaps the most influential work in this wave of theorizing is Everett M. Rogers's *Diffusion of Innovations*, 5th Edition (New York, NY: Free Press, 2003 [1962]).

Echoes of Deutsch's concept of social communication can also be found in the work of later scholars such as Ernest Gellner,[66] Eric J. Hobsbawm[67] and Benedict Anderson[68] who privilege powerful media as the purveyors of a common culture and language within the broader context of a process of nation-building, the spread of nationalism and the consolidation of national identity. Such arguments hark back to Herbert Marshall McLuhan, who attributes a central importance to the role of the media in the emergence of a "global village."[69] In a similar vein, Gellner, who suggests a link between modernity and the spread of industrialization, imputes to the very emergence of the mass media in a society the ability to make an elite, high culture available to the masses. In the process, the media help bring about "the core idea of nationalism."[70] The media, according to Gellner, are instrumental in removing cultural heterogeneity which acts as the main obstacle to the formation of a nation. Their role in cultural homogenization is aided by the establishment of an efficient educational system, which "in effect confers … identity on" an individual.[71]

Others, such as Benedict Anderson, argue that nations are mere products of the imagination of members of a certain society who see themselves as belonging to an imagined community, "which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation."[72] Anderson attributes the rise of these imagined communities to the emergence of "print capitalism." He argues that the print media provides the social "glue" that makes the nation possible. He maintains that "the convergence of capitalism and print technology" acts as a catalyst for the consolidation of an imagined community by affording individuals within society the opportunity to engage in the "mass ceremony" of reading the same material.[73] Ultimately, this simultaneous mediated communication infuses members of society with a "hypnotic confirmation of the

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[66] See his *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

[67] See his *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[68] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1994).

[69] McLuhan, a Canadian philosopher, literary critic and scholar, is considered as the patriarch of media criticism and is credited for coining the term "global village." See his monumental work *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994 [1964]).

[70] Gellner, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[72] Anderson, *op. cit.* p. 46.

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

solidity of a single community, embracing characters, authors and readers, moving onward through calendrical time."[74]

Similarly, Hobsbawm proposes a line of argument that also imputes to the media a significant role in articulating a national identity in the era of nationalism. He highlights the role of the media not only in propagating political ideologies but also in linking the public and private spheres by fashioning national symbols. In studying the European experience, Hobsbawm points to "the ability of the mass media to make what were in effect national symbols part of the life of every individual, and thus to break down the divisions between the private and local spheres in which most citizens normally lived." In this context, he ascribes to the mass media an instrumental role in transforming "the British royal family into a domestic as well as public icon of national identification."[75]

The discourse of the cybernetic approach to nation-building has been criticized for being excessively vertical. As Mirca Madiano remarks:

> "By adopting a top-down perspective, they [proponents of the cybernetic approach] assume a common identity for all the people that they investigate. In a somewhat ironic way, modernist theory, which started as a reaction to the essentialism of primordial theories, ends up reifying identity itself. Nations are the products of a top-down process whereby an elite discourse is taken up by people at a local level. Such a perspective ignores that people might contest the nation and its official ideology and leaves open the question of how people come to embrace the official discourse."[76]

In locating the core of nation-building firmly within the process of social communication, the cybernetic approach tends to present a mechanistic model whereby human society is conceptualized as a machine and, as such, can be controlled through the devices of social engineering. It uncritically mirrors the scientific optimism of the Enlightenment with its blend of Promethean rationalism whereby Reason is assumed to be equally available to all human beings as well as its romantic, if not even idealistic, belief in the utility of giving non-

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[74] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[75] Hobsbawm, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
[76] Mirca Madiano, *Mediating the Nation: News, Audience and the Politics of Identity* (London: UCL Press, 2005): p. 15.

technical aspects of life a technical identity.[77] As Oran Young puts it, the cybernetic approach,

> "offers a model that seems far more manipulative than most actual operations; it often seems to discount irrational, fortuitous, or random behaviour, and above all, it does not deal adequately with the nuances of human thought processes, the psychological consequences of worldviews and value systems, the subtleties of political leadership, and the nebulous quality of many political relations."[78]

Ultimately, by being overly deterministic, the cybernetic approach shares with the now-outmoded Hypodermic Needle Model of communications, or the "Magic Bullet" perspective, a view of the media as a hypodermic syringe which injects content into the minds of the audience, who are assumed to accept passively the received media messages without questioning. In this sense, it ignores the audiences' social backgrounds and their own beliefs, opinions, ideals and attitudes. "Audiences," Nicholas Abercrombie rightly observes, "are not blank sheets of paper on which media messages can be written; members of an audience will have prior attitudes and beliefs which will determine how effective media messages are."[79] Accordingly, the cybernetic approach's firm belief in the inevitable homogenizing effects of the communication process betrays a curious obliviousness to the multiplicity of ways in which mass media messages are received, and in turn processed cognitively, by various segments of their audiences. More importantly, it glosses over how the mass media might at times contribute to the intensification of tendencies toward fragmentation and polarization in deeply divided societies. Much as they sometimes improve social contradictions, the mass media might at other times aggravate such contradictions.

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[77] In many ways, such "objectification-reification" of social phenomena is inherent in the positivist project (and, indeed, in the entire broader discourse of modernism). It is spawned by what Jacques Ellul calls the "technological ethic." See his *The Technological Society*, translated from the French by John Wilkinson (New York, NY: Vintage Books, September 1967, [1964]). It should be cautioned that opposition to the "objectification-reification" of social phenomena does not necessarily share the sentimental and nostalgic longing for the romanticized virtues of pre-industrial society whose pedigree can be traced to the Victorian era. For an overview of the origins of this nostalgic tradition see Herbert L. Sussman, *Victorians and the Machine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968).

[78] Oran Young, *Systems of Political Science* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968): p. 60.

[79] Nicholas Abercrombie, *Television and Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996): p. 140. The inadequacy of the Hypodermic Needle Model was exposed in a landmark study on voter choices in 1944. See Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet, *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Campaign* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1968 [1944]).

1.1.5. *Structural Functionalism*

"Modern societies are and must be futurist: they claim to know in advance what they will be like, and technicians are inclined to be even more irritated by the resistance of men than by that of things."

Raymond Aron, *Marxism and the Existentialists*

Following in the footsteps of Parsons, Gabriel Almond developed, throughout his work, a paradigmatic[80] formulation of a functional approach to the study of political systems in developing countries. According to the approach developed by Almond and his associates, not only the structural and institutional components of political systems are analyzed but also the function of such institutional or structural trappings within the context of the system as a whole. It is based on an inputs-outputs analysis of the functions of political systems. For instance, Almond and Coleman imputed an important role to input functions of political systems – namely, political socialization and recruitment, interest-articulation, interest-aggregation and political communication – in differentiating the stages of political development in non-Western societies. The outputs – namely, rule-making, rule application and rule adjudication – represent the mechanisms through which the political system interacts with the environment.[81]

In another landmark study on the trajectory of state-making, Almond and Powell outlined a theoretical position which distinguishes between three main stages of political evolution: i.e.,

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[80] The term "paradigm" is commonly used in reference to a dominant way of thinking in a certain field of research. It was popularized in the early 1960s by Thomas Kuhn in his seminal book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd Edition (New York, NY: The New American Library, 1970, [1962]). This work has been so much cited by social scientists writing about method and philosophy of the social sciences that it has become the *locus classicus* of writings on method in social science. An anthology tracing the influence of Kuhn's book in the social sciences can be found in G. Gutting, ed., *Paradigms and Revolutions* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980). However, the term has since been used in a wide, and sometimes contradictory, variety of ways – a fact that later led Kuhn himself to lament "having totally lost control of it" (Thomas Kuhn, "The Natural and the Human Sciences," in David R. Hiley, James F. Bohman, and Richard Shusterman, eds., *The Interpretive Turn: Philosophy, Science, Culture* [Ithaca, NY; and London: Cornell University Press, 1991]: p. 22). A common understanding that runs through most of these usages is that of a systematic body of basic assumptions, organizing concepts, units of analysis, and propositions that shape research in a given area of inquiry. It should be noted here that in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and later in *The Essential Tension* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1971), Kuhn advanced the notion of "sets of puzzles" which serve as preludes to paradigms. In addition to the one offered by Kuhn in Chapter V of his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, an in-depth exploration into the meaning of the term "paradigm" can be found in Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, Enlarged Edition (New York, NY: Free Press, 1968): pp. 69-72.
[81] Gabriel A. Almond and James S. Coleman, eds., *The Politics of the Developing Areas* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1960).

primitive, traditional and modern systems. Formulated on a high level of abstraction, this articulation characterizes politics in primitive systems as being subject to kinship relations, dominated by a "diffuse, parochial culture," and embodying a "minimum of structural differentiation." Almond and Powell also noted that, in traditional societies, members of various communities are subjected to specialized, governmental, or "output," structures – a fact that contributes to the emergence of a "subject culture." This is in contradistinction with modern systems characterized by both output, i.e., governmental, and input, i.e., political, structures, exemplified by "participant" modes of political culture.[82]

By adumbrating a machine-like view of polities and societies in terms of holistic structures and subsystems, structural functionalism sought to formulate a model amenable for the comparative analysis of social and political phenomena. The underlying assumption is that, notwithstanding the uniqueness of their historical experiences, the distinctiveness of their institutional structures, and cultural differences, polities perform similar political functions. By analyzing the different and distinct ways in which different societies perform analogous political tasks, structural functionalism invited analysts "to fill in the terms in an equation, having presumably mastered the rudiments of political diagnosis by learning what the equation is."[83]

But the universalizing discourse extolled by structural functionalism was undergirded by a "false universalism" for the universal qualities it proposed were relentlessly ethnocentric and, therefore, advanced simulacra of reality guilty of obfuscating the rich diversity of political expressions and experiences in the world. In this context, Leonard Binder has lambasted the structural functionalist approach for its ethnocentricity as it tends, much like liberal modernization theory, to generalize the broad patterns of political activity in Western societies. Third World countries are assumed to evolve to become more sophisticated along Western lines.[84]

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[82] Almond and Powell, *op. cit.*
[83] Alexander J. Groth, "Structural Functionalism and Political Development: Three Problems," *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (September 1970): p. 485.
[84] See Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1988), esp. Chapter 2: "The Natural History of Development Theory, with a Discordant Note on the Middle East," pp. 24-84.

For all its avowed claims to scientific rigor,[85] precision and exactitude, structural functionalism has been found to be flawed on several counts. By the 1970s, interest in structural functionalism declined precipitously after it had taken battering from all sides.[86] From within, a devastating critique was directed by a former student of Parsons, Harold Garfinkel, who advanced an interpretivist approach known as ethnomethodology. Influenced by the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl,[87] Garfinkel privileged the individual rather than holistic systems. He formulated a method of interpretation where the inter-subjective meaning of social action is embedded in and interwoven with the particulars of the context and the intentions of the actors.[88]

From without, blistering attacks were launched by those authors who condemned the political biases that lie at the heart of structural functionalism's obsession with equilibrium, stability and survival.[89] One author has identified

> "three basic problems of structural functionalism which also bedevil other attempts at making the study of politics more rigorous. These problems are terminological ambiguity; indeterminacy of relationships among 'things political'; and confusions of fact with values."[90]

More importantly, the structural functionalist approach is funereally static as it does not take stock of internal competition for power within the political system. By emphasizing systemic conformity, it loses sight of the dynamic forces of politics. Unlike machines and biological systems, the body politic is a dynamic entity where countervailing forces, fluidity and even

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[85] Almond maintains that structural functionalism "does specify the elements of the polity in such a form as may ultimately make possible statistical and perhaps mathematical formulation" (Almond and Coleman, *op. cit.*, p. 59).

[86] Notwithstanding the fact that structural-functionalism has lost its allure as a dynamic theoretical force in the social sciences, a small number of authors still believe in the utility of a reformulated structural-functional model. One such author argues that "if reformulated in more precise terms, the structural-functional model may also provide a guide in formalizing its successors. Seen in these new terms, structural-functionalism appears as a theory of state-society relations, as well as potentially a theory of the state." Ruth Lane, "Structural-Functionalism Reconsidered: A Proposed Research Model," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (July 1994): pp. 461-477.

[87] For an engaging and critical introduction to Edmund Husserl's philosophy, see Dermot Moran, *Edmund Husserl: Founder of Phenomenology* (Oxford: Polity Press, 2005).

[88] See Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1967).

[89] For examples, see A. James Gregor, "Political Science and the Uses of Functional Analysis," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (June 1968): pp. 425-439; and Kingsley Davis, "The Myth of Functional Analysis as a Special Method in Sociology and Anthropology," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 24, No. 6 (December 1959): pp. 757-772.

[90] Groth, *op. cit.*, p. 486.

the whims and caprices of politicians shape the political sphere. According to Jean Blondel, structural functionalism does not take stock of the aims of the political agents and depends on uncritical normative assumptions as to what functions are.[91] Moreover, structural functionalism's obsession with homeostatic equilibrium presents it with difficulties to account for dysfunctions and radical transformations in the political system such as revolutions, civil disobedience and riots. These are reduced to anomic outbreaks rather than expressions of socio-economic and political conflicts embedded in the system.

1.1.6. Revisionist Modernism

"Oedipus:

Is the king near by? Will he come in time
To find me still alive, my mind still clear?

Antigone:
Tell me what it is you have in mind!

Oedipus:
To give him now, in return for his great kindness,
The blessing that I promised I would give."

Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*

The overly optimistic prognoses of the early proponents of liberal modernization theory, which predicted that newly-independent Third World countries would experience the same patterns of economic growth and political and social stability as their Western predecessors, foundered on the rock of the actual pattern of events. Real-life experiences in many Third World countries unfolded in a manner that perplexed liberal modernization theorists. The incessant recurrence of military coups, inter-state wars, internal repression, civil strife, and rampant corruption effectively debunked the notion of a smooth path to Westernization or "diffusion" of Western culture and gave rise to a series of critical challenges and rejoinders

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[91] Jean Blondel, "An Agenda for Comparative Government," *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Bind 11, No. 1 (1988), online version at: http://www.tidsskrift.dk/visning.jsp?markup=&print=no&id=95385; accessed on Tuesday, July 01, 2008.

which placed a high premium on stability – political, social and economic – over a potentially disruptive democracy.[92]

Two approaches have emerged within this "revisionist modernist" outlook: one gave prominence to building a strong state, while the other drew attention to the complexity of the relationship between tradition and modernity. Perhaps the most prominent exponents of the "strong state" approach were Samuel P. Huntington and David E. Apter, whereas the Rudolphs and Reinhard Bendix emerged as the most important exponents of the second.

1.1.6.1. *The Politics of Order*

In seeking to identify the factors that explain cohesion in postcolonial societies otherwise fraught with divisive tendencies, Huntington advanced a view which saw that "the primary need" in Third World countries was "the accumulation and concentration of power, not its dispersion."[93] He argued that the resilience of the political institutionalization process is essentially a function of the capacity of government to contain and respond to the cross-pressures exerted on it. "[G]overnmental institutions," he averred, "derive their legitimacy and authority not from the extent to which they represent the interests of the people or of any other group, but to the extent to which they have distinct interests of their own apart from all other groups."[94] The weakness and/or rigidity of the institutions of newly independent countries inhibit their ability to accommodate the multiple demands they face or to withstand the corresponding diverse pressures. The cumulative effects of disenchantment with the new order and frustrated social mobilization exert undue pressures on the infant political institutions which ultimately lead to "political decay."[95]

Huntington advanced the notion of "praetorian society" which exhibits high levels of politicization of social forces and institutions. In such a society, political power is fragmented. "It comes in many forms and in small quantities," he declared. "Authority over

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[92] For instance, sociologist S. N. Eisenstadt advanced the notion of the "breakdown" of modernization. See his *Modernization: Protest and Change* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1966).
[93] Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968): p. 138.
[94] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[95] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

the system as a whole is transitory."[96] With in such a scheme of things, Huntington argued, the armed forces play a progressive role. He observed that, "paradoxically but understandably, the more backward a society is, the more progressive the role of its military; the more advanced a society becomes, the more conservative and reactionary becomes the role of the military."[97]

Huntington further saw political parties as instrumental in securing the authority, strength and legitimacy of Third World states by channeling the demands of social forces. He suggested that, to this end, ruling parties in these countries resort to both "fair means and foul." As their strength grows, "parties become the buckle which binds one social force to another and which creates a basis for loyalty and identity transcending more parochial groupings."[98] For Huntington, what matters is not whether a single-party or a multi-party system emerges in a certain developing country, but rather the overall strength and ability of the party system to adapt to changing conditions on the ground.

Similarly, in recognizing the problematic relationship between democracy and development, David E. Apter articulated a definition of development which identified four characteristics of this process: differentiation (denoting growing specialization), stability (denoting the capacity to make decisions without disruption), choice (denoting an increasing flexibility and ability to innovate) and emulation (denoting the imitation of industrialized societies).[99] But regardless of the nature of political systems, stability and order, not democratic governance, remain paramount.[100]

Apter expounded a typology in which he distinguished between two types of political systems: the "reconciliation system" (also known as the "secular libertarian model"), and the

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[96] *Ibid.*, pp. 196-197.
[97] *Ibid.*, p. 221. This shift towards an emphasis on the military brass as the guardian of political order and modernization was also evident in a series of studies by several political scientists which made the case that in the absence of independent entrepreneurial elites in newly independent countries, the only sector with the organizational skills capable of bringing about modernization is the military. For an example of works inspired by this theme, see the collection of essays in John J. Johnson, ed., *The Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1962).
[98] Huntington, *op.cit.*, p. 405. In this argument, Huntington echoes Sigmund Neumann who saw the political party as "the great intermediary which links social forces and ideologies to official government institutions and relates them to political action within the larger political community." See his *Modern Political Parties* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1956): p. 397.
[99] David E. Apter, *Some Conceptual Approaches to the Study of Modernization* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1968).
[100] David E. Apter, "Comparative Politics: Old and New," in Robert E. Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingmann, eds., *A New Handbook of Political Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996): pp. 372-397.

"mobilization system" (also known as the "sacred collectivity model").[101] The first is based on the classical Western conceptions of democratic political community and free market economy. As such, it possesses two main capacities: the ability to reason and the ability to identify self-interest. Government in such a system plays a mediatory role which seeks to reconcile diverse societal interests.[102] On the other hand, the mobilization system is an ethical or moral political community which is presumed to embody superior political ideals.[103] It tends to be highly coercive. It is based on the former socialist bloc's conceptions of a centralized, patriarchal state arrogating to itself the right to intervene in all aspects of social life and a command economy. As such, it is more disciplined than the reconciliation system and stresses the unity, rather than diversity, of society.[104]

Apter argued that in the Western world, development represented a politico-economic synthesis involving a reciprocal interaction between economic growth and the expansion of political democracy. Such a mutually reinforcing synthesis cannot be replicated in most developing countries. Apter acknowledged that the vehement drive to replicate the capitalist modes of rapid growth in developing countries is fraught with severe social and economic dislocations and inequalities. This led him to see the mobilization system as a highly suitable vehicle for transforming developing countries into steadily growing economies. Yet he also maintained that the mobilization system tends to produce its own dilemmas and quandaries which eventually impel it to move, progressively and incrementally, in the direction of a reconciliation system.[105]

1.1.6.2. The Dialectics of Tradition and Modernity

In his probing search for the requisites of development, Apter, nevertheless, expressed some misgivings about the possibility of cultural diffusion and the superimposition of Western standards on non-Western societies. Herein, Apter was echoing the views of other revisionist modernization theorists who stressed the need to shift the focus of analysis towards the ways in which social traditions persisted and modified modernity. They rejected the Manichean

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[101] See David E. Apter, *The Politics of Modernization* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1965): p. 25.
[102] *Ibid.*, pp. 398-399.
[103] *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.
[104] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[105] *Ibid.*, pp. 449 and 460.

notions of liberal modernism which viewed tradition and modernity as polar opposites and conceived of their relationship in zero-sum terms.[106] The upshot of this argument is that traditional forms not only survive modernity but also help set contextual parameters for the process of modernization. Ultimately, this dialectical interaction results not in a single but rather multiple trajectories of modernization for developing societies. This shift was influenced by research in social anthropology in the late 1960s which found that tradition and modernity are interdependent rather than analytically distinct categories. As put by one social anthropologist of the time, there are "continuities both of process and, in part, of content, suggesting the relevance of pre-state forms of organization to the political development of modernizing nations."[107]

Exponents of this approach criticized the concept of tradition propounded by liberal modernization theorists as being too monolithic and broad to the extent that it precludes the possibility of a meaningful comparative analysis between societies. As such, they evoked problematically vague and generalized notions that do not "allow for a multiplicity of traditions in a spatial as well as a temporal sense."[108] As Randall and Theobald point out, "'Kung bushmen, the Abbasid Caliphate, the Kingdom of Ashanti and Mogul India are all traditional societies but appear to have little in common except that they are not modern."[109]

One important consequence of this line of analysis is a view of a dialectical relationship between tradition and modernity. These two categories are no longer viewed as mutually exclusive. In a landmark study, Rudolph and Rudolph analyze "variations in the meaning of modernity and tradition and suggest how they infiltrate and transform each other." They argue that the assumption that conceives of tradition and modernity as being "radically contradictory rests on a misdiagnosis of tradition as it is found in traditional societies, a misunderstanding of modernity as it is found in modern societies and a misapprehension of

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[106] Revisionist assaults on the traditional-modern dichotomy that lies at the heart of liberal modernism abound. For examples, see Edward Shils, "Tradition," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (April 1971): pp. 122-159; S. N. Eisenstadt, "Some Observations on the Dynamics of Tradition," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 11, No. 4, Special Issue on Cultural Innovation (October 1969): pp. 451-475; and Joseph R. Gusfield, "Tradition and Modernity: Misplaced Polarities in the Study of Social Change," in Jason L. Finkle and Richard W. Gable, eds., *Political Development and Social Change*, 2nd Edition (New York, NY: Wiley, 1971): pp. 15-26.
[107] J. Vincent, "Anthropology and Political Development," in Colin Leys, ed., *Politics and Change in Developing Countries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969): p. 59.
[108] Tipps, *op. cit.*, p. 213.
[109] Vicky Randall and Robin Theobald, *Political Change and Underdevelopment: A Critical Introduction to Third World Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1985): p 35.

the relationship between them."[110] In making their case, they specifically examine how the politicization of the caste system in India bolstered traditional values and authority while shaping the modern political participation process in the post-independence period.

Referring to the adaptive capacity of the Indian caste system, through its ability to translate social solidarity into vote banks, amid the transformations and vicissitudes unleashed by the march of modernity, the Rudolphs observe:

> "If tradition and modernity are seen as continuous rather than separated by an abyss, if they are dialectically rather dichotomously related, and if internal variations are attended to and taken seriously, then those sectors of traditional society that contain or express potentialities for change from dominant norms and structures become critical for understanding the nature and processes of modernization."[111]

In a similar vein, Reinhard Bendix demonstrates how traditional relationships may actually act to facilitate, rather than counteract, modernization.[112] In his explication of the greater integration of state and society, signified by the upsurge of loyalty to the modern nation-state, Bendix focuses on the expansion of citizenship and rights to political participation.[113] He argues that, "A core element of nation-building is the codification of the rights and duties of all adults who are classified as citizens. The question is how exclusively or inclusively citizenship is defined."[114] This codification of rights and duties is part of a broader shift towards a modern state structure characterized with the non-arbitrary exercise of power and the creation of meritocratic bureaucracies.[115] Bendix is notably wary of the fallacies of linear modernization theory which envisions a universal socio-historical model holding across different cultural and national contexts. He maintains that emerging nations follow distinct

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[110] Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1968): p. 3.
[111] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[112] Reinhard Bendix, "Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (April 1967): pp. 292-346. More recently, Robert W. Compton, Jr., has highlighted the interplay between tradition and modernity by showing how political elites in East Asia sought to legitimize their authority through the use of traditional and modern symbols. See his *East Asian Democratization: Impact of Globalization, Culture and Economy* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2000).
[113] Bendix, *Nation-Building and Citizenship*.
[114] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[115] *Ibid.*, p. 194.

lines of development and emphasizes the role of specific cultural characteristics and historical conditions in shaping structural outcomes such as the state.[116]

1.1.6.3. <u>Toward a Critique of Revisionist Modernism</u>

Revisionist approaches to modernization theory sought to prune the cruder, if not even naïve, assumptions out of the modernization mode of theorizing. The development trajectory was not as predetermined or predictable as it was assumed to be by liberal modernization theorists. However, revisionists did not reject modernity altogether but rather sought to salvage it. A search for a Western *mathesis universalis* of human and social affairs, a universal calling, still lies at the heart of these perspectives. This is evident in the work of Rudolph and Rudolph who write that,

> "'modernity' assumes that local ties and parochial perspectives give way to universal commitments and cosmopolitan attitudes; that the truths of utility, calculation, and science take precedence over those of emotions, the sacred, and the non-rational; that the individual rather than the group be the primary unit of society and politics; that the associations in which men live and work be based on choice not birth; that mastery rather than fatalism orient their attitude toward the material and human environment; that identity be chosen and achieved, not ascribed and affirmed; that work be separated from family, residence, and community in bureaucratic organizations; that manhood be delayed while youth prepares for its tasks and responsibilities; that age, even when it is prolonged, surrender much of its authority to youth and men some of theirs to women; that mankind cease to live as races apart by recognizing in society and politics its common humanity; that government cease to be a manifestation of powers beyond

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[116] A host of other writers have also made a case for the dialectic interplay between tradition and modernity. For instance, in his analysis of the Nigerian Civil War of 1967-1970, Paul Anber highlighted the fact that the process of modernization in newly-independent nations does not inevitably chip away at tribal loyalties. Instead, the uneven pace of development could well end up stimulate or intensify tribal identifications. Paul Anber, "Modernisation and Political Disintegration: Nigeria and the Ibos," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (September 1967): pp. 163-179.

man and out of the reach of ordinary men by basing itself on participation, consent, and public accountability."[117]

To use a Husserlian phrase, developing countries were still expected to be motivated to "Europeanize themselves" whereas Europeans were never expected to "Indianize, for example."[118]

By emphasizing the primacy of stability, the government's decision making processes and the openness of its policies were largely left out of the picture. Huntington's primary concern, for instance, did not lie with the content of government and its policies but rather with the mere fact that it enjoyed stability and the extent to which it ensured political order. On the other hand, by exploring the adaptability of traditional institutions, revisionist modernization perspectives were able to capture the continued relevance of forms of communalism which earlier formulations of modernization theory considered to be obsolescent. Yet, questions have been raised about whether the Rudolphs' investigative forays into the caste system "overstate the extent of change in a democratic, egalitarian direction."[119] Others have decried the strength of the scholarly current "which denies significant structural alterations in modernizing India" and questioned whether India's caste system can any longer be described as traditional.[120]

Moreover, notwithstanding their departure from diffusionism, revisionist modernization perspectives have faced a barrage of criticisms focusing on their inability to occasion a radical shift away from, or a rupture with, the prevailing ambience of modernization theory. One such critical assault came from dependency theorists who identified the fundamental weakness of the modernization approaches in their disregard of the economic dimension. Couching their trenchant critiques in a Marxist and neo-Marxist idiom, they shifted the

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[117] Rudolph and Rudolph, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.
[118] Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, translated by David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970): p. 288.
[119] Randall and Theobald, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
[120] See Richard G. Fox, "Avatars of Indian Research," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (January 1970): pp. 59-72.

primary focus of analysis of the underdevelopment problematique to the incorporation of 'peripheral' Third World economies into the 'world capitalist system.'[121]

1.1.7. Redeeming the Primordial

"The evidence of current human affairs seems to suggest that the House of Muumbi is where man really lives, that his essential tribalism is so deeply-rooted in the condition of his existence that it will keep cropping out of whatever is laid over it, like trees forcing their way through rocks on mountainsides a mile high."

Harold R. Isaacs, *Idols of the Tribe*

Revisionist modernist efforts to salvage modernization theory inadvertently underscored serious shortcomings, theoretical vulnerabilities and internal contradictions in the then-dominant modes of theorizing on nation-building and political development, in general. In the early 1970s, new vistas for research on nation-building were opened by a growing interest in the concept of "primordial attachments," which was originally developed by sociologist Edward A. Shils in his attempt to plot the topography of different social bonds in modern societies. Shils argued that the susceptibility of modern societies to fall prey to serious communal divisions stems from the "ineffable significance attributed to ties of blood."[122] Such primordial attachments constitute wellsprings of identity. They address "man's need to be in contact with the point and moment of his origin and to experience a sense of affinity with those who share that origin."[123] In other words, primordial attachments as they figure in the discourse of the primordialists provide a social solidarity reminiscent of what Emile

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[121] Literature in the dependency theory tradition is quite extensive. For works of leading exponents of this theory consult Andre Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical Studies of Chile and Brazil* (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1969); Theotonio Dos Santos, "The Crisis of Development Theory and the Problem of Dependence in Latin America," in H. Bernstein, ed., *Underdevelopment and Development* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1973): pp. 57-69; and Fernando Henrique Cardosso and Enzo Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*, translated by M. M. Urquidi (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979). For a critical assessment of dependency theory, see Philip J. O'Brien, "A critique of Latin American theories of dependency," in Ivor Oxaal, Tony Barnett and David Booth, eds., *Beyond the sociology of development: Economy and society in Latin America and Africa* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975): pp. 7-27.

[122] Edward A. Shils, "Primordial, Personal, Sacred and Civil Ties: Some Particular Observations on the Relationships of Sociological Research and Theory," *British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (June 1957): p. 142.

[123] Edward Shils, "Color, the Universal Intellectual Community, and the Afro-Asian Intellectual," in John Hope Franklin, ed., *Color and Race* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1968): p. 4.

Durkheim describes as a "collective consciousness."[124] But beyond contributing to the individual's sense of security, they also give rise to feelings that produce resistance to assimilation in the impersonal culture of modern life.

Following in the footsteps of Shils, Clifford Geertz propounded a theoretically refined stance which stresses the resilience of "primordial attachments" or bonds that transcend kinship, such as race, language, tribe, region, religion and custom, and how they sometimes stand at odds with various aspects of modern society. Newly-independent states are "abnormally susceptible to serious disaffection based on primordial attachments"[125] that are not necessarily mediated by blood. Geertz argued that these attachments provide

> "the 'givens' … of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language … and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech and custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves. One is bound to one's kinsman, one's neighbour, one's fellow believer, *ipso facto*; as the result not merely of personal affection, practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself."[126]

In such a formulation, primordial attachments are presumed to be involuntary, automatic and natural. They stir up "feelings of intense solidarity and are capable of inducing selfless behavior on the part of group members."[127] This has led some to place them beyond the realm of the rational.[128] At a certain level, and by dint of their potential to excite in human

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[124] Emile Durkheim introduced the notion of "collective consciousness" in the course of his discussion of the concept of "mechanical solidarity" in his *The Division of Labour in Society*, translated by W. D. Halls (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1984 [1893]).

[125] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1973): p. 259.

[126] Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Policies in the New States," in Clifford Geertz, ed., *Old Societies and New States: The Quest of Modernity in Asia and Africa* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1963): p. 109.

[127] Donald L. Horowitz, "The Primordialists," in Daniele Conversi, ed., *Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World: Walker Connor and the study of nationalism* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 2004): pp. 74.

[128] See, for instance, Edna Bonacich, "Class Approaches to Ethnicity and Race," *Insurgent Sociologist*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Fall 1980): p. 10. Likewise, H. Orlando Patterson classifies primordial attachments in "that area of experience which Weber designated as non-rational." See his "The Nature, Causes, and Implications of Ethnic Identification," in C. Fried, ed., *Minorities: Community and Identity* (Berlin, Germany: Dahlem Konferenzen, 1983): p. 26.

beings a complex mix of passions, myths, emotions, unquestioning devotion and beliefs shared by members of a given community, they "come to acquire a power and control over humans that they elevate to the level of the sacred, in much the same way as they develop and maintain their beliefs about God and religion."[129] Yet, the potency and strength of these attachments are both relative and subjective, varying with person, space and time. Geertz notes that,

> "The general strength of such primordial bonds, and the types of them that are important, differ from person to person, from society to society, and from time to time. But for virtually every person, in every society, at almost all times, some attachments seem to flow from a sense of natural – some would say spiritual – affinity than from social interaction."[130]

Notwithstanding the relativism of primordial attachments, there is an assumption underlying Geertz's articulation of primordialism that sees them as being primary or a part of human nature. The underlying postulate is that they are ensconced *a priori* in the human mind and psyche. Geertz, who studied newly-independent states in Asia and Africa following World War II, cautions that,

> "what the new states – or their leaders – must somehow contrive to do as far as primordial attachments are concerned is not, as they have so often tried to do, wish them out of existence by belittling them or even denying their reality…. They must reconcile them with the emerging civil order by divesting them of their legitimizing force … by neutralizing the apparatus of the state in relationship to them, and by channeling discontent arising out of their dislocation into properly political rather than parapolitical forms of expression."[131]

The notion that primordial attachments are biologically and genetically fixed has found its most fervent expression in the socio-biological explanation of nationalism articulated by Pierre L. van den Berghe, who argued that relations between ethnic groups mirror fundamental bio-social processes. Van den Berghe, who sought to refine primordialism from

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[129] Anton Allahar, "The Social Construction of Primordial Identities," in Sean P. Hier and B. Singh Bolaria, eds., *Identity and Belonging: Rethinking Race and Ethnicity in Canadian Society* (Toronto, Ontario: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 2006): p. 33.
[130] Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture*, pp. 259-260.
[131] *Ibid.*, p. 277.

the inside, criticized "classical" primordialists for "asserting the fundamental nature of ethnic sentiment without suggesting an explanation of why that should be the case."[132] Van den Berghe's socio-biological approach underscores the centrality of lineage and descent in defining ethnic groups, viewed as mere extended kinships conditioned both genetically and environmentally.

> "The propensity to favor kin and fellows is deeply rooted in our genes, but our genetic programs are highly flexible, and our specific behaviors are adaptive responses to a wide set of environmental circumstances. Ethnicity is *both* primordial and situational."[133]

The socio-biological flair characterizing van den Berghe's approach has also colored the work of Donald L. Horowitz who defines ethnic ties as kinship ties and ethnic groups as "super-families."[134]

The ontological weight attributed to primordial attachments as being ascribed and innate has exposed primordialists to attack by social scientists who castigated the a-historical and essentialist bias inherent in primordialism. "Primordialism," says Donald L. Horowitz, "has become the straw man of ethnic studies," and its proponents have become "the most caricatured and most maligned for their naïveté in supposing that ethnic affiliations are given rather than chosen, immutable rather than malleable, and inevitably productive of conflict."[135] The critics pointed out that since primordial attachments are generated in a historical process of social interaction then there is nothing that negates the possibility that they could be superseded by other attachments.[136] In the view of Joseph R. Gusfield,

> "The boundaries that delineate the "us" and "them" are not "givens" but are generated out of what people are attentive to and how they conceive the bounds of the group. Communities are not "given" as national types that support or prevent

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[132] Pierre van den Berghe, *The Ethnic Phenomenon* (New York, NY: Elsevier North-Holland, 1981): p. 17.
[133] *Ibid.*, p. 261, italics in original.
[134] Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985).
[135] Horowitz, "The Primordialists," *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.
[136] See, for example, Bonacich, *op. cit.*

the operation of a nation-state. Separatism is emergent, and conflicts are neither inevitable nor probable."[137]

Others, like Jack David Eller and Reed M. Coughlan, questioned the notions of primordial attachments as being endowed with emotional and affective content; given and fixed; and ineffable and non-amenable to explanation. They argued, instead, that social phenomena like ethnicity cannot be embedded only in the passions and emotions generated by primordial attachments because "emotion is not necessarily or ordinarily primordial but has a clear and analyzable sociogenesis."[138] While banishing the term "primordial" to the realm of the "unanalytical and vacuous … unsociological and thoroughly unscientific," they called for "dropping it from the sociological lexicon."[139]

While highlighting some of the limitations of the primordialist approach, the critics fall short of providing their canons with ample theoretical and logical ammunition sufficient for dismissing its general claims altogether. Like all other social science approaches, primordialism is admittedly not without its own flaws and problems. Yet, these limitations do not amount to a situation of total crisis. Primordialism, as an approach that stresses the workings of sub-national loyalties and social solidarities operative in the collective consciousness of communities, is still capable of furnishing an epistemological and conceptual tool informing and opening up a unique space for inquiry into social and political action. As is always the case, social and political scientists are naturally called upon to come up with coherent explanations of the continued potency of forces of fragmentation and the divisive tendencies that preclude the molding of diverse populations into harmonious and/or single political communities. In this regard, the promises of primordialism can be rehabilitated by recasting the concept into forms that would satisfy the critics' strictures against the presumed essentialist naturalness of primordial attachments. A reformulated notion of primordialism that takes into account the social constructedness of primordial attachments has a wider analytical scope than the original, absolute and static formulation and assists in moving political research forward. By construing primordial attachments as a social reality, the constructivist stance rescues primordialism from the exaggerated claims of essentialism which "suggests that there is one authentic set of characteristics which all share

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[137] Joseph R. Gusfield, "Primordialism and Nationality," *Society*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (January 1996): p. 55.
[138] Jack David Eller and Reed M. Coughlan, "The Poverty of Primordialism: The Demystification of Ethnic Attachments," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (April 1993): p. 201.
[139] *Ibid*., pp. 183-184.

and which do not alter across time."[140] Accordingly, primordial attachments are latent capacities or potentialities that manifest themselves or are realized when there bearers respond to external forces and factors. Thusly reconfigured, the constructivist stance charts the course of comprehending the extraordinary durability of familial, religious, ethnic, tribal and other primordial affinities which continue to figure prominently in our times as more than anthropological relics in modernizing systems.[141]

Viewing primordial identity and attachments as socially constructed realities takes into account how the intersection of present circumstances and developments with the baggage of history provides a locus for centripetal and/or centrifugal dynamics. In this sense, there is no

> "rule that states that all ethnic groups, old and new, must have primordial links with the same degree of intensity among their members; or that symbolic identity is equally useful to all groups and individuals at all times ... for in this rendering social reality is seen as an entirely socially negotiated matter."[142]

Within such a scheme of things, the "elements of social construction are one side of the emergence of separatist ideals and national types. How they are employed and how they affect both destructiveness and separatism depends considerably on the institutional context in which they operate."[143] The concept of identity, in the discourse of the constructivist stance, therefore, embodies intercalated moments of permanence and change, stability and flux, durability and becoming. In the words of Madan Sarup, "identity is a construction, a consequence of a process of interaction between people, institutions and practices."[144]

Theoretical accents of the primordial kind have left their imprint on a wave of theorizing on nation-building and nationhood. As it happened, these attempts came at a time when the dominance of positivist, empirical and behavioralist approaches to the social sciences was coming slowly under siege from modes of theorizing inspired by alternative philosophical and epistemological perspectives such as critical theory, phenomenology, post-structuralism

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[140] Kathryn Woodward, *Identity and Difference* (London: Sage Publications, 1997): p. 11.
[141] Patricia Springborg discusses the constitutive role of primordial bonds in the ancient society of the polis and their extra-ordinary durability in the modern political society of the Mediterranean basin in her "Politics, Primordialism, and Orientalism: Marx, Aristotle and the Myth of the Gemeinschaft," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 80, No.1 (March 1986): 185-211.
[142] Allahar, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
[143] Gusfield, "Primordialism and Nationality," p. 56.
[144] Madan Sarup, *Identity, culture and the post-modern world* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996): p. 11.

and hermeneutics. These perspectives challenged earlier formulations of social scientific theorizing, questioned their basic premises and presuppositions, and claimed to provide more adequate tools for understanding social and political phenomena in late modernity.[145] Concerns about the growing tendencies toward social disintegration, segmentation and lack of cohesion between social units in late capitalist societies revived interest in the distinction made by British sociologist David Lockwood in the course of his assault on functionalist theories between social integration and system integration. Whereas the former directs attention towards the concordant or discordant relationships between individual actors and their attitudes toward society, the latter concerns the functioning of, as well as orderly or conflictual interaction between, institutions and mechanisms.[146]

Elaborating on the ebb of optimism permeating early modernization theory, Walker Connor points out that literature in the field of nation-building virtually did not take ethnic diversity into account. He criticizes the leading theoreticians of nation-building for tending "to slight, if not totally ignore, problems associated with ethnic diversity."[147] While emphasizing how mobilization by self-differentiating ethnic groups poses challenges to the nation-state, Connor also argues that ethnicity constitutes "a step in the process of nation-formation."[148] In his recognition and accentuation of the relationship between ethnicity and nationhood, Connor is indebted to Max Weber who had hinted at the correspondence between ethnic groups and nations, although he pointed out that "the sentiment of ethnic solidarity does not by itself make a 'nation.'"[149] Yet, Connor also challenges and problematizes the assimilationist optimism that resides *a priori* in the discourse of modernity, arguing that cultural awareness

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[145] Douglas Kellner, "Critical Theory and the Crisis of Social Theory," *Sociological Perspectives*, Vol. 33, No. 1, Critical Theory (Spring 1990): p. 11. Kellner has also discussed the ferment precipitated by these discourses and the challenges they posed to social science methods premised on enlightenment rationality in his "Postmodernism as Social Theory: Some Problems and Challenges," *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 5, Nos. 2-3 (June 1988): pp. 240-269.

[146] See David Lockwood, "Social Integration and System Integration," in George K. Zollchan and W. Hirsch, eds., *Explorations in Social Change* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964): pp. 244-257. For a sympathetic exposition which seeks to draw attention to some ambiguities and shortcomings in Lockwood's distinction between social and system integration, see N. Mouzelis, "Social and System Integration: Some Reflections on a Fundamental Distinction," *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (December 1974): pp. 395-409.

[147] Walker Connor, "Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?" *World Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (April 1972): p. 319. See also his "The Politics of Ethnonationalism," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 27 No. 1 (1973): pp. 1-21.

[148] Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994 [1972]): p. 102.

[149] Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1978 [1922]): p. 395.

prompts individuals to simultaneously identify themselves more and more with their own groups and accentuate contrasts with other groups.[150]

The quandaries expressed by Connor about the possibility of assimilation animated the work of Arend Lijphart, who pioneered integration theory. Lijphart distinguishes between homogeneous societies, where interactions within society bring about further homogenization, and plural societies, where interactions tend to produce tensions. Yet despite his appreciation of plural states, he is skeptical about the desirability of assimilation. "Clear boundaries between the segments of a plural society," he affirms, "have the advantage of limiting mutual contacts and consequently of limiting the chances of ever-present potential antagonisms to erupt into actual hostility."[151]

Countering such a pessimistic bent towards the possibilities of integration, Anthony D. Smith seeks in his theory of nationalism, which strongly emphasizes the ethnic aspect of nations, to redeem the assimilationist élan of earlier modernization theorists.[152] He stresses the role played by a "Scientific State" that forges ahead with the effort to "homogenize the population within its boundaries for administrative purposes."[153] Throughout his work, Smith proceeds from a primordialist postulate of ethnicity, that is, that all modern nations have evolved out of age-old ethnic groups as a result of the efforts of determined nationalists in the context of necessary historical conditions. He remarks that,

> "Even for the most recently created states, ethnic homogeneity and cultural unity
> are paramount considerations. Even where their societies are genuinely 'plural'
> and there is an ideological commitment to pluralism and cultural toleration, the
> elites of the new states find themselves compelled by their own ideals and the
> logic of the ethnic situation, to forge new myths and symbols of their emergent
> nations and a new 'political culture' of anti colonialism and the post-colonial

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[150] Connor's misgivings about the desirability of cultural assimilation and homogenization dot his *Ethnonationalism*, where he surmises that increased contact between "two distinct and self-differentiating" communities sometimes does not reduce cultural fissures but is rather "apt to increase antagonism" (p. 21).

[151] Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977): p. 88.

[152] Smith sought to disentangle the concepts of nationalism and ethnicity in a series of works. These include: *Theories of Nationalism* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1971); *The Ethnic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); *State and Nation in the Third World* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1983); *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991); and *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1998).

[153] Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, p. 231.

(African or Asian) state. If the nation is to become a 'political community' on the Western territorial and civic model, it must, paradoxically, seek to create those myths of descent, those historical memories and that common culture which form the missing elements of their ethnic make-up, along with a mutual solidarity."[154]

Such theoretical formulations that privilege ethnicity have been attractive across the social sciences. They gained prominence in the wake of the ethnic conflagrations that attended the fall of the socialist bloc.[155] But in this line of analysis, religion and, by extension, sectarian identity, are reduced into a component of culture or an *a priori* cultural given rather than an independent or an intervening variable. In this study, I focus on a hitherto understudied aspect of state-making and nation-building. I bring the notion of sectarianism into understanding the historical trajectory of state-making and nation-building in Iraq. Obviously, sectarianism is treated here as an intervening variable in a causal mechanism. It is an entity that intervenes between certain triggering conditions or independent variables (such as political repression and intimidation, survival of traditional value systems, ideological dogmatism, and the failure to create genuine supra-communal movements that transcend sub-national identities) and the ultimate outcomes or dependent variables (in this case, the failure of homogeneity to take root in society and the stunted or anemic formation of a modern nation-state).

A shift to sectarianism, as a socially constructed, fluid and flexible socio-political phenomenon, would enhance the conceptual understanding of the emergence and development of the modern state in Iraq within the context of the social transformations engendered by the introduction into the Middle East of the Westphalian nation-state project following the fall of the Ottoman Empire. It would also allow the production of new knowledge about the stunted process of social integration which paved the way for the violent social convulsions that gripped the country following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and

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[154] Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 147.
[155] A summary of the voluminous output resulting from the spurt of research activity inspired by the growing interest in ethnicity is beyond the scope of this research. For examples, see Thomas H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto, 1993); Victor T. LeVine, "Conceptualizing 'Ethnicity' and 'Ethnic Conflict': A Controversy Revisited," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Summer 1997): pp. 45-75; Jack David Eller, *From Culture to Ethnicity to Conflict* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Hal B. Levine, "Reconstructing Ethnicity," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (June 1999): pp. 165-180; Tatu Vanhanen, "Domestic Ethnic Conflict and Ethnic Nepotism: A Comparative Analysis," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (1999): pp. 55-73; Ashutosh Varshney, "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society," *World Politics*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (April 2001): pp. 362-398; Bruce Gilley, "Against the Concept of Ethnic Conflict," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 6 (2004): pp. 1155-1166; and Henry E. Hale "Explaining Ethnicity," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (May 2004): pp. 458-485.

the concomitant struggles to reconstitute the communal bases of political power. An analysis of the intertwined and dialectic interplay between the trajectories of the emergence and development of the nation-state in Iraq, on the one hand, and the ebb and flow of sectarian sentiments, on the other, allows a better understanding of the integrative and disintegrative dynamics in modern Iraq away from the pitfalls of the haughty teleological metanarratives of modernity.[156] Inserting the largely neglected dimension of religion into the study of the emergence of nations has gained impetus by the publication of a landmark scholarly work by Adrian Hastings, who decried the existence of "major omissions in the modernist view. If due consideration of England and related nations, including the making of America, is one of them, the impact of religion in general and of the Bible in particular is another."[157] Likewise, the broader family of Political Science sub-disciplines has also seen a surge of interest in religion. Several scholars have, of late, taken the study of the increasing political significance of religion in international relations more seriously.[158] In a similar vein, this study seeks to contribute to rectifying this omission and help rescue the social scientific understanding of the trajectory of state- and nation-building from the throes of a hegemonic *weltanschauung* that is disposed to pay a scant attention to the role of religious factors, such as sectarianism, in the development of nation-states.

1.2. Sectarianism and the Politics of Identity in the Arab East

"The Lestrygonians and the Cyclops,
The angry Poseidon – do not fear them:
You will never find such as these on your path
if your thoughts remain lofty; if a fine
emotion touches your spirit and your body.
The Lestrygonians and the Cyclops,

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[156] In *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), Jean-François Lyotard denounces the totalizing urge of metanarratives as a discourse of legitimation divorced from the historically contingent nature of language. He declares that an "incredulity toward metanarratives" constitutes the defining feature of the postmodern drive to break free from the overextended claims of modernity.

[157] Adrain Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): p. 12.

[158] Examples include, Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1996); K. R. Dark, ed., *Religion and International Relations* (New York, NY: Palgrave Publishers, 2000); Fabio Petito and Pavlos Hatzopoulos, eds., *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile* (New York, NY: Palgrave Publishers, 2003); Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan Publishers, Inc., 2004); and Scott M. Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan Publishers, Inc., 2005).

the fierce Poseidon you will never encounter,
if you do not carry them within your soul,
if your heart does not set them up before you."

Constantine Cavafy (1863-1933), "Ithaca,"
translated by Rae Dalven

Having established the relevance of the concept of sectarianism for the study of state-making and nation-building in Iraq, the obvious question that now arises is: what is sectarianism? The etymological definition of the term "sectarianism" reveals its Latin origin, having its stem either in the word *secta*, which transports the related senses of "to cut," "to dissect" and "to separate," or in the word *sequi*, which denotes the meaning of "to follow."[159] Over the centuries, the term 'sectarianism' or 'sectarian' affiliation has come to be commonly understood by Western sociologists to mean adherence to a religious group that has broken away from a larger, established religion over doctrinal differences. Hence, Western sociologists who have studied sectarianism tend to restrict their concept of sectarianism to 'aberrant' or 'deviant' religious groups that diverge from the dominant, prevailing form of religion in a society. For instance, in his landmark study on the topic, Bryan R. Wilson argues that "a sect is likely to comprise only a very small proportion of a society's total population," whose members are characterized "by their evident divergence in doctrine, practice, social ethos, and form of sociation."[160]

Yet, Wilson, who warns against assuming an invariable pattern of sectarian development, acknowledges that the indices of sectarianism that he employs,

> "are relevant specifically to movements within Christianity or which operate in
> Christian (or post-Christian) milieux. Exclusivity, voluntarism, tests of merit,
> expulsion, and protest against dominant cultural traditions are not always, and
> perhaps not usually, the attributes of the various divisions and schools that are

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[159] See the entry for "Sect and Sects" by N. A. Weber in *The Original Catholic Encyclopedia*; available at: http://oce.catholic.com/index.php?title=Sect_and_Sects._Etymology_and_Meaning; accessed on Saturday, November 8, 2008, who argues that the latter, *sequi*, rather than the former, *secta*, is the etymological root of the word sect. For his part, H. K. Gallatin calls attention to both meanings in his entry for "Sect, Sectarianism," on the website of *BELIEVE: Religious Information Source web-site*; available at: http://mb-soft.com/believe/txc/sect.htm; accessed on November 8, 2008.

[160] Bryan R. Wilson, *The Social Dimensions of Sectarianism: Sects and New Religious Movements in Contemporary Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 3.

loosely called sects in other religious traditions – for example, in Hinduism, Judaism, or Islam."[161]

Taking up the challenge posed by Wilson's observation, the treatment of sectarianism in this study is informed by a reading of the unfolding of sectarianism in Islamic history from its origins in the early Islamic period to its contemporary expressions. A determinate mark of this centuries-old history is that the incidence of sectarian rifts engendered lasting internal contrasts within the overarching unity of the Muslim religion. With the accumulation of us-versus-them attitudes, interactions and controversies, the presumed orthodoxy-versus-deviant sect dichotomy propounded by such scholars as Fuad Khuri, whose concept of sectarianism in Islamic history restricts sects to protest movements opposed to Sunni orthodoxy and the state,[162] ceases to apply. Ultimately, not only breakaway groups but also the entire religious community becomes imbued with a distinct sectarian ethos. With the incidence of sectarian rifts, the various segments of the respective religious community take on a sectarian coloration. Accordingly, the term "sect" is used in this study to denote groups of religious believers with unique identities whose communal boundaries are delimited in the context of doctrinal and other controversies within a larger, overarching, and all-inclusive religious body, such as the Pharisees in Judaism, the Catholics and Protestants in Christianity, and Sunnis and Shi^cites in Islam.

In Arabic, the progenitor of the word which came to function as the equivalent of sectarianism, *al-ta'ifiyyah*, is the root *tawf* or *tafa* which means "to go around." It is the same root from which words like *tawaf* (the ritual rite of circumambulating the Ka^cabah during the Muslim hajj pilgrimage) are derived. In its original lexical usage the noun derived from this root, *ta'ifah*, which denotes a sector of a community or a faction, was mainly used to describe a group of people numbering up to a thousand people.[163] This notion of clustering or coming together into groups within the overarching unity of a religious community figures in

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[161] *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

[162] Khuri distinguishes sects from religious minorities and religious movements which did not subscribe to a rebellious ideology. See his *Imams and Emirs: State, Religion and Sect in Islam* (London: Saki Books, 1990).

[163] See the entries for *tawf* and *tafa* in classical Arabic lexicons such as Abu al-Fadhul Jamal al-Din Muhammad bin Makram Ibn Mandhur al-Ifriqi al-Misri [d. 711 A.H./1311 C.E.], *Lisan al-^cArab* [The Tongue of the Arabs]; online version at http://www.baheth.info/all.jsp?term=طوف (accessed on Wednesday, November 12, 2008); and Majd al-Din Muhammad bin Ya^caqub al-Fayruz Abadi [d. 817 A.H./1415 C.E.], *al-Qamus al-Muhit* [The All-Rounded Dictionary], 2nd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasat al-Risalah lil-Tiba^cah wal-Nashr wal-Tawzi^ci, 1987 C.E., 1407 A.H.): p. 1077.

numerous Qur'anic verses in which the word *ta'ifah* is used.[164] But the word is also used in the Qur'an to explicitly convey the meaning of factionalism, internal conflict and intra-communal disputation and disagreement.[165] This tension-ridden connotation is a recurrent theme in Prophetic *hadith* (reported sayings or doings of Prophet Muhammad) traditions where the term *ta'ifah* is used to refer to internal strife and divisive discord which pit righteous groups against groups that have gone astray. Examples of such *hadith* traditions abound. In one narration, the Prophet is reported to have said: "A dissenting faction that afflicts a group of Muslims goes beyond the pale of religion and would be killed by that which from among the two sects is closer to the right path."[166]

Although the word *ta'ifah* is currently the term commonly used to denote a 'sect,' it was in the term *firqah* ('schism,' 'sect,' 'division' or 'group') where the gathering of the above-mentioned conflict-laden and tension-ridden senses took place in the classical Islamic

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[164] For instance, "And a party [*ta'ifah*] of the followers of the Book say: Avow belief in that which has been revealed to those who believe, in the first part of the day, and disbelieve at the end of it, perhaps they go back on their religion" (Qur'an III: 72); and "When two parties [*ta'ifatan*] from among you had determined that they should show cowardice, and Allah was the guardian of them both, and in Allah should the believers trust" (Qur'an III: 122). Citations from the Muslim Scripture are from S. M. Shakir's translation, *The Qur'an*, 7th U.S. Edition (Elmhurst, NY: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., 1999).

[165] The Qur'anic verse in point here is: "And if two parties [*ta'ifatan*] of the believers quarrel, make peace between them; but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other, fight that which acts wrongfully until it returns to Allah's command; then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably; surely Allah loves those who act equitably" (Qur'an XXXXIX: 9). There is a general agreement among Qur'anic exegists, Sunni and Shiʿite alike, that this verse was revealed in Medina after the Prophet intervened to put an end to a scuffle that had broken out between two groups of Muslims during which they hit each other with sticks, shoes, and their hands. Narrations to this effect have been reported by the celebrated Sunni exegist Muhammad bin Jarir bin Yazid bin Kuthayyir bin Ghalib al-Tabari [d. 310 A.H./923 C.E.] in his *Jamiʿi al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* [The Assembler of Eloquence in the Interpretation of the Qur'an], the noted Mu'tazilite exegist Abu al-Qassim Mahmud bin 'Umar bin Muhammad bin 'Umar al-Khawarizmi al-Zamakhshari [d. 538 A.H./1143 C.E.] in his *al-Kashshaf ʿan Haqa'iq al-Tanzil wa-ʿUyun al-Aqawil* [The Discloser of the Truths of Revelation and the Essences of Sayings], and the eminent Shiʿite exegist Abu Ali al-Fadhul bin al-Hassan bin al-Fadhul al-Tabarsi [d. 548 A.H./1153 C.E.] in his *Majmaʿa al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an* [The Assemblage of Eloquence in the Interpretation of the Qur'an]. Online versions of these classical commentaries on the Qur'an are published on the website of the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, a Jordanian think-tank, at: http://www.altafsir.com/IndexArabic.asp; accessed on Wednesday, November 12, 2008.

[166] The translation of the *hadith* is mine. The narration is reported in the *hadith* compendium of Sulayman bin al-Ashʿath bin Ishaq bin Bashir bin Shaddad bin ʿUmar al-Uzdi al-Sijistani [d. 275 A.H./888 C.E.], *Sunan Ibn Dawud* [Ibn Dawud's Prophetic Traditions] and can be found at the website of the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Religious Endowments, Daʿawah and Guidance on the following page: http://hadith.al-islam.com/Display/Display.asp?Doc=14&ID=27991&SearchText=فرقة&SearchType=root&Scope=all&Offset=0&SearchLevel=QBE; accessed on Wednesday, November 12, 2008.

period.[167] The word frequently occurs in *hadith* traditions embodying bitter condemnation of fissiparous and schismatic tendencies and definitive premonitions and warnings of ominous eschatological tribulations. The word stems from the etymological root *farq* which is the progenitor of a variety of manifold derivative terms that span the economy of meanings from 'parting company' (*iftiraq*), 'to separate' and to 'scatter' (*farraqa*), and 'to abandon' (*faraqa*), through 'difference' (*farq*) and 'differentiator' (*furqan* and *faruq*), all the way down to 'team' (*fariq*), 'schism,' 'sect,' 'group' and 'division' (*firqah*, plural *firaq*). It should be pointed out in this context that the Qur'an is sometimes referred to as *Furqan*; that is a 'differentiator' between right and wrong.[168]

Amid such rich polysemy, the term *firqah* in the sense of a 'schism' or 'sect' gained prominence in the classical Islamic period due to its appearance in a widely circulated Prophetic tradition which predicted that the Muslims would split into numerous sects (*firaq*). According to this *hadith*, the Prophet is reported to have said:

> "The Jews split into seventy one schisms, one of them is destined for salvation and seventy are destined for Hellfire. The Christians split into seventy two schisms, seventy one are destined for Hellfire and one is destined for Heaven. By the One in Whose Hands the soul of Muhammad is held, my nation would split into seventy three schisms, one schism is destined for Heaven and seventy two are destined for Hellfire."[169]

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[167] In his methodical classification of sects in the Muslim world, Mark Sedgwick says that *firaq* (Arabic plural of *firqah*) "differ from the standard definition of sect in that, since their avowed mission is to the whole of Islam (or even all humanity) and their orientation is outward, they are not typically much interested in any "fellowship." They are, however, exclusivistic voluntary bodies, with possibilities of discipline, and are for their members a "primary source of social identity." On this basis, they are clearly sects within much the usual sense of the word." See his "Sects in the Islamic World," *Novo Religio*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (April 2000): p. 209.

[168] See the entry for *farq* in classical Arabic lexicons such as Ibn Mandhur's *Lisan al-'Arab*; online version at: http://www.baheth.info/all.jsp?term=فرق; accessed on Wednesday, November 12, 2008; and al-Fayruz Abadi, *op. cit.*, pp. 1183-1185.

[169] The translation of the *hadith* is mine. This *hadith* tradition is reported in slightly different versions by various Prophetic *hadith* compendia. The version used here is reported in the *hadith* compendium of Abu Abdallah Muhammad bin Yazid Ibn Majah al-Rabᶜi al-Qazwini [d. 275 A.H./888 C.E.], *Sunan Ibn Majah* [Ibn Majah's Prophetic Traditions] and can be found at the website of the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Religious Endowments, Da'awah and Guidance on the following page: http://hadith.al-islam.com/Display/Display.asp?Doc=5&ID=71520&SearchText&فرقة=SearchType=root&Scope=all&Offset=8 0&SearchLevel=QBE; accessed on Wednesday, November 12, 2008.

This *hadith* gave birth to a corpus of typological works which sought to identify these seventy three sects.[170] This genre, which is sometimes called heresiographies by Western scholars and referred to as *kutub al-firaq* ('the books dealing with sects') in Arabic, displays a preoccupation with cataloguing these prophetically foreseen schisms and searching for the sect that would gain salvation. This preoccupation figures prominently in the classical heresiographies such as that of ʿAbd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi who states in the introduction to his *al-Farq bayna al-Firaq* (The Difference between Sects) that he had written his heresiography in response to questions directed to him asking about,

> "the difference between the sect that attains salvation (*al-firqah al-najiyah*), which does not lose its footing and would not be stripped of graces, and the sects of transgression (*firaq al-dhalal*), which conflate the darkness of oppression with light and the belief in righteousness with calamity. They will burn in Hellfire and will find no succor from Allah."[171]

Against the backdrop of such lexical etymological markers and historically sedimented usages and senses, sects emerge as exclusive communities that derive their identity from distinctive dogmatic teachings and ritual practices that set them apart from other sects or denominations in their larger respective religious communities. Although the incidence of sectarianism does not necessarily preclude the possibility of positive and amicable trans-sectarian relations and interactions, the phenomenon of sectarianism is generally shaped by religious tension and embodies mutual negative attitudes and recriminations. Within such a scheme of things, discord eclipses concord. Each side of the sectarian divide(s) claims, explicitly or implicitly, consciously or subconsciously, monopoly over truth and salvation. The drive to maintain the fact or condition of being different and distinct oftentimes prompts

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[170] The Islamic heresiographic literature is quite extensive. Among the most noted classical works in this genre are ʿAbd al-Qahir bin Tahir al-Baghdadi [d. 429 A.H./1037 C.E.], *al-Farq bayna al-Firaq* [The Difference between Sects], 3rd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadidah, 1978); Abu al-Fath Muhammad bin ʿAbd al-Karim bin Abu Bakr Ahmad al-Shahristani [d. 548 A.H./1153 C.E.], *Kitab al-Milal wa al-Nihal* [The Book of Religions and Sectarian Creeds], edited by Muhammad Sayyid Keylani, 2nd Edition, Vols. 1-2 (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Maʿarifah li al-Tibaʿah wa al-Nashr, 1395 A.H./1975 C.E.); and Saʿad bin ʿAbdallah al-Ashʿari [d. 299 A.H./911-912 C.E.], *al-Maqalat wa al-Firaq* [The Beliefs and the Sects], edited with an introduction by Muhammad Jawad Mashkur (Tehran, Iran: The Center for Cultural and Scientific Publications [affiliated with the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Higher Education], 1361 H.S./1982 C.E.). It should be noted that both Baghdadi and Shahristani are Sunnis whereas Ashʿari is Shiʿite.
[171] al-Baghdadi, *op. cit.*, p. 2. In the concluding chapter of his book, al-Baghdadi identifies the sect getting salvation as "*ahl al-sunna wa al-jamaʿah*" ("the people of Sunna and Community"), that is the Sunnis (pp. 304-309).

sects to construct models of binary opposition that accentuate that which divides over that which binds, that which sets apart over that which unites.

Sectarian polemics are deeply entrenched in the grammar of polar opposites, absorbed in defending the sect's foundational creeds and tenets, and preoccupied with deconstructing and shattering the opponents' dogmas and standpoints. They construct psychological walls and barriers, nurture a symbolic capital and rhetorical discourse that privilege dichotomies, and foster the formation and invention of caricatures. Such is a terrain that is conducive for the construction of the 'Other.'[172] In times of heightened sectarian antagonisms and political tensions along sectarian lines, polemical caricatures are called upon to frame the public discourse for political purposes. As sects are ensnared in such a polemical cocoon, the quest for inter-sectarian dialogue, consensus and solidarity becomes a fugitive ideal. For instance, concerns about the export of Iran's Islamic Revolution in the 1980s prompted Saudi Arabia to fund the publication and free distribution of books and pamphlets seething with hatred against Shiʿism.[173] Many of these works maintained in no uncertain terms that Shiʿism was categorically beyond the pale of Islam. While there is no equivalent to such hateful literature among the Shiʿites, the 1980s witnessed a brief rise in the tempo of anti-Wahhabi Shiʿite

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[172] See Jacques Derrida, "Deconstruction and the other," in Richard Kearney, ed., *Dialogue with Contemporary Continental Thinkers: The Phenomenological Heritage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984): pp. 105-126.

[173] For an overview of this literature, see Werner Ende, "Sunni Polemical Writings on the Shi'a and the Iranian Revolution," in David Menashri, ed., *The Iranian Revolution and the Muslim World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990): pp. 219-232. An account of the rise of such anti-Shiʿite polemics in Pakistan can be found in S. V. N. Nasr, "The Rise of Sunni Militancy in Pakistan: The Changing Role of Islamism and the Ulama in Society and Politics," *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (February 2000): pp. 139-180. The list of these pamphlets and books is quite lengthy. Among the most well-known of these works are Ibrahim Sulayman al-Jabhan, *Tabdid al-Dhalam wa Tanbih al-Niyam ila Khatar al-Shiʿah ʿala al-Muslimin wa al-Islam* [Dispelling Darkness and Awakening the Sleepers to the Threat Posed by the Shiʿites to Muslims and Islam], 3rd Edition (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: Published with a permission from the Presidency of the Administrations of Scientific Research, the Issuing of Edicts, Daʿawah and Guidance [Idarat al-Buhuth al-ʿIlmiyyah wa al-Ifta' wa al-Daʿawah wa al-Irshad], 1408 A.H./1988 C.E.); Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib, *al-Khutut al-ʿAridhah li al-Usus al-Lati Qama ʿalayha Din al-Shiʿah al-Imamiyyah al-Ithnay ʿAshariyyah* [The Broad Outlines of the Principles Underpinning the Religion of the Imami Twelver Shiʿites] (Cairo, Egypt: al-Matbaʿah al-Salafiyyah wa Maktabatuha, 1393 A.H./1973-1974 C.E.); Ihsan Ilahi Dhahir, *al-Shiʿah wa al-Qur'an* [The Shiʿites and the Qur'an], 3rd Edition (Lahore, Pakistan: Idarat Turjuman al-Sunnah, 1403 A.H./1983 C.E.); Ihsan Ilahi Dhahir, *al-Shiʿah wa Ahl al-Bayt* [The Shiʿites and the Household (of the Prophet)], 3rd Edition (Lahore, Pakistan: Idarat Turjuman al-Sunnah, 1403 A.H./1983 C.E.); and Ihsan Ilahi Dhahir, *al-Shiʿah wa al-Tashayyuʿ* [The Shiʿites and Shiʿism], 3rd Edition (Lahore, Pakistan: Idarat Turjuman al-Sunnah, 1404 A.H./1984 C.E.). During my undergraduate education in the United States in the mid-1980s, free copies of such publications in several languages, including Arabic, English, Urdu, Malay, and Turkish, were distributed on a massive scale by chapters of the Muslim Students Association on US campuses and throughout mosques affiliated with the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA).

literature whose logical structure is inspired by a conspiracy theory line of argument.[174] Moreover, despite the efforts by many Shiᶜite clerics with ecumenical leanings to eradicate the practice of cursing some of the companions of the Prophet in their community, this custom survives in certain quarters and continues to leave a negative impact on Sunni-Shiᶜite communal relations.[175]

The introversive impulse towards a sort of a permanent self-definition – that is distinguishing those who belong from those who do not – prompts sects to "put much emphasis on the re-education, indoctrination and moral refinement of their members." This imputes on sects the quality of being self-conscious entities characterized with "a strong sense of identity, an identity that is based on precluding and subordinating, all other loyalties."[176] It is, however, in the context of heterogeneity where sectarian collective identity intensifies in the course of the sect's continuing conversation with other sectarian communities. This has been acknowledged and summarized by Charles S. Maier, who says:

> "Collective identity does include a crucial temporal dimension – some version or multiple versions of a communal history or 'collective memory.' … But it also implies the existence of other groups that exist in some critical spatial relation to one's own community, usually either 'outside' or 'alongside.' Group identity – whether national, religious, linguistic, class, or other – functions by constructing

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[174] One pamphlet that was repeatedly reprinted at the time is *Mudhakkarat Mister Humver, al-Jasus al-Baritani fi al-Bilad al-Islamiyyah* [The Memoirs of Mr. Humver, the British Spy in Muslim Lands], translated into Arabic by Dr. J. K. (Beirut, Lebanon: no publisher, no date [1973?]). The pamphlet claims that the doctrines of Wahhabism were imparted to its founder Muhammad bin ᶜAbd al-Wahhab [d. 1206 A.H./1792 C.E.] by a British Spy, one Mr. Humver, in hopes of leading Muslims astray and deepening the rift among Muslim sects to the benefit of the British. During a trip to Turkey in 1996, I obtained copies of this pamphlet, in both English and Arabic, published by Ihlas Vakfi, a Sufi-leaning Turkish Islamic religious trust, in Istanbul. The English version is entitled *Confessions of a British Spy and British Enmity against Islam* (Istanbul, Turkey: Waqf Ikhlas, 1995).

[175] A November 2008 political crisis that led to the resignation of the Kuwaiti government was precipitated by calls to grill the country's prime minister over allowing a visit to the country by an Iranian Shiᶜite cleric who is alleged to have used abusive and demeaning language against a companion of the Prophet. For coverage of this crisis see "Iranian Cleric Sparks Political Crisis," *Arab Times*, Tuesday, November 18, 2008; available at: http://www.arabtimesonline.com/client/pagesdetails.asp?nid=24891&ccid=9; accessed on Friday, January 09, 2009; and "Emir of Kuwait accepts Cabinet resignation," *International Herald Tribune*, Monday, December 1, 2008; available at: http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/12/01/news/ML-Kuwait-Politics.php; accessed on Wednesday, December 03, 2008.

[176] Manochehr Dorraj, "The Political Sociology of Sect and Sectarianism in Iranian Politics: 1960-1979," *Journal of Third World Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Fall 2006): pp. 95-117; online version at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3821/is_/ai_n17195888; accessed on Monday, November 10, 2008.

some sort of boundary condition, a cultivated awareness of qualities that separate 'us' from 'them.'"[177]

But communal delineation is not the only purpose here. It is wedded to a desire to make sectarian walls impenetrable and sects more like impregnable fortresses. The self-affirmation that lies at the heart of this us-versus-them dialectic goes hand in glove with a concern with the affirmative protection of communal boundaries as the community embarks on participatory interactions with other sects. As Jonathan Z. Smith exclaims, "'Otherness' is not so much a matter of separation as it is a description of interaction."[178]

The recognition of sectarian otherness as a description of human interaction brings to the fore the notion of the "dialogical self." The central issue here is explained by Charles Taylor, who argues that,

> "Much of our understanding of self, society, and world is carried in practices that consist in dialogical action… This means that our identity is never simply defined in terms of our individual properties. It also places us is some social space. We define ourselves partly in terms of what we come to accept as our appropriate place within dialogical action."[179]

But sectarian dialogical action and interaction oftentimes tend to breed feelings of self-righteousness, moral superiority and religious purity. And the resulting tensions are generally greater when sectarian communities live side by side as in Lebanon and Iraq.[180] It is perhaps for this reason that sectarian communities living in close proximity to each other are more likely to engage in mutual negative characterization and caricature. But this proximity need not be only spatial. As observed by one student of early Christian sectarianism, "it should not

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[177] Charles S. Maier, ""Being there": place, territory and identity," in Seyla Benhabib, Ian Shapiro, and Danilo Petranović, eds., *Identities, Affiliations and Allegiances* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007): pp. 67-68.

[178] Jonathan Z. Smith, "What a difference a difference makes," in Jacob Neusner and Ernest S. Frerichs, eds., *"To See Ourselves as Others See Us": Christians, Jews "Others" in Late Antiquity* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985): p. 10.

[179] Charles Taylor, "The Dialogical Self," in David R. Hiley, James F. Bohman, and Richard Schusterman, eds., *The Interpretive Turn: Philosophy, Science, Culture* (Ithaca, NY; and London: Cornell University Press, 1991): p. 311.

[180] Other examples include tensions between Catholic and Orthodox Christians in the former Yugoslavia. See Sabrina Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962-1991*, 2nd Edition (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992).

be surprising that the defining group's most vociferous condemnations are reserved for those 'others' whose beliefs or practices are closest to their own."[181]

It should be pointed out that an elitist, vanguardist streak runs through Muslim sectarian communities. Their members are called upon to conceive of themselves based on metonyms of light versus darkness, triumphalism versus sorrowfulness, and the saved ones versus those consigned to Hellfire. On the one hand, in contemporary Shi[c]ite sectarian idiom, Sunni converts to Shi[c]ism are referred to as *mustabsirun* ('those who have seen the light').[182] Classical Shi[c]ite sources have also referred to Shi[c]ites as *al-khassa* (the 'elect') or more specifically *al-ta'ifah* (the 'sect').[183] In fact, these sources cite *hadith* narrations where belief in the *wilayah* ('love' and 'mastership') of Ali bin Abi Talib, the first Shi[c]ite Imam, figures as a decisive factor in judging one's true faith.[184] Ironically, drawing upon this well of elitism to delimit the contours of the group's self-understanding along a vertical axis inadvertently betrays a self-recognition of the minority status of Shi[c]ism in the Muslim world. This elitist assertion is met with the counterclaim of Sunni salafists who have maintained that *Ahl al-Hadith* (the 'People of Hadith') is the 'Victorious Sect' (*al-Ta'ifah al-Mansourah*).[185] This displacement of the logic of insular elitism in favor of unambiguous triumphalist exclusivity is born out of acute self-recognition of the historical reality that Sunnis have always constituted the majority of Muslims.

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[181] David M. Reis, "Jesus' farewell discourse, "otherness," and the construction of a Johannine identity," *Studies in Religion/Sceinces Religieuses*, Vol. 32, Nos. 1-2 (2003): p. 42.

[182] See Dr. Salah al-Din al-Hussayni, *Kitab Sabil al-Mustabsirin ila al-Sirat al-Mustaqim wa Safinat al-Najin* [The Book of the Path of Those Who Have Seen the Light towards the Straight Path and the Ark of the Saved Ones]; online edition at: http://www.aqaed.com/shialib/books/03/sabiel/index/html; accessed on Sunday, November 16, 2008.

[183] Heinz Halm, *Shi'ism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991): p. 4.

[184] For instance, in one narration the Prophet is reported to have said: "Looking at Ali bin Abi Talib is an act of worship, mentioning him is an act of worship, and the faith of any servant [of Allah] would not be accepted except in conjunction in the belief in his mastership [*wilayah*] and disowning his enemies." This *hadith* is reported by Mirza Muhammad Taqi (d. 1312 A.H./1894-1895 C.E.) in his *Sahifat al-Abrar* [The Book of the Righteous], edited by Mu'assasat Ihya' al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah [Institute of the Revival of Islamic Books] (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assat al-A[c]alami lil-Matbu[c]at, 1424 A.H./2003 C.E.): p. 107.

[185] See Rabi[c]i bin Hadi [c]Umayr al-Mudkhali, *Ahl al-Hadith Hum al-Ta'ifah al-Mansourah al-Najiyah: Hiwar ma[c]a Salman al-[c]Udah* [The People of Hadith Are the Victorious Saved Sect: A Dialogue with Salman al-[c]Udah] (Madina, Saudi Arabia: Maktabat al-Ghuraba' al-Asliyyah, 1992). Ahl al-Hadith refers to a traditionalist Sunni theological trend that emerged in the 9[th] century. It took up the cudgel of opposition to the rationalist dogma of the Mu[c]tazilites, privileged a literal understanding of Prophetic *hadith* narrations over the deductive reasoning of Islamic schools of jurisprudence and has been considered the precursor to present-day salafism. See Jonathan P. Berkey, *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600-1800* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), esp. Chapter 15 "The formation of Sunni traditionalism," pp. 141-151.

Sectarian attitudes and rituals as well as discursive practices tend to persist long after sects as social entities have waned or decayed. They feed prejudices and stigmas that lurk beneath the surface only to stage a comeback under propitious social factors and historical contingencies. The resurgence of sectarian feelings stems from the dynamic nature of the self-definition process. In the words of Dorinne K. Kondo,

> "Individual identities are contextually constructed within fields of power and meaning and cannot easily be separated from specific situations, from culturally specific narrative conventions, or from abstractions we label history, politics, and economics."[186]

In the context of the Arab East, especially in the countries of the so-called Fertile Crescent, that is Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Palestine, sectarianism occupies pride of place among a host of primordial loyalties, such as kinship, geographical and tribal solidarities, which have stunted the development of a uniform national identity. "Sectarianism as a socio-political phenomenon … is a by-product of the modern Arab state and politics."[187] The modern concept of the nation-state, with its differentiation of religion and politics, has failed to completely displace these loyalties as the primary determinant of the political identity of citizens. If anything, the introduction of the nation-state system helped politicize and accentuate sectarian pluralism in the region.

With the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, polity, society, economy, indeed every domain of life in the region experienced an unprecedented trauma as it was abruptly fragmented and territorialized into nation-states. The globalization of the European system of nation-states into the territories of the former transnational empire pushed the Middle East into the throes of a crisis of identity. The crisis stemmed as much from the alien and artificial boundaries imposed to delimit the borders of the new nation-states as it did from the novelty of the concept of the nation-state as a political entity with a territorially delimited population accepting the legitimacy of a common form of government.[188] As Abbas Kelidar points out,

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[186] Dorinne K. Kondo, *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses in a Japanese Workplace* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1990): p. 47.
[187] Burhan Ghalyun, *Nidham al-Ta'ifiyyah: Min al-Dawlah ila al-Qabilah* [The System of Sectarianism: From the State to the Tribe] (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Markaz al-Thaqafi al-ᶜArabi, 1990): pp. 27-28.
[188] James P. Piscatori, *Islam in a World of Nation-States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

"In the Middle East, the idea of the nation-state is a new phenomenon. It has no historical antecedent in the political culture of Islam; nor has it become a familiar term in the political vocabulary of the region. The concept remained without an adequate definition since its importation, among a host of political ideas, from Western Europe during the nineteenth century."[189]

This is in part due to the fact that a fragmented community territorialized into a number of nation-states stands at odds with the transnational community of the *Ummah* (community of believers) found in the predominant model of political community throughout much of Islamic history let alone that envisioned in classical Islamic theology and political theory.[190] There is an unmistakable correspondence here between the unity of the *Ummah* on the level of sacred rites and rituals, on the one hand, and social and political cohesion, on the other, that could be made possible only under the leadership of a single ruler. One principal spokesperson of this view is the celebrated Sunni jurist of the Shafiᶜi school of thought al-Mawardi (d. 450 A.H./1058 C.E.), who was a strong advocate of the unity, universality and indivisibility of the *Ummah*. He maintained that at any time or age in history there could be only one caliph whose authority and sway extend over the entire Muslim *Ummah*.[191] Although this ideal of global unity embodied in a single polity did not exist in the strict sense of the term since the first century of Islam, the continued existence of the caliphate provided a conceptual prop and a symbol of Muslim political unity that kept the dream of a unified *Ummah* alive.

As a political modality, "Dar al-Islam, the abode of Islam, is wherever Islam rules, and Islam rules wherever the Muslims are."[192] Islam makes no clear differentiation between that which is spiritual and that which is temporal, that which is worldly and that which is other-worldly, that which is religious and that which is political. Consequently, "the categories 'religious' and 'political' are not mutually exclusive: a religious group does not cease to be religious for becoming political, and neither does a political group cease to be political if it becomes

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[189] Abbas Kelidar, "States without Foundations: The Political Evolution of State and Society in the Arab East," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (April 1993): p. 316.

[190] The holy affiliation of religion and politics is not peculiarly characteristic of Islam. José Casanova draws a comparison in this regard between the historical experiences of Catholicism and Islam in his, "Catholic and Muslim Politics in Comparative Perspective," *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (December 2005): pp. 89-108.

[191] Abu al-Hassan ᶜAli bin Muhammad bin Habib al-Basri al-Mawardi, *al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah wa al-Wilayat al-Diniyyah* [Sultanic Rules and Religious Masterships] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-ᶜIlmiyyah, 2000).

[192] Kelidar, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

religious."[193] Ideally, this fusion of the two spheres of religion and politics necessitates an integrated church-state structure whereby aspects of public policy are regulated by the state religion.

As the transnational, religiously-inspired dimension of political authority receded and finally disappeared altogether from the landscape of the Middle East, it left behind a void that the posterior establishment of the nation-states has failed to fill. As Burhan Ghalyun has adduced, with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the communities that had been living under its suzerainty lost their "center of gravity as a political community." Gone was an important medium for moving beyond primordial loyalties and towards a transcendental political loyalty.[194] It was at this juncture that age-old parochial and primordial loyalties and communal rivalries, such as religious sectarianism, regionalism, ethnicity and tribalism, became highly politicized. Political life in countries of the Arab East that are home to diverse sectarian communities, namely Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, underwent to varying degrees a process of sectarianization as ascriptive criteria became defining elements of the new body politic.

Hence, the new edifice of the nation-state system was not conducive for the gelling of a concept of citizenship based on secularized notions of politics, the autonomy of the individual and a shared identity that has been substantially de-confessionalized. The right of passage from the previous transnational Islamic teleological design to the new spatial determinants of a fragmented political community was characterized with a deficit of legitimacy. The bulk of the population "of the Arab East found themselves nationals of independent political entities to which they owed no allegiance."[195] Their political aspirations were largely beholden to a pan-Arab national state. Against this backdrop, the nation-state was therefore infused into the region through great power politics. "The boundaries of these states, indeed their very creation, owe more to the diverse and competing international aspirations of Britain and France at that time than to a great surge of nationalist demand and agitation for their establishment."[196]

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[193] Sedgwick, *op. cit.*, p. 212.
[194] Ghalyun, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-138.
[195] Kelidar, *op. cit.*, p. 319.
[196] *Ibid.*, p. 321.

The absence of a strong, shared political culture of civic citizenship gave way to a de-centering of identity. The development of centralized administration systems failed to give rise to a strong, unifying national identity that could act as the principal source of identification in the new nation-states of the Arab East. Instead, the new manifestations of identity were fragmented. Within such a scheme of things, primordial solidarities shaped by societal differentiation along religious and theological tendencies – as well as ethnic, tribal and kinship lines – came to the fore. But the linkage between sectarian identity and religion is especially problematic in the case of the politicization of the sectarian identity. As Ghalyun observes,

> "sectarianism is the polar opposite of religion, because instead of employing power and wealth to strengthen linkages, solidarities and compassion among individuals, that is that which constitutes the essence of the religious message and values at all times and everywhere, it is rather founded on exploiting existing spiritual solidarities and cohesiveness or this spiritual capital, for the sake of increasing power and wealth and enhancing worldly apportionment."[197]

Indeed, the politicization of sectarian identification is much more profound and more complex than mere emotional or genuine subscription to the religious or theological creeds of the sect. It produces its own special sectarian culture, as one modern Lebanese philosopher has once characterized it. In his philosophical treatise *Nahwa Mujtama^c Jadid* [Towards a New Society], Nassif Nassar argues that:

> "Sectarian society lives within the atmosphere of a special culture that can be called sectarian culture. The elements of this culture are derived from the theological view of man and the cosmos and from the sum total of psychological patterns associated with the life of the sect."[198]

Nassar's characterization of sectarian culture is cognizant of the facet of social construction in the formation of primordial sectarian identities. He points out that "the elements and patterns of sectarian culture intermingle with the elements of another culture, i.e. the material

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[197] Ghalyun, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
[198] Nassif Nassar, *Nahwa Mujtama^c Jadid: Muqaddimat Asasiyyah fi Naqd al-Mujtama^c al-Ta'ifi* [Towards a New Society: Basic Introductions in Critiquing Sectarian Society], 3rd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Tali^cah li al-Tiba^cah wa al-Nashr, 1977): p. 184.

empirical culture."[199] It is instructive in this regard how non-believing or non-religious members of sects are considered as representatives of the faith community of their ancestors or families when it comes to power-sharing arrangements.[200] While political sectarianism could be devoid of a religious content, the convergence of sectarianism and religiosity is prone to infuse politics with a messianic, millenarian and eschatological streak. This is particularly the case, albeit in a restricted manner, of the Sadrist trend led by young Shi^cite firebrand cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.[201]

Profound consequences flowed from this state of affairs in the denominationally divided societies that emerged in the Arab East in the wake of the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Sectarian subjectivities and identities emerged as sources of solidarity within the new nation-states. The mobilization of feelings of sectarian sameness and otherness in the context of the development and application of a modern administrative state jurisdiction and apparatus also gave rise to a dialectic relationship of contestation between sects and the state. As Nassar astutely observes with respect to the relationship between sects and the state in Lebanon:

> "Sects are groups which recognize their partial existence within the framework of the existing state. But only when compelled do they abandon their propensity for totalism. History made them join others to live with them under one roof. But they did not want that out of their own volition. Consequently, a dialectic exchange between the sects and the state was generated, which resulted in the sect's loss of some of its totality while the state remained below the degree of totality that it must enjoy."[202]

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[199] *Ibid.*

[200] Communists appointed in government positions in post-Saddam Iraq are a case in point. For instance, the secretary-general of the Iraqi Communist Party Hamid Majid Musa who was allocated a seat on the Governing Council formed in July 2003 was considered among the Shi'ite members of the 25-member body. Such a confessional power-sharing arrangement has a long history in modern Lebanon.

[201] For accounts of the rise of Muqtada al-Sadr to political prominence see, Patrick Cockburn, *Muqtada al-Sadr and the Fall of Iraq* (London: Faber and Faber, 2008). See also Khalil Fadl, "The Muqtada al-Sadr phenomenon: the key force in Iraqi politics," *Crescent International*, June 2008; http://www.muslimedia.com/irq-muqtada.htm; accessed on Friday, January 09, 2009; Nasr Salem, "Iraqi anger at US overcomes doubts about leadership of Muqtada al-Sadr," *Crescent International*, May 2004; available at: http://www.muslimedia.com/archives/oaw04/irq-muqtada.htm; accessed on Friday, January 09, 2009; and Nasr Salem, "Iraqi Shi'as polarised around the al-Sadr movement," *Crescent International*, July 2004; http://www.muslimedia.com/archives/oaw04/irq-shiasadr.htm; accessed on Friday, January 09, 2009.

[202] Nassar, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

The public space afforded by the creation of centralized state administrative machinery becomes a battlefield, a Hobbesian-like state of nature where sub-national, primordial identities vie for power and influence. Hence, competition between the sects for status in the political system is often rife. In the arena of politics, sects do not only seek to influence public policy to protect and reinforce their value systems or to provide services to their adherents. More importantly, sectarian passions also provide elites with a powerful tool to rally mass support as they jockey for positions of power and privilege. Sectarianism also becomes an agent of political activism. Political parties are formed along sectarian lines, with programs embodying the interests of certain sects. In such a system, "divisions among people in terms of rights and duties are reinforced, and some sects enjoy influence, clout, wealth, and social status at the expense of other sects."[203]

It is identity politics rather than national politics that emerged from the workings of the nation-state system in the Arab East. Identity politics was born out of the decoupling of nation and state, of politics and civic culture. In this context, the matrix of fitting the concerns of citizens into the public domain exhibits tension, alienation and disappointment. Interests are more likely to be articulated in terms of sectarian contestation rather than around social issues, ideology, or political programs. Politics here is effectively about preserving and perpetuating, rather than diluting and mitigating, sectarian, as well as other, differences. Such a political community invites fear, insecurity and discontent. "The fear of being subjugated, expelled, or physically annihilated," as Michel G. Nehme eloquently states,

> "is the supreme force that lies behind the individual political attitude in the countries of the Arab East ... In both the actual and the cognitive sense, the person in the Arab East is dominated by the vicissitudes of political nature – sectarianism – and feels he has little control over his political environment ... This sense of impotence and of danger in the environment induces him to rely on his own people for decisions – the elders, group leader, and others in position of authority.

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[203] Halim Barakat, *al-Mujtamaᶜ al-ᶜArabi fi al-Qarn al-ᶜIshrin: Bahth fi Taghayyur al-Ahwal wa al-ᶜAlaqat* [Arab Society in the Twentieth Century: An Investigation into the Change of Conditions and Relations] (Beirut, Lebanon: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahdah al-ᶜArabiyyah, 2000): p. 438.

Fear makes individuals of the same group stick together as the only way they know to protect themselves."[204]

This malady of fear was exacerbated by strategies of exclusion and totalizing ideologies that prevailed in the Arab East following the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. The troubled manner in which the history of the modern nation-state in the Arab East unfolded was further complicated by the pervasiveness of a concept of statehood inspired by,

"the local nationalist and patriotic thought which tended – in its pursuit of the establishment of a modern nation-state and infusing it with political legitimacy – to concentrate on the issue of identity, harmony and integration rather than building a concept of citizenship and laying emphasis on the duty of the modern state to secure for this concept the legal conditions for putting it into practice, and in turn guaranteeing the freedom and equality of its members."[205]

The new states in the Arab East were for the most part ruled by authoritarian regimes *par excellence*.[206] With the specter of the authoritarian state hovering over inter-community relations, conscious efforts were made to prevent the articulation of sectional interests, "mainly because of the pressure engendered by the doctrine of nationalism for political assimilation and national commonality."[207] Such a state of affairs is not conducive for developing a common sense of belonging among communities or fostering a supra-communal concept of citizenship based on universal rights and status. It rather tends to exacerbate the feelings of estrangement among communities and thus adds another impediment to the evolution of a unified political community out of the polyglot mixture of nationalities, sects, tribes, and other communal solidarities making up the Arab East.

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[204] Michel G. Nehme, "Identity and Fear: A Survey Study of the Arab East," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Winter 1995/96): p. 6.

[205] Burhan Ghalyun, "Fi Madh al-Taᶜaddudiyyah al-Ithniyyah wa al-Diniyyah," ["In Praise of Ethnic and Religious Pluralism"], *Aljazeera.net*, (Thursday, Ramadhan 19, 1429 A.H. – September 18, 2008 C.E.); available at: http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exers/1075C0C4-0DC5-458C-920A-E7853603EC95.htm; accessed on Thursday, November 27, 2008.

[206] See particularly the landmark study by Khaldun Hassan al-Naqib, *al-Dawlah al-Tasallutiyyah fi al-Mashriq al-ᶜArabi: Dirasah Bina'iyyah Muqaranah* [The Authoritarian State in the Arab World: A Comparative Structuralist Study], 2nd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahdah al-ᶜArabiyyah, 1996).

[207] Kelidar, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

Within such a scheme of things, consociational power-sharing arrangements[208] designed to translate the social basis of politics into the system of government tended to exacerbate tensions. While such arrangements give various segments of society a say in governing the country, they neither erode the social cleavages and sub-national segmentation nor reduce the communal bases of political competition within the system. If anything, as the case of Lebanon, the classic example of consociationalism in the Arab East, demonstrates, they tend to re-produce, reaffirm and deepen the same rigid sub-national communal boundaries.[209] The periodic political crises – and even slides down the precipice of inter-communal strife and civil war – that have plagued Lebanon since the 1943 National Pact agreement which inaugurated the Lebanese consociational power-sharing governing system, have always cast a thick pall of doubt on the robustness of this system. The rigid propensities of the Lebanese consociational system, which works on consensus and package deals between community elites, have made it especially prone to collapse under external and internal factors. Iraq is another country in the Arab East where one finds intensified symptoms of crisis in which primordial political allegiances to entities other than the state have shaped, and even stunted, the building of a harmonious nation and undermined state authority since the carve up of the Ottoman Empire.

1.3. Conclusion: Primordialism and the Salience of Sectarian Identity in Iraq

"Identity is conjunctural, not essential."

James Clifford,
*The Predicament of Culture:
Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*

As will be seen throughout this study, it was within the ethos of modernity that the interplay of a complex and overlapping mix of factors prevented primordial attachments, mainly ethnic

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[208] The term "consociationalism" was coined by Arendt Lijphart to denote agreed on power-sharing arrangements to ensure representation for various segments of a society divided by ethnic, religious, linguistic and/or other cleavages in government. See his "Consociational Democracy," *World Politics*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (January 1969): pp. 207-225; and *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977).

[209] See Michael Hudson, *The Precarious Republic: Political Mobilization in Lebanon* (New York, NY: Random House, 1985, [1968]).

and sectarian solidarities, from congealing into a seamless national identity. The above theoretical formulation on primordial identification as a socially constructed phenomenon provides the conceptual toolkit for this interpretive study of the inter-relationship between sectarianism and the trajectory of the making of nation and state in Iraq. It directs attention to the fact that the process of building a modern nation-state does not inevitably chip away at primordial loyalties. Instead of eradicating primordial identifications, the politics of nation-building and state-making could well end up stimulate or intensify them. Primordial attachments are capable of adjusting to the challenges emanating from the process of building a nation-state. They infuse individuals with a sense of emotional and psychological comfort amid the vicissitudes unleashed by the state's efforts to fashion homogeneity out of ethno-sectarian heterogeneity.

I would argue in this study that, in the case of Iraq, forging loyalty and identification with the modern nation-state through rationalized bureaucratic organizational structures and apparatuses of control, as well as the expansion of education, simply contributed to the recreation and reinforcement of primordial attachments. The reincarnation of primordial sectarian loyalties in Iraq has been a continuous process driven by perceptions of marginalization and domination within the trajectory of the making of the nation and state. Primordial identities morphed into new, politicized, and more intensified forms amid growing communal claims to political power. Understanding how the transformation of primordial sectarian identities in Iraq relates to the spiraling pursuit of political power resources necessitates a look at the distribution of political power across communities. But there is more to the transformation of primordial sectarian identification into a group political consciousness than reacting to imbalances in the distribution of power resources across communities, real or perceived. Identities are as much multifaceted phenomena as they are fluid and defy stasis. The hardening of primordial sectarian identities in Iraq has also been driven by a struggle for the soul of the country and what it means to be Iraqi. As this study will show, different readings of history embodied in the curriculum as well as perceptions of collective selfhood have been at the heart of this struggle. This study will describe and analyze ways pedagogy and contending visions of collective selfhood transformed primordial sectarian loyalties, turning them into salient markers of group identity in modern Iraq. Ultimately, the study will show how communal sentiments and perceptions generated by the communal distribution of power resources, sectarian-tinted historiography embedded in the curriculum, and clashing discourses on collective identity combined to inhibit the

development of strong bonds of supra-communal sense of identification and fuel the articulation of us-versus-them dichotomies.

In detecting the changing patterns of identification, this study will look at how primordial sectarian attachments in Iraq have been constructed within the texture of socio-political change, as well as the evolving structures of power and their institutionalization. Clearly, history and its shadow are operative in this process. A full portrait of the workings of sectarianism in the process of nation-building and state-making in Iraq cannot be blind to the historical roots of communal sectarian consciousness. Sectarianism in Iraq unfolds across the landscape of a remembered past, and it is to this past that we now turn.

CHAPTER 2

The Legacy of History:
Nation-Building, Marginalization and Ascendance of Primordial Sectarianism

"One is not modern by writing about chimney-pots, or archaic by writing about oriflammes … If one can really penetrate the life of another age, one is penetrating the life of one's own."

T. S. Eliot, "Introduction" to *Selected Poems* by Ezra Pound

When three men and one woman, all clad in traditional Iraqi female robes, carried out a multiple suicide bombing by detonating explosive devices at the Shi^cite Buratha mosque in northern Baghdad on April 7, 2006, they did more than just push the country one step further towards full-fledged sectarian strife.[1] They also highlighted how sites with overlapping layers of history are also situated at the nexus between collective memories, obsessions about the past and current struggles over political power. The historical Buratha mosque is the second most important Shi^cite mosque in Baghdad. Popular Shi^cite lore holds that Ali bin Abi Talib, the son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad, the first Shi^cite Imam, and the fourth caliph of Islam, paid a visit to the site. He is reported to have dug a well that is the source of a holy spring whose water is still sought by pilgrims.[2]

But behind the Shi^cite mask of the Buratha mosque lie multiple layers of history that embody the complex and interwoven diversity of Iraqi society. The site of the Buratha mosque is believed to have stood as a place of worship for thousands of years. Numerous traditions in

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[1] "Suicide bombers kill 50 at Iraq mosque," *The Age*, April 7, 2006; available at: http://www.theage.com.au/news/World/Suicide-bombers-kill-50-at-Iraq-mosque/2006/04/07/1143916723849.html; accessed on Monday, April 20, 2009; and "Suicide Bombers Kill 75 Iraqis, Officials Condemn Barbarism," *American Forces Press Service*, U.S. Department of Defense; available at: http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=15514; accessed on Friday, May 15, 2009.

[2] Nermin Al-Mufty, "A place abundant with palms," *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*, Issue No. 565, December 20-26, 2001; available at: http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/565/tr3.htm; accessed on Wednesday, April 15, 2009. See also Suhayr ^cAdel, "Buratha .. Wahdat al-Iman bayna Sawma^cat al-Rahib wa al-Jami^c" ["Buratha .. The Unity of Faith between the Monk's Hermitage and the Mosque"], ^c*Afaf*, No. 8 (1425 A.H./2004 C.E.): pp. 18-19; available at: http://www.afafonline.com/afaf-arshiv/08/index.htm; accessed on Saturday, June 6, 2009. When I visited the Buratha mosque in October 2003, I saw pilgrims seeking to obtain *baraka* by touching the spring, drinking from its waters, and washing their faces and hands with it.

popular Shi^cite lore have it that at the site of Buratha, an Assyrian term which means 'the Son of Wonders,' seventy prophets and vicegerents of Allah (*awsiya' Allah*) have prayed, among them Abraham, Jesus, and Daniel.[3] When Imam Ali visited the site, it had a different face. It was a Christian monastery which is likely to have replaced an earlier temple where rituals of devotion were performed.

Beyond layered diversity, however, the traces of the past embodied in Buratha also encompass a collective memory that intersects with Muslim sectarian strife in Baghdad during the ^cAbbasid period. Fearing that the mosque would become a center for Shi^cite oppositional activity in his capital, the ^cAbbasid caliph al-Muqtadir (295-320 A.H./908-932 C.E.) ordered the mosque razed to the ground. It was rebuilt in 328 A.H./939-940 C.E.[4] Such desecration of places of worship is the stock of sectarian strife. Variants of this and other acts of violence against religious sites would continue to occur in Iraq at times of heightened sectarian tensions down to the present.

In Chapter 1, we established the relevance of the concept of primordialism for the study of interrelationships between sectarian identification and the trajectory of state-making and nation-building within the socio-political context of Iraq. Our principal concern with history is to ascertain how sectarian primordial attachments in Iraq emerged and developed within the texture of religio-political tensions and flux. Recognizing that group identities are fluid and malleable, the following historical narrative of Sunni-Shi^cite relations seeks to construct a demythologized and objective account of the persistence of primordial sectarian affiliations in Iraq since the establishment of the modern nation-state in 1921. It shows how centuries of inter-communal conflict provided a reservoir of past seminal experiences, events, mass sufferings and, sometimes, festering emotional wounds that burdened, and became seared in, collective sectarian memories. But inasmuch as they are a product of collective memories and events of the past, sectarian identifications shift in tandem with modern political developments. As such, the salience of sectarian identifications in Iraq has also been shaped by the process of nation-state formation in modern Iraq. This chapter shows how wider

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[3] A compilation of Shi^cite traditions related to Buratha mosque can be found in "Buratha fi al-Tarikh" ["Buratha throughout History"], *Shabakat al-Imam al-Ridha* [Imam al-Ridha Network], available at: http://www.imamreza.net/arb/imamreza.php?id=1929; accessed on Wednesday, April 15, 2009.
[4] Diwan al-Waqf al-Shi^ci [Iraq's Shi^cite Bureau of Religious Endowments], "Jami^ci Buratha .. Mahwa Qulub al-^cArifin wa Ma'awa al-Mutahajjidin" [The Buratha Mosque .. A Refuge for the Gnostics' Hearts and a Haven for Night Worshippers], *Maraqid al-Nur* website, available at: http://www.alrsool.org/display.php?catid=shr&id=18; accessed on Wednesday, April 15, 2009.

political developments, unleashed mainly by the modern Iraqi state, awakened and sustained sectarianism. It directs attention to the articulation of us-versus-them sentiments based on perceived sectarian sameness and stirred by the process of consolidating and solidifying the modern bureaucratic state. Our excursus into the development of Sunni-Shiᶜite relations in Iraq, therefore, shows how primordial sectarian identities in Iraq defied the efforts of the modern nation-state to mould them into a unified national identity based on uniform citizenry. Ultimately, the story of the sectarian Sunni-Shiᶜite divide in Iraq is an account of the construction of collective consciousness or communal identities. By dint of their power to constitute group solidarity, communal identities can never be divorced from the past. Present collective consciousness is often bound with the past. It banks on historical memory.

2.1. The Sunni-Shiᶜite Chasm

"Beware! By Allah the son of Abu Quhafah [first Caliph Abu Bakr] dressed himself with it (the caliphate) and he certainly knew that my position in relation to it was the same as the position of the axis in relation to the hand-mill. The flood water flows down from me and the bird cannot fly upto me. I put a curtain against the caliphate and kept myself detached from it."

Ali bin Abi Talib,
Nahj al-Balaghah [Peak of Eloquence]

If Buratha is a site where present and past maintain a simultaneous presence, so it also highlights the deep historical roots of the current Sunni-Shiᶜite split in Iraq. This ancient division in Islam, with all the animosities embedded in it, evolved over centuries during which doctrinal positions were elaborated and transmitted from one generation to another, often in binary, us-versus-them terms. Iraq occupied a center stage in the development of both Sunnism and Shiᶜism. And notwithstanding the potential for and actual episodes of rapprochement and peaceful coexistence, this long historical process was often laden with tension and passions, and at times with conflict. A narrative of the origins and formation of primordial Sunni and Shiᶜite sectarian attachments in Iraq is, therefore, a tale of beginnings and endings, origins and conclusions, ruptures and continuities, growth and decay.

The Sunni-Shiᶜite chasm was spawned by a dispute not over religious dogma or ideology but rather over the succession of Prophet Muhammad who passed away on Rabiᶜi al-Awwal 12,

11 A.H./June 8, 632 C.E. after laying the foundations of an infant Islamic state.[5] The Muslim community was split over claims to leadership. At a gathering of community notables and companions of the Prophet they elected Abu Bakr bin Abi Quhafah [d. 13 A.H./634 C.E.], whose daughter ᶜA'ishah [d. 58 A.H./678 C.E.] was wife to Muhammad, as successor to the Prophet.[6] The choice of Abu Bakr was disputed by a small band of the Prophet's clan, Banu Hashim, and his companions.[7] Most of them considered Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, as the sole legitimate successor to Muhammad, and, therefore, they became known as *Shiᶜat Ali* (the 'Partisans of Ali'). The Shiᶜites further argued that succession to the Prophet after Ali is the sacred right of the latter's descendants through Muhammad's daughter, Fatima, Ali's wife.[8]

Reluctant to split the community, Ali refrained from open rejection of Abu Bakr or resort to arms to enforce his leadership. He simply withheld giving his allegiance to the new caliph until after Fatimah's death, some six months after Abu Bakr's election.[9] However, Ali remained largely withdrawn from taking an active part in the affairs of government while refusing to advance a claim to the caliphate. He maintained a similar attitude during the reigns of the two caliphs who succeeded Abu Bakr, ᶜUmar bin al-Khattab (13-23 A.H./634-644 C.E.) and ᶜUthman bin ᶜAffan (23-35 A.H./644-656 C.E.). But ᶜUthman's murder by

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[5] Bernard Lewis, *The Arabs in History* (New York, NY: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), p.47.

[6] Numerous sources have recorded the facts of what happened at this gathering held in Madina at a place known as the Saqifah (the 'Portico') of Banu Saᶜidah, a clan of the Khazraj tribe. Consult for example, S. Husain M. Jafri, *The Origins and Early Development of Shi'a Islam* (Qum, Iran: The Group of Muslims, no date): pp. 27-53.

[7] The names of those who originally refused to make a 'pledge of allegiance' (*bayᶜah*) to Abu Bakr are listed in several classical books of Islamic history. While most of them favored Ali for the caliphate, some, like Saᶜad bin ᶜUbadah al-Khazraji [d. 14 A.H./635-636 C.E.], were simply opposed to Abu Bakr's accession to the post. See, for example, ᶜIzz al-Din Abu al-Hassan Ali bin Abi al-Karam Muhammad bin Muhammad bin ᶜAbd al-Karim al-Jazri, popularly known as Ibn al-Athir [d. 639 A.H./1232 C.E.], *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* [The Complete History], Vol. 2, 2nd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kitab al-ᶜArabi, 1387 A.H./1967 C.E.): pp. 325-331.

[8] Abu Muhammad al-Hassan bin Musa al-Nawbakhti [d. early fourth century A.H./early tenth century C.E.], *Firaq al-Shiᶜah* [Shiᶜite Sects] (Najaf, Iraq: al-Matbaᶜah al-Haydariyyah, 1959), pp. 39-41; and Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam: The History and Doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism* (New Haven, CT; and London: Yale University Press, 1985): p.15.

[9] For more details about the election of Abu Bakr and Ali's reconciliation with him see Jafri, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-53. A dispassionate analytical narrative of the events surrounding the succession of Prophet Muhammad can be found in Wilfred Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad – A Study of the Early Caliphate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

rebels in Medina in 656 C.E. thrust Ali into the caliphate.[10] Reluctant at first, Ali accepted the post after having been urged from various sides. But Ali's accession to the throne marked the beginning of the first instance of internal strife in the Muslim community. His reign was marked by mutinies, desertions and multiple civil wars.

The most serious challenge came from Mu'awiyah, the powerful governor of Syria and 'Uthman's cousin, who accused Ali of complicity in 'Uthman's murder and ordered that Ali be cursed from the pulpits of mosques.[11] To meet these challenges, Ali moved his capital away from Madina to Kufa, a new garrison town in Iraq established in 17 A.H./639 C.E. which had the geo-strategic advantage of proximity to Damascus. Ali finally decided that the time was ripe for decisive military action against Mu'awiyah. The ensuing battle of Siffin, a ruined Roman site near the Euphrates, was inconclusive and ended with a call for arbitration to try to avoid any further bloodshed among Muslims. The arbitration created a rift in Ali's ranks. Those who deserted the caliph's army were known as the Khawarij ('Seceders'). It was one of their number, Abd al-Rahman ibn Maljam al-Muradi, who assassinated Ali, wounding him as he was performing pre-dawn prayers at the Kufa mosque on Ramadan 19, 40 A.H./January 27, 661 C.E. Ali died from his wounds two days later and his son, Hassan, the

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[10] A summary and analysis of 'Uthman's caliphate, his policies, and the subsequent rebellion is given by Muhammad Jamal al-Din Surur, *al-Hayat al-Siyasiyyah fi al-Dawlah al-'Arabiyyah al-Islamiyyah* [Political Life in the Arab-Islamic State] (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Fikr al-'Arabi, 1964): pp.57-69. See also Julius Wellhausen, *The Religio-Political Factions in Early Islam*, translated by R. C. Ostle and S. M. Walzer (Amesterdam, The Netherlands: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1975). For accounts of the events surrounding the murder of 'Uthman and its aftermath, see Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari [d. 310 A.H./923 C.E.], *The History of al-Tabarī*, Vol. XVI, *The Community Divided*, translated by Adrian Brockett (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997). See also, Martin Hinds, "The Murder of the Caliph 'Uthman," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (October 1972): pp. 450-469. Shaykh 'Abd al-Hussein al-Amini [d. 1392 A.H./1970 C.E.] *al-Ghadir fi al-Kitab wa al-Sunnah wa al-Adab* [al-Ghadir in the Scripture, the Prophetic Traditions and Literature], Vols. 1-11 (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 1403 A.H./1983 C.E.) provides a detailed historical excursus into the events surrounding the murder of 'Uthman from a Shi'ite perspective.

[11] The practice of denouncing and cursing Ali from the pulpits after Friday prayers continued until Umayyad caliph 'Umar bin Abd al-'Aziz (d. 101 A.H./720 C.E.) put an end to it. Mu'awiyah used very harsh methods to establish the practice. Those who refused to go along were put to the sword. Among those who met such a fate due to their staunch refusal to denounce Ali was Hajar bin 'Uday al-Kindi who was executed along with six companions on the outskirts of Damascus in 51 A.H./671 C.E. See Muhammad Jawad Mughniyyeh, *al-Shi'ah wa al-Hakimun* [The Shi'ites and the Rulers], 5th Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Jawad, 1981): pp. 71-83; and Muhammad Bahr al-'Ulum, *Hajar: Lisan Haqq wa Ramz Fida'* [Hajar: A Mouthpiece of Truth and a Symbol of Sacrifice] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Zahra' li al-Tiba'ah wa al-Nashr, 1982).

second Shi'ite Imam, succeeded him briefly, but was soon prevailed upon to relinquish his claim in favor of Mu^cawiyah.[12] This event marked the birth of the Umayyad dynasty.

There is no doubt that historical events are not mere epochs or points in time. They unfold and happen in geographical settings. In other words, they take place, and, in the process, they impute on these locations powerful and rich symbolism. Ali's momentous decision to move his capital to Kufa marked a crucial turning point in the relationship between Shi^cism and Iraq. Ali's short-lived rule, with its seat of power in Kufa, would later provide Shi^cism with an affective streak, a dense object of nostalgia, and a vivid dramatization of the theme of betrayal. It came to be seen as the epitome and a model *par excellence* of just rule – a space of intersection of the utopian and the historical. But, in the evolving construct of Sunni political thought and communal narrative of the early Muslim polity, the series of disordering crises set into motion by ^cUthman's murder gave rise to a conservative streak. Political opposition became confounded with sedition.[13] In this sense, Sunni political thought provided an ideology of obedience to the state.

Iraq was the place where another defining moment in the evolution of Shi^cism unfolded. Shortly after the death of Ali, his successor and eldest son Hassan made a deal with Mu^cawiyah to prevent further bloodshed among Muslims. According to the peace agreement reached in 41 A.H./661 C.E., Hassan relinquished his claims to the caliphate in return for a commitment by Mu^cawiyah that "authority should be for Hassan after him."[14] But the

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[12] For an analysis of the multiple early narratives about the personalities of Ali and Mu^cawiyah, see Erling Ladewig Petersen, *'Ali and Mu'āwiya in Early Arabic Tradition: Studies on the Genesis and Growth of Islamic Historical Writing until the End of the Ninth Century* (Copenhagen, Denmark: Munksgaard, 1964). For an account of the Siffin arbitration agreement, consult Martin Hinds, "The Siffin Arbitration Agreement," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (1972): pp. 93-129.

[13] Sunni jurists have gone as far as proscribing even discussing the quarrels between the companions of the Prophet. Examples abound. For instance, Shams al-Din Muhammad bin Ahmad bin ^cUthman al-Dhahabi [748 A.H./1348 C.E.] in his *Siyar A^calam al-Nubala'* [The Biographies of the Luminary Nobility], edited by Shu^cayb al-Arna'ut, Bashshar Ma^caruf, *et. al.*, Vol. 10 (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasat al-Risalah li al-Tiba^cah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi^ci, 1402 A.H./1982 C.E.): p. 92, says: "It has also been decided to abstain from [discussing] a lot of the wrangling and infighting among the companions, may Allah be pleased with them all."

[14] Muhammad Jawad Fadlallah, *Solh al-Imam al-Hassan (^calayhi al-salam): Asbabuh wa Nata'ijuh* [The Peace of Imam al-Hassan (Peace Be upon Him): Causes and Consequences], (Qum, Iran: Dar al-Muthaqqaf al-Muslim, no date): p. 130. A brief classical account of the peace deal can be found in Abu Muhammad Abdallah bin Muslim Ibn Qutaybah Al-Daynuri [d. 276 A.H./899 C.E.], *al-Imamah wa al-Siyasah* [Imamah and Politics], edited by Khalil al-Mansour (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Al-Kutub Al-^cIlmiyyah, 1422 A.H./2001 C.E.): p. 33. Numerous Shi^cite religious scholars have addressed this episode at length. In addition to Fadlallah's above-cited work, another representative of this trend is the late Shaykh Radhi Aal Yassin's *Solh al-Imam al-Hassan (^calayhi al-salam)* [The Peace of Imam al-Hassan (Peace Be upon Him)], 2nd Edition (Kadhemiyyah, Iraq: Dar al-Kutub al-^cIraqiyyah, 1965).

Umayyad ruler reneged on the terms of the peace agreement and proclaimed his dissolute son, Yazid, as successor.

Just like a rock dropped into a pond produces waves, the ripples of Mu^cawiyah's decision to proclaim Yazid as his successor set into motion a chain of events that culminated in a very unequal battle between the Umayyad troops and a hopelessly outnumbered small band of opponents led by Ali's second son, Hussein, in Karbala in Iraq. In 61 A.H./680 C.E., following the death of Mu^cawiyah and the accession of the self-indulgent Yazid to the caliphate, Hussein, moved into Iraq with a small band of followers and kinsfolk, hoping to find support in and around Kufa. Hussein and his devoted followers faced a deadly fate on the 10th of the lunar month of Muharram, or ^cAshura (from "^cAhsir,' meaning 'the tenth,' in Arabic).[15]

It was not only "the strength of remembered martyrdom," to use the words of the celebrated late historian Albert Hourani, that the tragic events at Karbala were to infuse Shi^cism with.[16] The Karbala tragedy also left a lasting scar on the collective consciousness of the Shi^cite community. The very concept of martyrdom goes hand in glove with an intense sense of righteousness. Death in a lost military encounter ceases to signify military defeat. Rather, military defeat is perceived as a moral and historical victory. Here, spiritual and moral power grows from, and compensates for, the lack of the material resources of power. But in the case of ^cAshura moral triumphalism was intertwined with a sense of pathos, sorrow, betrayal and abandonment. Over the years, the commemorative rites that developed to mark the tragedy and heal the scar on the psyche of Shi^cites became a source of group solidarity. If belief in Ali's right to the caliphate brought questions of political legitimacy and usurpation of power to the center stage of Shi^cite political thought, the tragedy of Karbala bound Shi^cism up firmly

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[15] There has been an endless stream of works by Shi^cite and other historians and religious scholars dealing with the tragedy of Karbala. An account by a classical non-Shi^cite historian can be found in Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari [d. 310 A.H./923 C.E.], *The History of al-Tabarī*, Vol. XIX, *The Caliphate of Yazid b. Mu'awiyah A.D. 680-683/A.H. 60-64*, translated by I.K.A. Howard (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991). For a good analytical survey of the Karbala tragedy and the permanent scar it left on the collective psyche of Shi^cites by a prominent modern-day Shi^cite cleric, see the late Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shams al-Din's trilogy *Thawrat al-Hussein: Dhurufuha al-Ijtima^ciyyah wa Atharuha al-Insaniyyah* [Hussein's Revolt: Its Social Conditions and Human Implications], 6th Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Ta^caruf li al-Matbu^cat, 1981); *Ansar al-Hussein: Dirasah ^can Shuhada' Thawrat al-Hussein – al-Rijal wa al-Dalalat* [Hussein's Supporters: A Study of the Martyrs of Hussein's Revolt – The Men and the Symbolisms], 2nd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Dar al-Islamiyyah, 1401 A.H./1981 C.E. [1395 A.H./1975 C.E.]); and *Thawrat al-Hussein fi al-Wujdan al-Sha^cabi* [Hussein's Revolt in Folk Consciousness], 1st Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Dar al-Islamiyyah, 1400 A.H./1980 C.E.).
[16] Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, with an Afterword by Malise Ruthven (London: Faber and Faber, 1995): p. 31.

with an oppositional discourse. This found its expression in a series of Shi^cite revolts and armed insurrections that challenged the legitimacy of the Umayyads.[17]

Armed insurrections mobilized large numbers of non-Arab converts to Islam, known as *mawali*, for their causes. Resentment among these converts, especially among those of Iranian origin, grew due to their relegation to an inferior status in the social structure of the nascent Islamic empire.[18] The *mawali*, therefore, were drawn to anti-Umayyad insurrections which raised egalitarian slogans. Eventually, one of these revolts led to the overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty in 132 A.H./750 C.E. But the Umayyads were not replaced by descendants of the Prophet through Ali and Fatimah, but rather by descendants of the Prophet's uncle al-^cAbbas.[19] As the ^cAbbasids went about consolidating their power and authority, they emulated the Umayyads with their harsh policies and profligate lifestyle. Soon, new disenchantments sprang up to replace the old. The ^cAbbasids soon found themselves on a collision course with supporters who felt betrayed by the revolution. "These disillusioned elements naturally began to look elsewhere for leadership, especially to members of the family of ^cAli b. Abi Talib."[20] Anxious about the radical oppositionist potential of Shi^cism, ^cAbbasid rule would soon assume an anti-Shi^cite stance. The pattern was a cyclic one, involving, as it did during Umayyad times, ghastly horrors of state repression feeding frustrations and, in turn, further armed revolts.

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[17] A good survey of Shi^cite armed revolts and insurrections in the Umayyad era is Hashim Ma^caruf al-Hassani, *al-Intifadhat al-Shi^ciyyah ^cabra al-Tarikh* [Shi^cite Uprisings throughout History] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-Sha^cabiyyah, no date). A classical survey of these episodes is provided by Abu al-Faraj Ali bin al-Hussein al-Isfahani [d. 356 A.H./967 C.E.], *Maqatil al-Talibiyyin* [The Killings of the Talibis], Edited and Illustrated by Ahmad Saqr (Qum, Iran: al-Sharif al-Radhi Publications, 1416 A.H./1996 C.E.).

[18] G. R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate AD 661-750*, 2nd Edition (London: Routledge, 2000): p. 4; F. [Farhad] Daftary, "Sectarian and National Movements in Iran, Khurasan and Transoxania during Umayyad and Early ^cAbbasid Times," in M. S. Asimov and C. E. Bosworth, eds., *History of Civilizations of Central Asia, Vol. IV: The Age of Achievement: AD 750 to the End of the Fifteenth Century, Part One: The Historical, Social and Economic Setting* (Paris, France: UNESCO Publishing, 1998): p. 41. See also, Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): p. 50.

[19] For an insightful analysis of the social and political factors shaping the ^cAbbasid revolution, especially as they relate to Khurasan and Transoxania, see M. A. Shaban, *The ^cAbbāsid Revolution* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970). For a discussion of the events and circumstances which made ^cAbbasid propaganda appealing to a potpourri of opposition elements, including the *mawali* and Arab settlers in Khurasan, see ^cUmar Abu al-Nasr, *al-Ayyam al-Akhirah li al-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah* [The Last Days of the Umayyad State] (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Maktabah al-Ahliyyah, 1962); Hawting, *op. cit.*, Chapter 6, "The Development of Factionalism and the Problems of Islamisation," pp. 72-89, Chapter 7, "The Third Civil War and the Caliphate of Marwan II," pp. 90-103, and Chapter 8, "The Overthrow of the Umayyad Caliphate," pp. 104-119; and Hugh Kennedy, *The Early Abbasid Caliphate: A Political History* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), Chapter 2, "The Origins of the Abbasid Revolution," esp. pp. 35-37.

[20] Kennedy, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

2.2. Demons of Communal Strife

"Who are you, black owl, crying to me in the night
waking me, lovely, crazy, who are you,
black owl, sheltering my thoughts under
your left wing, proclaiming my sin, and
burning me on the pyre, and creating me anew
from ash and spittle, who are you
black owl."

Azem Shkerli, *The Call of the Owl*,
translated from Albanian by John Hidgson

While military might is capable of suppressing armed revolt, it can never extinguish an identity. A confluence of intellectual effervescence, political upheavals, and demographic changes, especially the rapid urbanization of Baghdad,[21] combined to transform Iraq during the ᶜAbbasid period into an arena of a communal Sunni-Shiᶜite strife. In the shadow of unrelenting state persecution during the early ᶜAbbasid period, the main outlines of the Sunni-Shiᶜite doctrinal arguments were fleshed out and became established in the course of the articulation of a body of Islamic religious sciences.

By then, cosmopolitan Baghdad seems to have become increasingly segmented along sectarian lines. Baghdadis were living in neighborhoods that had distinctly different sectarian compositions.[22] It is my contention that this concentration of Shiᶜite and Sunni population

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[21] As historian Ira M. Lapidus notes: "Never had there been a Middle Eastern city so large. Baghdad was not a single city, but a metropolitan center, made up of a conglomeration of districts on both sides of the Tigris River. In the ninth century it measured about 25 square miles, and had a population of between 300,000 and 500,000 … Baghdad, then was the product of the upheavals, population movements, economic changes, and conversions of the preceding century; the home of a new Middle Eastern society, heterogeneous and cosmopolitan, embracing numerous Arab and non-Arab elements, now integrated into a single society under the auspices of the Arab empire and the Islamic religion." (Lapidus, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70).

[22] On the sectarian demographics of these neighborhoods, see Saᶜad bin Hudhayfah al-Ghamedi, *Suqut al-Dawlah al-ᶜAbbasiyyah: wa Dawr al-Shiᶜah bayna al-Haqiqah wa al-Ittiham* [The Fall of the ᶜAbbasid State: and the Shiᶜites' Role in It between Reality and Accusations], 3ʳᵈ Edition (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dar Ibn Hudhayfah, 1425 A.H./2004 C.E.): pp. 205-206. Details on the history of the Bab al-Azej neighborhood, currently known as the Bab al-Shaykh neighborhood, can be found in Tariq Harb, "Mihnat al-Muhamat fi Baghdad Asluha min Bab al-Shaykh," ["The Origins of the Law Profession in Baghdad Lie in Bab al-Shaykh"], *al-Mada*, Sunday, June 1, 2008; available at: http://www.almadapaper.com/paper.php?source=akbar&mlf=interpage&sid=43648; accessed on Tuesday, September 08, 2009. It should be noted that the sectarian composition of some of these neighborhoods survives to this day. For instance, the area around the shrine of Abu Hanifah is currently known as the Aᶜadhamiyyah neighborhood and continues to be a predominantly Sunni neighborhood. On the other hand, the area around the shrine of Musa al-Kadhem is currently known as the Kadhemiyyah neighborhood and continues to be a predominantly Shiᶜite neighborhood.

groups into separate neighborhoods contributed to the hardening of sectarian attitudes. Living in neighborhoods that are homogenous along sectarian lines within an atmosphere rife with sectarian antagonisms and turmoil turned these areas into caldrons seething with tension, anger and resentment toward the sectarian 'Other.' Physical separation exacerbated the psychological separation. It weakened and reduced the possibility of informal ties which bind neighbors together across the sectarian divide. The sectarian 'Other' seemed not only as an 'Other,' but also as a distant 'Other.' The intensity of inter-communal strife during this period reached new heights. Apparent manifestations of atavistic practices, such as the large-scale desecration of graves and places of worship, characterized eruptions of communal violence during this period.[23]

In many ways, politics had a generative intellectual power in the development of theological lines of thought. Positions on issues related to religious dogma and concepts were articulated in the context of bolstering diametrically opposed political positions. This was particularly the case along the charged Shiᶜite-Sunni fault line. As one astute student of classical Islamic philosophy has argued:

> "[S]ince throughout Muslim history the Shīᶜites had been forced into the position of a disgruntled minority whose political ambitions were repeatedly thwarted, it was natural that they should rebel intellectually against the facts of religio-political reality and seek in the realm of abstract constructions a spiritual haven to which they could turn in adversity."[24]

In suppressing the possibility of inter-communal solidarity, the proliferation and maturation of such an interwoven web of theological discourses and schools of religious thought against the backdrop of political rivalry led to the congealing of specifically Sunni and Shiᶜite communal identities. These were identities that developed amid an atmosphere of intense sectarian fragmentation and bore all the hallmarks of the sectarian impulse to separate and set the sectarian group apart from other sectarian groups in society. As sects, they tended to identify in negative terms all those who do not belong to the group. The development of

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[23] The outbreak of sectarian violence in Baghdad in the year 443 A.H./1051 C.E. is a case in point. See, ᶜImad al-Din Abu al-Fida' Ismaᶜil Ibn Kathir [d. 774 A.H./1373 C.E.], *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* [The Beginning and the End], edited by Judah Muhammad Judah and Muhammad Husni Shaᶜarawi, Vols. 11 (Cairo, Egypt: Dar Ibn al-Haytham, 2006): p. 36.

[24] Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 2nd Edition (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1983 [1970]): p. 41.

communal identities coincided with signs of revolutionary fatigue among various strands of Shi‘ism, especially the Twelver strand, stemming in part from the accumulation of dashed hopes and historical disappointments. This revolutionary impulse subsided in favor of communal solidarity and personal piety.

Sunni-Shi‘ite sectarian strife and riots continued to punctuate life in Baghdad till the capture of the city by the Mongols, which marks the fall of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate, in 656 A.H./1258 C.E. On the eve of the invasion Shi‘ites in Baghdad were increasingly seen in Sunni popular lore as fifth columnists against the state and potential supporters of outside hostile Shi‘ite powers. Such stereotypes and negative trait characterizations were reinforced during events surrounding the Mongol invasion of Baghdad. Classical Sunni historians have frequently put antagonisms precipitated by the Sunni-Shi‘ite strife at the center of the destruction of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate. They accused the caliph's Shi‘ite vizier Mu'ayyad al-Din Muhammad bin Ahmad al-‘Alqami, better known as Ibn al-‘Alqami (d. 656 A.H./1258 C.E.), of conspiring with the commander of the advancing Mongol armies, Hulagu Khan, against the last ‘Abbasid Caliph, al-Musta‘asim (d. 656 A.H./1258 C.E.).[25]

Critical historical research has presented an image that differs markedly from that constructed by classical Sunni histories, dismissing the alleged plot by Ibn al-‘Alqami to surrender Baghdad to the Mongols as mere fabrication of hostile gossip.[26] But regardless of the probity of the accusation, associating a certain sectarian group with the calamity of the fall of Baghdad can only contribute to the formation of negative emotions about its members. As a stereotype believed to be true by its holders, the image of the Shi‘ites as traitors collaborating with foreign invaders continues to feed inter-sectarian prejudice and hostility. Lurking in the

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[25] Ibn Kathir, *op. cit.*, Vol. 13, pp. 126-127.
[26] See Ghamedi, *op. cit.*; and Rashid al-Khayyun, *al-Adyan wa al-Madhahib fi al-‘Iraq* [Religions and Religious Schools of Thought in Iraq], 2nd Edition (Köln, Germany; and Baghdad, Iraq: al-Jamal Publications, 2007 [2003]): pp. 299-307.

deep recesses of classical historical sources, it has been recalled in times of heightened sectarian tensions down to this day.[27]

In the post-ᶜAbbasid period, Sunni-Shiᶜite relations underwent a détente. But this détente fell short of fostering a supra-sectarian Muslim concept of communal identity and was, therefore, fragile. It succumbed to challenges wrought about by the clash of two imperial Muslim titans: the Ottomans and the Safavids. As the Ottoman Sunnis and the Safavid Shiᶜites turned against each other in a bruising struggle for dominance of the Muslim world, many of their military confrontations were fought out in Iraq. Both sides employed sectarian symbols and themes to mobilize domestic support and whip up enmity toward the "Other." In the process, old sectarian antagonisms were re-awakened and sectarian primordial attachments reconstituted and deepened.[28]

2.3. Clerics and Tribes

"It would be a curious historical study, if the materials for it existed, to trace the diffusion of Shi'ah doctrines in Mesopotamia. They have certainly spread, owing to the missionary zeal of Shi'ah divines, during the last hundred years. For instance, a large tribal group of the Zubaid … was turned to Shi'ahism about 1830 by a famous mujtahid whose descendants still dominate the politics of Hillah. It is significant that the kindred tribes to the north, the Dulaim and Ubaid, a little further removed from the persuasive influence of the holy places, have remained Sunni."

Gertrude Bell,
Review of the Civil Administration of Iraq (1920)

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[27] The Ibn al-ᶜAlqami metaphor has been extensively employed as a slur against Iraq's post-Saddam Shiᶜite-led government by opponents of the post-2003 political order. In fact, the ousted Iraqi leader himself used it in one of his early message following the US-led invasion. In an April 28, 2003 message addressed to the Iraqi people and the Arab and Muslim world, the deposed leader said: "Just as Hulagu entered Baghdad, so did the criminal Bush enter Baghdad, with the help of ᶜAlqami – indeed, even more than one ᶜAlqami." The message was published by the London-based pan-Arab daily *al-Quds al-ᶜArabi*, Tuesday, April 29, 2003. On his part, the late Jordanian-born leader of al-Qaᶜida in Mesopotamia Ahmad Fadhil Nazzal al-Khalaylah, better known as Abu Musᶜab al-Zarqawi, used this metaphor extensively. For instance, in mid-May 2005, Zarqawi released an audio-taped sermon entitled "The Grandchildren of Ibn al-ᶜAlqami Have Returned" [*Wa ᶜAad Ahfad Ibn al-ᶜAlqami*]. This audio message has been posted on numerous jihadist websites. But these websites keep changing their addresses. The audio version of the message is available at: http://sajed2005.jeeran.com/sona/archive/2007/5/218589.html; accessed on Wednesday, September 09, 2009. Transcribed excerpts of this message have been published by the *Bayt Hawwa'* website and are available at: http://forum.hawahome.com/t23603.html; accessed on Wednesday, September 9, 2009.
[28] Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia: Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2004).

In the shadow of the protracted struggle for supremacy between the two powers some dynamics were set into motion which would have a profound, lasting impact on the confessional aspects of Shi^cism and inter-communal relations in Iraq. The disorder created by the fall of the Safavid state drove many prominent Shi^cite ^culama' to relocate to the shrine cities of Iraq, which was then under Ottoman rule. This mass influx of Shi^cite jurists and clerical divines invigorated religious learning in the shrine cities. An intense controversy over the proper methodology of ascertaining Shari^cah law raged in Karbala in the late eighteenth century which would ultimately enhance the authority of the clergy over the spiritual and temporal affairs of the Shi^cite laity. The controversy pitted the Akhbaris, who adopted a literal interpretation of the Qur'an and oral reports (*akhbar*) relating to sayings of the Prophet and Shi^cite Imams, against the Usulis, who stressed the primacy of the independent exercise of reason (*ijtihad*) to deduce legal rulings from the Qur'an and oral reports using rational principles (*usul*) of jurisprudence.[29] The triumph of the Usulis gave an impetus to the emergence of the institution of *marja^ca taqlid* (literally, 'source of emulation') whereby part of the authority of the hidden Imam, especially jurisprudential authority, was devolved to the Shi^cite jurists, known as *mujtahids*.[30] Control over financial resources heightened the economic and social position of the Shi^cite ^culama'. These resources originated from a variety of sources including religious endowments, voluntary special taxes, donations from the faithful and the traffic of corpses for burial in their cemeteries.[31]

The rise of Karbala and later Najaf as centers of Shi^cite learning in Iraq enabled them to play a crucial role in a process of mass conversion of Arab tribes in southern Iraq to Shi^cism. Iraq, as we have seen in this chapter, has been closely associated with Shi^cism since the early

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[29] On the Akhbari-Usuli controversy, see Juan R. I. Cole, "Shi'i Clerics in Iraq and Iran, 1722-1780: The Akhbari-Usuli Conflict Reconsidered," *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Winter 1985): pp. 3-34.

[30] In Twelver Shi^cite eschatology, Imam Muhammad bin al-Hassan (born Sha^caban 15, 255 A.H./July 28, 869 C.E.), the twelfth Imam in the line of imams who descended from the Prophet through his daughter Fatimah and his cousin Ali bin Abi Talib, has gone into occultation (*ghaybah*) in 941 C.E. Shi^cites believe that he is still alive and expect him to return at the end of time to "fill the world with justice and equity, after it had been filled with injustice and tyranny" (*li yamla' al-ardh qistan wa ^cadlan ba^cadama muli'at dhulman wa jawran*). On the belief in the occultation of the Twelfth Imam, see Jassim M. Hussain, *The Occultation of the Twelfth Imam: A Historical Background* (London: Muhammadi Trust, 1982).

[31] On the large flows of money from northern India to the shrine cities in Iraq, see Juan Cole, *Sacred Space and Holy War: The Politics, Culture and History of Shi'ite Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2002), Chapter 5, "'Indian Money' and the Shi'ite Shrine Cities," pp. 78-98; M. [Meir] Litvak, "Money, Religion and Politics: The Oudh Bequest in Najaf and Karbala', 1850-1903," *The International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (February 2001): pp. 1-21; and Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shi'is of Iraq*, 2nd Edition (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003 [1994]): pp. 211- 229. On how the British had unsuccessfully tried to manipulate the Oudh Bequest following their annexation of the province, see Meir Litvak, "A Failed Manipulation: The British, the Oudh Bequest and the Shi'i 'Ulama of Najaf and Karbala," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (May 2000): pp. 69-89.

Islamic period. But up until this wave of mass conversion, the Shi^cite community in Iraq was for the most part concentrated in urban centers.[32] A favorable confluence of a set of factors accelerated this conversion process. For one thing, environmental factors stemming from changes in the water flow of the Euphrates were at play. The construction of a canal to bring water to perpetually parched Najaf provided an impetus for the migration of tribes to the vicinities of the shrine cities. Completed in 1793, the Hindiyyah canal, as this massive hydro project came to be known, augmented the socioeconomic status of Najaf. A major environmental change associated with this project was a significant dwindling of water levels in the Shatt al-Hillah River, as the original course of the Euphrates River through the city of Hillah was known, in the nineteenth century. The ensuing high degree of economic and social dislocation prompted many of these tribes to move and settle along the Hindiyyah. This afforded the *^culama'* of the shrine cities greater opportunities for increased interaction with these nomadic and agriculturalist tribes.[33]

The rise of Wahhabi salafism, which posed an existential threat to Shi^cism in Iraq, created another impetus for increased frequency of interaction between the Shi^cite *^culama'* and the nomadic tribes. In the late eighteenth century the puritanical Wahhabis began to launch incursions into southern Iraq. These forays culminated in a major blitzkrieg-like offensive in 1802 during which the Wahhabis sacked Karbala and laid an unsuccessful siege to Najaf. The Wahhabis launched another attack against Najaf in 1806. But they were repulsed.[34] In the shrine cities, the trauma caused by these attacks evoked an acute sense of fear and vulnerability and heightened the missionary zeal of the Shi^cite *^culama'*. The result was feverish activity by Shi^cite preachers and emissaries to convert the tribes with an eye to have a ready tribal force that could be mobilized to secure the sacred shrine cities when the need arises.[35]

The growth of Shi^cism among the tribal population in southern Iraq resulted in simmering undercurrents of tension, anti-Sunni feelings and anti-Ottoman discontent that alarmed the Ottomans. Virtual Shi^cite self-rule was established in Karbala for nearly two decades. It was ended "by Baghdad-based Ottoman Turkish forces in January 1843."[36] Sporadic inter-communal disturbances continued to occur in Iraq as well, highlighting the persistent high potential for sectarian strife. Inter-communal tensions mounted in Samarra', north of

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[32] Nakash, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[33] *Ibid.*, p. 30.
[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 190-193 and 205-206.
[35] Nakash, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
[36] Juan R. Cole and Moojan Momen, "Mafia, Mob and Shiism in Iraq: The Rebellion of Ottoman Karbala 1824-1843," *Past and Present*, No. 112 (August 1986): p. 112.

Baghdad, after the preeminent Shi^cite *mujtahid* Mirza Muhammad Hassan al-Shirazi took up residence in the predominantly Sunni city in 1291 A.H./1874-1875 C.E.[37]

References to the spread of Shi^cism in Iraq became a frequent feature of Ottoman archival documents in the latter part of the nineteenth century, reflecting a heightened Ottoman anxiety about the phenomenon.[38] The menu of proposed preventive measures did not include the use of force. Instead, proposed solutions to stop and roll back the expansion of Shi^cism in Iraq were based on a hearts-and-minds strategy in which education plays a central part.[39] But these measures were too little too late, and education proved no panacea.

2.4. Anti-Colonialist Impetus for Unity

"Lo! This, your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so worship Me."

The Holy Qur'an XXI: 92

While concern was rising in official Ottoman circles about the expansion of Shi^cism in Iraq, increased Western penetration into Muslim societies was creating a strong impetus for unity on both sides of the Muslim sectarian divide. By the 19th century, it was becoming increasingly clear that Muslim empires were on a downward trajectory, their power on the wane. Events in the second half of the century, such as the French occupation of Tunisia in 1871 and the British occupation of Egypt in 1882, brought home to Muslims everywhere the theme of decline. Other forms of Western penetration, especially in the realms of technology, economics, and ideas, began to have an impact on traditional Muslim worldview and way of life. The changed international scene was disturbing to Muslim rulers, religious clerics, intellectual elites and commercial interests.

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[37] See Younus al-Shaykh Ibrahim al-Samarra'i, *Tarikh Madinat Samarra'* [A History of the City of Samarra'], Vol. 2, 1st Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Published with the Assistance of the Iraqi Scientific Society [al-Majma^c al-^cIlmi al-^cIraqi], no date): pp. 174-185.

[38] An 1889 report by a former governor of Basra estimated that "the percentage of the soldiers of 6th Army who belonged to the Shi'i sect was 90, and given that the natural enemy of the state in this region was Iran, and that troubles were continuously occurring among the Shi'i tribes, this fact should cause great concern." Gökhan Cetinsaya, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq, 1890-1908* (London; and New York, NY: Routledge, 2006).

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 107-110.

The Muslim response to colonialism took several forms. On the one hand, a series of military jihad movements developed in several parts of the Muslim world. The anti-Dutch jihad in Indonesia, the Mahdist Movement in Sudan, the anti-Italian jihad led by the Sanusi Sufi order in Libya, and other similar movements tried to arrest the encroaching march of European colonialism. But anxiety over decline from a golden past also had a regenerative intellectual power. It challenged Muslims to reconsider their worldviews, opened a space for them to resist the hegemony of the European colonialist discourse and fueled a drive to recover the dignity and power of the Islamic caliphate. A Muslim revivalist trend argued for revival and internal reform. Rejecting both unadulterated traditionalism and the blind pursuit of total cultural westernization, this streak of reformist thinking was neither puritanical nor anti-modern. In fact, its project to revive Muslim civilization entailed modernizing it.[40]

Profound political implications derived from this revivalist impulse. Islamic solidarity was seen as both a bulwark against European colonialist expansion and a prop enabling Islamic civilization to attain a stature at least equal to that of European civilization. This decidedly Pan-Islamic sentiment was driven by nostalgia for an idealized conception of an early Islamic community (*ummah*) where pristine oneness of faith serves as the source of communal solidarity. "The new situation held great promise, if not for concord, then at least for the diminution of age-old animosities."[41]

The underlying political logic corresponded to a parallel drive for Muslim unity on the part of Abd al-Hamid II. For the Ottoman sultan, Muslim unity was imperative to gain the necessary strength to break out of European encirclement, carve a leading role for the Ottoman Empire in the new international architecture, and broaden the base of Muslim support and loyalty to the Ottomans, both inside and outside the empire.[42] Some pro-constitutionalist ʿ*ulama'* of Najaf, such as Mullah Kadhim al-Khurasani, also lent their support to the movement

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[40] This period in Islamic history and the exponents of the revivalist trends have been studied extensively. For examples, see Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford; and New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001); Nikkie R. Keddie, "Sayyid Jamal al-Din 'al-Afghani,'" and Yvonne Haddad, "Muhammad Abduh: Pioneer of Islamic Reform," in Ali Rahnema, ed., *Pioneers of Islamic Revival* (London: Zed Books, 1994): pp. 11-29 and 30-63; and Riaz Hussain, *The Politics of Iqbal: A Study of His Political Thoughts and Actions* (Lahore, Pakistan: Islamic Book Service, 1977). There were other Muslim responses to European imperialism, such as nationalism. However, these are beyond the scope and purview of this discussion. For a general overview of nationalism in the Middle East, see Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*, 2nd Edition (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006): pp. 45-72.

[41] Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005 [1982]): p. 41.

[42] Stephen Duguid, "The Politics of Unity: Hamidian Policy in Eastern Anatolia," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (May 1973): pp. 139-155.

spearheaded by the Young Turks of the Committee for Union and Progress (Turkish: *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) or CUP, which ushered in the second Ottoman constitutional era in 1908.[43] The pro-constitutionalist Shi^cite clergy were soon alienated from the new regime by manifestations of the CUP's militaristic dispositions and hegemonic Pan-Turkic nationalism. Yet, the falling out with the CUP regime did not extinguish the torch of trans-sectarian Muslim solidarity as evidenced by Shi^cite agitation in Iraq in support of the jihad against the Italian invasion of Libya in 1911.[44]

Anti-colonialism provided a way to soften, and possibly even transcend, the primordial sectarian boundary that nurtured a motif of mutually antagonistic relationship. The Islamic revivalist trend that emerged in the nineteenth century contributed to cultivating trans-sectarian anti-colonialist activism that greeted the British occupation of Iraq during World War I. The model of trans-sectarian action that the 1920 revolution embodied, which saw Sunni and Shi^cite tribes joining forces against the British, was inspired by an ethos of Sunni-Shi^cite solidarity and cooperation that swept Iraq in the first years of the British occupation and mandate.[45] A patchwork of segmented societal groups and communities organized corporate political action transcending narrow primordial sentiments. Trans-sectarian anti-British activism during these heady days went beyond armed insurrectionary action. Those years also saw mass civic mobilization against the British being expressed in trans-sectarian religious idiom in Iraqi urban centers, especially Baghdad. Inspired by a sense of common

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[43] The first CUP branch in the Iraqi territories of the Ottoman Empire was established in Basra by Rashid al-Khuja, an Iraqi Colonel in the Ottoman army. Other CUP branches were later founded in Baghdad, Najaf and Mosul. See Reeva Spector Simon, *Iraq Between the Two World Wars: The Militarist Origins of Tyranny*, Updated Edition (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2004 [1986]): p. 26. Khuja later joined the secret Arab society known as *al-^cAhd* ('The Covenant') which sought the establishment of a dual monarchy in the Ottoman Empire along the lines of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Following the establishment of the modern Iraqi state, Khuja served in several senior government posts, including a stint as Chief of Staff at the Royal Court.

[44] Abd al-Halim al-Ruhaymi, *Ta'rikh al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi al-^cIraq: al-Judhur al-Fikriyyah wa al-Waqi^c al-Tarikhi (1900-1924)* [A History of the Islamic Movement in Iraq: Intellectual Roots and Historical Reality (1900-1924)] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Nubugh, 1409 A.H./1988 C.E.): pp. 150-152. On the Young Turks, see Feroz Ahmad, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

[45] Literature dealing with the 1920 insurrection is voluminous, especially in Arabic. Examples of chief and useful works include Wardi, *op. cit.,* Vol. 5 (Qum, Iran: al-Maktabah al-Haydariyyah, 1378-1379 S.H. [Solar Hijri Calendar]); ^cAbd al-Razzaq al-Hassani, *al-Thawrah al-^cIraqiyyah al-Kubra* [The Great Iraqi Revolution], Revised Edition (Qum, Iran: Mu'assasat al-Muhibbin, no date); and Fariq al-Mizhir al-Fir^caoun, *al-Haqa'iq al-Nasi^cah fi al-Thawrah al-^cIraqiyyah Sanat 1920 wa Nata'ijuha* [The Bright Truths of the Iraqi Revolution of the Year 1920 and Its Consequences], 2nd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasat al-Balagh li al-Tiba^cah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi^ci, 1415 A.H./1995 C.E.). For a British contemporary account, see James Aylmer Lowthorpe, *The Insurrection in Mesopotamia* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1922).

political interests, Sunni and Shi^{c}ite urban activists utilized religious ceremonies as they set out agitating against the British.[46]

These episodes of struggle marked the culmination of an upsurge in trans-sectarian agitation against the Allied Powers sparked by the Ottoman Empire's entry into World War I on the side of the Central Powers at the end of October 1914. As early as the first landings of the British expeditionary force at Fao in southern Iraq on November 6, 1914, Shi^{c}ite mujtahids joined their Sunni counterparts in urging Muslims to fight the non-Muslim invaders and defend the Sunni Ottoman Empire.[47] Many Shi^{c}ite clerics, including figures such as Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim and Sayyid Muhammad Sa^{c}id al-Habboubi, took an active part in mobilizing auxiliary forces made up of volunteers and fought on the side of the Ottoman forces in several battles, most important of which was at Shu^{c}aybah, to the west of Basra.[48]

2.5. Colonial Prelude to Nationhood

"We are here by our moral superiority, by the force of circumstances and the will of providence. These alone constitute our charter of government, and in doing the best we can for the people we are bound by our consciences and not theirs."

John Lawrence, British Viceroy of India (1864-1869),
quoted in Sir Michael O'Dwyer, *India as I Knew It, 1885-1925*

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[46] David R. Kertzer explores the role of rituals in politics in his insightful cross-cultural study *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988). Accounts of these joint Sunni-Shi^{c}ite mass protest meetings and demonstrations abound. For examples, see Muhammad Mahdi al-Basir, *Tarikh al-Qadhiyyah al-^{c}Iraqiyyah* [The History of the Iraqi Question] (Baghdad, Iraq: Matba^{c}at al-Falah, 1342 A.H./1924 C.E.): pp. 146-159; Jamil Abu Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat Baghdad: Muraja^{c}ah fi Tarikh al-Sira^{c}a al-Ta'ifi wa al-^{c}Unsuri, 672 Miladiyyah – 2007 Miladiyyah* [Baghdad Memoirs: A Review of the History of Sectarian and Racial Conflict: 672 C.E. – 2007 C.E.], 1st Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Mu'assasah al-^{c}Arabiyyah li al-Dirasat wa al-Nashr, 2008): p. 298; and Wardi, *op. cit.*, Vol. 5, pp. 172-196.

[47] Wardi, *op. cit.*, Vol. 4, pp. 130-131.

[48] Contingents of Kurdish volunteers from the northern parts of Iraq also fought on the side of the Ottomans against the British invaders. See Salah al-Khirsan, *al-Tayyarat al-Siyasiyyah fi Kurdistan: Qira'ah fi Malaffat al-Harakat wa al-Ahzab al-Kurdiyyah fi al-^{c}Iraq, 1946-2001* [Political Currents in Kurdistan: A Reading into the Files of the Kurdish Movements and Parties in Iraq, 1946-2001] (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assassat al-Balagh li al-Tiba^{c}ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi^{c}i, 1422 A.H./2001 C.E.): pp. 16-17. See also the short biography of Kurdish leader Shaykh Mahmoud al-Barzanji, aka Mahmoud al-Hafid, who led a contingent of Kurdish volunteers in the battle of Shu^{c}aybah, in Karim Sharza, "al-Shaykh Mahmoud al-Hafid Malik Kurdistan" [Shaykh Mahmoud al-Hafid the King of Kurdistan], *Gilgamish*, the website of the Gilgamish Center for Kurdish Studies and Research, August 12, 2007; available at: http://www.gilgamish.org/viewarticle.php?id=kurdish_persons-20070812-3086; accessed on Friday, June 18, 2010. Please note that the Kurdish, or more broadly ethnic, aspects of the quandaries of collective identity, nation-building and state-making in Iraq are subjects of crucial importance and present social and political scientists with interesting puzzles and research questions. However, these aspects are wildly beyond the scope of this research and require a separate lengthy treatment in their own right.

Despite major battlefield reversals and heavy losses at Mada'in (Ctesiphon) and Kut, the British succeeded to capture Baghdad on March 10, 1917. Soon thereafter, on March 19, Lieutenant General Sir Stanley Maude, commander of the British Army, issued a proclamation stating that,

> "Our military operations have as their object the defeat of the enemy, and the driving of him from these territories. In order to complete this task, I am charged with absolute and supreme control of all regions in which British troops operate; but our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators."[49]

The fall of Baghdad was followed by the capture of Samarra' in May, Ramadi in September and Kirkuk in early 1918. Three days after the signing of the Armistice of Mudros on October 30, 1918, British troops marched into Mosul.[50] Hence, following the end of World War I on November 11, 1918, the British found themselves in control of the three Ottoman vilayets of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul. The modern Iraqi state was founded on colonial arrangements which incorporated these three provinces into the British-administered Mandate of Iraq.

Anxious to cut their losses in blood and treasure, which heightened during the 1920 Revolt, the British reluctantly resolved to dissolve the direct military occupation government and devolve real power to a local Iraqi civil administration, or an "administration with an Arab

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[49] Sir Stanley Maude, "The proclamation of Baghdad," *Harper's Magazine* (May 2003); available at: http://www.harpers.org/archive/2003/05/0079593; accessed on Sunday, March 21, 2010. The sentiments expressed in Maude's proclamation would be eerily echoed some 86 years later by a flawed quasi-millenarian optimism which blinded neoconservatives in the George W. Bush administration from even entertaining, let alone contemplating, the possibility of potential perils resulting from a US-led invasion of Iraq. See Toby Dodge, "Failing in Baghdad – The British Did It First," *The Washington Post*, Sunday, February 25, 2007; available at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/23/AR2007022301746.html; accessed on Sunday, March 21, 2010.

[50] For a lucid examination of the military side of the British campaign, see A. J. Barker, *The Neglected War: Mesopotamia 1914-1918* (London: Faber & Faber, 1967). For an Iraqi eyewitness account of the British capture of Mosul, see Muhammad Hadid, *Mudhakkarati: al-Sira^c min Ajl al-Dimuqratiyyah fi al-^cIraq* [My Memoirs: The Struggle for Democracy in Iraq], edited by Najdat Fathi Safwat (London: Dar al-Saqi, 2006): pp. 49-51.

façade,"[51] in which the British maintain the last word on state policies and decisions. A Council of State headed by the Abd al-Rahman al-Ghaylani was installed as provisional government for over two years.[52] The initial makeup of the Council of State favored patrician Sunni notables. Six out of the eight ministers belonged to prominent Sunni families, one was Jewish, and one Shi'ite. This uneven composition of the cabinet provoked complaints of under-representation by the Shi'ites, who constituted an estimated 55 percent of the population.[53] The Shi'ites' concerns were exacerbated by the fact that the British had appointed Sunnis to high profile positions, such as governors (*mutasarrifs*) and local administrators (*qa'im maqams*), in predominantly Shi'ite areas throughout the central and southern Euphrates regions, whereas Shi'ites were mostly appointed in low-ranking bureaucratic and administrative posts. This policy was continued after the establishment of

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[51] The quote, attributed to Sir Percy Cox, Britain's first High Commissioner in Iraq, is cited by Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 75. On British efforts to devolve power to a provisional Iraqi government, see Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (London; and New York, NY: I. B. Tauris, 2007): p. 35; and Abd al-Razzaq al-Hassani, *Tarikh al-'Iraq al-Siyasi*, Vol. 1, 7th Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Rafidayn li al-Tiba'ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi'i, 1429 A.H./2008 C.E.): pp. 189-201.

[52] Abdallah Fahd al-Nafisi, *Dawr al-Shi'ah fi Tatawwur al-'Iraq al-Siyasi al-Hadith* [The Role of the Shi'ites in the Modern Political Development of Iraq] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Nahar li al-Nashr, 1973): p. 166; and B. H. Bourdillon, "The Political Situation in Iraq," *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 6 (November 1924): pp. 277-280.

[53] According to a British population estimate conducted in 1919 the Shi'ites numbered 1,493,015 out of a total population of 2,692,782, or about 55 percent, whereas the Sunnis numbered 992,285 or about 37 percent. See Nafisi, *op. cit.*, p. 167. Censuses in Iraq provide data only on the religious makeup, but not the sectarian breakdown, of the population. However, the generally accepted view is that Shi'ites represent around 55-60 percent of the population while Sunni Arabs account for around 20 percent. Still, since the fall of Saddam Hussein some Iraqi Sunni Arab community leaders, activists and writers have made the claim that Sunnis of Arab, Kurdish and Turkmen stock account for more than 50 percent of the population. Interview with Shaykh Abd al-Salam al-Kubaysi, Public Relations Officer of the Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq (*Hay'at 'Ulama' al-Muslimin fi al-'Iraq*), Baghdad, November 2003; and Taha Hamed al-Dulaymi, "al-Haqiqah: Awwal Kitab Makhtut 'an Ti'dad al-Sunnah wa al-Shi'ah fi al-'Iraq" ["The Truth: The First Book Manuscript on the Numbers of Sunnis and Shi'ites in Iraq"], Parts 1-3, *Mufakkirat al-Islam*, Thursday, October 2, 2003; available on: http://www.islammemo.cc/2003/10/02/2626.html; http://www.islammemo.cc/2003/10/02/2627.html; and http://www.islammemo.cc/2003/10/02/2628.html; accessed on Saturday, September 11, 2010.

the state.[54] Partly to placate the Shi^cites eleven ministers without portfolio were appointed. Four of the new ministers were Shi^cites.[55]

Meanwhile, an emerging broad consensus among the Shi^cites and Sunnis of Iraq began to gel around the future of the infant country. Most community leaders on both sides of the sectarian divide called for immediate independence for the country and installing a Muslim Arab leader as emir or king.[56] Faisal, who commanded Arab rebel forces in the Great Arab Revolt launched by his father Sharif Hussein against the Ottomans, seemed to offer a good solution for the British. Iraq provided Faisal with a substitute for his lost throne in Syria, while his lineage, as a descendant of the Prophet, made him acceptable to most Shi^cites in Iraq, notwithstanding the fact that he was a Sunni. At the same time, the pliant Faisal seemed willing to serve the British interests in the country.[57]

Upon acceding to the throne, Faisal embarked on an ambitious two-pronged quest to acquire the trappings of a modern state and to implement a social engineering project aimed to mold

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[54] See Muhsin Abu Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat al-Sayyid Muhsin Abu Tabikh, 1910-1960: Khamsun ^cAaman min Tarikh al-^cIraq al-Siyasi al-Hadith* [The Memoirs of Sayyid Muhsin Abu Tabikh, 1910-1960: Fifty Years of the Modern Political History of Iraq], compiled and edited by Jamil Abu Tabikh (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Mu'assasah al-^cArabiyyah li al-Dirasat wa al-Nashr, 2001): pp. 273-276 and 287-289. These Shi^cite grievances continue to reverberate to this date. In an interview which I conducted with him at his home in Baghdad in November 2009, an Iraqi Shi^cite MP (2006-2010) who hails from the Qadisiyyah Province in southern Iraq, decried the fact that "during the 35-year-long Ba^cath Party rule the Qadisiyyah province had about 10 governors. Only two of them were Shi^cites, while the rest were Sunnis." Interview with Iraqi Shi^cite Member of Parliament, United Iraqi Alliance Bloc, Baghdad, Saturday, November 21, 2009. The name has been withheld because the interviewee requested anonymity.

[55] Nafisi, *op. cit.*, 166-167. However, according to Hassan Latif Kadhem al-Zubaydi, *Mawsu^cat al-Ahzab al-^cIraqiyyah: al-Ahzab wa al-Jam^ciyyat wa al-Harakat al-Siyasiyyah wa al-Qawmiyyah wa al-Diniyyah fi al-^cIraq* [Encyclopedia of Iraqi Parties: Political, Nationalist and Religious Parties, Associations and Movements in Iraq] (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assassat al-^cArif li al-Matbu^cat, 1428 A.H./2007 C.E.): p. 611, five of the new ministers were Shi^cites.

[56] That does not necessarily mean that this position was unanimous. Initially, even many of the ^culama' and notables, Sunni and Shi^cite alike, subscribed to a host of other positions. For instance, in the referendum of the educated strata on the future governance of Iraq held by the British in December 1918 – January 1919, opinion was divided. While some went out in support of independence and a national Arab government, others supported direct British rule. Some factions in Najaf supported setting up a republic or even direct Iranian rule. The leading Sunni cleric and notable of Baghdad, Abd al-Rahman al-Naqib, who supported British rule, considered the notion of holding a referendum on the future rule of the country to be "foolish" and "a source of unrest and disturbances." The Naqib also confided to Gertrude Bell that, despite his revulsion towards the Turks, he would favor Turkish rule over rule by the Hejazis. Opinion shifted in favor of an Arab ruler following developments concomitant with the heightened agitation in the run-up to, during and following the 1920 Revolution. One such development was the demise of British Shi^cite supreme Mujtahid Ayatollah Kadhem al-Yazdi, who adopted a non-hostile stance toward the British and was replaced with the staunchly anti-British Ayatollah Muhammad Hassan al-Shirazi. For a detailed account of the December 1918 – January 1919 referendum, see Wardi, *op. cit.*, Vol. 5, pp. 67-91.

[57] Amal Vinogradov, "The 1920 Revolt in Iraq Reconsidered: The Role of Tribes in National Politics," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (April 1972): p. 139.

the country's heterogeneous ethnic and sectarian fragments into a homogeneous nation. Abbas Kelidar sums up this quest, saying:

"Iraq was to have all the symbols of statehood: a constitutional monarchy, parliamentary government, a national army, a centralized system of education, and common school curricula to instill loyalty and national allegiance into a new generation of Iraqis. Regulations were promulgated governing religious minorities and their parliamentary representation, and a national ideology was formulated that would appeal to all Iraqis irrespective of their ethnic, religious, or social background. Nothing was left to chance in the quest to transform Iraq into a homogeneous and cohesive nation."[58]

Faisal was highly conscious of the need to bring wider segments of the population, including the Shiᶜites, into the political bargain through economic benefits, extension of services, and some form of participation in the political process. However, the king "had no intention of overturning a system of patronage that privileged his own position as well as that of the almost exclusively Sunni Arab ex-sharifian officers."[59] Moreover, his efforts to bring the Shiᶜites into government were hindered by the dearth of qualified Shiᶜites with modern education and the inherent distrust of the Shiᶜites among elements within his own entourage. The inclination of Faisal's entourage to exclude the Shiᶜites from the political process was compounded by the uncompromising antagonism against the British and the new state adopted by some Shiᶜite clerics[60]

Relations between Faisal and the Shiᶜite mujtahids remained strained. When the Iraqi government accepted the 1922 Anglo-Iraqi treaty on condition that it would be ratified by a Constituent Assembly, Ayatollah Mahdi al-Khalisi and other likeminded mujtahids accused Faisal of having reneged on his pledge to them to secure Iraq's independence from British control.[61] In a speech that he delivered at a conference convened in Karbala, Khalisi

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[58] Abbas Kelidar, "Iraqi National Integration under the British," in Michael Eisenstadt and Eric Mathewson, eds., *U.S. Policy in Post-Saddam Iraq: Lessons from the British Experience* (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2003): p. 29.
[59] Charles Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 2nd Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002 [2000]): p. 79.
[60] Sami Zubaida, "The Fragments Imagine the Nation: The Case of Iraq," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2, Special Issue: Nationalism and the Colonial Legacy in the Middle East and Central Asia (May 2002): p. 211.
[61] Nakash, *op. cit.*, p. 79. Some mujtahids were particularly concerned about Article 12 of the Anglo-Iraqi treaty which prevented the government from taking measures to ban or interfere in missionary activity.

catalogued a battery of demands that touched on the sectarian makeup of government. The demands included that the British recognize Iraq's complete independence and that half the cabinet and government officials be selected from the Shiᶜite community.[62] Wedding conceptions of communal power-sharing to demands aimed to stem British influence in Iraq indicates that the core of the problem between the monarchy and the Shiᶜite clergy was no longer focused on how to deal with the British presence in Iraq. Concerns over the narrow communal base of political power under the monarchy had obviously crept into the minds of Shiᶜite community leaders.

Eventually, matters came to a head in the run-up to the elections for a Constituent Assembly which began on July 12, 1923. Khalisi issued a *fatwa*, endorsed by two other senior mujtahids, Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein al-Na'ini and Ayatollah Abu al-Hassan al-Isfahani, prohibiting the faithful from casting their ballots.[63] Other *fatwas* ruled that those who cast their votes in the elections would be excommunicated from, and ostracized by, the Muslim community.[64] Concerned that Khalisi and other senior mujtahids were operating as an overarching source of legitimacy for state policy, the government decided to act decisively against them. The government deported Khalisi and other members of his family to Aden on the pretext that he was a Persian interfering in Iraqi affairs.[65] Khalisi would later settle in the Shiᶜite holy city of Qum in Iran. Other senior Shiᶜite clerics left Iraq for Iran in protest. However, they would return to Iraq in April 1924, on the condition of non-interference in politics.[66]

Following the return of the mujtahids, Shiᶜite politicians, tribal chiefs, politically-active clerics and community notables continued to seek ways to influence the political process. Some were inclined to cooperate with Sunni oppositional forces. In 1924, Sayyid Muhammad

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[62] Sluglett, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

[63] Sluglett, *op. cit.* p. 56, where the author also reports the collective resignation of the local election committees in Karbala and Baᶜaquba following the edict. Opposition to the elections was not an exclusive preserve of Shiᶜite divines. For example, ecclesiastical grandees of the Chaldean Chruch in Mosul also issued a statement proclaiming opposition to elections. Abu Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat al-Sayyid Muhsin Abu Tabikh, 1910-1960*, p. 133.

[64] Nakash, *The Shi's of Iraq*, pp. 79-80.

[65] Wardi, *op. cit.*, Vol. 6, pp. 215-227; and Ahmad al-Katib, *Tajrubat al-Thawrah al-Islamiyyah fi al-ᶜIraq: Mundhu 1920 hatta 1980* [The Experience of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq: From 1920 until 1980], 1ˢᵗ Edition (Tehran, Iran: Dar al-Qabas al-Islami, 1402 A.H./1981 C.E.): pp. 81-85.

[66] Abu Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat al-Sayyid Muhsin Abu Tabikh, 1910-1960*, pp. 134-146; and ᶜAdil Ra'uf, *ᶜIraq bela Qiyadah: Qira'ah fi Azmat al-Qiyadah al-Islamiyyah al-Shiᶜiyyah fi al-ᶜIraq al-Hadith* [A Leaderless Iraq: A Reading into the Crisis of Islamic Shiᶜite Leadership in Modern Iraq], 2ⁿᵈ Edition (Damascus, Syria: The Iraqi Center for Media and Studies, 1424 A.H./2003 C.E.): pp. 27-31.

al-Sadr lent his support to efforts made by Yasin al-Hashemi, Naji al-Suwaydi and Shaykh Ahmad al-Dawud to lobby tribal chiefs from the Euphrates in the Constituent Assembly to vote against the amendment of the Anglo-Iraqi treaty.[67] Other Shi^cite leaders organized a self-styled party, the Renaissance Party (*Hizb al-Nahdhah*), to articulate and represent the interests of their community.[68] But the Party's aspirations to represent Shi^cite interests were constrained by the reluctance of most prominent religious authorities to endorse its program. It also failed to develop a broad-based party organization capable of mobilizing grass-roots support across the country.[69] The failed experience of the Renaissance Party directs attention to the fact that, in the early decades of the Iraqi state, communal divisions did not constitute the main basis for political solidarities.[70]

In their pursuit of gaining positions of power for their community, Rennaissance and other Shi^cite leaders were attracted to the idea of direct British administration of predominantly Shi^cite areas as a means to offset rising Sunni hegemony. The logical upshot of this project was carving an autonomous, or possibly independent, Shi^cite region in the south not subject to full control by Baghdad. A petition circulated at the time included a call for appointing British officials to administer the shrine cities. This represented a radical turnaround on traditional Shi^cite aversion "to open[ing] the very heart of their communal and religious life – the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala' – to foreigners."[71]

As the prospects of this tilt towards regionalism dwindled following the British decision to end their Mandate in 1932, the Shi^cites' efforts were re-focused on improving the conditions of their integration into the state. They articulated their demands in terms of the redistribution

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[67] Sluglett, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

[68] *Ibid.*

[69] Liora Lukitz, *Iraq: The Search for National Identity* (London; and Portland, OR: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 2004 [1995]): pp. 65-66.

[70] In her "Political Solidarity and Violent Resistance," *Journal of Social Philosophy*, Vol. 38, No. 1 (Spring 2007): p. 38, Sally J. Scholz defines solidarity as "a moral concept with multiple meanings, but minimally we can agree that it denotes a relation or unity between people. Some forms of solidarity descriptively emphasize the cohesiveness or fellow feeling of a group, others denote that shared project that informs the unity, and still others accentuate obligations to fellow citizens by virtue of membership in a state."

[71] Lukitz, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

of power based on quotas proportionate to relative numerical sizes of communities.[72] To Faisal, such demands highlighted the fractured nature of the modern Iraqi polity. Shortly before his death in March 1932, Faisal expressed concerns about the future prospects of Iraqi national unity. In a memorandum addressed to prominent Iraqi politicians, he wrote:

> "Iraq is a kingdom ruled by a Sunni Arab government founded on the wreckage of Ottoman rule. This government rules over a Kurdish segment, the majority of which is ignorant, that includes persons with personal ambitions who lead it to abandon it [the government] under the pretext that it does not belong to their ethnicity. [The government also rules over] an ignorant Shi^{c}ite majority that belongs to the same ethnicity of the government, but the persecutions that had befallen them as a result of Turkish rule, which did not enable them to take part in governance and exercise it, drove a deep wedge between the Arab people divided into these two sects. Unfortunately, all of this made this majority, or the persons who harbor special aspirations, the religious among them, the seekers of posts without qualification, and those who did not benefit materially from the new rule, to pretend that they are still being persecuted because they are Shi^{c}ites."[73]

2.6. Independent Iraq under the Monarchy

"The centralized State power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy, and judicature – organs wrought after the plan of a systematic and hierarchic division of labour – originates from the days of absolute monarchy."

Karl Marx, "The Civil War in France"

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[72] Nakash, *The Shi's of Iraq*, p. 119. In his memoirs, former minister of finance Abd al-Karim al-Uzri, a Shi^{c}ite who was working at the ministry of education in 1932, says that he examined lists of students sent abroad prepared by an American committee headed by Paul Monroe, which was invited in the same year by the Iraqi government to conduct a study on education in the country. His examination revealed that out of 110 students sent on government scholarships to seek their higher education abroad, 73 were Muslims, 24 Chirstians, and 13 Jews. Among the Muslims, only a few were Shi^{c}ites. See ^{c}Abd al-Karim al-Uzri, *Tarikh fi Dhikrayat: al-^{c}Iraq, 1930-1958* [History in Memoirs: Iraq, 1930-1958], 1st Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: no publisher, 1982): p. 25.
[73] Uzri, *ibid.*, p. 4.

As Iraq obtained its independence from the British Mandate in 1932, dynamic polarization emerged amid rising distrust between the unitary state, with its inexorably hegemonic center, and its nemesis represented by centrifugal tribal tendencies in both the predominantly Kurdish north and the predominantly Shiᶜite south. However, unlike the Kurds, who were opposed to integration in the new Iraqi state, the Shiᶜites "were not opposed to the concept of an Iraqi state, but to its translation in terms of Sunni hegemony."[74] The distrust was aggravated by dissonance between the ideas of authority and citizenship and the centripetal tendencies embedded in the concept of a nation-state, on the one hand, and the sub-national loyalties and centrifugal tendencies toward autonomy embedded in tribal society, on the other. Heightened tensions between the state and the Shiᶜite tribes of the Middle Euphrates were aggravated by economic and social factors complicating the Muslim sectarian rift in the country. Antagonisms resulting from the British land policy, which led to the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a small group of owners of extensive land holdings, were compounded by the transfer of rights over the land to members of the dominant urban Sunni elites.[75]

Moreover, harsh treatment meted out to Shiᶜites by government officials and bureaucrats heightened the Shiᶜites' disgruntlement at and alienation from the state. The paramount Shiᶜite mujtahid in Najaf in the 1930s, Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Kashif al-Ghita', reported receiving numerous letters and emissaries from community members who complained of government heavy-handedness, including arbitrary arrests "on charges of engaging in sectarian activities."[76] By the mid-1930s, the state had to contend with a series of tribal-based rebellions in the Middle Euphrates. While the above-mentioned growing distrust provided the backdrop against which these rebellious conflagrations flared up, intra-elite rivalry at the the center provided the spark. In their heated scramble for power Sunni politicians in Baghdad exploited tribal unrest among the Shiᶜite Arab tribes in central and

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[74] Lukitz, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

[75] For a useful treatment of these land policies, see Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, "The Transformation of Land Tenure and Rural Social Structure in Central and Southern Iraq, *c.* 1870-1958," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (November 1983): pp. 491-505.

[76] Letter from Ayatollah Kashif al-Ghita' to Iraqi historian Abd al-Razzaq al-Hassani quoted in Abd al-Khaliq Hussein, *al-Ta'ifiyyah al-Siyasiyyah wa Mushkilat al-Hukum fi al-ᶜIraq* [Political Sectarianism and the Problem of Governance in Iraq], 1ˢᵗ Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Dar Mesopotamia, 2011): p. 137.

southern Iraq.[77] United only in their opposition to the Sunni hegemony at the center, Shiᶜite tribal leaders saw an unprecedented opportunity to grab greater power, and they were determined to seize it.

The unity of purpose among Shiᶜite tribal leaders contrasted sharply with the disunity prevailing in their ranks. Maneuverings by politicians at the center to win influence among a motley array of tribal leaders in the Middle Euphrates exacerbated personal rivalries among the latter.[78] Into this fragmented leadership landscape stepped the religious authorities of Najaf to articulate the demands of the community. In March 1935, a group of Shiᶜite lawyers worked with the foremost mujtahid in Najaf Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Kashif al-Ghita' on drafting a 12-point manifesto addressed to King Ghazi. The document, known as the Najaf Charter (*Mithaq al-Najaf*), lamented sectarian discrimination against the Shiᶜite majority, demanded the appointment of Shiᶜite judges in predominantly Shiᶜite areas and to the Iraqi Cassation Court, and demanded that development projects be evenly distributed across the country, especially in the south.[79] The Charter is a very important document. It represents the first attempt since the establishment of the modern state to sum up the political frustrations, aspirations and demands of the Shiᶜite majority and present them to the ruling elite. But the demands fell on deaf ears and tribal risings continued to spread.

The centralized state emerged victorious from the clashes and clamor of the tribal uprisings of the mid-1930s. It had managed to protect its hegemony in the face of domestic upheavals nurtured by primordial sectarian and tribal solidarities. State autonomy was deemed sacrosanct. Paradoxically, the sheer coercive advantage that secured for the infant Iraqi state its resounding military victory over the Middle Euphrates tribes won it only a fleeting and Phyrric victory in the march toward nation-building. Despite its efficacy in stifling the Shiᶜites' drive to renegotiate their representation within the state apparatus, coercion failed to act as a substitute for the fundamental moral principles of national integration and fostering an overarching allegiance to a national community.

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[77] Majid Khadduri, *Independent Iraq: A Study in Iraqi Politics since 1932* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960): pp. 48-51; A. D. MacDonald, M. C., "The Political Developments in Iraq Leading Up to the Rising in the Spring of 1935," *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (January 1936): pp. 27-44; and Nakash, *The Shiʻis of Iraq*, pp. 120-121.

[78] A first-hand glimpse into Shiᶜite factionalism during this period can be found in Muhsin Abu Tabikh, *Mudhakkarat al-Sayyid Muhsin Abu Tabikh*, pp. 307-336.

[79] For the full text of the Najaf Charter, see ᶜAbd al-Karim al-Uzri, *Mushkilat al-Hukum fi al-ᶜIraq*, pp. 62-65. A full translation is provided in Appendix I.

By the 1940s, the Iraqi Communist Party (*al-Hizb al-Shuyuᶜi al-ᶜIraqi*) or ICP, with its strong Iraqist streak, captured the imagination of Shiᶜite youths educated in the government's schools whose numbers increased greatly with the spread of modern education.[80] As an ideology purporting to guarantee the inevitable liberation of the oppressed classes, communism had a special resonance for Shiᶜite youths soaked in collective feelings of dissatisfaction, victimization and marginalization. A catalyst for this shift in mood toward communism among the Shiᶜite youths came from the leadership vacuum in the Shiᶜite community created by the miujtahid's adoption of a quiescent political stance since their pledge not to meddle in politics when they returned to Iraq in 1924.[81]

Education is an effective tool of empowerment and, as such, it generates an emancipatory impetus.[82] The rise in the number of young Shiᶜites with higher education, which spiked following the introduction of provincial quotas for admissions to universities in the early 1940s,[83] intensified the pressure on the Sunni elite to increase the representation of Shiᶜites in the civil service and state apparatus. In attempting to mollify the Shiᶜites' feelings of frustration and discrimination and meet their growing demands for a greater share of power, the Sunni political elite engaged in a controlled process of political change. More Shiᶜites were given posts in the various branches of government and the civil service. "Yet at the same time, Iraq's rulers expanded the size of the government and the bureaucracy, thus insuring Sunni control of the state machinery."[84] Hence, while Sunnis continued to retain preponderance of political power, four Shiᶜites served terms as prime ministers in the

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[80] Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of Its Communists, Baʿthists and Free Officers* (London: Saqi Books, 2004 [1978]): p. 700.

[81] ᶜAdil Ra'uf, *al-ᶜAmal al-Islami fi al-ᶜIraq byana al-Marjaᶜiyyah wa al-Hizbiyyah: Qira'ah Naqdiyyah li-Masirat Nisf Qarn (1950-2000)* [Islamic Activism in Iraq between the Marjaᶜiyyah and Partisanship: A Critical Reading into the March of Half a Century (1950-2000)], 1st Edition (Damascus, Syria: The Iraqi Center for Media and Studies, 1421 A.H./2000 C.E.): pp. 20-24. For comprehensive, sophisticated accounts of the Iraqi Communist Party, see Tareq Ismael, *The Rise and Fall of the Communist Party of Iraq* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); and Batatu, *op. cit*.

[82] Henry A. Giroux, *Pedagogy and the Politics of Hope: Theory, Culture and Schooling* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997): p. 147.

[83] Uzri, *Tarikh fi Dhikrayat*, pp. 61-62.

[84] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

shortlived cabinets that came to power between the end of World War II and the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958.[85]

But the shift created a sense of anxiety and insecurity among the predominantly Sunni political class. The Sunnis feared that they would be elbowed out of power by the Shi[c]ite majority. Inter-communal Sunni-Shi[c]ite tensions spiked during the term in office of Salih Jabr, the first Shi[c]ite to assume the prime minister's post in Iraq.[86] Rhetoric with sectarian overtones seeped into the political discourse and the press, and outright accusations of sectarianism were traded.[87] Shortly after Jabr took office, pent-up anger and resentment in urban centers, especially among young rural migrants, boiled over into street protests triggered by the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty signed at Portsmouth in January 1948.[88] When Jabr's cabinet fell, Iraq was rife with speculation that he was ousted from the prime minister's post because he was a Shi[c]ite promoting the interest of his community. In an apparent bid to lay these speculations to rest, another Shi[c]ite, Sayyid Muhammad al-Sadr, was selected to succeed him. "Had a Sunni been chosen," the late historian Elie Kedourie maintained, "bloodshed might have ensued."[89]

Controlled change did not stop the frustrations of the Shi[c]ites from snowballing. The growing tensions inexorably intensified the distrust of the system among the urban poor and middle strata, most of who belonged to recent rural migrant families. Political disillusionment, alienation, desperation, shattered dreams and dashed hopes for a better future were endemic. They brought in their train radicalization and great potential for opposition-led agitation. Growing popular discontent provided various anti-government forces, especially the ICP, with opportunities for urban mass mobilization. Popular anger, built up by the cumulative frustrations of the poor urban strata and the educated middle classes, was compounded by a deep collective sense of humiliation over the 1948 Arab defeat in Palestine. Within such a

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[85] Muhammad al-Husayni al-Shirazi, *Tilka al-Ayyam: Safahat min Tarikh al-[c]Iraq al-Siyasi* [Those Days: Pages from the Political History of Iraq] (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assassat al-Wai[c]i al-Islami, 1420 A.H./2000 C.E.): pp. 69 and 98; and Hassan al-[c]Alawi, *al-Shi[c]ah wa al-Dawlah al-Qawmiyyah fi al-[c]Iraq* [The Shi[c]ites and the Nation-State in Iraq] (Paris: CEDI Press, 1989).

[86] Michael Eppel, "The Fadhil Al-Jamali Government in Iraq, 1953-54," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (July 1999): pp. 417-442.

[87] Elie Kedouri, "Anti-Shiism in Iraq under the Monarchy," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1988): pp. 249-253.

[88] This bout of mass protests and clashes with the police is known as the *Wathbah* (literally 'Leap'). For detailed accounts of this episode, see Batatu, *op. cit.*, pp. 545-566; and Mahmoud Shabib, *Wathbah fi al-'Iraq wa Suqut Salih Jabr* [A Leap in Iraq and the Fall of Salih Jabr] (Baghdad, Iraq: Dar al-Thaqafah, 1988).

[89] Kedouri, "Anti-Shiism in Iraq under the Monarchy," p. 249. See also Tripp, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

charged atmosphere, in November 1952, the government's unresponsivenss to the demands of opposition parties for political reform and social justice sparked another bout of rioting, which went down in the annals of Iraqi history as the November Uprising (*Intifadhat Tishrin al-Thani*).[90]

Coercive power usually has an intoxicating effect on power holders. The Uprising and its suppression underscored the continued ability of the Sunni political class to crush and root out dissent with armed force. Reluctant to address the underlying causes of grievance, the monarchy was increasingly turning to coercive controls to shield itself from internal opposition and political vulnerability. But the shield finally came down in July 1958 when the instrument implementing these coercive controls – the armed forces – turned against the regime. The coup concluded one phase in the trajectory of the Iraqi nation-state. The republican moment in the narrative of the Iraqi nation-state has arrived.

2.7. The First Republican Decade: The Qassim and ʿArif Brothers' Regimes

"The more enlightened our houses are, the more their walls ooze ghosts. Dreams of progress and reason are haunted by nightmares."

Italo Calvino, "Cybernetics and Ghosts,"
The Literature Machine: Essays,
translated by Patrick Creagh

On July 14, 1958, a group of army officers staged a military coup that overthrew the Hashemite monarchy and declared Iraq a republic.[91] Unbridled passions nurtured violent mob behavior that verged on the atavistic. Angry demonstrators surged at the royal al-Rihab Palace in Baghdad where they executed 23-year-old King Faisal II and members of the royal family. The mutilated corpses of the king and Crown Prince Abd al-Ilah were dragged

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[90] For accounts of the November Uprising, see Batatu, *op. cit*., pp. 666-670; and Muhammad Hamdi al-Jaʿafari, *Intifadhat Tishrin al-Thani ʿAam 1952 Milady wa Inqilab al-Wasy fi al-ʿIraq: Dirasah Tarikhiyyah Tahliliyyah Watha'iqiyyah* [The Uprising of November 1952 C.E. and the Regent's Coup in Iraq: An Historical Analytical Documentary Study], 1st Edition, (Cairo, Egypt: Maktabat Madbuli, 2000).

[91] Perhaps the best objective and perceptive analytical account of the July 14, 1958 coup is that provided by Batatu in *ibid*., pp. 764-807. Arabic sources offer highly divergent accounts of the coup. For examples, see Layth Abd al-Muhsin al-Zubaydi, *Thawrat 14 Tammuz fi al-ʿIraq* [The July 14 Revolution in Iraq] (Baghdad, Iraq: Dar al-Rashid li al-Nashr, 1979); and Muhammad Hussein al-Zubaydi, *Thawrat 14 Tammuz fi al-ʿIraq* [The July 14 Revolution in Iraq] (Baghdad, Iraq: Ministry of Culture, 1983).

through the streets of Baghdad and later burned. The following day, Nuri al-Sa^cid met an equally grisly fate as he tried to flee the country dressed as a woman after having gone into hiding at the house of his friend Mahmoud al-Astrabadi in Kadhemiyyah.[92]

The military coup ushered in an array of radical socio-political transformations that turned it into a social revolution. During his short-lived rule, General Abd al-Karim Qassim, who hailed from mixed Sunni-Shi^cite parentage,[93] adopted policies that had the potential to undermine the bases of the dominance of the traditional power elite in Iraq to an extent never seen before in the country's modern history. He abolished the conventional practice of greatly limiting the admission of Shi^cites into the military academy and military staff college.[94] He pushed for instituting meritocratic criteria in the selection of appointees, regardless of their religious, sectarian ethnic, tribal or other background.[95] Such actions gained Iraq's first republican military ruler great acclaim and popularity. But some policies instituted under Qassim, such as land reform and legal reforms of family law, posed unprecedented challenges to the powers of, and generated strong backlash from, traditional forces, such as leaders of tribes, clans, and sectarian and ethnic communities.

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[92] An eye-witness account of the slaughter of the royal family by a Royal Guards officer can be found in Falih Handhal, *Asrar Maqtal al-^cA'ilah al-Malikah fi al-^cIraq* [The Secrets of the Murder of the Royal Family in Iraq], (Beirut, Lebanon: no publisher, 1971). Handhal later settled in the UAE and established a reputation as a historian. I met him in the UAE when he was taking part in observing the December 2005 elections for the Iraqi National Assembly at an out-of-country voting center in Dubai where I covered the balloting as a journalist. The Astrabadis, for their part, would later flee Iraq and settle in Bloomington, Indiana, in the United States, where I encountered them in the 1980s and 1990s.

[93] General Qassim was born into a Sunni Arab father and a Shi^cite Fayli Kurdish mother. In socio-economic terms, he hailed from humble background. This was a theme which he repeatedly hammered on. For instance, in a speech delivered on Labor Day, May 1, 1959, General Qassim addressed his audience, saying. "Sisters and brothers! My father was a simple worker like other workers. He became a simple farmer who served his people. Later, he became a simple wage-earner working to earn his food from day to day in an honorable and dignified manner." Quoted in George Lenczowski, "Radical Regimes in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq: Some Comparative Observations on Ideologies and Practices," *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (February 1966): p. 46.

[94] Hussein, *op. cit.*, p. 173-174. The practice of restricting the admission of Shi^cites into military academies was one of main grievances of Shi^cites under the monarchy. Shi^cite lawmakers succeeded in bringing the issue to discussion in parliament in its 40th ordinary session on May 26, 1945. See Uzri, *Tarikh fi Dhikrayat*, pp. 237-243.

[95] For instance, in 1959, Qassim threatened to dissolve the Sovereignty Council in a row with the Council's Chairman General Najib al-Rubay^ci over the appointment of the president of the newly-founded University of Baghdad. Rubay^ci opposed Qassim's candidate for the post Abd al-Jabbar Abdallah, a Mandean, on the grounds that a non-Muslim should not preside over the national university of an Arab-Islamic country like Iraq. He campaigned for assigning the post to the late historian Abd al-Aziz al-Duri, a Sunni Arab. Qassim's threat succeeded in forcing the Sovereignty Council to submit to his will and approve the appointment of Abdallah. Interview with Najib Muhyi al-Din, Former Chairman of the Iraqi Teachers' Union, Amman, Wednesday, May 19, 2010.

These measures and policies generated tension between the Qassim regime and the Muslim religious establishments, Sunni and Shi^cite alike. But while the Sunni religious establishment had limited influence and played a marginal role in Iraqi politics, its Shi^cite counterpart, the *marja^ciyyah*, had a potentially more significant impact. The implementation of the Agrarian Reform Law raised the ire of large landlords as well as clerics, who viewed it as contravening the Shari^cah. Shi^cite clerics assaulted the law for focusing on clipping the wings of tribal chiefs and landlords rather than on increasing production.[96] The Shi^cite clergy also took particular umbrage at the Personal Status Law No. 188 of January 1959 which gave women the right to initiate divorce,[97] and banned polygamy except when authorized by a judge (Article 3, Section 4). The Iraqi chapter of the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*) submitted a memorandum to the authorities in May 1960 demanding that provisions contradicting the Shari^cah in the law be abolished.[98] The calls on Qassim to abolish or amend the law went unanswered.

Moreover, the Shi^cite clergy grew concerned about the powerful influence of communism among the educated strata of the Shi^cite youths, including descendants of religious and clerical families, as well as the poor Shi^cite rural migrants to cities.[99] Ultimately, escalating tensions put the ICP and the Shi^cite clerical establishment on a collision course. The Shi^cite clerics' response was one of defensive anger and fear. Senior mujtahids issued religious

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[96] Shirazi, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-191. On agrarian reform under General Qassim, see Rony Gabbay, *Communism and agrarian reform in Iraq* (London: Croom Helm, 1978): pp. 108-151. See also, Fuad Baali, "Agrarian Reform in Iraq: Some Socioeconomic Aspects," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (January 1969): pp. 61-76.

[97] Article 34, Section 1 stated that divorce "is done by the man, the woman, any authorized representative or the judge." A translation of the full text of the law is available at: "Law No. (188) of the year 1959: Personal Status Law and amendments," website of the American Bar Association, http://apps.americanbar.org/rol/publications/iraq_personal_status_law_1959_english_translation.pdf; accessed on Saturday, April 02, 2011.

[98] Iman Abd al-Hamid al-Dabbagh, *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun fi al-^cIraq (1959 Miladiyyah – 1971 Miladiyyah)* [The Muslim Brotherhood in Iraq (1959 C.E. – 1971 C.E.)], 1st Edition (Amman, Jordan: Dar al-Ma'mun li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi^ci, 1432 A.H./2011 C.E.): pp. 103-104 and 595-597.

[99] In an October 1953 meeting with the British ambassador to Iraq Sir John Troutbek, Shi^cite mujtahid Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Kashif al-Ghita' complained that "the dens of communism have proliferated and become widespread in Iraq. It has even entered the houses of the people of religion and ecclesiastical leaders." See *Muhawarat al-Imam al-Muslih al-Shaykh Muhammad al-Hussein Aal Kashif al-Ghita' ma^ca al-Safirayn al-Baritani wa al-Amriki fi Baghdad bi Munasabat Ziyaratihima li Samahatih fi Madrasatih fi al-Najaf* [The Converstation of Reformist Imam Shaykh Muhammad al-Hussein Aal Kashif al-Ghita' with the British and American Ambassadors in Baghdad upon the Visit They Paid to His Excellency at His School in Najaf], 2nd Edition (Buenos Aires, Argentina: al-Rafiq Maganize, 1374 A.H./1955 C.E.): p. 17. The late eminent scholar of modern Iraqi history Hanna Batatu, *op. cit.*, pp. 982-983 and 1000, provides a class analysis interpretation of why communism took firm roots among the youths in poor Shi^cite quarters of Baghdad as well as the descendants of notables and clerics in the shrine cities. In contrast, Hassan al-^cAlawi, *op. cit.*, p. 280, argues that communism and other progressive ideologies found a fertile ground among Iraqi Shi^cites due to their openness to enlightenment ideas.

edicts against the communists. The strongest edict came from Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim, then the preeminent mujtahid in Najaf. "Membership in the Communist Party is not permissible," it declared. "It is in the nature of disbelief and atheism or the propagation of disbelief and atheism."[100] The edict was reprinted in large numbers and copies were widely distributed by Shiᶜite religious elements, Sunni Islamists and Arab nationalists, including Baᶜathists.[101] The edict whipped up an already heightened anti-communist sentiment in religious and conservative circles to such frenzy that it was understood as root-and-branch rejection of all leftwing ideologies.[102]

Furious condemnation was not the only reaction that the perceived threat of communism had elicited from the Shiᶜite religious strata. It also inspired a spirited organizational response as many religious Shiᶜites set out to counter the spread of communism by establishing modern hierarchical associations and parties suitable for organized agitation and propaganda. A significant result of these activities was the emergence of the Islamic Daᶜawah Party (*Hizb al-Daᶜawah al-Islamiyyah*). The Daᶜawah Party was also influenced by the experiences of internationalist Sunni Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*) and the Islamic Liberation Party (*Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami*).[103] The main ideologue of the religious Shiᶜite response to the challenges posed by Western political

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[100] Quoted in Ali Karim Saᶜid, ᶜ*Iraq 8 Shubat 1963 – Min Hiwar al-Mafahim ila Hiwar al-Dam: Murajaᶜat fi Dhakirat Talib al-Shabib* [The Iraq of February 8, 1963 – From the Dialogue of Concepts to the Dialogue of Blood: Revisions in the Memory of Talib al-Shabib], 1ˢᵗ Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kunuz al-Adabiyyah, 1999): p. 312. Shiᶜite divines issuing edicts in support of that of Ayatollah Hakim include Ayatollah Sayyid Abd al-Hadi al-Shirazi, Ayatollah Sayyid Mahmoud al-Shahrudi, Ayatollah Sayyid Abu al-Qassim al-Kho'i, Ayatollah Sayyid Abdallah al-Shirazi, Ayatollah Shaykh Abd al-Karim al-Zanjani, Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Jawad al-Tabrizi, Ayatollah Shaykh Murtadha Aal Yassin, Ayatollah Sayyid Abd al-Karim al-Jaza'iri, Ayatollah Sayyid Mahdi al-Shirazi, and Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Ali al-Tabataba'i. The only prominent Ayatollah abstaining from issuing an anti-communist edict was Sayyid Saᶜid al-Hamami. See al-Khatib ibn al-Najaf, *Tarikh al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah al-Muᶜasirah fi al-ᶜIraq* [The History of the Contemporary Islamic Movement in Iraq] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Maqdisi, 1981): p. 15. Some Sunni clerics also issued edicts declaring communism to be a form of disbelief, including a joint edict by Kurdish clerics affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood in the northern city of Halabja in 1960. See Dabbagh, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

[101] Hussein, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

[102] Interview with Khalis Muhyi al-Din, Member of the Central Committee of the National Democratic Party, Amman, Sunday, July 11, 2010.

[103] Some founding members of the Daᶜawah Party had previous experiences in the ranks of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Liberation Party. See Salah al-Khirsan, *Hizb al-Daᶜawah al-Islamiyyah - Haqa'iq wa Watha'iq: Fusul min Tajrubat al-Harakah al-Islamiyyah fi al-ᶜIraq khilal 40 ᶜAman* [The Islamic Daᶜawah Party – Facts and Documents: Chapters from the Experience of the Islamic Movement in Iraq throughout 40 Years], 1ˢᵗ Edition (Damascus, Syria: al-Mu'assassah al-ᶜArabiyyah li al-Dirasat wa al-Buhuth al-Istratijiyyah, 1419 A.H./1999 C.E.): pp. 39-41. For general historical overviews of the history of the Muslim Brotherhood, see Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969); Barry Rubin, ed., *The Muslim Brotherhood: The Organization and Policies of a Global Islamist Movement* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 2010); and Alison Pargeter, *The Muslim Brotherhood: The Burden of Tradition* (London: Saqi Books, 2010). On the Islamic Liberation Party, see Suha Taji-Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest: Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate* (London: Grey Seal, 1996).

ideologies, especially communism, and the concomitant shift towards modern Shi[c]ite political organization, was Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr. In formulating his ideological system, Sadr presented a critique of both communism and capitalism and enunciated an Islamic third way.[104]

Common adversity often provides an impetus for unity. Accordingly, disparate elements and social strata that felt threatened by the course pursued under the Qassim regime were united in adversity against the military ruler and his communist supporters. The opposition found its expression mostly in the ideological garb of Arab nationalism. Wealthy Shi[c]ite merchants lent financial support to Qassim's Arab nationalist foes.[105] It was a clique of army officers subscribing primarily to different varieties of Arab nationalism together with officers with Sunni Islamist leanings and affiliations that overthrew Qassim in a bloody military coup in February 1963.[106] The putschist Arab nationalist regimes that assumed power after Qassim not only restored the political ascendancy of Sunni Arabs but also progressively restored primordial loyalties of communalism, tribalism, and sectarianism. The new regime was dominated by the Ba[c]ath Party. While the non-Ba[c]athist [c]Arif assumed the presidency,[107] the Ba[c]athist Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr became prime minister. The Party's Military Bureau (*al-Maktab al-[c]Askari*), which was formed in 1960, played a leading part in planning and

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[104] A prodigious writer, Sadr formulated his ideological system throughout numerous works. The most relevant of his works to this discussion are Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, *Iqtisaduna* [Our Economics] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Ta[c]aruf li al-Matbu[c]at, 1991 [1961]); and Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, *Falsafatuna* [Our Philosophy] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Ta[c]aruf li al-Matbu[c]at, 1998 [1959]). Perhaps the best comprehensive study of the life and works of Sadr in English is Chibli Mallat's *The Renewal of Islamic Law: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf and the Shi'i International* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). It should be pointed out that Sadr joined the Da[c]awah Party during its early years, but he resigned upon a request by senior clerics, including Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim. Subsequently, Sadr devoted himself to religious learning avoiding partisan activities that might jeopardize his rise through the clerical hierarchy to the status of *marji[c] taqlid*.

[105] Interview with Khalis Muhyi al-Din, Member of the Central Committee of the National Democratic Party, Amman, Sunday, July 11, 2010,

[106] Sami Zubaida, "The rise and fall of civil society in Iraq," in Haldun Gülalp, ed., *Citizenship and Ethnic Conflict: Challenging the nation-state* (London; and New York, NY: Routledge, 2006): p. 119; and Dabbagh, *op. cit*., pp. 322.325 . Contemporaneous sympathetic accounts relating the events of the February 1963 coup are provided in Ahmad Fawzi, *Thawrat 14 Ramadhan* [The Ramadhan 14 Revolution], 1st Edition (Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt: Dar al-Kitab al-[c]Arabi bi Misr, April 1963); and Younus Bahri, *Thawrat 14 Ramadhan al-Mubarak: Asrar wa Haqa'iq wa Watha'iq [c]an Wathbat al-[c]Iraq al-Majidah wa Zawal al-Tughyan al-Qassimi [c]an Wadi al-Rafidayn Tunshar li Awwal Marrah* [The Blessed Ramadhan 14 Revolution: Secrets, Truths, and Documents about the Glorious Arabian Rising of Iraq and the Demise of Qassimite Tyranny in Mesopotamia Published for the First Time], 1st Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Andalus, February 15, 1963).

[107] For a biography of Abd al-Salam [c]Arif, see Ahmad Fawzi, *Abd al-Salam Muhammad [c]Arif: Siratuh .. Muhakamatuh .. Masra[c]uh* [Abd al-Salam Muhammad [c]Arif: His Biography .. His Trial .. His Death] (Baghdad, Iraq: Matabi[c]i al-Dar al-[c]Arabiyyah, 1989). Detailed, yet partisan, information on the life and career of Abd al-Salam [c]Arif can also be found in Subhi Nadhem Tawfiq, *Abd al-Salam [c]Arif kama Ra'aytuh* [Abd al-Salam [c]Arif as I Saw Him] (London: Dar al-Hikmah, 2008); and Faysal Hassoun, *Masra[c]a al-Mushir al-Rukun Abd al-Salam [c]Arif* [The Death of Staff Field Marshal Abd al-Salam [c]Arif], 2nd Edition (London: Dar al-Hikmah, 2004).

carrying out the February 8 coup. The rise to prominence of the Military Bureau marked the beginning of a shift in the leadership and power structure of the Ba^cath Party away from a more balanced denominational and regional representation of the country's broader Arab population. While the Regional Command consisted of 5 Shi^cites and 3 Sunnis, membership in the Military Bureau titled in favor of Sunni Arab officers.[108]

Triumphant putschist justice was swift, harsh and arbitrary. It was armed with *fatwas* by Sunni and Shi^cite clerics permitting spilling the communists' blood by declaring them as "apostates" liable to capital punishment.[109] General Qassim was captured and summarily

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[108] Interview with Khalis Muhyi al-Din, Member of the Central Committee of the National Democratic Party, Amman, Sunday, July 11, 2010; Hamid al-Hamdani, "Min Dhakirat al-Tarikh: Ma'zaq Inqilabiyyi 8 Shubat, wa Inqilab Abd al-Salam ^cArif" ["From History's Memory: The Predicament of the February 8 Putschists, and Abd al-Salam ^cArif's Coup], *al-Hiwar al-Mutamaddin*, August 6, 2010; available at: http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=224855; accessed on Saturday, September 11, 2010; and Hani al-Fukayki, *Awkar al-Hazimah: Tajrubati fi Hizb al-Ba^cath al-^cIraqi* [Dens of Defeat: My Experience in the Iraqi Ba^cath Party], 2nd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Riad El-Rayyes Books, April 1997 [March 1993]): p. 217. The original membership of the Bureau consisted of Mundhir al-Wandawi (Sunni), Salih Mahdi ^cAmmash (Sunni), Muhammad Ali al-Sibahi (Shi^cite), ^cAla' al-Janabi (possibly Shi^cite from Musayyab in Babil Province), and Sami Sultan (Sunni). It was expanded in 1962 by adding Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr, Khalid Makki al-Hashemi, Hardan al-Takriti, and Abd al-Sattar Abd al-Latif. All were Sunnis. The Bureau was headed by Hazim Jawad (Shi^cite), a leading member of the Regional Command, who was replaced by Ali Salih al-Sa^cadi (Shi^cite) following the former's arrest in November 1959. Later, Talib Hussein Shabib (Shi^cite), also a Regional Command member, was added. Batatu, *op. cit.*, p. 968 erroneously lists Ali Salih al-Sa^cadi as an Arabized Fayli Kurd. Sa^cadi belongs to the Banu Sa^cad tribe in Diyala. A tribal chief of the Banu Sa^cad in Diyala, Shaykh Abd al-Jabbar al-Sa^cadi, affirmed that his tribe is Shi^cite. Interview with Shaykh Abd al-Jabbar al-Sa^cadi, a tribal chief of the Banu Sa^cad tribe in Diyala, Baghdad, Saturday, November 21, 2009. Shaykh Wissam al-Hardan, a tribal chief of the Abu ^cAyth tribe in Anbar Province and Secretary-General of the Iraqi People's Front (*al-Jabhah al-Sha^cbiyyah al-^cIraqiyyah*), confirmed, in a telephone interview, that Ali Salih al-Sa^cadi belonged to the Diyala branch of the Banu Sa^cad tribe, which is Shi^cite. Other branches of the Banu Sa^cad, such as the Anbar branch, are Sunni. Many Arab tribes in Iraq have Sunni and Shi^cite branches. Telephone interview with Shaykh Wissam al-Hardan, a tribal chief of the Abu ^cAyth tribe in Anbar Province and Secretary-General of the Iraqi People's Front (*al-Jabhah al-Sha^cbiyyah al-^cIraqiyyah*), Tuesday, April 19, 2011. For short biographical sketches of Mundhir al-Wandawi, Salih Mahdi ^cAmmash, Muhammad Ali al-Sibahi, ^cAla' al-Janabi, Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr, Khalid Makki al-Hashemi, Hardan al-Takriti, Abd al-Sattar Abd al-Latif, Hazim Jawad, Ali Salih al-Sa^cadi, and Talib Hussein Shabib, see Jihad Karam, *Ba^cathiyyun min al-^cIraq: Kama ^cAraftuhum* [Ba^cathists from Iraq: As I knew Them], 1st Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Dar al-^cArabiyyah li al-^cUlum Nashirun, 1431 A.H./2010 C.E.): pp. 119-120, 113-114, 132, 102-104, 117, 110-112, 115, 35-36, and 19-22, respectively.

[109] Fukayki, *op. cit.*, 279 and Khayyun, *al-Adyan wa al-Madhahib fi al-^cIraq*, pp. 332-325 mention the names of four clerics as having issued edicts declaring the communists as "apostates" deserving "to be killed." These are Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim and Ayatollah Muhammad Mahdi al-Khalisi, both Shi^cites, Shaykh Najm al-Din al-Wa^ciz, the Sunni Mufti of Baghdad, and Shaykh Qassim al-Qaysi, a junior Sunni cleric. However, the *Nida' al-Rafidayn* newspaper, the mouthpiece of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, denied in its issue of April 7, 2002, that Ayatollah Hakim had ever issued such an edict. It asserted that the late Shi^cite clerical grandee rebuffed approaches by putschist officers who appealed to him to issue an edict to this effect. See Khayyun, *ibid.*, p. 335, footnote 337.

executed along with three of his close associates in the radio and TV building.[110] The Baᶜathists instituted a reign of terror, carried out by their paramilitary Nationalist Guards, which was tasked with policing, security and intelligence duties, including "pursuing criminals and opponents of the Republic," protecting vital facilities and areas, and "cooperating with the army in defending the cities."[111] In practice, the Nationalist Guards was not a complementary but rather a parallel force to the state's coercive apparatus. Some 3,000 people are believed to have been executed over a period of 9 months during which the Baᶜathists controlled government.[112] Their victims were disproportionately Shiᶜites. The excesses of the Nationalist Guards units ignited fear and furor among their nationalist allies that ultimately contributed to the undoing of Baᶜathist rule. Internal conflict and internecine infighting among various factions of Arab nationalist officers turned the corridors of power in the new regime into a snake pit. Colonel ᶜArif ousted the Baᶜathists in a coup in November 1963. Interestingly, some Baᶜathists collaborated with ᶜArif in the ouster of their own party from power due to irreconcilable internal differences, internecine infighting and factional feuds.[113]

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[110] These were Fadhil ᶜAbbas al-Mahdawi, Qassim's maternal cousin and chief of the People's Court, Colonel Taha al-Shaykh Ahmad, and Captain Kanᶜan Khalil Haddad. See Fukayki, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-254; and Hussein ᶜUthman Nirkasajari, "Inqilab 8 Shubat 1963 .. Dhakirat Talib Shabib .. Durus wa ᶜIbar" ["The February 8, 1963 *Coup d'État.. The Memory of Talib Shabib .. Lessons and Morals*"], *al-Mada*, Wednesday, February 8, 2010; available at: http://almadapaper.net/news.php?action=view&id=10950; accessed on Saturday, September 11, 2010.

[111] Abd al-Karim Farhan, *Hassad Thawrah (Mudhakkarat): Tajrubat al-Sultah fi al-ᶜIraq, 1958-1968* [The Harvest of a Revolution (Memoirs): The Experience of Rule in Iraq, 1958-1968], 2ⁿᵈ Edition (London: Dar al-Buraq, 1996): p. 74.

[112] Tripp, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-163. A gruesome and graphically detailed catalogue of the horrendous excesses and atavistic brutality of the Nationalist Guards was provided in a book published by the Abd al-Salam ᶜArif government following the toppling of the Baᶜathists from power in November 1963. Hay'at al-Dalil al-Dawli [International Evidence Commission], *al-Munharifun min al-Haras al-Qawmi fi al-Madd al-Shuᶜubi tahta Ashiᶜat 18 Tishrin al-Thani 1963* [The Deviationists among the Nationalist Guards in the Shuᶜubi Tide under the Rays of 18 November 1963], Arabic Publications Series, No. 1 (Baghdad, Iraq: Interior Ministry?, 1964).

[113] Factional rivalry over questions of tactics, ideology, and policy, as well as power struggles, maneuverings and machinations had gripped the Baᶜath Party at the time. The rivalry pitted three factions against one another: a "leftwing faction" led by deputy prime minister Ali Salih al-Saᶜadi included in its ranks Muhsin al-Shaykh Radhi, Karim Shintaf, Hamdi Abd al-Majid, and Hani al-Fukayki, and was supported by the Nationalist Guards and junior Baᶜathist army officers; a "rightwing faction" led by interior minister Hazim Jawad and foreign minister Talib Shabib included in its ranks Abd al-Sattar Abd al-Latif, Muhammad al-Mahdawi, Jamil Sabri and Ali ᶜUraym; and a "moderate faction" derived strong support from senior Baᶜathist army officers and was led by prime minister Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr. Each of these factions was also fraught with personal rivalries, enmities and envy. For details of these intra-Baᶜathist power struggles, see Hamed Mustafa al-Maqsud, "Intifadhat Muᶜaskar al-Rashid wa Inhiyar Sharakat al-Inqilabiyyin" ["The Uprising of the Rashid Camp and the Collapse of the Putschists' Partnership"], *al-Bayyinah al-Jadidah*, Monday, May 31, 2010; available at: http://www.albayyna-new.com/archef/1066/albayyna-new/php/pag5.html; accessed on Monday, September 13, 2010.

Parallel to this, the ᶜArif Brothers' regime took measures aimed towards the partial privatization and communalization of coercion and violence by the state. This began shortly on the heels of the regime's rupture with the Kurds, who renewed their armed rebellion in June 1963. The government organized paramilitary forces, known as the Fursan ('Knights'), which took part in its military campaigns against the Kurdish rebels.[114] Policies were also instituted by Abd al-Salam ᶜArif to introduce a thoroughgoing form of state-directed economic development. On July 14, 1964, a presidential decree nationalized a number of banks, industries and insurance companies.[115] But ᶜArif's attempt to ground his conception of socialism in the Qur'an earned him the derision of his opponents who mocked his notion of 'Islamic socialism' as an oxymoron. A few days following ᶜArif's nationalization decree, an anonymous writer from Baghdad wrote in a Beirut-based newspaper: "We do not know in which [Qur'anic] verse or Prophetic saying President ᶜArif discovered the theories of Karl Marx."[116] On their part, Shiᶜite and Sunnni clerics sought to debunk the Islamic pretentions of ᶜArif's socialism.[117]

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[114] Interview with Shaykh Ali al-Dahham al-ᶜUbaydi, a tribal chief of the ᶜUbayd tribe in the Salah al-Din and Kirkuk/Ta'mim Provinces, Amman, Tuesday, February 16, 2010; Interview with Shaykh Ali Hussein Ibrahim al-Hamdani, the paramount tribal chief of the Bu-Hamdan tribes in Kirkuk, Kirkuk, Monday, October 11, 2010; and Interview with a Sunni Arab District Administrator in Hawijah, Kirkuk/Ta'mim Province, Kirkuk City, Monday, January 25, 2010. The name has been withheld to protect the interviewee's anonymity. It should be noted that some Kurdish tribes also set up Fursan formations and fought on the side of the government. Among these tribes were the Kaka'is, Dawudis, Hirkis, Zibaris, Mam Sinis, Sidamis, Salihis, Jaffs, Zanghanahs, Jabbaris, Surchis, Hawamandis, Bilbasis, Shwanis and Talabanis. In 1966, a Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) splinter group known as the KDP-Political Bureau, which Jalal Talabani, the current Iraqi president, would join, took part alongside the Fursan in fighting against the KDP rebels. According to Shaykh Ali al-Dahham and Shaykh Ali al-Hamdani, among the tribal chiefs who commanded Kurdish Fursan formations were Muhyi al-Din al-Hirki, Latif al-Zibari, Midhat al-Dawudi, Mushir Hadi Agha al-Sidami, Talib al-Talabani, Suᶜad al-Talabani, Bakr Faqi al-Salihi, Hassan Tahir Sharif al-Salihi, Sayyid Jamal al-Kaka'i (the uncle of ᶜAdnan Kaka'i, the current chief of the Kaka'i sect), Ali Ibrahim Sargharan (also known as Ali Ibrahim Ahmad Agha) of the Mam Siniyyah tribe, and Karim Agha al-Hawamandi.

[115] Lenczowski, *op. cit.*, p. 55. See also Nicholas Perdikis and Hassan Saloum, "An Analysis of the Error between Forecast and Actual Expenditures in the Budgetary System of Iraq, 1961-1980," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (May 1987): p. 131-153.

[116] The article entitled "Hadhihi al-Ishtirakiyyat al-Mutaᶜaᶜamah bi al-Qawmiyyah wa al-Islam: Ma Hiya?" [Those Socialisms that Are Hybridized with Nationalism and Islam: What Are They?] appeared in *al-Hayat*, July 19, 1964. It was reproduced in Ta'ifah min al-Mufakkirin [A Group of Thinkers], *al-Ishtirakiyyah fi al-Tajarib al-ᶜArabiyyah* [Socialism in Arab Experiments], 1ˢᵗ Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kitab al-Jadid, 1965): pp. 51-59. The quote appears on p. 52.

[117] Shirazi, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-228. Shaykh Abd al-ᶜAziz al-Badri, a founding father of the Iraqi branch of the Islamic Liberation Party (*Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami*), launched an attack on socialism in his *Hukum al-Islam fi al-Ishtirakiyyah* [Islam's Verdict on Socialism], with an introduction by Shaykh Amjad al-Zahawi (al-Madinah al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia: al-Maktabah al-ᶜIlmiyyah, 1384 A.H./1965 C.E.).

ᶜArif's nationalization policies were perceived by the Shiᶜites as aimed at eroding and challenging the economic power base of their community.[118] Having been largely shut out of top government and military posts since the establishment of the modern state, the Shiᶜites increasingly turned to commerce and private business. The wealth of the urban Shiᶜite merchants and business entrepreneurs increased after they moved in to fill some of the vacuum left due to the mass migration of Iraqi Jews, who occupied an important place in the country's business and financial life, to Israel in the late 1940s and early 1950s.[119] The Shiᶜites' perceptions of being targeted by state policies were nurtured by Abd al-Salam ᶜArif's staunchly Sunni sectarian attitude. Accounts abound about instances when his bigotry seeped through the restraints of composure and self-control usually associated with public office. On one occasion, he used the sectarian slur "*rawafidh*" (rejectionists) to refer to two Shiᶜite members of the National Council of the Revolutionary Command, Hani al-Fukayki and Muhsin al-Shaykh Radhi, who had arrived late at a Council meeting.[120] Some of his policies, which seem to have been inspired by sectarian motives, heightened sectarian passions and inter-communal tensions.[121] For example, Sunni mosques were built in predominantly Shiᶜite areas. There were instances when the resulting inflamed sectarian tensions engendered hateful reactions, such as the desecration of a newly-built Sunni mosque in the al-Shu'un al-Ijtimaᶜiyyah neighborhood in Baghdad's Hurriyah quarter by throwing garbage at its entrance.[122] ᶜArif also expressed an intent to build the grave of, or a shrine for, Umayyad Caliph Muᶜawiyah bin Abi Sufyan, who is viewed by the Shiᶜites as a tyrant, hypocrite and usurper of the caliphate from its rightful owners, the Household of the Prophet.[123] The inflamed passions during Abd al-Salam's reign pushed the country, in the words of one Shiᶜite interlocutor who grew up in Baghdad at the time, to "the brink of civil

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[118] Uzri, *Mushkilat al-Hukum fi al-ᶜIraq*, pp. 275-278; and ᶜUmar Halliq, "Fi al- ᶜIraq Azmat Wujdan hawla al-Ishtirakiyyah wa Salahiha .." [A Crisis of Conscience in Iraq over Socialism and Its Validity ..], *al-Hayat*, March 5, 1965. The article was reproduced in Ta'ifah min al-Mufakkirin [A Group of Thinkers], *al-Ishtirakiyyah fi al-Tajarib al-ᶜArabiyyah*, pp. 263-281. The quote appears on p. 274.

[119] Batatu, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

[120] Fukayki, *op. cit.*, p. 273. On another occasion, ᶜArif is reported to have abruptly ended a visit to the national insurance company headquarters upon finding out that its senior executives and section heads were either Shiᶜite or Christian. Saᶜid al-Samarra'i, *al-Ta'ifiyyah fi al-ᶜIraq: al-Waqᶜi wa al-Hall* [Sectarianism in Iraq: The Fact and the Solution], 1ˢᵗ Edition (London: Mu'assat al-Fajr, 1413 A.H./1993 C.E.): p. 46.

[121] For examples of British diplomatic correspondence touching on growing Shiᶜite distrust of the government during this period, see Hamid Al Bayati, *The Shia of Iraq Between Sectarianism and Suspicions in British Secret Documents, 1963-1966*, 1ˢᵗ Edition (London: Al-Rafid, 1418 A.H./1997 C.E.): pp. 33-40.

[122] Interview with Ali Thwany, Iraqi Architect and Researcher, Amman, Tuesday, September 21, 2010.

[123] On ᶜArif's intention to build a shrine for Muᶜawiyah, see Khayyun, *al-Adyan wa al-Madhahib fi al-ᶜIraq*, p. 336. For a Shiᶜite view of Muᶜawiyah, see "Was Mu'wiyah a Momin [Believer] or Munafiq [Hypocrite]?" *Answering-Ansar.org*; available at: http://www.answering-ansar.org/answers/muawiya/en/chap10.php; accessed on Thursday, April 21, 2011.

war."[124] Little wonder that many Shi^cites rejoiced at the death of Abd al-Salam ^cArif in a mysterious helicopter crash on April 16, 1966. The sense of jubilation was summarized by the adage coined especially for this occasion: "*Tar lahim wa nizil fahim*" [He took off as flesh and went down as coal].

It might be argued that the increasingly sectarian policies under Abd al-Salam ^cArif could have been partly prompted by the regime's concerns over the growth of underground Shi^cite Islamist activism. But regardless of whether Abd al-Salam's policies were inspired by sectarian bigotry on his part or by *raison d'état* and the exigencies of regime survival, their pernicious and polarizing effect has effectively been the same. His policies bred corrosive distrust of, and alienation from, the state among the Shi^cites, notwithstanding the brief honeymoon between ^cArif and the *marja^ciyyah* at the beginning of his rule when the new military regime amended the Personal Status Law. The attendant brewing sense of bitterness on the part of the Shi^cites gave rise to new attempts to articulate communal demands along sectarian lines. Complaints of discriminatory practices re-emerged as the totem around which the maelstrom of Shi^cite resentment revolved. In 1965, Shaykh Muhammad Ridha al-Shabibi, a Shi^cite cleric, poet and former cabinet minister and speaker of parliament under the monarchy, gave public expression to this seething Shi^cite resentment in a memo submitted to prime minister Abd al-Rahman al-Bazzaz in which he called for bridging the sectarian gap in state administration and bureaucracy. The memo complained that "sectarian discrimination has never been a barefaced problem of governance as it is today." It reminded the prime minister that "the state and its apparatuses, functions, and fields of work are not the sole preserve of one sect to the exclusion of another. Rather its duties are to be distributed according to merit."[125]

The heightening feelings of Shi^cite sectarian victimization under the ^cArif Brothers regime created a fertile ground for the growth of forms of public and underground communal activism. One indication of the depth of this alienation is the proposal to topple the regime which some Shi^cite army officers made to Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim. The Ayatollah was indecisive, however. He declined for fear that the coup will allow the communists to stage a

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[124] Interview with Ali Thwany, Iraqi Architect and Researcher, Amman, Tuesday, September 21, 2010.
[125] Uzri, *Mushkilat al-Hukum fi al-^cIraq*, p. 182. A full translation of this memorandum is provided in Appendix II.

comeback.[126] In contrast to the Ayatollah's aversion to a military takeover, a host of conspiratorial cliques of officers were busy plotting military coups to seize power. Eventually, one of these cliques would succeed in toppling the ᶜArif regime and ushering in dictatorial rule that took repression and terror from the above to unprecedented levels in Iraq's history.

2.8. Baᶜath Party Rule: From Radical Secularism to Rabid Sectarianism

"In Babylonia didst thou attempt to make me lose my way in a labyrinth of brass with many stairways, doors, and walls; now the Powerful One has seen fit to allow me to show thee mine, which has no stairways to climb, nor doors to force, nor wearying galleries to wander through, nor walls to impede thy passage."

Luis Borges,
"The Two Kings and the Two Labyrinths,"
in *Collected Fictions*, translated by Andrew Hurley

The Baᶜathists came back to power in two consecutive military coups in July 1968.[127] The reign of the second Baᶜath Party regime demonstrates how one extreme – in this case radical secularism – spawned its opposite – fanatic sectarianism. Broadly speaking, the Arab nationalist ideology of the Baᶜath Party[128] advocated the establishment of an indivisible, secular Pan-Arab nation, comprising a modern community for all Arab peoples regardless of their religious, tribal, class or other sectional allegiances. All these allegiances, whose sublimation and dissolution in favor of an imagined, organic, perennial Pan-Arab association was believed to be necessary, were denounced not only as backward but also as manifestations of a 'false consciousness.' The party's late co-founder and chief ideologue,

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[126] Najaf, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-185.

[127] For an account, consult Batatu, *op. cit.*, pp. 1073-1077. For a brief account of the early history of the Baᶜath Party in Iraq until the Febraury 1963 coup, see Hazim Saghiyyeh, *Baᶜath al-ᶜIraq: Sultat Saddam Qiyaman wa Hutaman* [Iraq's Baᶜath: Saddam's Rule – Genesis and Ruin], 2nd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon; and London: Dar al-Saqi, 2004 [2003]): pp. 15-25.

[128] For useful studies on the origins and early history of the Baᶜath Party, consult Kamel S. Abu Jaber, *The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party: History, Ideology and Organization*, 1st Edition (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1966); John F. Delvin, *The Ba'ath Party: A History from Its Origins to 1966* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1976); and Jalal al-Sayyid, *Hizb al-Baᶜath al-ᶜArabi* [The Arab Baᶜath Party] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Nahar li al-Nashr, 1973). On the split and competition between the Syrian and Iraqi factions of the Baᶜath, see Eberhard Kienle, *Ba'ath Versus Ba'ath: The Conflict Between Syria and Iraq, 1968–89* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1990). For a wide-ranging compendium of primary Baᶜath Party documents and literature see Bashir al-Daᶜuq, ed., *Nidhal al-Baᶜath* [The Struggle of the Baᶜath], Vols. 1-18, 4th Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Taliᶜah, 1974).

Michel ᶜAflaq, classified sectarianism among the "diseases extant in Arab society," on a par with capitalism, feudalism, racism, regionalism, reaction and other social ills.[129] But the promises made in this idealized ideological formulation would wither away in tandem with the imposition of Baᶜathist monopoly over political power.

2.8.1. Shiᶜite Activism and State Tyranny

"As usurpation is the exercise of power, which another hath a right to; so *tyranny is the exercise of power beyond right,* which nobody can have a right to. And this is making use of the power any one has in his hands, not for the good of those who are under it, but for his own private separate advantage. When the governor, however intitled, makes not the law, but his will the rule; and his commands and actions are not directed to the preservation of the properties of his people, but the satisfaction of his own ambition, revenge, covetousness, or any other irregular passion."

John Locke,
Two Treatises on Government

Buoyed by rising oil export revenues, the new Baᶜathist regime expedited its efforts to build its repressive apparatus and crush opponents of all stripes: communists, Arab nationalists, Kurdish nationalists, and Islamists.[130] It sought to undermine the institutional autonomy of the Shiᶜite religious establishment. The clerics and students at the Najaf religious seminary were persecuted. But as the Baᶜath Party regime would soon find out, no matter how hard it tried, it could never lay to rest the autonomy of the Shiᶜite religious establishment. Underground Sunni Islamist groups received painful, incapacitating blows in the first few

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[129] Michel ᶜAflaq, *Fi Sabil al-Baᶜath* [For the Sake of the Baᶜath], 21ˢᵗ Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Taliᶜah, March 1980): p. 168. For a sympathetic biographical profile of Michel ᶜAflaq, see Dhuqan Qarqut, *Mishil ᶜAflaq: al-Kitabat al-Ula maᶜa Dirasah Jadidah li Sirat Hayatih* [Michel ᶜAflaq: The Early Writings with a New Study of His Biography], 1ˢᵗ Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Mu'assassah al-ᶜArabiyyah li al-Dirasat wa al-Nashr, 1993). For Baᶜathist views championing the retreat of the sacrd from the realm of politics, see Saddam Hussein, *Nadhrah fi al-Din wa al-Turath* [An Outlook on Religion and Heritage], 1ˢᵗ Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Dar al-Thawrah, July 1978): pp. 14-15. The late Iraqi president's views on the Arab-Islamic heritage and modernity were further articulated in *al-Turath al-ᶜArabi wa al-Muᶜasarah* [Arab Heritage and Modernity] (Baghdad, Iraq: Dar al-Hurriyyah, 1980).
[130] According to Roger Owen and Şevket Pamuk, *A History of Middle East Economies in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998): p. 166, Iraq saw its "oil revenues rising dramatically from $6 billion in 1974 to a peak of $26.5 billion in 1979." On the association between oil revenues and the stability of authoritarian regimes, see Kiren Aziz Chaudry, *The Price of Wealth: Economies and Institutions in the Middle East* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univeristy Press, 1997); and Terry Lynn Karl, *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

years of Ba^cath Party rule. The clampdown dealt to Sunni Islamists reached its zenith in 1970-1971 with the arrest and execution of scores of activists from the Muslim Brotherhood and other smaller Sunni Islamist underground organizations on charges of plotting to overthrow the government or assassinate top government figures. The clampdown had a devastating effect on Sunni Islamist activism, forcing the Muslim Brotherhood in 1970 to take a painful decision to suspend its activities in Iraq.[131]

Shi^cite Islamist activism, which had managed to establish strong networks of organized party and community-based support in the 1960s, was a more difficult enemy for the hardening authoritarian fist of the Ba^cathist regime. The pace of repression against Shi^cite Islamist activism picked up dramatically in the early 1970s. A turning point in the clampdown was the execution of Da^cawah Party leader Abd al-Sahib Dukhayyil, known as Abu ^cIssam, whose body was thrown into an acid vat in 1971. In 1974, a Revolutionary Court sentenced five leading Da^cawah figures to death.[132] Three of those put to death were clerics – a fact which prompted Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, who was briefly detained and interrogated later that year, to issue an edict prohibiting clerics from joining any political party in hopes of averting the execution of more clerics.[133] The highly charged atmosphere created conditions conducive for mass mobilization which was suppressed ruthlessly by the government's strong-arm methods. The Safar Uprising (*Intifadhat Safar*), aka the Fortieth Uprising (*Intifadhat al-Arba^cin*), of 1977 occurred when the government attempted to ban the Shi^cite faithful from performing the rites of visitation to the shrine of Imam Hussein to commemorate the Araba^cin, or the Fortieth Day after the day of ^cAshura, under the pretext of an alleged Syrian plot to bomb the shrine.[134]

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[131] Dabbagh, *op. cit.*, pp. 340-352 and 382-389; and Interview with Muslim Brotherhood and Iraqi Islamic Party leader, former Iraqi Governing Council member Muhsin Abd al-Hamid, *Baghdad Channel*, the satellite TV channel of the Iraqi Islamic Party, dated December 27, 2008. Interview transcript available on the *Baghdad Channel* website at: http://www.baghdadch.tv/channel_series.php?id=1519; accessed on Friday, April 29, 2011.

[132] The five men are: ^cArif al-Basri, ^cImad al-Din al-Tabataba'i al-Tabrizi, ^cIzz al-Din al-Qubbanji, Nuri Muhammad Hussein Tu^cmah and Hussein Muhammad Kadhem Jalukhan. Najaf, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109; and *Shuhada' Baghdad* [The Martyrs of Baghdad], 2nd Edition (Tehran, Iran: Hizb al-Da^cawah al-Islamiyyah – al-I^cilam al-Markazi [The Islamic Da^cawah Party – Central Media Bureau], Dhu al-Qi^cidah 22, 1403 A.H. [August 31, 1983 C.E.]); and Ra'uf, *al-^cAmal al-Islami fi al-^cIraq byana al-Marja^ciyyah wa al-Hizbiyyah*, pp. 118 and 204-205.

[133] T. M. Aziz, "The Role of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr in Shi^ci Political Activism in Iraq from 1958 to 1980," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (May 1993): p. 213.

[134] Ra^cad al-Musawi, *Intifadhat Safar al-Islamiyyah fi al-^cIraq, 1397 Hijriyyah – 1977 Miladiyyah* [The Islamic Safar Uprising in Iraq, 1397 A.H.-1977 C.E.], 2nd Edition (Qum, Iran: 1404 A.H./1983-1984 C.E.). See also Aziz, "The Role of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr," pp. 213-214; Najaf, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-114; and Ofra Bengio, "Shi'is and Politics in Ba'thi Iraq," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (January 1985): pp. 3-4.

Subsequent developments set the stage for the confrontation between the Shi͏ᶜite Islamists and the Ba͏ᶜathist regime to escalate to an existential struggle. Amid intensifying repression directed against Shi͏ᶜite opposition, the Islamic revolution toppled the Shah's regime in neighborning Iran in February 1979. The revolution was welcomed by Iraqi Shi͏ᶜites chafing under Ba͏ᶜath Party dictatorship. A sense of euphoria at the victory of the revolution was palpable in some predominantly Shi͏ᶜite areas where sweets were distributed as an expression of joy. Religious Shi͏ᶜites saw in the revolution a triumph of Islam's spiritual values over the crass materialism of modern ideologies, including the secular nationalist ideology of the Ba͏ᶜath Party. Demonstrations were held in several Iraqi cities during which demonstrators chanted slogans praising Ayatollahs Sadr and Ruhollah Khomeini, the leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran. Excessive force, including live ammunition, was used to disperse demonstrations and Iraqi intelligence rounded up protesters and activists.[135]

The reverberations of the Islamic revolution had far-reaching implications for the confrontation between the Shi͏ᶜite Islamists and the Ba͏ᶜath Party regime in Iraq. On the one hand, Gulf countries, including Iraq, feared being toppled through Iranian-inspired revolutionary upheavals. Such fears were heightened due to a surfeit of messianic zeal and revolutionary romanticism that imbued the discourse of Iranian revolutionary leaders who employed the rhetoric of Islamic solidarity and 'manifest destiny.' Claiming a moral – if not even religious – obligation to encourage Islamic revolutionary change elsewhere in the Muslim world, Iranian leaders spoke openly about the "export" of the revolution.[136] In its programming, the Arabic Service of Radio Tehran began calling on Iraqis to follow the example of the Iranian revolutionaries and rise up in an Islamic revolution against the Iraq regime, which was engaged in fomenting unrest in Iran's predominantly Arab province of

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[135] Najaf, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-121.

[136] On the Iranian concept of "export of revolution," see *Tasdir al-Thawrah kama Yarah al-Imam al-Khomeini (Quddisa Sirruh)* [Export of Revolution as Seen by Imam Khomeini (May Allah Sanctify His Soul)] (Tehran, Iran: Mu'assassat Tandhim wa Nashr Turath al-Imam al-Khomeini, 1997). Iranian leaders have argued that the "export of revolution" does not necessarily need to be carried out by violent means and subversion but rather by propaganda and setting a model. However, these assertions did not allay the fears created by the notion of "export of revolution." See R. K. Ramazani, "Iran's Export of the Revolution: Politics, Ends, and Means," in John Esposito, ed., *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impact* (Miami, FL: Florida International University Press, 1990): pp. 40-62.

Khuzistan. Iranian revolutionary leaders also issued a string of statements vilifying the Ba‘ath Party regime as evil and atheist, exhorting the Iraqi people to overthrow it.[137]

On the other hand, Shi‘ite Islamists in Iraq, including the Islamic Da‘awah Party and politically-activist clerics such as Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, openly supported the infant revolutionary regime.[138] They saw the revolution as a model whereby an oppressive regime spreading the tentacles of its well-entrenched security apparatus throughout society was overthrown through mass mobilization. Sadr sent statements to the Iranian people declaring his unstinting support for their uprising and admiration for Ayatollah Khomeini. He issued an edict proscribing membership in the ruling Ba‘ath Party. Sadr also authored six treatises articulating the conceptual underpinnings of the modern Islamic state as part of his contribution to the debate on laying the foundations for building an Islamic state.[139]

The anti-regime discourse adopted by Shi‘ite Islamist activists during this period was potent, vitriolic and uncompromising in its hostility to the Ba‘athist regime. It expressed, in no uncertain terms, full support and loyalty to Shi‘ite clerics, including the leader of Iran's Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Khomeini. One leaflest distributed on the occasion of Jerusalem Day in 1979 is instructive in this regard. Ayatollah Khomeini had declared the last Friday of the holy fasting month of Ramadhan as Jerusalem Day to be devoted for public activities, including mass demonstrations, in support of the liberation of Palestine. The leaflet, signed by "Supporters of the *Marja‘iyyah* and Scholarly Seminaries" (*Ansar al-*

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[137] See Jasim M. Abdulghani, *Iraq and Iran: The Years of Crisis* (Becjenham, Kent: Croom Helm Ltd, 1984): pp. 178-228; and Robert O. Freedman, *Moscow and the Middle East: Soviet Policy since the Invasion of Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): pp. 86-87.

[138] Aziz, "The Role of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr," pp. 215-216. One Da‘awah Party booklet states that Sadr maintained a close relationship with the leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who spent 14 years in exile in Najaf. It says that the two used to exchange views "at various stages of this blessed revolution." See Hizb al-Da‘awah al-Islamiyyah – Maktab Lubnan al-I‘ilami [Islamic Da‘awah Party – Lebanon's Media Office], *Istishhad al-Imam Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr min Mandhur Hadhari: Dirasah Tahliliyyah bi Munasabat al-Dhikra al-Sanawiyyah al-Ula li Istishhadih* [The Martyrdom of Imam Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr from a Civilizational Perspective: An Analytical Study on the First Anniversary of His Martyrdom] (Beirut, Lebanon: Hizb al-Da‘awah al-Islamiyyah – Maktab Lubnan al-I‘ilami, Jumada al-Ula 1401 A.H/1981 C.E.): p. 35.

[139] The treatises were later compiled in one book titled *al-Islam Yaqud al-Hayat* [Islam Leads Life] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Ta‘aruf li al-Matbu‘at, 1992). The booklets are entitled: *Lamhah Fiqhiyyah Tamhidiyyah ‘an Mashru‘ Dustur al-Jumhuriyyah al-Islamiyyah fi Iran* [An Introductory Jurisprudential Glimpse on the Proposal for the Constitution of the Islamic Republic in Iran], *Surah ‘an Iqtisad al-Mujtama‘ al-Islami* [A Portrait of the Economy of the Islamic Society], *Khutut Tafsiliyyah ‘an Iqtisad al-Mujtama‘ al-Islami* [Detailed Outlines of the Economy of the Islamic Society], *Khilafat al-Insan wa Shahadat al-Anbiya'* [The Viceregency of Man and the Witnesshood of the Prophets], *Manabi‘i al-Qudrah fi al-Dawlah al-Islamiyyah* [The Fountainheads of Power in the Islamic State], and *al-Usus al-‘Ammah li al-Bank fi al-Mujtama‘ al-Islami* [The General Bases of Banking in Islamic Society].

Marja^ciyyah wa al-Hawzat al-^cIlmiyyah), criticized the "shameful, treacherous stand taken by the agent Tikriti government toward this guided Islamic step." The government, the statement explained, not only abstained from participating in celebrations marking Jerusalem Day but also "prevented the Muslim masses of Iraq from expressing their feelings of loyalty to their true Islamic leadership represented by Imam Khomeini and the luminary clerics and their love and sacrifices for beloved Jerusalem and the usurped lands."[140] In one of a series of three taped messages denouncing the regime and calling on the Iraqi people to stand up to it, Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr characterized the overthrow of the regime and its replacement with an Islamic government in the idiom of religious duties and obligations:

> "It is incumbent on every Muslim in Iraq and every Iraqi outside Iraq to do whatever he can, even if it cost him his life, to keep the jihad and struggle to remove this nightmare from the land of beloved Iraq, to liberate themselves from this inhuman gang, and to establish a righteous, unique, and honorable rule based on Islam."[141]

The ripples of the Iranian revolution expedited the Da^cawah Party's shift towards revolutionary activism, which entailed efforts to arm and train members in order to engage the regime in urban guerrilla warfare.[142] Other smaller Shi^cite underground groups, such as the Islamic Action Organization (*Munadhdhamat al-^cAmal al-Islami*), took up arms against the regime as well. Armed attacks, some carried out by suicide bombers, were launched against government buildings, security services, such as the headquarters of the Directorate-General of Security (*Mudiriyyat al-Amn al-^cAmmah*) in Baghdad, Ba^cath Party offices and figures, and senior government officials, including an attempt to assassinate Tariq ^cAziz, then the foreign minister, at the Mustansiriyyah University in Baghdad.[143]

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[140] A photocopy of this statement is in the possession of the author.

[141] Quoted in Aziz, "The Role of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr," p. 217.

[142] Ra'uf, *al-^cAmal al-Islami fi al-^cIraq byana al-Marja^ciyyah wa al-Hizbiyyah*, pp. 205-206. According to the Da^cawah Party booklet, *Istishhad al-Imam Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr min Mandhur Hadhari*, "Martyr Sayyid Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr found that the triumph of the Islamic revolution in Iran had added new elements to the objective conditions for the occurrence of the Islamic revolution in Iraq which expedited its outbreak and stoked its embers" (p. 36).

[143] Ra'uf, *al-^cAmal al-Islami fi al-^cIraq byana al-Marja^ciyyah wa al-Hizbiyyah*, p. 264. Such attacks defined the *modus operandi* of the Shi^cite underground inside Iraq in subsequent years, as evidenced by the failed attempt on the life of Saddam Hussein at Dujayl to the north of Baghdad in July 1982 and the suicide car-bomb attack against the planning ministry in Baghdad in June of the same year.

These events marked a watershed in the confrontation between the Islamist Shi^cite opposition and the Ba^cath Party regime. Communal identity and primordial grievances were recruited into this confrontation, thus bestowing on it a primordial sectarian aspect. Shi^cite Islamists tapped into deep wells of Shi^cite collective feelings and rhetoric of victimization, oppression and alienation. In reacting to the threats emanating from the rising tide of Shi^cite Islamism, the Ba^cath Party regime slid deeper into the swamps of totalitarianism and expedited the process of building up its suffocating repressive grip on society. Its ruthless repressive measures against Shi^cite Islamist activists and clerics were seen as expressions of state sectarianism camouflaged under a thin-veneer of secular Arab nationalism and ersatz progressivism.

In fighting for regime survival, the Ba^cathists went after the Shi^cite opposition root and branch, taking, in the process, the use of unbridled violence to unprecedented levels which plunged the country into a whirlpool of blood. Thousands of activists were arrested and countless were executed, many of who without trial. Sadr was executed, along with his sister Aminah, famously known as Bint al-Huda, on April 8, 1980. The Da^cawah Party was outlawed and membership in the Da^cawah became punishable by death.[144] Hundreds of thousands of Shi^cites, mostly Fayli Kurds, but also Iraqi Arabs and Persians, were also deported. Eventually, the Ba^cath Party regime was able to smother the Shi^cite popular oppositional mobilization and destroy the Shi^cite Islamist parties' organizational networks inside the country, but at an exorbitant human, if not even collective psychological and emotional, cost.

2.8.2. Shattered Dreams, Nightmares and Schizoid Collective Memory: The 1991 Uprising

"People have given us our power, so we showed them patience with anger underneath it, and they showed us loyalty with rancor underneath it … If we disappoint them, they disappoint us, and then we do not know if we prevail or fail."

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[144] Revolutionary Command Council Resolution 461 banned the Da^cawah Party and imposed retroactive death penalty for party membership. It is re-printed in "Jara'im al-Ba^cath dhidha Hizb al-Da^cawah al-Islamiyyah: Qarar I^cidam al-Du^cat al-Sayyi' al-Sit" ["The Crimes of the Ba^cath against the Islamic Da^cawah Party: The Infamous Decision to Execute Da^cawah Members"], *Jaridat al-Da^cawah* [al-Da^cawah Newspaper], Wednesday, Rabi^ci al-Thani 24, 1432 A.H./March 30, 2011 C.E.; available at: http://www.adawaanews.net/old_newspaper/2011/1216/08Dirasat.html; accessed on Saturday, May 07, 2011.

The most ironic result of the regime's success in repressing Shiᶜite political activism throughout the 1980s was a steadily deepening collective consciousness of sectarian identity among the Shiᶜites that percolated beneath the surface. This gathering subterranean upsurge of communal identity broke out into the open once the repressive fist of the state weakened amid the stresses and strains resulting from Saddam's decision to invade Kuwait in 1990. The defeat of Iraq's bloated army in the war emboldened disgruntled ethnic and sectarian communities, namely, the Kurds and Shiᶜites, to rise up against the regime.[145] Especially in the predominantly Shiᶜite areas in the south, the ranks of the rebels, who had no central leadership, were reinforced by deserting soldiers, most of who had been driven back in a humiliating and disorderly retreat from the Kuwaiti theatre of operations.[146]

The spontaneous, chaotic and uncoordinated series of revolts that swept the south and came to be known as the *Intifadhah* (Uprising) was an attack on the existing political order. It took advantage of the debilitating weakness of the administrative and repressive means of the Baᶜath Party's authoritarian rule as a result of the Kuwait debacle. While political motivations were the main driving force for the outbursts of rebellion, they did not always provide the spark. For example, according to one eyewitness, the rebellion in Basra evolved from acts of looting by hungry and war-weary residents against state-owned food warehouses, government buildings and Baᶜath Party offices.[147] In fact, amid the chaos and

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[145] This analysis focuses on the series of upheavals and armed revolts that engulfed the predominantly-Shiᶜite southern provinces following Iraq's defeat in the Gulf War of 1991. The parallel armed insurrection in the predominantly-Kurdish north is beyond the scope of this study.

[146] Little solid analytical work has gone towards writing the historiography of the unsynchronized post-Gulf War uprisings. A notable exception can be found in Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity* (London: Hurst & Company, 2011): pp. 65-86. For a field media report from southern Iraq which provides a glimpse into the chaotic and disorganized nature of the uprising, see Melinda Liu, "Apocalypse Near," *Newsweek*, April 1, 1991; available at: http://www.newsweek.com/1991/03/31/apocalypse-near.html; accessed on Saturday, May 21, 2011.

[147] Interview with Farhan Ahmad al-Kanᶜan, Journalist, Basra, Wednesday, May 18, 2011.

mayhem characterizing the *Intifadhah*, acts of looting, revenge killings and vendettas pushed the rebellion in many areas down the slippery slope of total anarchy.[148]

The rebellion in southern Iraq was marked by a vigorous assertion of Shi^cite identity, featuring overtly Shi^cite religious symbolism and rhetoric. Pictures of Shi^cite clerics, including that of the late Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini, were prominently displayed and hoisted by the rebels in areas under their control. Some slogans reportedly chanted by the rebels were laden with sectarian overtones. Chief among the slogans which earned a place in sectarian infamy in accounts of the *Intifadhah* was: "There is no viceregent except Ali, and we want a Ja^cafari ruler" (*maku wali illa ^cAli wa nurid hakim Ja^cafari*).[149]

There were those among the localized leaderships of the rebellion who looked up to the Shi^cite *marja^ciyyah* in Najaf to take up the supreme ledership mantle of the Uprising. These hopes were dashed by the reluctance of Grand Ayatollah Abu al-Qassim al-Kho'i, the paramount Shi^cite jurist resident in Najaf, to assume the leadership mantle of the *Intifadhah*. A staunch proponent of the separation of the spiritual from the temporal, Kho'i issued two *fatwas*, on March 5 and 7, in which he craftily treaded a very cautious line. The first *fatwa* fell short of making explicit political commitments or blessing the rebellion while seeking to curb the raw excesses marring the unfolding events.[150] Ayatollah Kho'i's second *fatwa* went a step further by appointing an eight-man clerical body, later expanded to nine, "to oversee the administration of all affairs" of society. However, it fell short of claiming full leadership of the rebellion.[151]

The regime's counterattack was merciless. The resulting physical destruction and human losses were enormous, leaving deep and indelible scars on the collective psyche of the

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[148] According to one source, Shi^cites accounted for nearly 70 percent of lower ranking secret service agents. Those were particularly targeted with revenge killings by the rebels. See Isam al-Khafaji, "State Terror and the Degradation of Politics," in Fran Hazelton, ed., *Iraq Since the Gulf War: Prospects for Democracy* (London; and New Jersey, NJ: Zed Books Ltd., 1994): pp. 20-31. Portraits of the descent of rebel-held areas into anarchy can be found in Kanan Makiya, *Cruelty and Silence: War, Tyranny, Uprising and the Arab World* (New York, NY; and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993): pp. 65-74; and Lamis Andoni, "Shattered and Torn Apart," *Middle East International*, No. 398 (April 19, 1991): pp. 9-11.

[149] Makiya, *Cruelty and Silence*, p. 66. This has been confirmed to me by numerous eyewitnesses in Iraq.

[150] A copy of the hand-written text of Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Abu al-Qassim al-Kho'i's *fatwa* dated Sha^caban 18, 1411 A.H. [March 5, 1991 C.E.] is on file with the author. A full translation is provided in Appendix III. Due to Ayatollah Kho'i's aloofness from politics, his March 5 *fatwa* "was issued reluctantly and under the pressure of events" (Kanan Makiya, *Cruelty and Silence*, p. 73).

[151] A copy of the hand-written text of Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Abu al-Qassem al-Kho'i's *fatwa* dated Sha^caban 20, 1411 A.H. [March 7, 1991 C.E.] is on file with the author. A full translation is provided in Appendix IV.

country's Shi^{c}ite community. The shrine cities of Karbala and Najaf suffered tremendous damage as they were scenes of heavy fighting. The advancing government troops targeted the Shi^{c}ite holy shrines of Hussein and Abbas in Karbala, as well as that of Ali in Najaf, all three of which sustained direct hits. On March 21, Saddam appeared on television with Ayatollah Kho'i, who had been kidnapped from his house in Najaf by helicopter-borne commandos. During this meeting, the 92-year-old Shi^{c}ite divine addressed Saddam in a faint voice, saying: "Thanks be to God. God has enabled the president to stamp out this sedition."[152] Survivors and eye-witnesses described scenes of gruesome carnage committed by loyalist forces in their drive to snuff out the rebellion. Republican Guards displaying banners reading "No Shi^{c}ites after today" (*La Shi^{c}ah ba^{c}ad al-yawm*) were reported to have run over people in Najaf.[153] A coordinated campaign of mass killings, executions and arrests was carried out in several places.[154]

The sheer scale of the government's indiscriminate use of violence to suppress the *Intifadhah* came to be seen by the Shi^{c}ites as an unprecedented, explicit attack against anything "that gave them their identity."[155] The bombardment of the shrines went down in the Shi^{c}ite collective lore as a sacrilegious act of the first order. The resulting intense feelings of victimhood marked a complete rupture with the Sunni-dominated state. But the passionate and strident assertion of Shi^{c}ite identity *vis-à-vis* the despotic Ba^{c}athist state gave rise to fears and feelings of exlusion among Sunnis which resulted in their loss of sympathy for the rebellion. The salience of identity in the rebellion accentuated deeply-ingrained sectarian fissures and brought them to the surface and into public discourse. Iraq's Sunni Arabs, as well as regional Sunni Arab states and western powers, came to see Saddam's rule as the lesser of two evils, the other being a fragmented Iraq or a Shi^{c}ite-dominated Iraq allied with Iran. Imagined in polarized terms, the memory of the *Intifadhah* emerged as a site of contestation between completely incompatible sectarian antagonists.[156]

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[152] Makiya, *Cruelty and Silence*, pp. 96-97; and Tracy Wilkinson, "Iraq Frees 1,135 Kuwaiti Captives; 3,865 Still Held," *Los Angeles Times*, March 22, 1991; available at: http://articles.latimes.com/1991-03-22/news/mn-557_1_northern-iraq; accessed on Monday, May 30, 2011.

[153] Paul Taylor, "Iraqi Refugees Accuse Saddam's Army of Atrocities in Holy City," *Reuters North American Wire*, March 27, 1991.

[154] Human Rights Watch has documented the story of mass killings in Babil Province during the uprising in *Iraq: The Mass Graves of al-Mahawil: The Truth Uncovered* (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch, May 29, 2003); available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3f4f59567.html; accessed on Monday, May 30, 2011.

[155] Makiya, *Cruelty and Silence*, p. 100.

[156] See Haddad, *op. cit.*, Chapter 6 "Sectarian Relations and the Mythology of 1991," pp. 117-141.

2.8.3. *Antinomies of Assertive Religiosity*

"The Prophet has said, 'The Muslim is brother of the Muslim' . . . How then can it be permitted to the community of Muhammad to divide itself into such diverse opinions that a man can join one group and hate another one simply on the basis of presumptions or personal caprices, without any proof coming from God? . . . Unity is a sign of divine clemency, discord is a punishment of God."

Ahmad bin Abd al-Halim Ibn Taymiyyah,
quoted in Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*

In post-Gulf War Iraq, vibrant forms of popular religiosity flourished, partly as a response to the adversities and depredations that had visited the country since Saddam Hussein's accession to power. The recurrence of external and internal wars, compounded by ruthless regime repression and the effects of the sanctions regime, heightened the Iraqis' need for spiritual comfort and their preoccupation with death, salvation and the afterlife. Helpless to throw off the thick pall that shrouded their lives with adversity and insecurity, Iraqis sought to be purged not only of their sins, but also of their sorrows, pains and despondency, through prayers, rituals and other forms of religious observance.

This wave of religiosity was a serendipitous opportunity for a regime trying to recast itself in an Islamic image. It wasted no time in jumping on the religiosity bandwagon. While using heavy-handed measures against Shiᶜite groups believed to be close to Iran, the regime adopted a softer approach towards Sunni Islamist groups, such as trends and figures associated with or inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*).[157] The state's religious institutions were invigorated in the early 1990s to serve as vehicles for the regime's newfound interest in religion. Foremost among these was the Religious Awareness-Raising Committee (*Lajnat al-Tawᶜiyah al-Diniyyah*) working under the auspices of the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs (*Wazarat al-Awqaf wa al-Shu'un al-Diniyyah*). Sunni clerics as well as underground Sunni Islamic activists were happy to take

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[157] Prior to the 1991 Gulf War, Sunni Islamist groups were banned and Sunni Islamist activists were suppressed under Baᶜath Party rule. For instance, Shaykh Nadhem al-ᶜAssi, a cleric and tribal chief of the ᶜUbayd tribe in the Hawijah area in Kirkuk, was poisoned in 1984.

part in these efforts.[158] The Committee organized religious education courses in Sunni mosques throughout the country.[159]

There was an unmistakable sectarian streak in the regime's attempt to reinvent and cloak itself in a conservative Islamic garb. It adopted anti-Iranian rhetoric that was a thinly disguised attack on Shi^cism. By implication, explicitly Sunni rhetoric to discredit Iran, laden with charges of subscribing to "a foreign and heretical form of religion," made Iraqi Shi^cites open to suspicion, conspiracy theory interpretations and even derision.[160] At one point, *Babil*, a daily newspaper published by Saddam's eldest son ^cUday, launched a barrage of lacerating attacks against the Shi^cites, referring to them by the hateful epithet of *rafidhah*.[161] Amid such unrestrained assault, the Iraqi Shi^cites' sense of alienation, and even outsiderness, from the state was sharpened.

The state's drive to employ the sacred in the service of the profane political imperatives of regime survival culminated in its National Faith Campaign (*al-Hamlah al-Wataniyyah al-*

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[158] Muhsin Abd al-Hamid, who would become a Chairman of the Iraqi Islamic Party in the post-2003 period and a member of the former 25-member Iraqi Governing Council formed in the wake of the toppling of Saddam Hussein, was among those who headed the Committee during the 1990s. One Islamist activist in Kirkuk estimated that about 90 percent of those working in the Committee in Kirkuk in the 1990s were affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. The Committee's chapter in Kirkuk was headed by Sayyid Abdallah al-Nu^caymi, a Sufi. While Sayyid Nu^caymi himself was not a member of the Brotherhood, his deputy and most of his subordinates had links with the Brotherhood. Among them was Abd al-Hamid al-^cUbaydi, who is currently based in Egypt and has a program on the *al-Rafidayn* satellite TV channel in which he answers viewers' questions seeking *fatwas* according different schools of Muslim jurisprudence or *madhhabs*. Interview with Senior Leader of the Independent National Tribal Gathering (*al-Tajammu^c al-Watani al-^cAsha'iri al-Mustaqil*), Kirkuk, Monday, January 18, 2010. The name has been withheld upon the interlocutor's request to protect his identity.
[159] A woman from Basra who currently lives in the UK recalls that she began to attend summer religious classes held at the al-Saqr Mosque in the city's al-Baradh^ciyyah quarter at the age of 11 in 1993. She said that the syllabus included lessons in Qur'anic recitations and Sunni jurisprudence. Instructors in these courses encouraged young girls and women to don the *hijab*. The woman's father was a member of the Ba^cath Party, had volunteered in the People's Army (*al-Jaysh al-Sha^cabi*) during the Iraq-Iran War, and spent nearly 15 years as a prisoner of war in Iran. Email correspondence with "Zainab," a woman from Basra living in the UK who requested anonymity, Saturday, August 28, 2010.
[160] Zubaida, "The rise and fall of civil society in Iraq," p. 129.
[161] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

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Imaniyyah), announced in 1994.[162] The Campaign swerved from the Ba^cath Party's avowedly secularist ideology. One former Ba^cathist and Iraqi intelligence officer stated that the Faith Campaign "constituted a deviation from the Party's thought."[163] This sentiment was shared by many Ba^cathist old guards who were loath to diluting the original secular ethos of the Party. But under Saddam Hussein's rule, where the Party was held in as much terror and fear as the rest of the country, there was no space for the expression of any form of dissent or opposition.[164]

The Faith Campaign included an ostentatious mosque-building spree. Tax holidays were given to citizens who build mosques. Religious schools and colleges were opened around the country. Schools increased the dose of religious studies. A Qur'anic studies subject was introduced to the curriculum at all school levels. Pubs, gambling establishments, and discos were restricted or even closed. The selling and consumption of alcohol were curtailed. Spirits shops within a 200-meter radius of a mosque or religious shrine were ordered closed.[165] Judges were required to study courses on judiciary practice in Islamic jurisprudence and to pass special tests to be able to continue to serve as judges. An Islamic bank was established to carry out banking activities consistent with the Islamic Shari^cah.[166] Religious programming in the media was expanded and promoted. A religious radio station, *al-Qur'an al-Karim Radio*, was launched. The station's menu of programs consisted of about 60 percent Qur'anic

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[162] Interview with Shaykh Abd al-Latif al-Humayyim, Secretary-General of the Association of the Scholars and Intellectuals of Iraq (*Jama^cat ^cUlama' wa Muthaqqafi al-^cIraq*) and Former Secretary-General of the Now-Defunct World People's Islamic Conference (*al-Mu'tamar al-Islami al-Sha^cabi al-^cAlami*), Amman, Wednesday, June 8, 2011. There is a widespread erroneous belief that Iraq's then-vice president ^cIzzat Ibrahim al-Duri, who is reputed to be a follower of the Qaderiyyah Sufi order, was the originator of the idea of the Faith Campaign. Email correspondence with Muwaffaq al-Rifa^ci, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the *al-Manarah* Newspaper, Saturday, August 28, 2010. Duri most likey encouraged the campaign and tried to use it to promote his Qaderiyyah Sufi order. Talib al-Hassan provides a lacerating biographical sketch of ^cIzzat al-Duri in his *^cIzzat Ibrahim al-Duri: al-Sanam* [^cIzzat Ibrahim al-Duri: The Idol] (no place of publication: Dar al-Mawqif, 2000).
[163] Interview with Abd al-Sattar al-^cUbaydi, Former Iraqi Intelligence Operative, Amman, Thursday, November 4, 2010.
[164] Interview with Shaykh Abd al-Latif al-Humayyim, Secretary-General of the Association of the Scholars and Intellectuals of Iraq (*Jama^cat ^cUlama' wa Muthaqqafi al-^cIraq*) and Former Secretary-General of the Now-Defunct World People's Islamic Conference (*al-Mu'tamar al-Islami al-Sha^cabi al-^cAlami*), Amman, Wednesday, June 8, 2011. Humayyim recalls a conversation with the late Iraqi president in which the two men agreed that Saddam Hussein was the only Ba^cath Party leader supporting the Faith Campaign. He lists former prime minister Sa^cadun Hammadi and former intelligence chief Barazan al-Tikriti, Saddam's half-brother, among the leaders opposing the Faith Campaign.
[165] Email correspondence with Muwaffaq al-Rifa^ci, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the *al-Manarah* Newspaper, Saturday, August 28, 2010.
[166] Interview with Shaykh Abd al-Latif al-Humayyim, Secretary-General of the Association of the Scholars and Intellectuals of Iraq (*Jama^cat ^cUlama' wa Muthaqqafi al-^cIraq*) and Former Secretary-General of the Now-Defunct World People's Islamic Conference (*al-Mu'tamar al-Islami al-Sha^cabi al-^cAlami*), Amman, Wednesday, June 8, 2011.

recitations, while the remaining 40 percent was devoted to other Islamic religious programming. "The station's programming was 100 percent Sunni."[167]

Ba^{c}ath Party members were ordered to practice religious rituals. A religious educational program was developed for Ba^{c}ath Party members at various levels. Directives were issued warning of punitive measures against members who fail to attend this program. An academy, the Institute for Teaching the Qur'an and the Prophetic Traditions (*Ma^{c}ahad Tadris al-Kitab wa al-Sunnah*), was established, with branches in Baghdad and Mosul, offering a two-year religious educational program for senior Ba^{c}ath Party members above the Division Member (*^{c}Udhu Firqah*) rung in the Party hierarchy, who were also required to memorize three parts of the Qur'an in order to be promoted.[168]

In theory, there was no declared policy commitment to promote a particular Muslim sectarian stand through the Faith Campaign. However, in practice, Sunni religious institutions and activists benefitted disproportionately from the Faith Campaign. "The Faith Campaign," recalled ^{c}Adnan al-Dulaymi, the leader of the Sunni Iraq People's Congress (*Mu'tamar Ahl al-^{c}Iraq*), "strengthened the Sunnis because they exploited it to spread religion and religiosity."[169] Sunni Islamist activists took advantage of the government's leniency to move under the guise of social welfare projects, funded by donations from doners inside and outside Iraq, which benefitted the growing numbers of impoverished Iraqis under the sanctions regime.[170]

One of the most remarkable features of the vibrant forms of religiosity which flourished in Iraq in the 1990s was the emergence of a highly intolerant Salafist trend. Salafism is by no means new to Iraq. The existence of Salafist-leaning religious figures in Baghdad has been traced back to the nineteenth century.[171] But Salafism did not manage to gain a foothold in

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[167] Interview with Senior Leader of the Independent National Tribal Gathering (*al-Tajammu^c al-Watani al-^{c}Asha'iri al-Mustaqil*), Kirkuk, Monday, January 18, 2010.
[168] Email correspondence with Muwaffaq al-Rifa^{c}i, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the *al-Manarah* Newspaper, Saturday, August 28, 2010; and Interview with Shaykh Ali Hussein Ibrahim al-Hamdani, the paramount tribal chief of the Bu-Hamdan tribes in Kirkuk, Kirkuk, Monday, October 11, 2010.
[169] Interview with ^{c}Adnan al-Dulaymi, Leader of the Sunni Iraqi Accordance Front (*Jabhat al-Tawafuq al-^{c}Iraqiyyah*) Bloc in the Iraqi Parliament (2006-2010) and Secretary General of the Iraq People's Congress (*Mu'tamar Ahl al-^{c}Iraq*), Amman, Wednesday, June 8, 2011.
[170] Interview with ^{c}Adnan al-Dulaymi, Leader of the Sunni Iraqi Accordance Front (*Jabhat al-Tawafuq al-^{c}Iraqiyyah*) Bloc in the Iraqi Parliament (2006-2010) and Secretary General of the Iraq People's Congress (*Mu'tamar Ahl al-^{c}Iraq*), Amman, Wednesday, June 8, 2011.
[171] Itzchak Weismann, "Genealogies of Fundamentalism: Salafi Discourse in Nineteenth-Century Baghdad," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (August 2009): pp. 267-280.

the Ottoman territories which would be merged into modern Iraq chiefly, it seems, because these areas remained firmly under Ottoman control and Sufism maintained a strong foothold among their Sunni inhabitants. Throughout most of the twentieth century, Salafism yielded little influence over the Sunni community in Iraq.[172] These were moderate Salafists shunning politics and focused on theological beliefs and the performance of religious practices in accordance with the teachings of Salafist scholars.[173]

The Salafist trend which crystallized in the 1990s had its roots in developments related to the Iraq-Iran War. Due to the support lent to the Iraqi war effort by Gulf Arab states, the Iraqi government turned a blind eye to the dissemination of books preaching the ultra-conservative Salafist brand of Islam. These books, promoted mostly by the Saudi embassy in Baghdad and Saudi-affiliated organizations, were distributed for free at a time when many orthodox religious works, Sunni and Shiᶜite alike, were banned.[174] The spread of Salafist literature and ideas paved the way for a slow but steady stream of voluntary conversion to Salafism among Iraqi Sunnis.[175] By the 1990s, Salafism began to take shape in Iraq as a non-hierarchical, decentralized, diffuse, segmented and amorphous tendency. It had neither a national organizational structure nor a prominent or paramount leader in Iraq.[176] Salafism established footholds throughout the Sunni Arab hearthland in central, north-central, and western Iraq,

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[172] Interview with ᶜAdnan al-Dulaymi, Leader of the Sunni Iraqi Accordance Front (*Jabhat al-Tawafuq al-ᶜIraqiyyah*) Bloc in the Iraqi Parliament (2006-2010) and Secretary General of the Iraq People's Congress (*Mu'tamar Ahl al-ᶜIraq*), Amman, Wednesday, June 8, 2011; and Interview with Shaykh Abd al-Latif al-Humayyim, Secretary-General of the Association of the Scholars and Intellectuals of Iraq (*Jamaᶜat ᶜUlama' wa Muthaqqafi al-ᶜIraq*) and Former Secretary-General of the Now-Defunct World People's Islamic Conference (*al-Mu'tamar al-Islami al-Shaᶜabi al-ᶜAlami*), Amman, Wednesday, June 8, 2011.

[173] Interview with Shaykh Harith al-Dhari, Chairman of the Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq (*Hay'at ᶜUlama' al-Muslimin fi al-ᶜIraq*), Amman, Thursday, February 4, 2010. Shaykh Dhari identified the al-Niᶜimah family in Mosul as one of the households subscribing to Salafism in the 1960s. See also Dabbagh, *op. cit.*, pp. 234 and 562.

[174] Interview with Shaykh Harith al-Dhari, Chairman of the Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq (*Hay'at ᶜUlama' al-Muslimin fi al-ᶜIraq*), Amman, Thursday, February 4, 2010; and Interview with ᶜAdnan al-Dulaymi, Leader of the Sunni Iraqi Accordance Front (*Jabhat al-Tawafuq al-ᶜIraqiyyah*) Bloc in the Iraqi Parliament (2006-2010) and Secretary General of the Iraq People's Congress (*Mu'tamar Ahl al-ᶜIraq*), Amman, Wednesday, June 8, 2011.

[175] Interview with ᶜAdnan al-Dulaymi, Leader of the Sunni Iraqi Accordance Front (*Jabhat al-Tawafuq al-ᶜIraqiyyah*) Bloc in the Iraqi Parliament (2006-2010) and Secretary General of the Iraq People's Congress (*Mu'tamar Ahl al-ᶜIraq*), Amman, Wednesday, June 8, 2011.

[176] Interview with Shaykh Abd al-Salam al-Kubaysi, Public Relations Officer of the Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq (*Hay'at ᶜUlama' al-Muslimin fi al-ᶜIraq*), Baghdad, November 2003.

where the regime derived a marked degree of support.[177] Concerned about the rise of Salafism, the regime waged several crackdowns to curb its influence. Salafists were arrested, threatened, intimidated and tortured. But the repressive measures taken against the Salafists were not as brutal and extreme as those characteristic of the regime's typical method of dealing with the Shiᶜite opposition.[178]

Some aspects of the rise of Salafism in Iraq were fraught with negative implications for Sunni-Shiᶜite inter-communal harmony. Salafists engaged in a deliberate prosletyzation drive aimed at converting Shiᶜites in southern Iraq into Sunnism. Sunni activists associated with the Muslim Brotherhood pitched in by stepping up efforts to build Sunni mosques in the predominantly Shiᶜite southern provinces.[179] The prosletyzation drive was borne out of Sunni anxiety about the growing demographic expansion of rural Shiᶜite migrants into traditionally Sunni-majority urban centers such as Baghdad and Basra.[180] For the Shiᶜites, the prosletyzation campaign felt like an injustice and existential threat rolled into one.

Assertive religiosity, with the potential for sharpening the awareness of sectarian identity, was also palpable among Iraqi Shiᶜites in the 1990s. The Sadrist phenomenon, which developed due to the activities of the late Ayatollah Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr, Muqtada al-Sadr's father and Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr's cousin, was the starkest manifestation of this salience of assertive Shiᶜite religiosity. The Iraqi regime inadvertently helped in Ayatollah Sadr's rise to prominence by promoting his assumption of the *marjiᶜi*

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[177] Interview with ᶜAdnan al-Dulaymi, Leader of the Sunni Iraqi Accordance Front (*Jabhat al-Tawafuq al-ᶜIraqiyyah*) Bloc in the Iraqi Parliament (2006-2010) and Secretary General of the Iraq People's Congress (*Mu'tamar Ahl al-ᶜIraq*), Amman, Wednesday, June 8, 2011; and Interview with Shaykh Abd al-Latif al-Humayyim, Secretary-General of the Association of the Scholars and Intellectuals of Iraq (*Jamaᶜat ᶜUlama' wa Muthaqqafi al-ᶜIraq*) and Former Secretary-General of the Now-Defunct World People's Islamic Conference (*al-Mu'tamar al-Islami al-Shaᶜabi al-ᶜAlami*), Amman, Wednesday, June 8, 2011.

[178] Interview with Senior Leader of the Independent National Tribal Gathering (*al-Tajammuᶜ al-Watani al-ᶜAsha'iri al-Mustaqil*), Kirkuk, Monday, January 18, 2010. The name has been withheld upon the interlocutor's request to protect his identity. Interview with ᶜAdnan al-Dulaymi, Leader of the Sunni Iraqi Accordance Front (*Jabhat al-Tawafuq al-ᶜIraqiyyah*) Bloc in the Iraqi Parliament (2006-2010) and Secretary General of the Iraq People's Congress (*Mu'tamar Ahl al-ᶜIraq*), Amman, Wednesday, June 8, 2011; and Interview with Shaykh Abd al-Latif al-Humayyim, Secretary-General of the Association of the Scholars and Intellectuals of Iraq (*Jamaᶜat ᶜUlama' wa Muthaqqafi al-ᶜIraq*) and Former Secretary-General of the Now-Defunct World People's Islamic Conference (*al-Mu'tamar al-Islami al-Shaᶜabi al-ᶜAlami*), Amman, Wednesday, June 8, 2011.

[179] Interview with ᶜAdnan al-Dulaymi, Leader of the Sunni Iraqi Accordance Front (*Jabhat al-Tawafuq al-ᶜIraqiyyah*) Bloc in the Iraqi Parliament (2006-2010) and Secretary General of the Iraq People's Congress (*Mu'tamar Ahl al-ᶜIraq*), Amman, Wednesday, June 8, 2011.

[180] Interview with Shaykh Abd al-Latif al-Humayyim, Secretary-General of the Association of the Scholars and Intellectuals of Iraq (*Jamaᶜat ᶜUlama' wa Muthaqqafi al-ᶜIraq*) and Former Secretary-General of the Now-Defunct World People's Islamic Conference (*al-Mu'tamar al-Islami al-Shaᶜabi al-ᶜAlami*), Amman, Wednesday, June 8, 2011.

taqlid (source of emulation) status following the death of Ayatollah Kho'i in 1992. The regime sought to present Ayatollah Sadr as an Arab *marji͑i taqlid* to counter and curb the influence of non-Arab jurists in Najaf. By agreeing to go along with the regime, Ayatollah Sadr eluded, at least temporarily, the regime's repressive apparatus and legalized his social movement activism.[181]

Indeed, the breathing space given to Ayatollah Sadr by the government allowed him to craftily engage in activities designed to establish a grassroots organizational infrastructure appropriate for protracted activism. He focused on creating conditions conducive for a Shi͑ite cultural and religious revival. To this end, he embarked on a heated drive to recruit Iraqi young men to study as clerics at the Najaf *hawzah*.[182] Moreover, Ayatollah Sadr set up a network of representatives (*wukala'*) and offices in cities and towns throughout the country. He published books and other publications, including a newspaper, and provided charitable services to his followers. In 1996, in a radical break with Shi͑ite tradition, he instructed his representatives to hold Friday prayers throughout the country.[183] In October 1997, he began to lead Friday prayers at the historic Kufa Mosque near Najaf.[184]

Ayatollah Sadr preached a populist mixture of Islamic revivalism, religious millenarianism, Iraqi nationalism and anti-colonialism which appealed to angry and alienated Shi͑ites traumatized by long decades of state terror. By stressing social justice and championing the rights of the downtrodden in society, Ayatollah Sadr's message carried special resonance among the most impoverished, marginalized, disenfranchised and scorned strata of Iraq's Shi͑ites, those contemptuously ridiculed by such derogatory slurs as *shuruqis* or *mi͑idan*, which are usually reserved for rural Shi͑ites of southern Iraq. All too often, his vehement

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[181] ͑Adil Ra'uf makes a strong case for this argument in his *Marja͑iyyat al-Maydan: Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr - Mashru͑uh al-Taghyiry wa Waqai͑i al-Ightiyal* [Field Marja͑iyyah: Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr – His Transformational Project and the Facts of the Assassination], 7th Edition (Damascus, Syria: al-Markaz al-͑Iraqi li al-I͑ilam wa al-Dirasat, 1424 A.H./2003 C.E.).

[182] Interview with Shaykh Ra͑ad al-Sakhri, Head of the Sadrist Trend's office in Kirkuk, Kirkuk, Wednesday, October 6, 2010.

[183] Traditionally, Shi͑ite jurists have set very strict requirements for holding Friday prayers. These include the presence of a "just" (͑adel), i.e. infallible, imam. See Abu al-Qassim Ali bin Hussein al-Musawi, better known as al-Sharif al-Murtadha [d. 436 A.H./1044 C.E.], *Rasa'il al-Sharif al-Murtadha* [The Treatises of al-Sharif al-Murtadha], Vol. 3, edited by Mahdi Raja'i (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assat al-Nur li al-Matbu͑at, no date): p. 41. However, over the past few decades, activist Shi͑ite jurists, such as Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran, have eased these requirements and encouraged the faithful to hold Friday prayers.

[184] Patrick Cockburn, *Muqtada al-Sadr and the Fall of Iraq* (London: Faber and Faber, 2008): p. 99. Ayatollah Sadr's Friday sermons have been compiled in a volume entitled *Minbar al-Sadr* [Sadr's Pulpit], edited by Muhsin al-Musawi (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Adhwa', 1423 A.H./2003 C.E.).

anti-Americanism seeped into his Friday sermons and public speeches, which were usually punctuated with anti-American slogans and diatribes.[185]

The wide support and popularity that Ayatollah Sadr gained among the Shi^cites became a source of anxiety for the regime. Government officials were miffed at his refusal to laud the government in his sermons, despite their repeated requests. Their anxiety was apparently heightened by reports of his contacts with armed rebel groups engaged in sporadic low-intensity guerrilla-style attacks against the regime from their bases in the marshlands.[186] The government instructed him not to perform Friday prayers in February 1999. He steadfastly refused. He was gunned down along with his two sons, Mustafa and Mu'ammal, in Najaf, most likely by government hit squads, as he was returning home from a religious ceremony. The regime denied involvement and tried to pin the blame for his slaying on internal rivalries within the Shi^cite religious establishment.[187]

When it came to Muslim inter-sectarian relations, Ayatollah Sadr preached an ecumenical message, stressing Sunni-Shi^cite harmony and unity. Yet he never lost sight of the primacy of Shi^cite thought, theology and religious observance. That is why his activism, which helped galvanize an already assertive Shi^cite sectarian identity, was fraught with the potential for "fostering a sense of threat amongst the other who may resort to counter assertions of their sectarian identity thereby feeding the cycle."[188] Similarly, one manifestation of the religious resurgence among Iraqi Sunnis was a noticeable increase in sectarian sub-national self-identification. In Salafism, rising Sunni piety and the shift to sectarian self-definition merged with assertive religious extremism, radicalized anti-modernism and staunch anti-Shi^cism. Religious resurgence during those years, therefore, contributed to the accentuation of

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[185] *Ibid.*, p. 504. See, also, Khalil Fadl, "The Muqtada al-Sadr phenomenon: the key force in Iraqi politics," *Crescent International*, June 2008; available at: http://www.muslimedia.com/irq-muqtada.htm; accessed on Friday, January 09, 2009. For highly partisan pro-Sadr biographies which do not shy away from discussing his disputes with top Shi^cite clerics, see Mukhtar al-Assadi, *al-Sadr al-Thani: al-Shahed wa al-Shahid – al-Dhahirah wa Rudud al-Fi^cil* [Sadr II: The Witness and the Martyr – The Phenomenon and the Reactions], 2nd Edition (no place of publication: Mu'assassat al-A^caraf, 1420 A.H./1999 C.E.); and Abbas al-Zaydi al-Mayahi, *al-Safir al-Khamis* [The Fifth Deputy] (no place of publication: no publisher, 1422 A.H./2001 C.E.).

[186] Interview with Sayyid Fa'iq al-Musawi, Student of Ayatollah Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr and Former Staff Member at His Office in Najaf, Baghdad, Thursday, May 3, 2012. On Ayatollah Sadr's contacts with the Shi^cite rebels in the southern marshlands, see also Abd al-Sattar Aal Muhsin, *al-Imam al-Sadr: Tayyar fi Ummah wa Ummah fi Tayyar* [Imam al-Sadr: A Trend in a Nation and a Nation in a Trend], 1st Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assassat al-Sirat, 1419 A.H./1999 C.E.): pp. 55-62.

[187] An investigative analytical account of the assassination of Muhammad Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr can be found in Fa'iq al-Shaykh Ali, *Ightiyal Sha^cab* [Assassinating a People], 1st Edition (London: Markaz al-Buhuth wa al-Dirasat al-Istratijiyyah al-^cIraqi, 2000).

[188] Haddad, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

primordial sectarian affiliations and loyalties as members of the Sunni and Shi^{c}ite communities turned increasingly to identifying themselves along sectarian lines. This accentuated the denominational us-versus-them dichotomy. Herein is the locus of the centrifugal dynamic set off by the salience of sectarian identities in Iraq in the 1990s.

2.8.4. Identity Politics and the Exiled Opposition

> "Kent: All's cheerless, dark and, deadly:
> Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves,
> And desperately are dead.
> Lear: Ay, so I think."

> William Shakespear, *King Lear*

In tandem with the increasing salience of sectarian sub-national primordial affiliations in the shadows of the repressive Ba^{c}athist state in the 1990s, identity politics also gained prominence in the landscape of the exiled Iraqi opposition where primordial sentiments increasingly became fundamental elements of political organization. In the relative safety of exile away from the overweening power of the repressive state, identities that were previously suppressed by the state were reasserted, became politically significant and served as rallying and organizing principles for political activism. This trend reinforced a form of politics rife with the potential for centrifugal tendencies, denting the few unifying tendencies wrought about by the modern nation-state.

With the end of the Iraq-Iran war in 1989, the Shi^{c}ite Islamist activists' hopes for an imminent collapse of the Ba^{c}ath Party regime were dashed. Pent-up frustrations, dwindling Iranian support and the drive to assert independence from Iran led many Iraqi Shi^{c}ite activists to leave the Islamic Republic. Significant numbers of them settled in Syria and the UK. Others sought asylum as political refugees in other western countries. Events during the Gulf War and its aftermath set off a series of developments that reconstituted the landscape of the Iraqi opposition in exile. The ranks of the opposition were swelled by a wave of refugees following the Gulf War and the failed post-Gulf War Uprising in 1991. The opposition, moreover, was buoyed by the western and regional hostility to Ba^{c}ath Party rule, the regime's

international isolation, and the establishement of a safe haven in northern Iraq controlled by Kurdish parties which provided the opposition with a base on Iraqi soil.[189]

The 1990s saw an increasing awareness of the importance of devising coordination mechanisms capable of incorporating a broad spectrum of the Iraqi opposition. This occasioned a shift towards frameworks that incorporate parties representing the various communities and ethno-sectarian components of society. The first such experiment came with the establishment of the Joint Action Committee (*Lajnat al-ᶜAmal al-Mushtarak*) or JAC in 1990. Organized in Damascus under Syrian prodding and patronage, the JAC incorporated a host of Shiᶜite Islamist, Kurdish, leftist and Arab nationalist parties.[190] However, the preponderance of Shiᶜite Islamist and Kurdish groups remained a salient feature of the opposition landscape. Despite the keenness of Shiᶜite Islamist, Kurdish and rising secular Shiᶜite oppositionists, such as Ayad Allawi, Ahmad Chalabi and Saᶜad Salih Jabr, on bringing Sunni Arabs on board, Sunni Arab representation in the opposition remained weak. Most Sunni figures joining the opposition enjoyed little political support in their community.[191]

The landscape of the opposition was beset by fractiousness and excessive factionalism that stunted the opposition's ability to fashion a coherent strategy. This state of affairs, one analyst observed,

> "fostered ever shifting conjunctions of political forces with an equally unstable balance of interests and perceptions … Obviously, the formulation of strategy under conditions of excessive factionalism is impossible under the weight of objectives and courses of action that tend to contradict and nullify one another."[192]

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[189] Ali A. Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace* (New Haven, CT; and London: Yale University Press, 2007): pp. 50-51.

[190] *Ibid.*, p. 43. On JAC, see also ᶜAziz Qadir al-Summanji, *Qitar al-Muᶜaradhah al-ᶜIraqiyyah min Bayrut 1991 ila Baghdad 2003* [The Train of the Iraqi Opposition from Beirut 1991 to Baghdad 2003], 1st Edition (London: Dar al-Hikmah, 2009):pp. 66-72.

[191] Interview with Hamid al-Kifaey, Former Spokesman of the Iraqi Governing Council, London, Monday, September 20, 2010. Kifaey mentioned the names of a host of Sunni opposition figures such as Basel al-Naqib, Jassim Maᶜaruf, Tariq Ali al-Salih, Ahmad al-Hajjiyyah, Samir al-Sumaydaᶜi, ᶜAdnan Pachachi, Qassem Ghali, Mudhar Shawkat, Salah ᶜUmar al-Ali, and Salah al-Shaykhli. Some of these figures assumed senior government posts in the post-Saddam period. Allawi, *op. cit.*, p. 72 attributes the underrepresentation of the Sunni Arabs in the opposition to "their paucity of numbers in the Diaspora, as well as their association, rightly or wrongly, with the policies of the Ba'ath in power."

[192] Nasser Salem, "The failures and the problems of the Islamic movement in Iraq," *Crescent International* (October 2002), re-published by the *Media Monitors Network* at: http://www.mediamonitors.net/nassersalem2.html, October 10, 2002; accessed on Saturday, June 18, 2011.

This was compounded by the fact that the fault lines dividing the opposition groups essentially mirrored the sectarian, ethnic, and regional divisions in Iraqi society. In such an atmosphere, it was only natural for oppositional discourse and praxis to fall prey to communitarianism. Coalitions formed to bring opposition groups together tended to represent sectional interests proportionally. Quota systems emerged as means to accommodate the competing political demands made by various factions. Disagreements were protracted as factions competed for guaranteed place and influence. Engendering compromise in such a richly diverse and deeply divided landscape created an impetus for decision-making based on consensus or accordance (*tawafuq*).

The division of political spoils based on a quota system was first consecrated at the opposition conference held in Salah al-Din in the Kurdistan semi-autonomous region in northern Iraq in 1992. Delegate quotas were allocated based on both communal and political affiliations.[193] The conference's general assembly selected a 3-man presidium for the Iraqi National Congress (INC) taking into consideration the political, national and sectarian diversity of Iraqi society. As such, those selected were: General Hassan al-Naqib (Sunni Arab), Mass'ud Barazani (Kurd), and Sayyid Muhammad Bahr al-'Ulum (Shi'ite Islamist). Similarly, accordance was also used to select the membership of ancillary bodies of the INC.[194]

While achieving a modicum of unity, the coalitional arrangements did not address the need for integrating the fragmented landscape of the opposition into a national political force transcending communitarian interests. The factions mainly articulated the parochial interests of narrow sub-groups of Iraqi society. This state of affairs was prone to crisis and could easily spark factional conflict. The process was far from a deliberative democracy. It rather involved a complex interplay of authoritarianism and consociationalism. No where was this more apparent than in the imposition of conveniently pre-packaged results on secret balloting to elect a collective leadership for the INC at the Iraqi opposition conferences held in

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[193] Summanji, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
[194] *Ibid.*, p. 144-148.

Windsor, UK, in April 1999, and New York in November 1999.[195] The need to accommodate ethnic, sectarian and political diversity through a quota system was further institutionalized in the Follow-Up and Coordination Committee (*Lajnat al-Mutaba^cah wa al-Tansiq*) selected at the Iraqi opposition conference held in London in December 2002. The fact that the quota system did not signify democratization, but rather fragmentation, of the Iraqi opposition landscape was starkly apparent in the acrimonious disagreements, intense bargaining, and frantic backdoor wheeling and dealing surrounding the formation of this Committee. Several Sunni Arabs whose names were included on the announced roster of members refused to accept membership.[196]

Sunni Arab reluctance to take up seats allocated to them in the Follow-Up Committee was a symptom of a hardening of societal divisions. In fact, the Sunni Arabs in exile looked askance at the quota system out of fear of setting a precedent that would threaten the continuation of their traditional political dominance and load the dice in favor of Shi^cites and Kurds in the looming post-Saddam order. In other words, the quota system allocated to them shares less than what they already had in government. Similarly, on the opposite side of the sectarian divide, the hardening of a powerful sense of sectarian self-identification on the part of Shi^cite oppositionsits in exile found its expression in a discourse of justice, fairness and equity. This was best exemplified in the "Declaration of the Shia of Iraq" (*I^cilan Shi^cat al-^cIraq*), which propounded a Shi^cite "perspective on the future of Iraq and the changes

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[195] *Ibid*., pp. 381-388, 402-404, and 409-413. The Provisional Collective Leadership of the INC elected at Windsor was composed of Latif Rashid of the PUK (Kurd), Hoshyar Zibari of the KDP (Kurd), Ayad ^cAllawi of the Iraqi National Accord Movement (*Harakat al-Wifaq al-Watani al-^cIraqi*) or INAM (former Ba^cathist and a Shi^cite secularist who appealed to Sunni Arabs), Hamed al-Bayati of the SCIRI (Shi^cite Islamist), Ahmad Chalabi of the INC (Shi^cite secularist), Riyadh al-Yawar of the INC (Sunni secularist), and Muhammad Abd al-Jabbar of the Islamic Da^cawah Cadres or *Kawadir al-Da^cawah al-Islamiyyah* (Shi^cite Islamist). The Collective Leadership Commission (*Hay'at al-Qiyadah al-Jama^ciyyah*) elected at the New York conference was composed of Rashid, Zibari, ^cAllawi, Chalabi, Yawar, and Sharif Ali bin al-Hussein of the Constitutional Monarchist Movement or *al-Harakah al-Malakiyyah al-Dusturiyyah* (Sunni Arab, descendent of the ousted royal family), and Shaykh Muhammad Muhammad Ali (independent Shi^cite Islamist).

[196] The above discussion is based on my own firsthand observations during my coverage of the London conference as a journalist for the BBC Arabic Service. The final communiqué of the London conference and the names of the original 65 members of the Follow-Up and Coordination Committee have been published by the *aljazeerah.net* website. See "Nass al-Bayan al-Khitami li Mu'tamar al-Mu^caradhah al-^cIraqiyyah fi London" [Text of the Final Communiqué of the Iraqi Opposition Conference in London], *aljazeera.net*, Tuesday, December 17, 2002; available at: http://www.aljazeera.net/news/archive/archive?ArchiveId=44907; accessed on Wednesday, July 20, 2011.

necessary to construct the state along lines of fairness and justice."[197] By asserting the political demands of a specific sectarian community it offended the sectarian sensitivities of Sunnis and drew criticisms from Sunni as well as secular Shiᶜite oppositionists.[198]

Asserting sectarian claims and counter-claims to a sense of political worth in a pluralist society like Iraq was indicative of the retreat of the civic sense of Iraqi identity and the growth of negative forms of sectarian identity politics. The articulation of political demands based on the operation of the logic of sectarian identity effectively functioned to nurture fears of exclusion by, and mutual distrust of, the sectarian 'Other.' As communitarianism became a rallying and organizing principle of political behavior, sectarian identities clawed their way to the center stage of political discourse and gelled into cohesive socio-political identities. Sectarian communities, therefore, retrenched to polarized camps. The natural offspring of such polarity is a permissive environment that predicates increased inter-sectarian tensions and conflict.

2.9. Conclusion: The Quandaries of National Integration

"We Spent year after year after year watching
Thunderous, lightning clouds with no rain
And winds like storms which neither pass as a storm
Nor lie quiet – we sleep and wake up in fear of them."

Badr Shakir al-Sayyab, "The Song of Rain,"
translated by Issa Boullata

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[197] An English translation of the "Declaration of the Shia of Iraq," which was proclaimed in July 2002, has been published on *www.al-bab.com*; available at: http://www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/iraq/shia02a.htm; accessed on Friday, July 22, 2011. This quote from the Declaration is taken from this translation. The original Arabic version was published by the *Aljazeera.net* website, Sunday, Shaᶜaban 18, 1425 A.H./October 3, 2004 C.E., available at: http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/F55B05C7-517F-4692-8FA1-29440FF3E48F.htm; accessed on Friday, July 22, 2011. The English translation is reproduced in Appendix VI.

[198] The explicit articulation of a specifically Shiᶜite set of demands was the main target of criticisms leveled at the Declaration. Many critics argued that the drafters of the declaration should have propounded a vision of Iraq's future for all Iraqis rather than a single sectarian community. See, for example, Hamid al-Kifaey, "Nurid Iᶜilanan li al-ᶜIraqiyyin Kullihim wa Laysa li Ta'ifah Minhum" [We Want a Declaration for All Iraqis Rather than for One Sect of Them], *al-Zaman*, Monday, July 15, 2002, re-published on the author's website *www.alkifaey.net*; available at: http://www.alkifaey.net/348.html; accessed on Saturday, July 23, 2011.

The foregoing cursory excursion into a centuries-long history sought to demonstrate the centrality of the sectarian Sunni-Shiᶜite divide in Iraq's past prior to the US-led invasion in 2003. It shows us not only the beginnings and development of a primordial religious rift, but also how this division shaped, and was shaped by, the world in which the two sectarian communities in Iraq live. This long history is obviously laden with passions, emotions, sorrows, pains, injustices, disappointments and betrayals. It provides a reservoir of inherited images shared – mostly subconsciously rather than consciously – by members of each of the two communities. The effects of these lingering loyalties on the dynamics of Iraqi politics became very apparent following the collapse of the Saddam Hussein regime. Fervent ethnic and sectarian loyalties soon filled the vacuum left by the tattered and largely discredited Baᶜath Party ideology, pushing the country to the verge of dismemberment.

Given that communities and nations are "congealed histories," remembered past furnishes shared historical experiences, perceived or real, that make the production of commonalities possible. "Whatever actually happened is far less important than how it is remembered."[199] Much as they serve to impute a sense of uniqueness on a certain collectivity, these assemblages of meaning contribute to the inter-subjective production of the 'Other.' As Margaret R. Sommers puts it: "It is through narrativity that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities."[200] The baggage of the history of the Sunni-Shiᶜite division lies at the heart of the dueling narratives that shaped the articulation of Muslim sectarian identities in Iraq. Each communal narrative rests on a remembered past where heroism and greatness, martyrdom and victimization, power and privilege, are intertwined.

The Iraqi nation-state established following World War I heralded the dawn of the twin process of the formation of modern state institutions and the fostering of a cohesive civic national identity. Ideally, the ultimate goal of such a process is the consolidation of rationalized bureaucratic and institutional underpinnings of a territorially-defined polity where the citizens' primary sense of belonging "is defined by *jus soli*, the law of the

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[199] Ronald Grigor Suny, "Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (December 2001): p. 864.
[200] Margaret R. Somers, "The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relationship and Network Approach," *Theory and Society*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (October 1994): p. 606.

place."[201] The impetus for inter-sectarian harmony met its nemesis – i.e. resurgent primordial sectarianism – as the political elite moved from the clash and clamor of the anti-colonialist struggle to the calculated task of building the institutional framework of the state. The Iraqi state failed to fulfill the ideal of inclusiveness and equal access to the realm of state power, producing fragile cohesiveness. Naturally, such a system was prone to disruption and could not withstand disequilibria and stresses.

Political marginalization under the monarchy accentuated the sense of collective identity among the Shiʿites who tried to renegotiate their inclusion in the national polity. Their demands focused on securing a higher proportion of Shiʿite representation in state administration and civil service. But the rigidity of the political system restricted the possibility to accommodate these demands. The resulting polarized state of affairs between the state and its opponents led to the venting of dissent through disruptive channels. The Shiʿite tribal communities participated in a spate of tribal revolts against the state. Popular discontent boiled over into outbursts of street riots and civil disturbances in urban centers. The pace of incorporating the Shiʿites into the upper echelons of the state which picked up speed in the last decade of the monarchy did not constitute any significant dent in a farily closed political system. The controlled opening of the political system fell short of meeting increasingly radicalized demands for instituting equal access to power.

The July 14, 1958 revolution heightened expectations of social justice and inclusion in the system. Iraq's first military ruler General Abd al-Karim Qassim exerted concerted efforts aimed to reduce political and socio-economic inequalities. But the spontaneous overflow of popular support for the revolution would soon be channeled into power struggles, pitting mainly Arab nationalists, including Baʿathists and Muslim clergymen, both Sunnis and Shiʿites, against communists. Political and ideological conflict, while real, served also to camouflage powerful interests of sectarian communities. In some ways, differences and protracted political wars of attrition between the Baʿathists and the communists in the 1950s and 1960s camouflaged ethno-sectarian conflict.[202] Pro-communist bastions in Baghdad, such

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[201] Judith Lichtenberg, "How Liberal Can Nationalism Be?" in Ronald Beiner, ed., *Theorizing Nationalism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999): p. 170.

[202] Fawzi Hamed al-Hiti, "Hal Hunak Hall li Azmat al-ʿUnf al-Ta'ifi fi al-ʿIraq" [Is There a Solution to the Crisis of Sectarian Violence in Iraq], in Majmuʿah min al-Bahithin [A Group of Researchers], *al-Ta'ifiyyah fi al-ʿIraq: Muqarabat fi al-Judhur wa Subul al-Khuruj min al-Ma'zaq* [Sectarianism in Iraq: Approaches to the Roots and Pathways to Exit the Predicament] (Baghdad, Iraq: al-Hadhariyyah li al-Tibaʿah wa al-Nashr; and Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assassat al-ʿArif li al-Matbuʿat, 1429 A.H./2008 C.E.): p. 14.

as Kadhemiyyah and ᶜAqd al-Akrad, were predominantly Shiᶜite or Kurdish, while pro-Baᶜathist bastions, such as Aᶜadhamiyyah, were predominantly Sunni Arab. The summoning of faith on the part of Shiᶜite clerics to stand up to Qassim and communism accelerated the drive to form Shiᶜite hierarchical organizations, including political parties, pursuing political goals, including taking over power. This development was accompanied by a parallel attempt to formulate a Shiᶜite Islamic ideological response to Western ideologies based on strong theological grounds.

The putschist Arab nationalist regimes that assumed power after Qassim restored the political ascendancy that the Sunni Arab elite enjoyed since the establishment of the modern Iraqi nation-state. What emerged from these radical Arab nationalist regimes was a progressively dictatorial and arbitrary system of government. Lacking a strong popular base of support, which restricted their ability to engage in mass political mobilization, these regimes turned increasingly to force to shore up their rule. Feeling insecure, these regimes put the exigencies of regime survival ahead of ideological ideals of consolidating national identity and intensified the use of strong-arm tactics and repression.

There existed a heterogeneous political and civil society space in Iraq in which members of all communities coexisted on the basis of ideological commitments and political programs. However, the erosion of this space under successive governments and its near elimination under the Baᶜath Party regime reawakened particularistic tendencies and affiliations as primary bases for political solidarity.[203] This ushered in a serious retreat from the de-primordialization process set off by the establishment of the modern state in favor of a new loyalty moored in the anchors of nationalism.

Intensified repression impeded the emergence of disloyal groups and terrorized the populace into submission to the will of the state. Corecion drove not only organized opposition underground but also strove to remove primordial loyalties from the public sphere. But coerced loyalty and forced homogenization became breeding grounds for a subterranean upsurge of primordial sectarian loyalties, which emerged as sites of resistance contesting the overweening power of the hegemonic state. Chafing under severe repression, Iraqis found themselves surrounded by fear and suspicion. They were forced to pull back from public discourse into the modicum of security and protection provided by the private spheres of their

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[203] Sami Zubaida, "The rise and fall of civil society in Iraq," p. 117.

own kinship networks and communities. They retreated into the comfort of their own sub-national primordial identities and pre-modern modes of social organization, such as the tribe.

By precipitating the total collapse of the Iraqi state, the US-led invasion indicated that the crisis of the national integration project in Iraq is symptomatic of a deeper predicament in the modern Iraqi national polity. The naked and painful truth is that sectarianism in modern Iraq has been shaped by deeper structural, ideational and ideological foundations upon which the state was built. A fuller understanding of the impact of sectarianism on the processes of nation-building and state-making in modern Iraq can only be courted by seeking to unearth these thinly concealed constellations of structural and normative roots. This is a task that we address in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3

Elite Makeup and the Politics of Stratification

"World historical men – the Heroes of an epoch – must be recognized as its clear-sighted ones; their deeds, their words are the best of that time. Great men have formed purposes to satisfy themselves, not others."

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel,
Philosophy of History

On a beautiful spring day in March 2004, the historic Serail of Rumaythah stood in majestic splendor in the center of this dreary southern Iraqi town at the edge of the desert. Despite the bleakness engulfing the place that had suffered the effects of more than three decades of war, brutal repression and/or international sanctions, the Serail conveyed a sense of a past replete with events. The sturdy edifice, a rectangular two-story building with protruding corner towers to defend the entrance, acted as the seat of local government during Ottoman times. After the British invasion of Iraq during World War I, the building, built with red bricks baked from local clay, became the headquarters of military and civilian British rule. The small external windows covered with metal bars on the ground floor conjured up images of jail cells.[1] In fact, it was a night raid by tribesmen of the Dhawalim tribe to free their tribal chief Shaykh Sha^calan Abu al-Chun, who had been imprisoned at the Serail on charges of refusing to pay taxes, which sparked an anti-British rebellion in June 1920. The British broke the backbone of the insurrection some five months later but at the exorbitant price tag of 40 million pounds, "twice the annual budget allotted for Iraq," and the lives of more than 400 troops.[2]

The failed armed insurrection, which went down in the annals of modern Iraqi history as the Great Iraqi Revolution (*al-Thawrah al-^cIraqiyyah al-Kubra*), took place in an epoch redolent

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[1] This description is based on my observations during a visit that I made to Rumaythah in March 2004 in the course of my journalistic work for the BBC in Iraq.
[2] Amal Vinogradov, "The 1920 Revolt in Iraq Reconsidered: The Role of Tribes in National Politics," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (April 1972): p. 138; and Abbas Kadhim, "Civil Military Relations in Iraq (1921-2006): An Introductory Survey," *Strategic Insights*, Vol. 5, No. 5 (May 2006); available at: http://www.nps.edu/Academics/centers/ccc/publications/OnlineJournal/2006/May/kadhimMay06.pdf; accessed on Sunday, March 14, 2010.

of radical trans-sectarian Muslim political activism against British occupation. As if to bear out the prophets of doom, the trans-sectarian honeymoon attendant at the inception of the modern Iraqi state did not nurture a sustainable disposition of trans-sectarian solidarity that permeates all levels of Iraqi society. The ability of the new state's apparatus to contain primordial sentiments, effect radical transformation in communal relations, and mould the multiple segments of society into an organic whole, was limited. Like one of those perverse twists in a fantastical tale of *The Arabian Nights*, the integrative impulse of nation-building in Iraq gave rise to counter-tendencies that reproduced and reinvented the lines of fissure, including sectarian fault lines. As ethno-sectarian communities tried to renegotiate the rules of their inclusion in the national polity, they turned inward, thus exacerbating communal rifts and accentuating the sense of collective identity.

The establishment of the modern Iraqi nation-state superimposed a variety of the Westphalian nation-state model on a complex, multi-layered, sometimes overlapping, congeries of segmented groups which lacked any sense of national unity. Several strategies were deployed to mould a nation out of this disparate set of social units: building trans-communal, national institutions (modern educational institutions, national armed forces, state bureaucracy, etc.), adopting nationalist political discourse, embracing secularism, and the like. In this sense, the construction of a national identity went hand in hand with the creation of modern state institutions in Iraq.[3] Yet the homogenizing policies of the modern, territorially-bounded nation-state failed to nurture a solidarity founded on a common sense of citizenship. Deeply engrained sectarian and ethnic sentiments and antagonisms continued to percolate beneath the surface boiling over into the open recurrently. As will be seen in the subsequent sections, the ethno-sectarian composition of the political elite has been an indispensable site for the inscription of sectarianism onto the trajectory of nation-building and state-making in Iraq. The uneven sectarian composition of the ruling elites nurtured feelings of political exclusion among marginalized sectarian groups, the Shiʿites before 2003 and the Sunnis in the post-2003 period. The resultant hardening of sectarian identities subverted the national ideal. It dented the emergence of an ethos of national unity, undermined the thrust to nurture attachment to the new territorially-demarcated political community, and fostered the conduct of politics and popular mobilization along primordial sectarian identifications. As primordial

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[3] In his *States, War and Capitalism: Studies in Political Sociology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1988): p. 4, Michael Mann argues that state power grows out of a combination of coercive force, economics and ideology.

ethno-sectarian identifications became the primary, politically-relevant sources of identification, other categories or signifiers of identity were progressively pushed to the background. A striking grim reality of the story of nation-building and state-making in Iraq is that the toppling of Saddam Hussein in 2003 did not usher in an end to the imbalanced distribution of power resources among ethno-sectarian groups and the attendant communal polarization. In fact, it marked the beginning of a new phase of heightened communal polarization rife with competing claims over the state's power resources laid by political elites professing to represent communal interests. This chapter argues that, in this setting of polarized politics along binary communal lines, primordial ethno-sectarianism was institutionalized through consociational power-sharing arrangements to divvy up power resources between elites. This speaks of the paradox of politics in post-Saddam Iraq: shunting aside authoritarianism and laying the foundations of a more inclusive political order served only to institutionalize primordial sectarianism in the body politic of the state.

3.1. From the Monarchy to the Downfall of Saddam Hussein

> "Haemon: This city is not yours alone to rule.
> Creon: The law demands the king alone will rule.
> Haemon: Then rule an empty island by yourself."
>
> Sophocles, *Antigone*

No sooner that Faisal was crowned as King of Iraq than he embarked on the twin effort of maintaining an internally coherent and stable social order, and creating durable state institutions. But power was not dispersed in the system of governance created to promote national consolidation in the socially-fractured infant country. It was rather unevenly distributed between communities espousing conflicting, multiple identities and interests. From the outset, Sunni Arabs provided the country with a stratum of top political, administrative and military officials "who actually exercise political power."[4] Their strategic position would "enable them to influence political decisionmaking directly, substantially, and

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[4] Tom Bottomore, *Elites and Society* (London: Routledge, 1993 [1964]): p. 17.

regularly."[5] These leaders, in the words of Harold Lasswell, would "get most of what there is to get."[6] Although a minority of less than 20 percent of the total population, Sunni Arabs enjoyed the lion's share of political power and privilege in the new polity, providing it with an element of continuity. Sunni Arab hegemony would remain a permanent feature of the Iraqi political landscape right through the tumultuous end of Saddam Hussein's rule. The sociology literature on inequality and social stratification suggests that this preponderance of the Sunni Arab elite nurtured a system of "structured inequality" in the Iraqi body politic. According to Celia S. Heller, "structured inequality" is a condition whereby "inequality is not random but follows a pattern, displays relative constancy and stability, and is backed by ideas that legitimize and justify it."[7]

The ascendancy of the Sunni Arabs in modern Iraq is grounded in their history which gave them a competitive advantage in pursuing political power. In many ways, Sunni Arabs in the newly-founded Iraqi state maintained and capitalized on the power, wealth and influence that they had secured during four centuries of Ottoman rule.[8] This made them better connected, better educated and better placed to reap better returns from the new state. In contrast, the Shiᶜites of Iraq spent the four centuries of Ottoman rule as an economically depressed, politically repressed, and less educated community.[9] This left the community short of "the pool of ex-Ottoman officials to draw on which was available to their Sunni counterparts."[10]

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[5] John Higley and Gwen Moore, "Political Elite Studies at the Year 2000: Introduction," *International Review of Sociology*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (July 2001): p. 176.

[6] Harold Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1936): p. 13.

[7] Celia S. Heller, ed., *Structured Social Inequality: A Reader in Comparative Stratification* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1969): p. 4.

[8] Reeva Spector Simon, *Iraq Between the Two World Wars: The Militarist Origins of Tyranny*, Updated Edition (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2004 [1986]): p. xiii.

[9] In his *Min Awraq Kamil al-Chadirchi* [From the Papers of Kamil al-Chadirchi], 1ˢᵗ Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Taliᶜah li al-Tibaᶜah wa al-Nashr, 1971): p. 80, Kamil al-Chadirchi, the founder of the National Democratic Party [*al-Hizb al-Watani al-Dimuqrati*], describes the status of the Shiᶜites under Ottoman rule as follows: "The Shiᶜite sect was, during the time of Sultan Abd al-Hamid, and actually during the time of the Ottoman state, a minority viewed with enmity by the state. So, it did not open for it spaces for progress in any field of public life. Among the salient examples of this were that it would not accept a student from among its number in the military academy and none of its individuals would be accepted in government jobs, except in rare cases and when there is a dire need. Even in the few state secondary schools, obstacles used to be put in the path of admitting sect members. Naturally, this led to its seclusion and treading the path of free business such as commerce, industry, farming, and similar jobs, which have nothing to do with the government, because the government did not view this sect to be part of it. Also, the sect did not consider itself part of the state. As such, enmity between it and the state was increasing day in, day out."

[10] Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (London; and New York, NY: I. B. Tauris, 2007): p. 229.

In the early years of statehood, this was compounded by edicts issued by Shi^cite religious authorities proscribing employment in government administration for the faithful.[11]

3.1.1. Sectarian Hegemony and Executive Leadership

"People have given us our power, so we showed them patience with anger underneath it, and they showed us loyalty with hate underneath it. We sold them this for that, and they sold us that for this. If we disappoint them, they disappoint us, and then we do not know if things will go our way or not."

Umayyad Caliph Mu^cawiyah bin Abi Sufyan

The degree of Sunni Arab dominance in the Iraqi state from its inception down to the fall of the Saddam regime can be clearly seen by examining longitudinal data sets on the makeup of the coalitions of incumbents of top positions in the executive branch of government over this period. The core theme here is tracing changes in the patterns of recruitment into the executive political elites according to sectarian affiliation.

3.1.1.1.   The Monarchist Period:

"It is the Army, and the Army alone, which protects the homeland and defends its dignity. But how can we demand of the soldier to expose himself to danger in order to protect us, when he does not feel that this land is his but the Ministers', the Pashas' and the notables'."

Prime Minister Hikmat Sulayman
(October 29, 1936 – August 17, 1937)

The sectarian composition of cabinets under the monarchy reveals a marked bias towards the Sunni Arab community. Membership in this sectarian community was an important marker of membership in the executive power elite during this period. This is the main conclusion that can be derived by examining the empirical data presented in

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[11] Ahmad al-Katib, *Tajrubat al-Thawrah al-Islamiyyah fi al-^cIraq: Mundhu 1920 hatta 1980* [The Experience of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq: From 1920 until 1980], 1st Edition (Tehran, Iran: Dar al-Qabas al-Islami, 1402 A.H./1981 C.E.): pp. 46 and 75.

Figure 1 which presents a line graph depicting the rhythms of change in percentages of ethnic and denominational background of cabinet members under the monarchy.

Figure 1: Percentages of Ethnic and Denominational Background of Cabinet Members under the Monarchy (1920-1958) [12]

Percentages of Ethnic and Denominational Background of Cabinet Members under the Monarchy (1920-1958)

The chart reveals that executive power as a public good was distributed unequally among sectarian communities throughout most of the monarchic period. The overall level of incumbency of Sunni Arab urbanites in most cabinets formed under the monarchy was significantly higher than that of other communities. In fact, nearly 66 percent of all ministers holding cabinet posts under the monarchy were Sunnis from Baghdad and Mosul. This came at the expense of other communities, especially the Shi^cite majority and the Kurdish minority. Shi^cites occupied only 182 out of the total of 645 ministerial posts under the monarchy.[13] A cursory examination of the composition of cabinets between 1920 and 1936 provides a clear indication of the level of concentration of political power under the monarchy. There were 57 politicians who changed cabinet posts in the twenty-one cabinets which came to power during this period.[14]

It was only in the closing years of the Hashemite monarchy that the elite's sectarian background became significantly less exclusive. Before the closing decade of the monarchic period, the representation of non-Sunni Arab communities in cabinets was continuously low except in the short-lived cabinet of Jamil al-Midfa^ci formed in February 1934 where Shi^cites achieved parity with Sunni Arabs, with each community holding a 43 percent share of cabinet seats. This occurred as Shi^cite tribal uprisings in the Middle Euphrates region were intensifying. It was an attempt to appease elements in the Shi^cite leadership in a bid to snuff out the rising tide of rebellion. From the early 1950s down to the fall of the monarchy in 1958 the representation of Shi^cites in the cabinets rose significantly, achieving parity with the Sunni Arabs in a succession of cabinets between 1957 and 1958. The upward political mobility of the Shi^cites during these years reflected the monarchic regime's interest in undertaking controlled political change to ensure that change in the ethno-sectarian composition of the elite does not entail regime change.

3.1.1.2. <u>The First Republican Decade</u>

"The lackies of the colonialists and some traitors, treacherous people and despots, who are being moved by colonialism to destroy our republic .. who fight us through reckless movements to undermine our republic and destroy its foundation .. The immortal Iraqi

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[13] Ayad Al-Qazzaz, "Power Elite in Iraq – 1920-1958: A Study of the Cabinet," *The Muslim World*, Vol. 61, Issue 4 (October 1971): pp. 275 and 277.
[14] Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

republic, the offspring of the immortal July 14 Revolution is invincible.. It crushes colonialism, and it crushes every disloyal collaborator. We work for the sake of the people and for the sake of the poor especially, and to strengthen the foundation of the country, for we are invincible, and Allah is with us. O sons of the victorious army, divisions, units, regiments and personnel! O faithful soldiers! Tear up the traitors. Kill them. Crush them."

General Abd al-Karim Qassim's Last Speech
Broadcast on February 8, 1963

The Sunni Arabs' dominant position in the ranks of the power elite was self-perpetuating in the sense that the circulation of elites concomitant with regime change tended to occur within their sectarian group. The 1958 revolution did not diminish the lopsided Sunni Arab dominance of Iraq's political elite. If anything, the disproportionately Sunni Arab orientation of the political elite was strengthened following the toppling of the Hashemite monarchy. And the increases in the Shiᶜites' representation in the top executive posts in the closing years of the monarchy were rolled back.

In analyzing leadership patterns, Phebe Marr has pointed out that one of the most striking features of the Iraqi governments in the first decade of republican rule (1958-1968) is the shift towards leaders born and reared in provincial milieus. Under the monarchy, those who were born in the capital, Baghdad, and, to a lesser extent, Mosul predominated in government. For instance, in the ten years preceding the 1958 revolution (1948-1958), ministers from Baghdad and Mosul made up 48 percent and 14 percent, respectively, of all cabinets. The percentage of cabinet ministers from provincial towns was 27 percent.[15] The establishment of the republic triggered a gradual shift towards new leaders born and raised in provincial towns as well as the emergence of leaders with rural background. In the ten years that followed the 1958 coup, 36 percent of cabinet ministers came from Baghdad, 9 percent from Mosul, 35 percent from provincial towns, and 8 percent from rural areas.[16]

Figures show that the shift, which started under the left-wing General Abd al-Karim Qassim, accelerated under the Arab nationalist ᶜArif Brothers' regime. Under Qassim, elements born in Baghdad and Mosul made up approximately 60 percent of all cabinets compared to about

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[15] Phebe Ann Marr, "Iraq's Leadership Dilemma: A Study in Leadership Trends, 1948-1968," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Summer 1970): p. 284.
[16] *Ibid*.

25 percent from the provinces.[17]   **Figure 2** below shows the percentages of ethnic and denominational background of cabinet members during Qassim's reign. As a compound bar chart, **Figure 2** allows us to make clear visual comparisons of the component percentages for each cabinet:

Figure 2: Percentages of Ethnic and Denominational Background of Cabinet Members under General Qassim's Rule (1958-1963) [18]
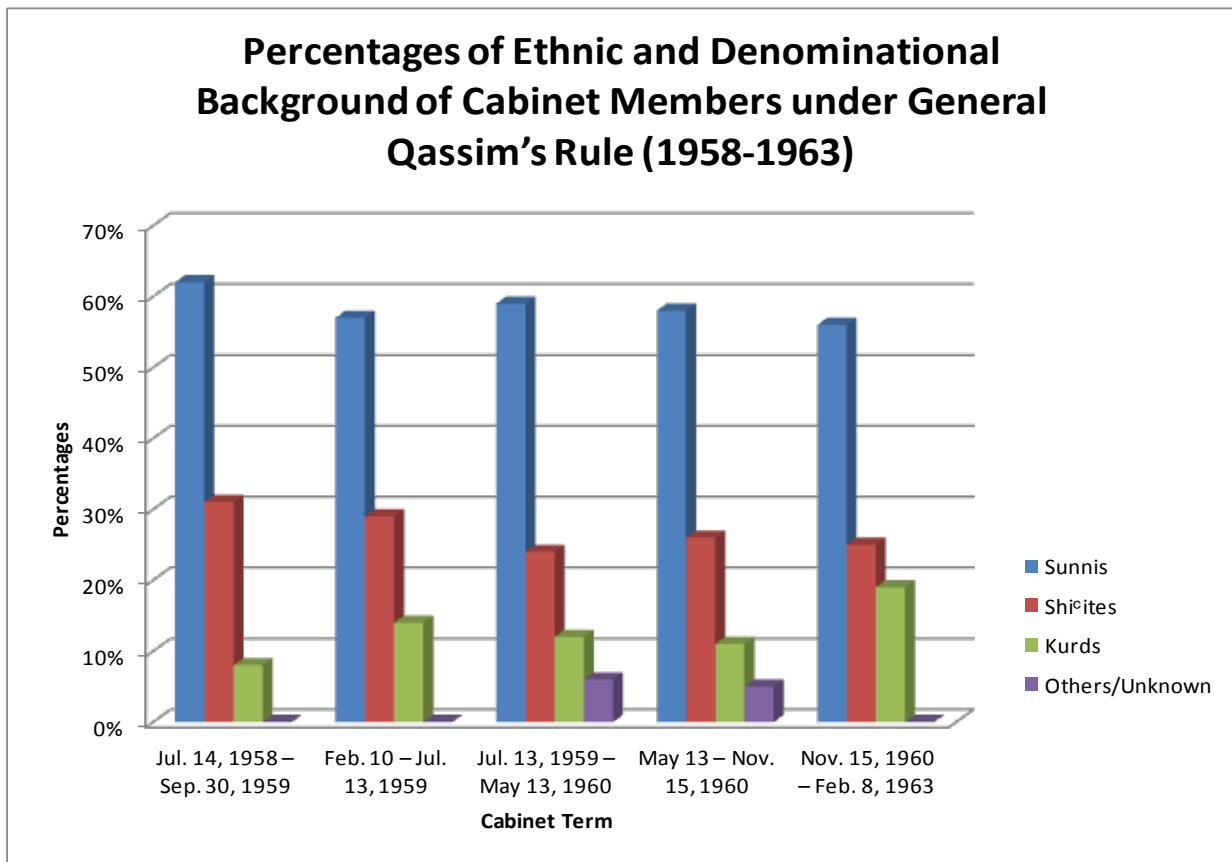
Figure 2 reveals quite an identifiable trend that prevailed throughout Qassim's reign. It shows that the highest proportion of cabinet ministers was reserved for Sunnis. The percentage of Sunnis hovered steadily around triple their estimated proportion in the general population of around 20 percent. This trend is by no means surprising given that Sunnis were highly represented in the civil service, had accumulated administrative experience, and dominated the officer corps of the army since the establishment of the modern Iraqi state. On

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[17] *Ibid.*, p. 285.
[18] Calculations were made based on tables provided by Zubaydi, *Mawsuᶜat al-Ahzab al-ᶜIraqiyyah*, pp. 639-642.

the eve of the 1958 coup, Sunni Arabs accounted for 13 out of the 15 members of the Supreme Committee of the Free Officers, which was originally formed in 1956. The remaining two members were Shi[c]ites.[19] Sunni Arabs accounted for all the members of a 9-strong Committee-in-Reserve of the Free Officers. This was made up of more junior officers tasked with "continuing the struggle in the event of the failure of the Supreme Committee."[20] By comparison, the proportion of Shi[c]ites was consistently equal to or under half the proportion of Sunnis in cabinets under Qassim. This proportion also showed a slight decrease over time. The Kurds, for their part, made significant gains over time. Starting with 8% of ministers in the first cabinet formed under Qassim, i.e. about half the proportion of Kurds in the population estimated at 15 percent, the precentage grew to 19 percent in Qassim's last cabinet. Qassim's failure to significantly narrow the gap between Sunni Arab and Shi[c]ite and Kurdish representation in cabinets is interesting in the light of his non-sectarian approach to recruitment. It stems in part from his inability "to build up a functioning network of support outside the state apparatus." Naturally, this made him increasingly dependent on the officer corps which is dominated by Sunni Arabs.[21]

Under the two [c]Arif Brothers, the trend of Sunni domination of cabinets not only continued but also showed an upward turn. This came at the expense of the representation of Shi[c]ites and Kurds which declined significantly in percentage points compared to their ratios in cabinets under Qassim. Sunni representation dropped substantially in the last three cabinets formed under the presidency of Abd al-Rahman [c]Arif whose accession to power occasioned a shift in power and influence among the country's political-military elite. Despite the dip in their shares of ministerial positions, however, Sunni Arabs continued to hold well over half of the posts in these three cabinets. **Figure 3** provides summary data of the denominational and ethnic composition of cabinets under the [c]Arif Brothers' regime. It shows sharp discrepancies between the representation of Sunnis, on the one hand, and that of members of the Shi[c]ite and Kurdish communities, on the other, in cabinets under the [c]Arif's Brothers' regime. This is a function of Sunni domination of the officer corps and the upper echelons of the army. A

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[19] Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of Its Communists, Ba'thists and Free Officers* (London: Saqi Books, 2004 [1978]): pp. 774-784.
[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 788-791.
[21] Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett, *Iraq since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship* (London; and New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2003 [1987]): p. 218.

natural consequence of this was that Sunni officers were disproportionately represented in the coalition of Arab nationalist officers who formed the backbone of the regime.

Figure 3: Percentages of Ethnic and Denominational Background of Cabinet Members under the ʿArif Brothers' Regime (1963-1968) [22]

Percentages of Ethnic and Denominational Background of Cabinet Members under the ʿArif Brothers' Regime (1963-1968)
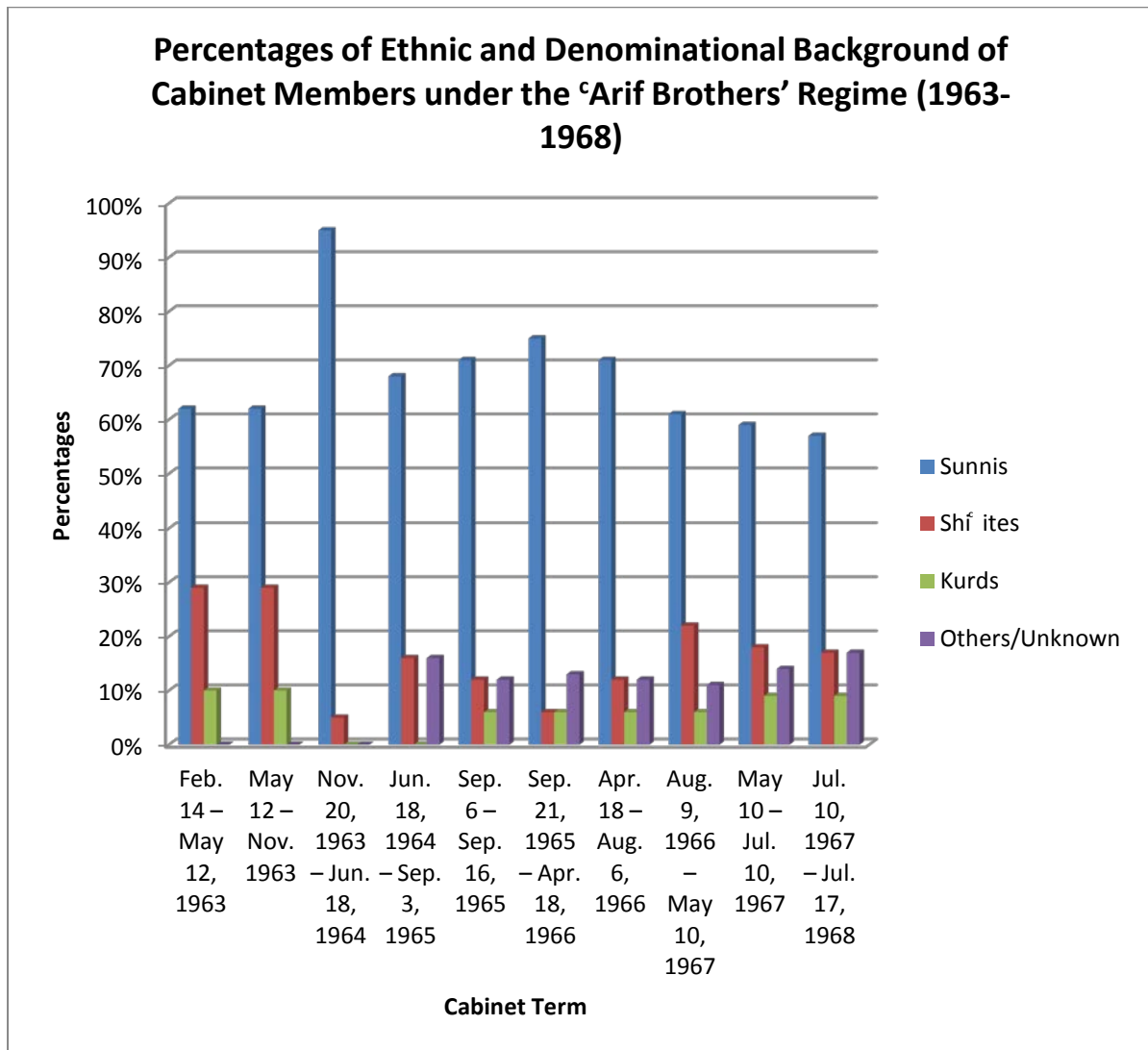
Under the ʿArif Brothers, leaders drawn from provincial and rural areas were the largest group (49 percent) of all cabinets, surpassing those from Baghdad and Mosul combined (48 percent).[23] Most of them were descendants of lower-middle class families of merchants, religious clerics, provincial government officials, and professionals. This is partly a result of the opportunities for upward mobility made available to provincial elements by the expansion of education. Most of the provincial increase was geographically concentrated in the

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[22] Data compiled from tables provided by Zubaydi, *Mawsuʿat al-Ahzab al-ʿIraqiyyah*, pp. 643-649.
[23] Marr, "Iraq's Leadership Dilemma," *op. cit.*, p. 285.

northwestern part of the country. Under the republican regimes which ruled the country between 1958 and 1968 some 20 percent of cabinet ministers hailed from northwestern towns, compared to only 4 percent in the last ten years of the monarchy.[24] Again, the trend accelerated under the ᶜArif Brothers' regime. Whereas under Qassim, the share of this area in all cabinets stood at only 9 percent, under the ᶜArif Brothers' regime, the share spiked to 22 percent.[25]

The situation was all the more acute in the top posts, whose occupants exert greater influence in shaping state policy. These include the posts of prime minister, deputy prime minister, and ministers of interior, defense, finance and foreign affairs, together with the regent or king under the monarchy and the president, as well as the membership of the National Council of the Revolutionary Command or the Revolutionary Command Council, under the republican regimes. During this period, Sunni Arabs held 80 percent of top posts compared to 60 percent in the last ten years of the monarchy. At the same time, the percentage of Shiᶜite representation dropped from 20 percent to 16 percent, whereas that of the Kurds sank from 15 percent to 5 percent.[26] On the other hand, of the 18-member National Council of the Revolutionary Command headed by Abd al-Salam ᶜArif, 12 were Sunni Arabs, 5 Shiᶜite Arabs and 1 Shiᶜite Fayli Kurd. The imbalance between Sunnis and Shiᶜites in the Council was exacerbated by the fact that all 10 military members were Sunni Arabs.[27]

The provincial areas where these ascendant power elite were drawn from were characterized by their traditional culture and close knit social networks and relations. In the provincial towns, urban sedentary traditionalism and lifestyle blended with cultural influences and values from the Bedouin ethic of the Arab nomadic pastoralist tribes roaming the desert nearby. These towns also were traditional strongholds of Arab nationalist movements. In many ways, therefore, the emergence of these elite reflected the Arab nationalist parties' domination of the political scene since the overthrow of the leftist Qassim. The increasingly conspiratorial nature of politics in post-monarchic Iraq facilitated this trend. In an atmosphere

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[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 286-287.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 287.

[26] *Ibid.* The precipitous decline in Kurdish representation can be attributed to the festering, on-and-off rebellion started by Mulla Mustafa Barazani in September 1961 and Kurdish resentment at the Arab nationalist ideology adopted by the ᶜArif Brothers' regime.

[27] Batatu, *op. cit.*, pp. 1004-1009; and Hazim Saghiyyeh, *Baᶜath al-ᶜIraq: Sultat Saddam Qiyaman wa Hutaman* [Iraq's Baᶜath: Saddam's Rule – Genesis and Ruin], 2nd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon; and London: Dar al-Saqi, 2004 [2003]): p. 32.

fraught with plots and counter-plots, factional feuds and rivalries, deception and multiple double-crossing, descent from the same area promoted mutual confidence, unity and exclusivity of the emerging power elite. Officers from the same provincial areas shared similar backgrounds and experiences. Many of them attended the same schools, were friends who knew each other since childhood, interacted in the same social contexts in their adolescence and adulthood, were bound by common values, belonged to the same tribes, shared relatives in common and/or were related by bonds of intermarriage.

But such a system also had to bear the burdens of its own shortcomings. It spawned factionalism based on local, clannish and kinship interests. The two ᶜArif brothers concentrated on securing a tight grip on the armed forces by promoting officers from their own Al Jumaylah tribe, who live around the provincial capital of Ramadi and the ᶜArifs' hometown of Fallujah in Anbar Province. Abd al-Salam set out on a deliberate, calculated process to fill the officer corps with members who have primordial tribal ties to him. He founded his own praetorian guard to protect his regime. Known as the Republican Guards (*al-Haras al-Jumhuri*), this well-armed elite force was of a brigade size, complete with a tank regiment. It owed allegiance primarily to the president rather than the state.[28]

3.1.1.3.   The Baᶜath Party Regime

"The army is the crown of the people and not a class above the people."

Saddam Hussein

The increasing trend towards the emergence of leaders from provincial backgrounds set into motion with the toppling of the monarchy in 1958 continued following the Baᶜath Party's takeover of power in 1968. At first, the sectarian and ideological makeup of the new ruling clique was far from diverse. The military brass that formed the backbone of the new regime was made up mainly of the same Sunni Arab officers hailing from the same areas that had buttressed the previous regime. This was reflected in the makeup of the political bodies at the

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[28] Ibrahim Al-Marashi and Sammy Salama, *Iraq's Armed Forces: An Analytical History* (London: Routledge, 2008): p. 97.

top of the state pyramid. In 1968, career officers hailing from the Sunni triangle accounted for all members of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), defined as "the supreme institution in the State" by Iraq's interim constitution of 1970,[29] and the Regional Leadership (RL) of the Baᶜath Party.[30]

By the mid-1980s gradual changes in the composition of the RCC and RL had paved the way for a new generation of party activists hailing from the rural lower classes to dominate Iraq's top leadership. In tandem, the political role of army officers diminished greatly as the Baᶜath Party consolidated its political control of state administration and the armed forces.[31] The drive to clip the wings of the military brass was prompted by a desire on the part of the civilian leaders of the Baᶜath Party to break free from overdependence on the military.[32] Furthermore, the collective denominational profile of the new political elite under the Baᶜath Party regime became more diverse. Shiᶜite Arabs as well as Kurds and Christians occupied posts in the upper reaches of government. While the penetration of the Shiᶜite Arabs into the corridors of power "was not mere window-dressing," that of the Kurds and Christians remained largely symbolic. However, Shiᶜite representation in the upper echelons of government, which rose substantially with the inclusion of Shiᶜites into the RCC in 1977, seems to have been connected to a desire to contain growing Shiᶜite disenchantment with the regime following the Safar Uprising in February 1977.[33] The trend to incorporate Shiᶜites into the upper echelons of the political elite gained momentum in the early 1980s during the war with Iran. The establishment of a legislature, the National Assembly (*al-Majlis al-Watani*), in

[29] "Iraq Interim Constitution, 1970," *mallat.com*; available at: http://www.mallat.com/imag/pdf/InterimConst1970.pdf; accessed on Monday, August 29, 2011. Accordingly, the RCC is the supreme executive and legislative authority in the country. See Articles 38 and 42-43 which spell out the competencies of the RCC.

[30] Amatzia Baram, "The Ruling Political Elite in Baᶜthi Iraq, 1968-1986: The Changing Features of a Collective Profile," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (November 1989): pp. 447 and 450-451.

[31] Al-Marashi and Salama, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-118. Measures aimed toward the consolidation of the Baᶜath Party's grip on the military included assigning Baᶜath Party political commissars to all units of the armed forces, repeated purges of the officer corps, and placing loyal tribal members in key positions at every level of the armed forces.

[32] Adeed Dawisha, "The Politics of War: Presidential Centrality, Party Power, Political Opposition," in Frederick W. Axelgard, ed., *Iraq in Transition: A Political, Economic, and Strategic Perspective* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press; and London: Mansell Publishing, 1986): p. 25.

[33] Baram, "The Ruling Political Elite in Baᶜthi Iraq," pp. 447 and 454.

June 1980 is a case in point. Stacked with MPs loyal to the Ba^cath Party regime, the toothless body provided a channel for the representation of regional and provincial interests.[34]

Nevertheless, the makeup of the leadership group at the helm of the political pyramid remained unbalanced and the supremacy of Sunni Arabs in the political system was sustained. The uppermost positions, whose occupants exerted unrivalled influence, such as the offices of Chairman of the RCC, his deputy, president of the republic, secretary-general of the RL and ministers of defense and interior, remained in Sunni hands. The dominance of Sunni Arabs in the cabinets under the second Ba^cath Party regime provides another index of their continued powerful position in the state. Figure 4 clearly shows the discrepancies in the distribution of executive power between ethno-sectarian groups under Ba^cath Party rule.

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[34] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 2nd Edition, pp. 282-283; and Ofra Bengio, "Shi'is and Politics in Ba'thi Iraq," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (January 1985): pp. 6-7, who notes that Shi^cites accounted for nearly 40 percent of those elected to the first National Assembly.

Figure 4: Percentages of Ethnic and Denominational Background of Cabinet Members under the Ba^cath Party Regime (1963-2003) [35]

Percentages of Ethnic and Denominational Background of Cabinet Members under the Ba^cath Party Regime (1968-2003)
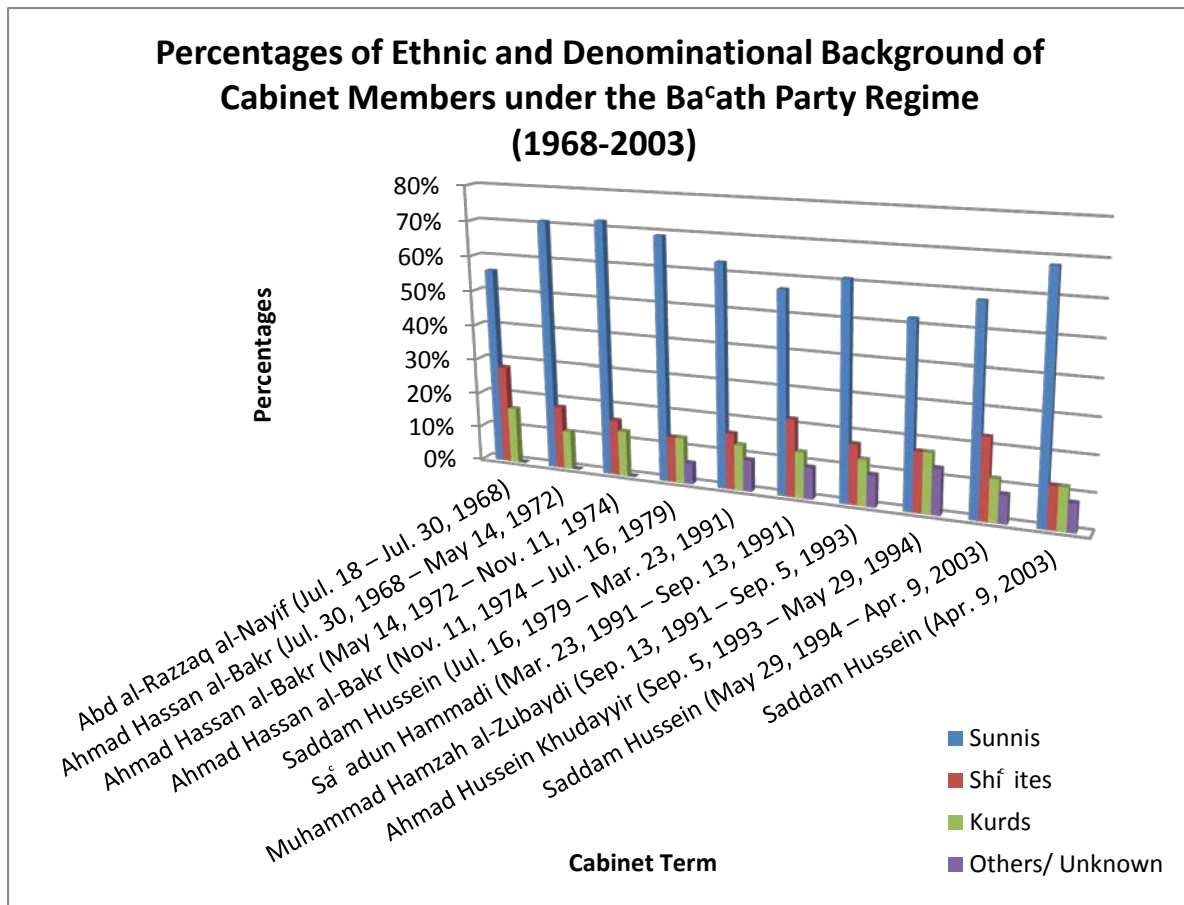
While Sunni Arab domination of the ranks of the political elite persisted following the 1968 coup, elite circulation within the Sunni Arab community underwent a geographical shift. The trend towards domination by an oligarchy hailing from the Tikrit region and its surrounding areas was a conspicuous feature of the Ba^cath Party regime. In fact, as early as 1963, it was a widely-recognized fact among senior Ba^cathists that a clique of officers from Tikrit formed a close circle of supporters around Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr.[36] Special promotions were given to Ba^cathist officers, bypassing rules regarding seniority, age and experience.[37] Upon coming to power in 1968, it was known that several key figures in the new regime, including president

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[35] Zubaydi, *Mawsu^cat al-Ahzab al-^cIraqiyyah*, pp. 650-659.

[36] Hani al-Fukayki, *Awkar al-Hazimah: Tajrubati fi Hizb al-Ba^cath al-^cIraqi* [Dens of Defeat: My Experience in the Iraqi Ba^cath Party], 2nd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Riad El-Rayyes Books, April 1997 [March 1993]): p. 233.

[37] Abd al-Karim Farhan, *Hassad Thawrah (Mudhakkarat): Tajrubat al-Sultah fi al-^cIraq, 1958-1968* [The Harvest of a Revolution (Memoirs): The Experience of Rule in Iraq, 1958-1968], 2nd Edition (London: Dar al-Buraq, 1996): pp. 107-108.

Bakr, General Hardan Abd al-Ghaffar al-Tikriti, General Hammad Shihab, and Saddam Hussein, hailed from Tikrit.[38]

This trend towards the 'Takritization' of the top political elite gave way to a cult of personality centered on the adulation and glorification of the top Party leader. The 1968 coup marked the beginnings of the ascent of Saddam Hussein, a civilian Baᶜath Party *apparatchik*, up the slippery slope of political power in Iraq.[39] With the political levers of power and privilege increasingly controlled by him, Saddam went about propelling loyalists and kinsmen into high-profile and powerful positions in the state. In this highly hierarchical structure, official duties and responsibilities were assigned to senior state officials, both civilian and military, but little authority was delegated to them.[40] This was a gulag-like system built on terror where members of the power elite falling from grace faced violent death, gruesome torture and imprisonment.

3.1.1.4. <u>Dictatorship and the Awakening of Primordial Identities</u>

"The Iranians have installed themselves as the guardians of the Shiᶜites."

Anonymous article believed to be authored by
Saddam Hussein, *al-Thawrah*, April 5, 1991

In his pursuit to establish this cult of personality, Saddam Hussein contributed to the sharpening and reawakening of primordial, segmentary identities in a way never seen before in the country's modern history. The tendency to privilege those who came from Tikrit and surrounding Sunni Arab areas intensified after Saddam Hussein became president in 1979. Members of this group, many of who were members of his own clan or kinsmen, controlled

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[38] For a biographical profile of Hammad Shihab, see Jihad Karam, *Baᶜathiyyun min al-ᶜIraq: Kama ᶜAraftuhum* [Baᶜathists from Iraq: As I knew Them], 1ˢᵗ Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Dar al-ᶜArabiyyah li al-ᶜUlum Nashirun, 1431 A.H./2010 C.E.): pp. 121-123.

[39] For a biographical sketch chronicling how Saddam Hussein took over power and set about imposing his absolutist rule over the country, see Con Coughlin, *Saddam: The Secret Life* (London: Macmillan, 2007). For partisan, yet not up-to-date, biographies of Saddam, see Amir Iskandar, *Saddam Hussein: Munadhilan wa Mufakkiran wa Insanan* [Saddam Hussein: The Struggler, the Thinker and the Human Being] (Paris, France: Hachette, 1980); and Fuad Matar, *Saddam Hussein: The Man, the Cause and the Future* (London: Third World Centre, 1980).

[40] Baram, "The Ruling Political Elite in Baᶜthi Iraq," p. 449; and Dawisha, "The Politics of War," p. 23.

the security services which exercised tremendous power from behind the scenes. In many instances, they wielded greater political influence than cabinet office holders, senior civil servants and high-ranking bureaucrats.[41] Members of certain tribes were given preferentiality in recruitment into the regime's expanding elite military and praetorian units and security services. Favored tribes included his own Al-Bu Nasser, especially the Beijat branch from which he hailed, as well as clans of the large Dulaym tribal confederation from Anbar Province and the Jibours and the ᶜUbayds from the areas of Beiji in his Salah al-Din Province, Shirqat in Ninawah Province and Hawijah and Zab in Kirkuk/Ta'mim Province.[42]

In the aftermath of its humiliating defeat in the 1991 Gulf War and the ensuing uprisings which nearly overthrow Baᶜath Party rule, the regime fell back openly on communal solidarities. There was a complete *volte-face* on the issue of tribalism by the regime which had denounced tribal and sectarian affinities as "remnants of colonialism" in Communiqué No. 1 issued upon its takeover of power in the July 1968 coup.[43] The shift, dressed up in saccharine-coated nationalist rhetoric extolling tribal affinities as part of a glorified Arab heritage, was prompted by consideration of *raison d'état*, security and other political imperatives. It sought to use tribal shaykhs as docile instruments in the state machinery of social control.

Various tactics were employed in this tribal empowerment policy. "Selected tribal *shaykhs* were officially installed as leaders of their tribes, some of their lands restored (reversing earlier land reforms) and supplied with arms, on condition of loyalty to the regime and ensuring social and political controls in its favor."[44] In return for their loyalty, tribal chiefs received lavish personal financial rewards as well as sizable sums of money which the state poured in to fund local development projects. To enable the chiefs' tribal militias to carry out

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[41] Interview with Former Iraqi Cabinet Minister (1988-1991), Baghdad, Monday, January 3, 2011.

[42] See, Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq: Saddam Hussein's Tribal Policies 1991-96," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (February 1997): pp. 1-31; and Faleh A. Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues: Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Tribes under Patrimonial Totalitarianism in Iraq, 1968-1998," in Faleh A. Jabar and Hosham Dawood, eds., *Tribes and Power: Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East* (London: Saqi Books, 2003): pp. 69-109. Zab was originally a sub-district in the Shirqat District in Ninawah Province. However, administrative changes carried out by the former regime affected the boundaries and status of this administrative unit. In 1984, Republican Decree No. 514 detached the Zab Sub-District from Shirqat District and annexed it to the Hawijah District in Kirkuk/Ta'mim Province. Three years later, Republican Decree No. 368 detached the remaining parts of Shirqat District from Ninawah Province and attached them to Salah al-Din Province.

[43] Quoted in Amatzia Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq," p. 1.

[44] Sami Zubaida, "The rise and fall of civil society in Iraq," in Haldun Gülalp, ed., *Citizenship and Ethnic Conflict: Challenging the nation-state* (London; and New York, NY: Routledge, 2006): p. 128.

policing duties in their respective tribal domains (*dirah*), the government provided them with small arms, and sometimes even with rocket propelled grenade (RPG) rocket-launchers, mortars and heavy caliber guns. This saved the regime from spreading its forces thinly over large swathes of land in the countryside.[45]

Moreover, shaykhs were given more autonomy in managing tribal affairs, settling disputes and negotiating compensations. This was facilitated by allowing tribal traditions "to be grafted onto the Iraqi legal system, as the central authorities became inclined to respect tribal customs in criminal cases."[46] More subtle ways were also used to legitimate tribal solidarities. In meetings with military personnel Saddam Hussein would ostentatiously ask soldiers to state their tribal affiliations.[47] The use of surnames indicating the tribal or regional origins of senior party leaders, government officials and army officers – a practice which was abolished in 1977 to conceal the fact that most senior posts were occupied by members of Saddam's own tribe or hailing from his region – was once again allowed.[48]

In seeking to gain wider tribal allegiance the regime managed to co-opt tribal chiefs from across the Muslim sectarian divide. But it concentrated on tribal chiefs in the Sunni triangle, especially in Anbar, Ninawah, Salah al-Din and Kirkuk/Ta'mim provinces. Many Shiᶜite tribal chiefs in southern Iraq continued to be loyal to the state. However, by favoring Sunni tribes, "Shi'a tribes would be marginalised even whilst being co-opted, thereby nurturing feelings of sectarian victimhood amongst Shi'a tribes."[49] In this sense, the regime's promotion of neo-tribalism provided another building block in the construction of primordial sectarianism. Therefore, the tribes, as genealogical social units based on lineage and divided into branches, clans and sub-clans which intersect with the country's heterogeneous sectarian landscape, added another layer of complexity to Iraq's sectarian woes.

The regime's recruitment and promotion policy based on tribal affiliations was not free of occasional boomerang effects. In January 1990, a plot hatched by disgruntled Jibouri officers to assassinate the president at the Army Day military parade was exposed. The attempt was quashed and scores of Jibouri officers were executed while hundreds others were dismissed

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[45] Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq," p. 13.
[46] *Ibid*., pp. 13-14.
[47] *Ibid*., p. 6.
[48] *Ibid*., p. 15.
[49] Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity* (London: Hurst & Company, 2011): p. 101.

from their posts.[50] This episode spawned a putschist dynamic among Jibouri officers who are said to have staged several failed coups following the 1991 Gulf War.[51] While highlighting the sometimes uneasy relationship between the government and its favored tribes, the unsuccessful plot by the Jibouri officers was a harbinger of a more serious tribal challenge yet to come. On May 17, 1995, a tribal revolt erupted in Anbar Province after the bodies of executed Air Force General Muhammad Madhlum al-Dulaymi and his associates, who had been arrested in 1994 on charges of involvement in an alleged coup plot, were delivered to their families. It reportedly took government troops at least two weeks to subdue the revolt.[52]

In the final analysis, the initial unequal distribution of political power which prevailed during the monarchy persisted even after the establishment of the republic. The Sunni Arab elite's continued domination of political power in Iraq endured until the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime. The violent transfers of power between competing political groups that took place in the series of military coups staged during the monarchic and republican periods did not occasion basic elite transformations. The circulation of elites accompanying the transfers of power from one regime to another did not necessarily result in a radically different sectarian makeup of the ruling class. Heavy concentration of power and influence in the hands of the Sunni Arabs under the monarchy seems to have predicted the community's continued political dominance under republican rule.

3.2. 'Regime Change' and the Institutionalization of Ethno-Sectarianism

"[W]hen there is a general change of conditions, it is as if the entire creation had changed and the whole world been altered."

Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*,

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[50] Baram, Neo-Tribalism in Iraq," p. 5

[51] Haychal al-Jibouri, the father of former member of parliament ᶜUmar Haychal al-Jibouri, the head of the Independent National Tribal Gathering (*al-Tajammuᶜ al-Watani al-ᶜAsha'iri al-Mustaqil*), is said to have taken part in one such attempt shortly after the failed anti-government post-Gulf War uprisings in spring 1991. Interview with Senior Official at the Independent National Tribal Gathering (*al-Tajammuᶜ al-Watani al-ᶜAsha'iri al-Mustaqil*), Kirkuk, Monday, January 18, 2010.

[52] Baram, "Neo-Tribalism in Iraq," p. 6. See also, Faleh A. Jabar, "Sheikhs and Ideologues," pp. 99-100; Austin Long, "The Anbar Awakening," *Survival*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (April 2008): p. 76; and "Waqa'iᶜi ᶜIraqiyyah min Zaman al-Istibdad .. Ramuh Hayyan bayna Adhras Kilab Muftarisah .. Iᶜidam al-Liwa' al-Tayyar Muhammad Madhlum wa Mutaradat Jamaᶜatih" ["Iraqi Facts from the Time of Despotism .. They Threw Him Alive between the Teeth of Wild Dogs .. The Execution of Air Force General Muhammad Madhlum and the Chasing of His Group"], *al-Mu'tamar*, Daily Newspaper of the Iraqi National Congress, March 7, 2007; available at: http://www.inciraq.com/pages/view_paper.php?id=20073715; accessed on Friday, August 27, 2010.

The staying power of the Sunni Arab ruling class came to an end with the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003 which ushered in radical changes in the makeup of the Iraqi political elite. The US-orchestrated 'regime change' in Iraq set into motion a profound restructuring of the ethno-sectarian composition of the ruling class that portended a dislocation of the Sunni Arab power elite. It allowed a counter-elite stratum comprised primarily of those who had taken active part in opposing the Ba^cath Party regime to predominate in the new system. Past opposition to the former regime was not the only primary distinguishing feature of the new power elite, though. This elite's ethno-sectarian composition constituted a radical departure from the traditional makeup of the Iraqi elite sector since the formation of the modern Iraqi state. Shi^cites and Kurds, rather than Sunni Arabs, enjoyed the lion's share of positions in the higher echelons of power in the post-Saddam era.

As will be seen in the following sections, exclusionary mechanisms were adopted to bar functionaries associated with the Ba^cath Party from holding public office and, in turn, restrict and control their circulation into the new elite. Concurrently, an unwritten, conventional quota system, which divvies up political power and public office along ethno-sectarian lines, has also emerged. In theory, these arrangements were introduced under the pretext of fairness and justice as well as the inclusionary rubrics of alleviating power inequality across communal lines and ensuring representation in government commensurate with the sizes of respective communities. However, in practice, these arrangements turned ethno-sectarian primordial affiliations into primary determinants of political organization and differential access to power under the new system.

3.2.1. The de-Ba^cathification Purgatory

"A distinction must be made between Ba^cathists who are working in government departments and institutions, have gone along with the political process and confronted terrorism, and Saddamist Ba^cathists who are cooperating with al-Qa^cida and working to thwart the political process."

Prime minister Nouri al-Maliki,
Interview with *al-^cIraqiyyah TV*, October 29, 2011

Given the Ba^cath Party's absolute dominance of political life in the police state presided over by Saddam Hussein, it was only natural that 'regime change' would unleash a momentum to remove Ba^cathists from positions of power and influence in the post-Saddam period. In the eyes of many in the new regime, Ba^cath Party members were thugs complicit in the crimes perpetrated by the former regime who should not be allowed to take part in politics.[53] This conviction was compounded by widespread fears that, with their strong conspiratorial streak, the Ba^cathists holding positions in state bureaucracy and public service would abuse their powers in their pursuit to undermine the new regime and orchestrate a comeback to government.

3.2.1.1.   The Genesis and Early Development of de-Ba^cathification

"I still believe that the Ba^cath Party metamorphosed from a political party to a secret association that imposed its authoritarianism on Iraq. It was one of the main pillars of Saddam Hussein's rule. The Party became totalitarian. Its figures took part in persecuting the people and appropriated its political, military, financial, social and cultural potentials. Its role as party has ended after it became a tool of authoritarianism. As a result, its existence in [the realm of] political activism is an illusion."

Ahmad Chalabi,
Interview with *Asharq Al-Awsat*,
Sunday, October 8, 2006

The first shots in the post-Saddam de-Ba^cathification drive were fired by the Pentagon. In his "Freedom Message to the Iraqi People" on April 16, 2003, commander of the coalition forces

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[53] Interview with a Former Shi^cite MP, State of Law Coalition Bloc, Baghdad, Monday, October 31, 2011. The name has been withheld to protect the interviewee's anonymity.

General Tommy Franks proclaimed the disestablishment of the Baᶜath Party.[54] However, it fell to U.S. proconsul in Iraq L. Paul Bremer to lay the foundations of a lustration and vetting system designed to regulate and limit the involvement of members of the former regime, especially its repressive security organs and the Baᶜath Party, in the new post-Saddam polity. A sweeping decree that he issued on May 16, 2003 banned the Baᶜath Party and barred thousands of senior Baᶜathists from holding public office. According to Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Order No. 1, members of the top four rungs of the party were "removed from their positions and banned from future employment in the public sector."[55] The de-Baᶜathification decree was followed, on May 23, 2003, by CPA Order No. 2 which dissolved Iraq's 500,000-strong armed forces and intelligence services. Other entities dissolved by Order No. 2 included the Revolutionary Command Council, the ministry of information, the Presidential Secretariat and the Presidential Diwan.[56]

By signing Order No. 1 Bremer removed tens of thousands of Baᶜathists from their government posts with the stroke of his pen. Some sectors, such as education, where teachers were under pressure to join the Baᶜath Party during the 35-year-long rule of the former regime, were more hardly hit by de-Baᶜathification. The implementation of de-Baᶜathification had dire consequences for education in Sunni Arab areas which traditionally had high

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[54] See Adam Roberts, "Transformative Military Occupation: Applying the Laws of War and Human Rights," in Michael Schmitt and Jelena Pejic, eds., *International Law and Armed Conflict: Exploring the Faultlines: Essays in Honour of Yoram Dinstein* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2007): p. 478; and Linda D. Kozaryn, "Deck of Cards Helps Troops Identify Regime's Most Wanted," *American Forces Press Service*, April 12, 2003; available on the website of the U.S. Department of Defense at: http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=29113; accessed on Tuesday, February 14, 2012. A day earlier, on April 15, a 13-point plan issued by a conference on the formation of a new interim administration organized by the US State Department in Ur in Dhi Qar Province and attended by 75 Iraqi delegates demanded that: "The Ba'ath party must be dissolved and its effects on society must be eliminated." For the text of the 13-point plan, see Claire Taylor and Tim Youngs, *The Conflict in Iraq*, House of Commons Research Paper 03/50 (London: House of Commons Library, International Affairs and Defence Section, 23 May 2003): p. 58.

[55] "Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 1: De-Ba'athification of Iraqi Society," the official website of The Coalition Provisional Authority; available at: http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030516_CPAORD_1_De-Ba_athification_of_Iraqi_Society_.pdf; accessed on Wednesday, October 26, 2011. The Baᶜath Party organization consisted of a structured hierarchy made up of the following rungs: "Friend" (*Sadiq*), "Sympathizer" (*Mu'ayyid*), "Supporter" (*Nasir*), "Advanced Supporter" (*Nasir Mutaqaddim*), "Candidate Member" (ᶜ*Udhu Murashshah*), "Active Member" (ᶜ*Udhu ᶜAmil*), "Division Member" (ᶜ*Udhu Firqah*), "Section Member" (ᶜ*Udhu Shuᶜbah*), "Branch Member" (ᶜ*Udhu Fariᶜi*), and "Bureau Member" (ᶜ*Udhu Maktab*). The structure is presided over by the National Command (*al-Qiyadah al-Qutriyyah*) and the Pan-Arab Command (*al-Qiyadah al-Qawmiyyah*), which theoretically consist of leaders elected through democratic polls at Party conventions. Curiously, CPA Order No. 1 did not list one high level category, Bureau Member. However, Bureau Members were in effect still subject to de-Baᶜathification as they belonged to a rung well above that of Division Member.

[56] "Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 2: Dissolution of Entities," the official website of The Coalition Provisional Authority; available at: http://www.cpa-iraq.org/regulations/20030823_CPAORD_2_Dissolution_of_Entities_with_Annex_A.pdf; accessed on Saturday, October 29, 2011.

membership rates in the Ba^{c}ath Party. For instance, schools in the predominantly Sunni Arab areas in the so-called Sunni triangle became virtually without teachers.[57]

De-Ba^{c}athification was catapulted to the top of Iraq's post-Saddam policy agenda due to the efforts of neoconservative US officials and a bevy of leaders in the Iraqi opposition to Saddam Hussein's Ba^{c}athist regime most of who maintained close links to the neoconservatives in Washington. The Pentagon office of then-Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith was responsible for preparing the draft of Order No. 1.[58] But a full-fledged vision of blanket de-Ba^{c}athification in post-Saddam Iraq had not figured in the programs of Iraqi opposition factions and coalitions in the 1990s. Several proposals on how to deal with Ba^{c}athists and "hold them accountable for the Party's mistakes and their own conduct" were discussed in opposition circles. But these discussions revolved around a truth-and-reconciliation transitional justice model whereby, except for cases where there are specific complaints or charges warranting court proceedings, Party members would disavow the Ba^{c}ath Party and apologize for having joined it. In return, they would be able to keep their jobs provided that they meet the requirements of the posts in terms of educational qualifications, years of service and work experience.[59] This view also formed the basis of the conceptual framework for de-Ba^{c}athification in post-Saddam Iraq articulated by the Democratic Principles Working Group (DPWG). This was one of 17 working groups formed by the US State Department in April 2002 that brought together US experts, think-tanks, and Iraqi exiles to draw up a vision for post-Saddam Iraq in a number of sectors.[60] Concerned about the potential downside of wholesale exclusion of Ba^{c}athists from civil service, the de-Ba^{c}athification program envisioned by the DPWG document was limited in scope.

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[57] Interview with a Sunni Arab District Administrator in Hawijah, Kirkuk/Ta'mim Province, Kirkuk City, Monday, August 3, 2009. The name has been withheld to protect the interviewee's anonymity. Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2006): p. 83.

[58] Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "Dissenters become assets in White House's new plan for Iraq," *The Seattle Times*, January 15, 2007, available at: http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/nationworld/2003525603_iraqpolicy15.html; accessed on Sunday, December 11, 2011; L. Paul Bremer III, with Malcolm McConnell, *My Year in Iraq: The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney: Simon & Schuster, 2006): p. 39; and L. Paul Bremer III, "How I Didn't Dismantle Iraq's Army," *The New York Times*, Thursday, September 6, 2007; available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/06/opinion/06bremer.html; accessed on Monday, April 23, 2012.

[59] Email correspondence with Abd al-^{c}Aziz al-Wandawi, Former Director at the Higher National Commission for de-Ba^{c}athification, Saturday, November 14, 2009.

[60] Each working group focused on one thematic issue such as Defense Policy, Foreign Policy, Oil and Gas, Free Media, etc. The State Department's project, dubbed the "Future of Iraq Project," was supervised by Tom Warrick, a senior State Department official. See, Ali A. Allawi, *The Occupation of Iraq: Winning the War, Losing the Peace* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007): pp. 83-84.

> "*De-Ba'athification cannot mean dismissing from their jobs all two million Iraqis who belong to the Ba'ath party, or conducting witch hunts based on rumors and allegations.* If nothing else, summary dismissals will deprive the Transitional Government, and the country, of valuable skills, historical knowledge, and experience."[61]

But the early work done by the Democratic Principles Working Group, as well as that of a potpourri of other committees set up by the State Department, was largely discarded shortly after the war as the neoconservatives emerged victorious from internecine infighting within the Bush administration over policy in postwar Iraq.[62]

A series of CPA orders and memoranda laid out the procedural and institutional mechanisms to carry out the objectives of de-Ba^cathification. Initially, Coalition Forces were charged with the investigative functions aimed to identify and gather information about public service employees with Ba^cath Party affiliations.[63] However, Order No. 5, issued on May 25, 2003, promulgated the establishment of an Iraqi de-Ba^cathification Council (IDC) comprised of Iraqis selected by the CPA Administrator and charged with identifying Ba^cathists implicated in human rights violations and their whereabouts.[64] The IDC was abolished in November 2003 in accordance with the provisions of CPA Memorandum No. 7, which delegated the implementation of the de-Ba^cathification policy to a Higher National Commission for de-Ba^cathification (*al-Hay'ah al-Wataniyyah al-^cUlyah li Ijtithath al-Ba^cath*), or HNCDB, set up by the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC). The HNCDB was charged with determining possible affiliations of Iraqi citizens with the dissolved Ba^cath Party or the former regime's security services. The CPA, however, retained the prerogative to review de-Ba^cathification measures

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[61] Democratic Principles Work Group, "Final Report on the Transition to Democracy in Iraq," Final version of the working document of the Conference of the Iraqi Opposition as amended by the members of the Democratic Principles Work Group, November 2002, p. 63; italics in original. The "Final Report on the Transition to Democracy in Iraq" was co-edited by Kanan Makiya and Salem Chalabi, a lawyer and nephew of Ahmad Chalabi.

[62] Elizabeth Drew, "The Neocons in Power," *The New York Review of Books*, June 12, 2003; available at: http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2003/jun/12/the-neocons-in-power/?pagination=false; accessed on Friday, December 2, 2011.

[63] See "Coalition Provisional Authority Memorandum Number 1: Implementation of De-Ba'athification Order No. 1," the official website of The Coalition Provisional Authority; available at: http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030603_CPAMEMO_1_Implementation_of_De-Ba_athification.pdf; accessed on Saturday, October 29, 2011.

[64] "Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 5: Establishment of the Iraqi De-Baathification Council," official website of The Coalition Provisional Authority; available at: http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/CPAORD5.pdf; accessed on Saturday, October 29, 2011.

taken by the IGC or any entities working under its auspices.[65] Headed by Ahmad Chalabi, the makeup of the HNCDB was heavily weighted in favor of Shiᶜite parties. Most of those employed by the Commission were people who had suffered from the former regime's repression.[66] Civil servants dismissed from their jobs on account of their affiliation with the Baᶜath Party had the right to appeal their dismissal and, if successful, reclaim their jobs. But the appeals mechanism was not independent. It was vested in an administrative unit within the HNDBC organizational structure. Individuals appealing de-Baᶜathification measures against them risked giving up the right to pension. Those granted exception to the de-Baᶜathification policy could be reinstated only after attending an educational and rehabilitation program.[67]

The Iraqi provisional constitution of 2004, "Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period," more commonly known as Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), confirmed the HNCDB, stating that it "shall continue to serve."[68] The Iraqi permanent Constitution voted in by a referendum on October 15, 2005 provided scope for deepening the legal underpinnings of the de-Baᶜathification policy and the exclusion of Iraqis from full participation in the public sphere on the basis of former membership in or other links to the outlawed Baᶜath Party rather than individual deeds. Article 7/First declared:

> "Any entity or program that adopts, incites, facilitates, glorifies, promotes, or
> justifies racism or terrorism or accusations of being an infidel (takfir) or ethnic

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[65] "Coalition Provisional Authority Memorandum Number 7: Delegation of Authority Under De-Baathification Order No. 1," the official website of The Coalition Provisional Authority; available at: http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20031104_CPAMEM0_7_Delegation_of_Authority.pdf; accessed on Saturday, October 29, 2011.

[66] Interview with Former Shiᶜite MP, State of Law Coalition Bloc, Baghdad, Monday, October 31, 2011. The name has been withheld to protect the interviewee's anonymity. Please note that, at the time of the formation of the Commission, ISCI was known as the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (*al-Majlis al-Aᶜala li al-Thawrah al-Islamiyyah fi al-ᶜIraq*) or SCIRI, and was headed by Ammar's father, the late Sayyid Abd al-ᶜAziz al-Hakim.

[67] Email correspondence with Abd al-ᶜAziz al-Wandawi, Former Director at the Higher National Commission for de-Baᶜathification, Saturday, November 14, 2009; and "Ijra'at Khassah bi Asra al-Harb" [Special Provisions for Prisoners of War], *www.debaath.com*, the official website of the Higher National Commission for de-Baᶜathification, available at: http://www.debaath.com/site/page/ajr_h/aja.htm, accessed on Friday, August 7, 2009. However, it seems that the exemption was not always granted. Baᶜathists promoted to Division Members as a reward for their captivity during the Iraq-Iran War were still removed from their jobs. See Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, pp. 82-83.

[68] See "Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period," the official website of the Coalition Provisional Authority; available at: http://www.constitution.org/cons/iraq/TAL.html; accessed on Tuesday, February 28, 2012.

cleansing, especially the Saddamist Ba'ath in Iraq and its symbols, under any name whatsoever, shall be prohibited."[69]

However, the Constitution did not provide a formal legal definition of the "Saddamist Ba^{c}ath." Nor was such a definition provided by subsequent legislation.

3.2.1.2. Root-and-Branch de-Ba^{c}athification

"I am with the activation of de-Ba^{c}athification. The Ba^{c}ath must be eradicated expeditiously. Otherwise, there will be dire consequences and evil."

Sayyid Muqtada al-Sadr

From the outset, the implementation of de-Ba^{c}athification policy fell prey to pressures from implacable zealots committed to root-and-branch eradication of all vestiges of Ba^{c}athism. The proponents of blanket de-Da^{c}athification were mostly returning exiles who sought to use the policy to decapitate the previous ruling class as a step towards its replacement with members of the former opposition. The ink had hardly dried on Bremer's signature on Order No. 1 when Chalabi urged "the Coalition to go beyond the decree issued today, to conduct even more aggressive de-Ba^{c}athification."[70] Indeed, overly zealous measures taken in the early stages of the implementation of de-Ba^{c}athification went well beyond the purview of Order No. 1. Some government bodies adopted across-the-board dismissal of Ba^{c}athist staff members, even at levels of Ba^{c}ath Party membership lower than the upper rungs specified in Order No. 1.[71]

It was only natural that a gathering storm of protests would hover over the de-Ba^{c}athification process. Among the Ba^{c}athists who were adversely affected, both Sunnis and Shi^{c}ites alike,

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[69] *Iraqi Constitution* (Baghdad, Iraq: Iraqi Council of Representatives, Media Directorate, no date): pp. 8-9.
[70] Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, p. 48. According to Bremer, US intelligence sources had estimated that the total number of members in the top four rungs of the Ba^{c}ath Party who would be affected "amounted to only about 1 percent of all party members or approximately 20,000 people, overwhelmingly Sunni Arabs" (p. 40). On the CPA's failure to consult the Iraqi people about the scope of de-Ba^{c}athification, see Eric Stover, Miranda Sissons, Phuong Pham and Patrick Vinck, "Justice on hold: accountability and social reconstruction in Iraq," *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 90, No. 869 (March 2008): p. 21.
[71] Interview with a Provincial Higher National Commission for de-Ba^{c}athification Official, Kirkuk City, Sunday, August 9, 2009. The name has been withheld to protect the interviewee's anonymity.

resentment and bitterness at having lost jobs and past privileges prevailed. However, Sunni Arab Ba^{c}athists perceived the exclusionary ethos of de-Ba^{c}athification as an anti-Sunni rather than an anti-Ba^{c}athist purge – "a guillotine designed to decapitate the Sunni community."[72] To a great extent, the acute sense of loss of power largely explains why de-Ba^{c}athification elicited more angry reactions from Sunni Arabs who couched their opposition in the rhetoric of communal victimization. In a statement issued one month after the establishment of the HNCDB, the Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq (*Hay'at ^{c}Ulama' al-Muslimin fi al-^{c}Iraq*) or AMSI, a Sunni clerical anti-occupation outfit opposed to the post-Saddam political order, criticized what it described as an "attack" against Iraqis, "especially and specifically the Sunnis."[73]

Criticism of out-of-control de-Ba^{c}athification even rippled within the new ruling circles, where the debate centered on the scope of the anti-Ba^{c}athist purge. The arguments marshaled by critics stressed the pressures brought to bear on Iraqis under the former regime to join the Ba^{c}ath Party. Ali A. Allawi, a former minister of trade, defense, and finance in the post-Saddam period, summarizes this controversy as follows:

> "The treatment of former Ba'athists caused much bitter recrimination within the new Iraqi political class. The arguments in favour of drastic 'cleansing' of Ba'athists from Iraq were countered by the assertion that most of its members had been coerced into joining, and collectively could not be held responsible for the crimes of the former regime."[74]

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[72] Interview with Ahmad, a Sunni Arab judge from Ramadi, provincial capital of al-Anbar Province, Baghdad, Sunday, November 16, 2003. The full name has been withheld to protect the interviewee's anonymity.

[73] The Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq, Statement No. 8, "Hawla al-Ightiyalat al-Akhirah li-Ba^{c}adh al-Shakhsiyyat al-Diniyyah wa al-^{c}Ilmiyyah" ["On the Recent Assassinations of Some Religious and Scholarly Figures"], *Bayanat Hay'at ^{c}Ulama' al-Muslimin fi al-^{c}Iraq: Hasad Al-Ihtilal al-Amriki li al-^{c}Iraq* [The Statements of the Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq: The Harvest of the American Occupation of Iraq], Introduction by Shaykh Muhammad Bashshar al-Faydhi, Vol. 1 (Amman, Jordan: Dar al-Jil al-^{c}Arabi, 2008): pp. 50-52.

[74] Allawi, *op. cit.*, p. 147. Some American military officials also opposed de-Ba^{c}athification. Among the dissenters was General David Petraeus, who commanded the 101st US Airborne Division in Mosul in 2003. See Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "Dissenters become assets in White House's new plan for Iraq," *The Seattle Times*, January 15, 2007, available at: http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/nationworld/2003525603_iraqpolicy15.html; accessed on Sunday, December 11, 2011.

3.2.1.3. <u>Imbalanced Softening of de-Baᶜathification</u>

"What we are talking about strongly and fervently is de-Baᶜathification and standing up to the Baᶜathists, and the Constitution has a firm stand toward them. But the numbers that speak now indicate to us that the government which has been formed by the parties and blocs that suffered from the former regime and the Baᶜathists has given the Baᶜathists very high and important medals and returned most of them to their previous positions."

Shaykh Jalal al-Din al-Saghir,
Shiᶜite Member of Parliament and ISCI Leader

By April 2004, the CPA began to show public signs of dismay about the negative effects of the blanket purge of rank-and-file Baᶜathists from Iraq's public sector and security forces. In statements broadcast on Iraq's semi-official TV network, *al-ᶜIraqiyyah*, Bremer acknowledged that complaints that the de-Baᶜathification policy "has been applied unevenly and unjustly … are legitimate." Bremer used this TV appearance to announce a fundamental shift in the approach to de-Baᶜathification. He declared that dismissed former Baᶜathists who can provide proof that their Party membership stemmed from pragmatic career considerations rather than belief in the ideological tenets of the Baᶜath may be reinstated "promptly."[75] Bremer subsequently rescinded Order No. 5 which established the IDC.[76]

Security and practical considerations represented the primary impetus for this shift away from thoroughgoing de-Baᶜathification. The shift occurred as it was becoming increasingly clear to policymakers in post-Saddam Iraq that disaffected, jobless Sunni Arab former Baᶜathists and armed services personnel were swelling the ranks of the budding insurgency. Conducting a successful counter-insurgency campaign required drying up popular support for the insurgency and the strengthening of the Iraqi officer corps by allowing former senior Baᶜathists to return to the security forces. In addition to counter-insurgency imperatives, the

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[75] "Bremer Asks Iraqi People for Support During Transition: An Address by CPA Administrator L. Paul Bremer III," website of the U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany, April 23, 2004, available at: http://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/docs/bremer230404.htm; accessed on Friday, November 4, 2011; and "Coalition Provisional Authority Briefing with Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt, Deputy Director for Coalition Operations; and Daniel Senor, Senior Advisor, CPA", Friday, April 23, 2004, *GlobalSecurity.org*; available at: http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/2004/04/mil-040423-dod01.htm; accessed on Wednesday, November 2, 2011.

[76] "Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 100: Transition of Laws, Regulations, Orders, and Directives Issued by the Coalition Provisional Authority," official website of The Coalition Provisional Authority; available at: http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20040628_CPAORD_100_Transition_of_Laws__Regulations__Orders__and_Directives.pdf; accessed on Monday, April 23, 2012.

shift towards a softer approach to de-Ba^{c}athification gained momentum by political support welling up in some policymaking quarters. Ministries feeling the dire effects of the purge, such as education and higher education and scientific research, complained about the drain on their human resources.[77] Moreover, prime minister Ayad ^{c}Allawi supported the reintegration of former Ba^{c}athists into the state bureaucracy and security forces with enthusiasm. His efforts in this regard involved an "outreach" campaign, which included clandestine contacts with insurgents and their political supporters.[78]

It is difficult to estimate with any reasonable degree of accuracy how many former Ba^{c}athists were allowed to return to their jobs or other positions in the civil or security services. Nibras Kazimi, a former adviser to the de-Ba^{c}athification Commission, put the number of those reinstated after winning appeals rescinding their dismissal in 2004 at around 15,000.[79] Among the reinstated former Ba^{c}athists were members of dissolved bodies whose personnel were barred by law from reinstatement and receiving pensions. These bodies include Saddam's obnoxious secret service (*Mukhabarat*), brutal Special Security Apparatus (*Jihaz al-Amn al-Khass*), and fearsome elite militia of Faida'iyyu Saddam (literally, 'Those Who Sacrifice Their Lives for Saddam's Sake').[80] The willingness of the Shi^{c}ite-dominated government to circumvent the law to reinstate members of these repressive tentacles of the former regime combines elements of cynicism and political expediency. Most of the senior former officials allowed to return to civil and military service belong to the Shi^{c}ite

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[77] Email correspondence with Abd al-^{c}Aziz al-Wandawi, Former Director at the Higher National Commission for de-Ba^{c}athification, Saturday, November 14, 2009.

[78] David Ignatius, "Allawi's Bold Bid For Stability in Iraq," *The Washington Post*, Wednesday, July 14, 2004, available at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A48222-2004Jul13.html, accessed on Tuesday, December 13, 2011; and Email correspondence with Abd al-^{c}Aziz al-Wandawi, Former Director at the Higher National Commission for de-Ba^{c}athification, Saturday, November 14, 2009. The author has collected a list of names of former Ba^{c}athists who were allowed to return to government jobs under Allawi and later became top government officials, including ministers and deputy ministers, and high-ranking officers in the security forces. However, the names of these officials will be kept confidential due to the sensitivity of the topic. Salah al-Takmachi, a pro-ISCI London-based Shi^{c}ite activist and writer, lists the names of some senior officers at the defense and interior ministries who were formerly associated with the Ba^{c}ath Party, in a newspaper article entitled "Azmat al-Ba^{c}ath fi al-^{c}Iraq .... Haqa'iq wa Mu^{c}alajat wa Mawaqif" ["The Crisis of the Ba^{c}ath in Iraq … Facts, Treatmentst, and Standpoints"], *al-Bayyinah al-Jadidah*, Sunday, April 19, 2009, available at: http://www.albayyna-new.com/archef/797/albayyna-new/pag9.html, accessed on Monday, November 7, 2011.

[79] Sharon Otterman, "Debaathification," *Council on Foreign Relations*, April 7, 2005, available at: http://www.cfr.org/publication/7853/iraq.html; accessed on Tuesday, December 13, 2011.

[80] Interview with Faryad Touzlu, Iraqi Member of Parliament, United Iraqi Alliance Bloc, Baghdad, Saturday, November 21, 2009.

community, thus underscoring the selective use of the de-Ba^{c}athification process as a vehicle for the unequal allocation of power resources across communities.[81]

It comes as no surprise that the sectarian imbalance in the rehabilitation of former Ba^{c}athists has drawn fire from opponents of de-Ba^{c}athification, especially Sunni Arabs, whose rhetoric throbbed with the idiom victimization. This imbalance has become a focus of Sunni Arab complaints of marginalization in the post-Saddam polity. On the sidelines of a conference on national reconciliation held at the Conference Center in Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, a Sunni Arab tribal leader grumbled to me about the intricate web of kin, tribal and other connections to powerful figures in the post-Saddam political establishment which has facilitated the reinstatement of many Shi^{c}ite former Ba^{c}athists in government service. In contrast, Sunni Arabs, he lamented, are treated as if they were "all on Saddam's side."[82] On the other hand, the idea of tempering the de-Ba^{c}athification policy was not popular among staunch Shi^{c}ite proponents of the exclusion of former Ba^{c}athists from public life. Chalabi, for instance, deemed the reintegration of Ba'athists into government as akin to "allowing Nazis into the German government immediately after World War Two." Others raised the specter of insurgent infiltration of the security forces through former Ba^{c}athists allowed to assume positions in the newly-built security forces.[83]

Restrictions that had tied the hands of the HNCDB under ^{c}Allawi's premiership were removed following the assumption in April 2005 of the prime minister's post by Ibrahim al-Ja^{c}afari, then-leader of the Islamic Da^{c}awah Party. Ja^{c}afari's government put new recruitment or reinstatement of former Ba^{c}athists into the public service on hold.[84] This ban was ended by Ja^{c}afari's successor as prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, named in May 2006. Maliki's shift on de-Ba^{c}athification was spurred by a desire to rejuvenate the stalled national reconciliation process. A few months into Maliki's term in office, the theme of drawing a distinction between Ba^{c}athists who have blood on their hands and those who joined the Ba^{c}ath Party out

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[81] Interview with Former Shi^{c}ite MP, State of Law Coalition Bloc, Baghdad, Monday, October 31, 2011. The name has been withheld to protect the interviewee's anonymity.
[82] Interview with Shaykh Wissam al-Hardan, Secretary-General of the Iraqi People's Front (*al-Jabhah al-Sha^{c}abiyyah al-^{c}Iraqiyyah*) and a Tribal Chief of the Bu ^{c}Ayth Section of the Dulaym Tribes in Anbar Province, Baghdad, Saturday, November 21, 2009.
[83] "Iraq Baathists to get jobs back," *BBC News*, 23 April 2004, available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3651953.stm; accessed on Tuesday, December 13, 2011.
[84] Interview with Former Shi^{c}ite MP, State of Law Coalition Bloc, Baghdad, Monday, October 31, 2011. The name has been withheld to protect the interviewee's anonymity.

of self-interest rather than ideological conviction seeped into the discourse of the prime minister and other senior government officials in his close circle.[85]

3.2.1.4.   From de-Ba{{c}}athification to Accountability and Justice

"There is a real problem called the Ba{{c}}ath Party. We have to summon strength. The rule is ours. Parliament is ours. I am confident that if we were to allow the Ba{{c}}ath Party to contest the elections, it will not get more than 30 to 50 seats, and this will not have an effect on the political process. We have to be more transparent and truthful with ourselves. We have to fix the de-Ba{{c}}athification law if we want social peace and safety for our children."

Shi{{c}}ite MP Sayyid Ayad Jamal al-Din (Iraqia Bloc)
Parliamentary Session, Sunday, June 25, 2006

Mounting complaints about the adverse effects of de-Ba{{c}}athification on the families of former members of the once-ruling Ba{{c}}ath Party who lost their sources of income due to their removal from their jobs created pressures which led to the passage of the Accountability and Justice Act by parliament in January 2008. One of the main arguments in favor of new, softer de-Ba{{c}}athification legislation was that depriving former Ba{{c}}athists of their salaries and pensions had led to the pauperization of their families. The resulting impoverishment was a breeding ground for insurgency, terrorism and criminality.[86] Pleas from growing chorus of domestic voices calling for relaxing restrictions on former Ba{{c}}athists and redressing injustices caused by the implementation of de-Ba{{c}}athification were compounded by international pressures on the Maliki government, mainly from the US, to adopt policies that would help wean the Sunni Arabs away from the influence of the insurgents so as to promote national reconciliation.[87]

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[85] Interview with Former Shi{{c}}ite MP, State of Law Coalition Bloc, Baghdad, Monday, October 31, 2011. The name has been withheld to protect the interviewee's anonymity.
[86] Interview with Former Shi{{c}}ite MP, State of Law Coalition Bloc, Baghdad, Monday, October 31, 2011 (the name has been withheld to protect the interviewee's anonymity); and Email correspondence with Abd al-{{c}}Aziz al-Wandawi, Former Director at the Higher National Commission for de-Ba{{c}}athification, Saturday, November 14, 2009.
[87] Ian Black and Ed Pilkington, "US pressure forces move to reconciliation," *The Guardian*, Monday 27 August 2007, available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/aug/27/usa.iraq1; accessed on Tuesday, December 13, 2011.

After months of parliamentary debate, which at times descended into heated exchanges between lawmakers from different parliamentary blocs, the Iraqi parliament on January 12, 2008, passed Law No. 10 of 2008, "Law of the Higher National Commission for Accountability and Justice" (*Qanun al-Hay'ah al-Wataniyyah al-ᶜUlya li al-Musa'alah wa al-ᶜAdalah*), better known as the "Accountability and Justice Act" (*Qanun al-Musa'alah wa al-ᶜAdalah*).[88] The legislation provided for renaming the Higher National Commission for de-Baᶜathification as the Higher National Commission for Accountability and Justice (Article 2/First). Article 6 of the law spelled out a detailed lustration and vetting process. All public servants at the Section Member rung and members of the security services of the former regime are referred to retirement. Those dismissed from their jobs are eligible for pension in accordance with the law of service and retirement. However, former members of the notorious Fida'iyyu Saddam elite militia were not eligible for any retirement rights "in return for their work in the said apparatus." The new law, moreover, included provisions for an independent appeals mechanism against decisions by the Accountability and Justice Commission (AJC) (Article 2/Ninth and Tenth).

The Accountability and Justice Act was greeted with mixed reactions across communal and partisan lines. In general, Kurdish and Shiᶜite political groups and figures took supportive stands on the new legislation, highlighting its importance for national reconciliation, albeit not without voicing some reservations.[89] Such sentiments, however, were not shared by the Sadrists, who viewed the new legislation as standing on thin constitutional ice. No sooner than the Council of Ministers referred the Accountability and Justice Bill to parliament in mid-November 2007 that Sadrist MP Falah Hassan Shanshal, Chairman of the parliamentary de-Baᶜathification Committee, denounced it as a "coup against the constitution."[90] The early optimism evoked by the Accountability and Justice Act among Sunni Arabs rapidly fizzled into surly disappointment. Sunni Arab politicians soon turned sorely opposed to the law

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[88] "Qanun Raqam (10) li Sanat 2008: Qanun al-Hay'ah al-Wataniyyah al-ᶜUlya li al-Musa'alah wa al-ᶜAdalah" [Law Number (10): Law of the Higher National Commission for Accountability and Justice]; *Global Justice Project: Iraq*; available at: http://gjpi.org/wp-content/uploads/law-no-10-of-2008-on-accountability-and-justice-ara1.pdf; accessed on Wednesday, December 14, 2011.

[89] "Tabayun Rudud Afᶜal al-Kutal al-Barlamaniyyah al-ᶜIraqiyya hawla Iqrar Qanun Hizb al-Baᶜath" ["Divergent Reactions by Iraqi Parliamentary Blocs to the Passing of the Baᶜath Party Law"], *Xinhua*, January 14, 2008; available at: http://arabic.people.com.cn/31662/6337485.html; accessed on Tuesday, December 13, 2011.

[90] Usamah Mahdi, "al-Sadr Yuᶜaridh wa al-Tawafuq Tu'ayyid Qanun Ijtithath al-Baᶜath" [Sadr Opposes While Accordance Supports de-Baᶜathification Law], *Elaph*, Saturday, November 16, 2007; available at: http://www.elaph.com/Web/Politics/2007/11/280537.htm; accessed on Tuesday, December 6, 2011.

which they saw as bearing all the hallmarks of a pernicious conduit for their disenfranchisement. Salih al-Mutlaq, the chairman of the Iraqi Front for National Dialogue (*al-Jabhah al-ᶜIraqiyyah li al-Hiwar al-Watani*) or IFND, a secular Sunni Arab political group, resorted to pun-making to assail the legislation as "a law of accountability without justice."[91] Much like the debate over de-Baᶜathification, the debate over the merits or lack thereof of the Accountability and Justice Act unfolded in a black-and-white fashion, thus making communal rifts more pronounced. The prevalent view among Shiᶜite proponents of de-Baᶜathification and the Accountability and Justice Act dismisses criticisms leveled at the new law as the whiny ramblings of "either Baᶜathists or those who have relatives who had been associated with the Baᶜath Party."[92]

As a form of political exclusion, de-Baᶜathification exacerbated sectarian contradictions and conflict, and undermined the prospects of reconciliation in the country. The resultant feelings of resentment and political marginalization among Sunni Arabs bred a view of de-Baᶜathification as a Damocles Sword hanging over their community's chances to enjoy full citizenship rights and privileges in the post-Saddam polity. The deepening sense of alienation and marginalization ultimately contributed to the salience of sectarian affiliation as a marker of identity as it induced Sunni Arabs to express and articulate their grievances along sectarian lines. As we will see in the following section, power-sharing arrangements in post-Saddam Iraq, whereby government posts are distributed according to ethno-sectarian quotas, intensified this tendency towards mobilization along ethno-sectarian lines and, in the final analysis, undermined possibilities for the development of a unified national identity.

3.2.2. The Apportionment Balancing Act: Ethno-Sectarian Quotas

"All types of rule rest upon the institutional mediation of power, but channel this through the use of definite strategies of control."

Antony Giddens,
A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism

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[91] "Tabayun Rudud Afᶜal al-Kutal al-Barlamaniyyah al-ᶜIraqiyya hawla Iqrar Qanun Hizb al-Baᶜath" *op. cit.*
[92] Interview with Faryad Touzlu, Iraqi Member of Parliament, United Iraqi Alliance Bloc, Baghdad, Saturday, November 21, 2009.; and Interview with Former Shiᶜite MP, State of Law Coalition Bloc, Baghdad, Monday, October 31, 2011. The name has been withheld to protect the interviewee's anonymity.

Power in the political system crafted in the post-Saddam period was distributed between ethno-sectarian communities. Posts in government and administration were parceled out to members of various ethno-sectarian groups according to an evolving complex, unwritten quota system which took shape over time. This system, which had all the hallmarks of a consociational arrangement, was meant to prevent the monopolization of power by one community and to act as a force for integration by recognizing the diversity of Iraqi society. But in practice it turned into an impetus for disintegration, eroding civic consciousness and stunting the formation of a unified national identity. Beyond the old edifice of Sunni Arab primacy that lasted until the fall of Saddam Hussein, the Iraqis did not find unity in diversity. Instead, they stumbled into a system of distributing power that deepened societal cleavages and communal fault lines. The most characteristic outcome of such a system is that sub-national primordial identities, especially sectarian and ethnic affiliations, are sharpened for political competition and combat.

3.2.2.1.   In Search of Governance Arrangement

"The fight itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy."

Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*

Burdened by ideological blinders, war planning by neoconservatives at the Pentagon, which began in earnest in 2002, focused on military operations to the neglect of planning for the day after the removal of Saddam Hussein from power. This omission stemmed primarily from the neoconservatives' aversion to nation-building. Bureaucratic turf wars between the Pentagon and the State Department compounded the effects of this aversion. Planning for post-Saddam Iraq undertaken by the Future of Iraq Project, launched by the State Department in October 2001, was condemned to oblivion when the White House handed over responsibilities for

Iraq after the impending invasion to the Pentagon.[93] In a presidential directive issued on January 20, 2003, Bush ordered the formation of the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) within the Pentagon to make preparations "for war and post-war aid needs." ORHA was headed by retired US Army Lt. Gen. Jay Garner, and worked under the flawed prognosis that it would deal with a flood of civilian refugees and internally displaced people and work on repairing vital Iraqi infrastructure damaged as a result of military operations.[94] ORHA's efforts were hampered by its ambiguous mandate and lack of clarity about the nature of its relations with a yet-to-be-formed Iraqi administration. In a memo that he sent to Downing Street in May, British envoy to Baghdad in the immediate aftermath of the invasion, John Sawers, described ORHA as "an unbelievable mess." It had "[n]o leadership, no strategy, no coordination, no structure, and [was] inaccessible to ordinary Iraqis."[95]

The protracted bureaucratic guerrilla warfare between the State and Defense departments over control of post-war Iraq policy wrote the epitaph of ORHA. Efforts by Secretary of State Colin Powell to restore the State Department's influence with the White House came to fruition in early May 2003 when Bush plucked L. Paul Bremer from obscurity by appointing him as Presidential Envoy to Iraq and administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) which exercised direct rule until the end of June 2004.[96] Security Council Resolution

[93] Eric Schmitt and Joel Brinkley, "The Struggle for Iraq: Planning; State Dept. Study Foresaw Trouble Now Plaguing Iraq," *The New York Times*, Sunday, October 19, 2003; available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/19/world/struggle-for-iraq-planning-state-dept-study-foresaw-trouble-now-plaguing-iraq.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm; accessed on Saturday, January 27, 2012.

[94] Raymond W. Copson (Coordinator), *Iraq War: Background and Issues Overview*, Report for Congress, (Washington, DC: The Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, Updated March 24, 2003): pp. 31-32; available at: http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/19202.pdf; accessed on Saturday, January 27, 2012.

[95] Ewen MacAskill, "US postwar Iraq strategy a mess, Blair was told," *The Guardian*, Tuesday, March 14, 2006; available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2006/mar/14/uk.topstories31; accessed on Sunday, January 28, 2012.

[96] Allawi, *op. cit.*, p. 105; and Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, pp. 12-13. For a useful account of the CPA, see James Dobbins, Seth G. Jones, Benjamin Runkle and Siddharth Mohandas, *Occupying Iraq: A Histroy of the Coalition Provisional Authority* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009).

1483, passed on May 22 2003, provided the legal grounds for the CPA which took over the exercise of the "powers of government temporarily" as of May 16.[97]

3.2.2.2. The Governing Council and the Inauguration of Ethno-Sectarian Quotas

"Government is not the solution to our problem. Government is the problem."

Ronald Reagan, Inaugural Address
(January 20, 1981)

From the early days of the occupation, Washington agonized over the transition from ORHA to an Iraqi Interim Authority (IIA), "consisting mainly of the exile opposition leaders plus some additional Iraqis from inside the country."[98] The Iraqi exile opposition pushed for cobbling together an IIA whose core consists of the six-man leadership council selected in February 2003 at a meeting held in Salah al-Din in the Kurdistan Region by the Follow-Up and Coordination Committee set up at the London opposition conference in December 2002. The six-man council was made up solely of leaders of groups based in exile and the Kurdistan Region. But the architects of the war at the Pentagon envisioned an IIA that would "draw from all of Iraq's religious and ethnic groups – to include Iraqis currently inside and outside Iraq."[99] In a bid to address concerns for inclusiveness, a proposal was put forward envisioning a two-stage process whereby the council would first be expanded into a 13-strong steering committee by adding to its ranks seven members from inside Iraq. The steering committee would then augment its membership by selecting sixteen additional members. This

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[97] The CPA was proclaimed by "Coalition Provisional Authority Regulation Number 1," official website of The Coalition Provisional Authority; available at: http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030516_CPAREG_1_The_Coalition_Provisional_Authority_.pdf; accessed on Saturday, January 28, 2012. It should be noted, however, that Regulation No. 1, dated May 6, 2003, was written after the date of the proclamation as it mentions UN Security Council Resolution 1483, passed on May 22, 2003, in its preamble as well as in Section 1, 2. See also, "Resolution 1483 (2003) Adopted by the Security Council at its 4761st meeting, on 22 May 2003," the official website of the United Nations; available at: http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N03/368/53/PDF/N0336853.pdf?OpenElement; accessed on Saturday, January 28, 2012.
[98] Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 3rd Edition (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2012 [1985]): p. 265.
[99] Paul Wolfwitz, *Prepared Statement for the Senate Armed Services Committee: The Future of NATO and Iraq* (Washington, DC: United States Department of Defense, Thursday, April 10, 2003): p. 8.

expanded committee would be transformed into the IIA. This method of selection would have allowed exile groups to assume a disproportionate role in the makeup of the IIA.[100]

In its hurried pursuit to cobble together a broadly inclusive IIA, the State Department invited 75 Iraqi delegates, including returning exiles and religious and tribal leaders from inside the country, to attend a conference on the future of governance in Iraq which opened at an airbase in Ur near Nasseriyyah, the capital of Dhi Qar Province, on April 15, 2003. The Iraqi delegates, who included a disproportionate number of US-based exiles, adopted a 13-point programme which called for setting up a democratic, non-sectarian and federal system of government and the rejection of the imposition of leaders by foreigners. Questions such as the interconnection between religion and state proved divisive and were deferred.[101] On April 28, another conference was convened in Baghdad attended by 300 representatives of the country's various ethnic and religious communities. Former exiled opposition groups did not attend in an apparent bid to dispel criticisms of pro-exile bias and lack of inclusiveness similar to those leveled at the Nasseriyyah conference. The "spirited if occasionally confused" meeting voted overwhelmingly in favor of an Iraqi-led transitional body to conduct the day-to-day affairs of government and state administration. The daylong conference called for holding an expanded conference within four weeks to thrash out the makeup of the Iraqi-led government.[102] The emphasis placed on the formation of an Iraqi-led 'transitional government' rather than an 'interim authority' as favored by Washington reflected the prevailing mood among Iraqis in favor of a speedy repossession of power and sovereignty.

The expanded national conference to select an Iraqi-led government never came to pass. Instead, leading Iraqi former exiled political actors held a series of discussions to hammer out the composition of the provisional government. They peddled their earlier scheme to form a government around the six-man, later expanded to seven-man, Iraqi leadership council. However, the acrimony that surrounded the two conferences in Nasseriyyah and Baghdad

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[100] Allawi, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

[101] *Ibid.*, p. 101, "Find two Iraqis who agree: America's ring-holder realises what he has taken on," *The Economist*, April 17, 2003; available at: http://www.economist.com/node/1714991; accessed on Friday, February 3, 2012.

[102] Alissa J. Rubin and Michael Slackman, "Iraqis Agree to Agree on a New Government," *Los Angeles Times*, April 29, 2003; available at: http://articles.latimes.com/2003/apr/29/news/war-iraq29; accessed on Friday, February 17, 2012. See also, Jane Perlez, "Iraqis Set to Meet to Pick Transitional Government," *The New York Times*, Tuesday, April 29, 2012; available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/29/world/aftereffects-postwar-government-iraqis-set-meet-pick-transitional-government.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm; accessed on Friday, February 17, 2012; and Allawi, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-104.

laid bare the returning exiled groups' lack of broad popular support as well as a sharp divide between the exiles and those who remained in Iraq. Moreover, deep fissures separating the gaggle of returning exiled groups precluded the possibility of their emergence as a solid, coherent political force. Thus, the flush of optimism about a speedy handover of power to the IIA receded, leaving behind a stinging realization on the part of the Bush administration that it had "to engage in the direct and protracted governance of Iraq to transform its polity and economy."[103]

In its bid to thwart the exiles' efforts to form a transitional government, the CPA highlighted the imbalance of the Iraqi leadership council, which was heavily weighted towards the Shi[c]ites and the Kurds. It leaned in favor of forming an advisory council that is fully representative of the wider spectrum of communities and political streams in Iraqi society. The prospect of an advisory council that has little power ran into stiff opposition from Iraqi exiles who harbored grander political ambitions in post-Saddam Iraq. The Shi[c]ites, in particular, looked forward to a growing role in any post-Saddam political arrangement to redress former discrimination against them in government. The two main Kurdish parties were more inclined to consolidate their grip on power in their semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region. The bulk of the Sunni Arab community was hostile to the very idea of joining a political process under occupation authorities. Only Sunni exile opposition leaders and the Iraqi Islamic Party (*al-Hizb al-Islami al-[c]Iraqi*) or IIP, an affiliate of the Muslim Brotherhood, were willing to join governing or administrative arrangements under the US occupation. Sunni exile leaders enjoyed very little support inside the country, whereas the IIP maintained a narrow support base. Subsequent pulling and hauling between the CPA and the Iraqi leadership council culminated in the formation of a 25-person Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), inaugurated on July 13, 2003 "as the principal body of the Iraqi interim administration, pending the establishment of an internationally recognized, representative government."[104] The IGC had limited powers to determine national policies. It had the power to appoint, dismiss and oversee the work of interim diplomats and cabinet ministers, to

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[103] Eric Herring and Glen Rangwala, *Iraq in Fragments: The Occupation and Its Legacy* (London: Hurst & Company, 2006): p. 15.

[104] "Coalition Provisional Authority Regulation Number 6: Governing Council of Iraq," official website of The Coalition Provisional Authority; available at: http://www.iraqcoalition.org/regulations/20030713_CPAREG_6_Governing_Council_of_Iraq_.pdf; accessed on Saturday, February 18, 2012. For an account of the formation of the IGC, see Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, pp. 78-103.

approve budgets, and to propose policies. However, the CPA retained an ultimate veto power over the IGC's decisions.

In a "Political Communiqué" issued on July 22, the IGC identified "the elimination of the traces of political despotism and ethnic and sectarian discrimination" as one of its key tasks.[105] But the IGC, whose members were selected by the CPA following a process of consultations with exiled groups and community leaders to ensure a broad spectrum of political, communal, regional and gender representation,[106] was incapable of healing the country's sectarian and ethnic woes. Ethno-sectarian apportionment (*muhasasah*) comprised its defining structural feature. The IGC was based on an ethno-sectarian quota system calculated by the CPA in rough proportions of the various communities to the total population. In this scheme, the Shi^{c}ites enjoyed slight numerical predominance of the power resources. **Figure 5** below shows the relative representation of various communities in the IGC's power pie. Clearly, significant variations exist between the representation of Shi^{c}ites and the representation of other communities:

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[105] Iraqi Governing Council, "al-Bayan al-Siyasi" [Political Communiqué], Baghdad, July 22, 2003 (copy on file with author).
[106] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 3rd Edition, p. 272. This was confirmed by a former IGC member. Interview with Ahmad al-Barrak, Former Member of the Iraqi Governing Council and Former Chairman of the Property Claims Commission, Baghdad, Saturday, April 1, 2012

Figure 5: Percentages of Ethnic and Denominational Background of the Iraqi Governing Council Members (July 13, 2003 – June 30, 2004)

Percentages of Ethnic and Denominational Background of the Iraqi Governing Council Members (July 13, 2003 – June 30, 2004)

Turkmens 4%
Christians 4%
Kurds 20%
Shíʿites 52%
Sunni Arabs 20%
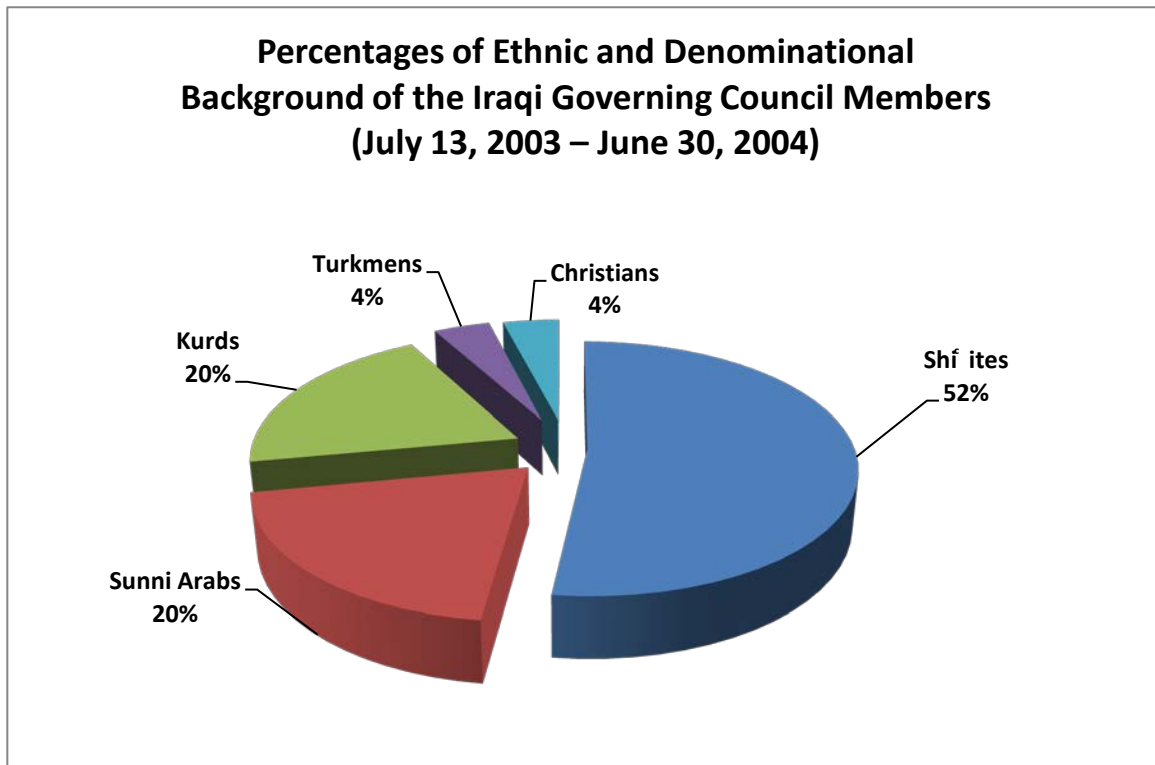
Decision-making in the IGC, which served until June 30, 2004, proved challenging. Reaching consensus on momentous matters such as selecting a single president eluded the diverse group making up the IGC. To break the deadlock, the members settled in late July on a rotating 'presidency,' whereby nine members would take monthly turns in occupying the post of IGC President in Arabic alphabetical order. The same logic of ethno-sectarian apportionment that determined the makeup of the IGC was operative throughout the process of the formation of the rotating presidency. The arrangement was based on an ethno-sectarian apportionment of political power that reflected the predominance of the Shiᶜites. Five of those who served on the rotating presidency were Shiᶜites, two Sunnis and two Kurds. According to Bremer, the IGC had originally settled for setting up a five-man executive whereby the Shiᶜites retain a majority of the seats, i.e., three, while the Sunnis and the Kurds occupy one seat each.

"However, the two Kurdish leaders, Barazani and Talabani, had been unable to agree which of them should take the Kurdish seat. So they demanded they each be

seated in the Council's presidency. This immediately provoked a demand by the Sunni Arabs for a second seat to equalize their weight with the Kurds. At this point, the Shia insisted they have a majority on the presidency as they did on the Governing Council."[107]

As such, the tendency to apportion power and government office based on a communal quota system proved self-reproductive. It effectively laid the foundations of a consociational pattern that would profoundly shape the makeup of subsequent governing bodies. Shortly after taking office, the IGC embarked on the task of selecting an interim cabinet. IGC members agreed that each one of them would pick one interim minister. Rather than using the cabinet as an opportunity to transcend narrow partisan and communal interests and broaden the emerging political order's political base, the IGC members appointed ministers from their own parties or even close relatives. The result was an interim cabinet whose ethno-sectarian makeup was a replica of the IGC. The cabinet makeup coincided with that of the IGC as the 25 ministers were distributed along the same ethnic and sectarian lines. The cabinet selection process was not conducive for meritocracy or efficiency. Some of the interim ministers were inexperienced and ill-prepared for shouldering the responsibilities of their jobs. One interim minister described some of his cabinet colleagues as "patently unsuitable for the jobs they had been allocated."[108]

On November 15, 2003, the CPA concluded an agreement with the IGC on a timetable for the transfer of sovereignty to a new Iraqi transitional administration by June 30, 2004. The agreement laid out provisions for drafting a provisional constitution known as the "Fundamental Law" by the IGC in consultation with the CPA, selecting a Transitional National Assembly (TNA) through an intricate system of local caucuses, and organizing elections for a Constitutional Convention tasked with drafting a permanent constitution that would be ratified in a national referendum.[109] The US decision to accelerate the handover of power to the Iraqis was prompted by a desire to deal with mounting opposition to the occupation of Iraq from several directions: the escalating insurgency spearheaded by Sunni

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[107] Bremer, *My Year in Iraq*, p. 124.
[108] Allawi, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
[109] The complete text of the agreement is reproduced in Andrew Arato, *Constitution Making under Occupation: The Politics of Imposed Revolution in Iraq* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009): pp. 110-113; and John Ehrenberg, J. Patrice McSherry, José Ramón Sánchez, and Caroleen Marji Sayej, eds., *The Iraq Papers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): pp. 195-197.

Arabs, the increasing unpopularity of the war in the US, and the Sadrists' growing hostility and adamant opposition to the US occupation and the IGC.[110]

The significance of the IGC arrangement in the trajectory of the development of sectarianism in post-Saddam Iraq does not merely lie in giving Shiᶜites a leading political voice. Nor does it only lie in inaugurating a marked shift in the distribution of state power away from dominance by the Sunni Arabs which had prevailed since the establishment of the modern Iraqi nation-state. It lies first and foremost in laying the foundation stone for a new regenerative mechanism for the distribution of power resources based on the relative demographic or numerical weights of ethno-sectarian communities. Basing the IGC selection process on a formula that approximates Iraq's communal diversity amounted to the institutionalization of longstanding, but amorphous, ethno-sectarian tendencies. It was the first time since the formation of modern Iraq when the notion of a rigid ethno-sectarian apportionment of power resources was embraced as a formal organizing principle of politics.

3.2.2.3. <u>Identity Politics at the Ballot Box</u>

"I voted for the United Iraqi Alliance because it represents the Shiᶜites, the persecuted and oppressed people."

> Abu Radhi, 82, Shiᶜite Voter in Sadr City,
> December 15, 2005

"This election will determine our destiny. If we don't participate, the next four years will be the same as now. The Sunnis will be oppressed, and if that happens our lives will be hell."

> Abdula Abdul Rahman, 34,
> Engineering Professor in Fallujah,
> December 15, 2005[111]

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[110] For a useful discussion of these pressures on US decision makers, see Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 3rd Edition, pp. 273-279; and Herring and Rangwala, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.
[111] Epigraphic quotes are from "The scene from polls around the country," *Knight Ridder Newspapers*, Thursday, December 15, 2005; available at: http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2005/12/15/13162/the-scene-from-polls-around-the.html; accessed on Sunday, April 29, 2012.

For all its pro-democratization rhetoric, the Bush administration's initial proposal for electing a transitional legislature was not based on the principle of one person, one vote. Instead, it put forward a system of provincial caucuses that would elect a number of representatives to the interim assembly proportionate to the population size of each of Iraq's 18 provinces.[112] This system would have afforded the CPA a great leverage in shaping the final makeup of the Iraqi transitional assembly. To the Bush administration's chagrin, the proposed system of caucuses was torpedoed by stiff opposition led by the preeminent Shiᶜite jurist in Najaf, Grand Ayatollah Sistani, who insisted on general elections before the transfer of sovereignty to Iraqis based on the principle of one person, one vote. Sistani had, as early as June 26, 2003, declared his opposition to giving the Coalition a leading role in drafting a constitution for post-Saddam Iraq, arguing that Coalition forces "have no jurisdiction whatsoever to appoint members of the Constitution preparation assembly." He insisted that "there must be a general election so that every Iraqi citizen – who is eligible to vote – can choose someone to represent him in a foundational Constitution preparation assembly."[113] Given the country's built-in Shiᶜite demographic majority, universal suffrage based on the principle of one person, one vote would naturally lead to Shiᶜite domination of the elected legislature. This was a classic tyranny-of-the-majority dilemma made all the more acute by the lack of safeguards to guarantee the rights of the non-Shiᶜite minorities.[114] The controversy over the holding of elections led to UN intervention to try to break the impasse. Appointed as special UN secretary-general envoy to Iraq, veteran Algerian diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi argued in a report to the Security Council that the CPA's caucus system and holding elections by the handover of sovereignty deadline were both impractical. Sistani accepted the idea suggested

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[112] Arato, *op. cit.*

[113] Quoted in Noah Feldman and Roman Martinez "Constitutional Politics and Text in the New Iraq: An Experiment in Islamic Democracy," *Fordham Law Review*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (November 2006): pp. 891-892.

[114] The dilemma of majority tyranny or 'tyranny of the majority' denotes potential anti-democratic effects of direct democracy, especially within ethnically, racially or religiously non-homogeneous societies where a certain community commands numerical dominance. The dilemma has been explored by liberal democratic thinkers, including John Stuart Mill and the Founding Fathers of the United States republic. In Federalist No. 51, James Madison, for instance, warned: "If a majority be united by a common interest, the rights of the minority will be insecure. There are but two methods of providing against this evil: The one by creating a will in the community independent of the majority, that is, of the society itself; the other by comprehending in the society so many separate descriptions of citizens, as will render an unjust combination of a majority of the whole very improbable, if not impracticable." See, James Madison, *Federalist Nos. 10 and 51* (New York, NY: New American Library, 1937 [1787]): p. 339. See also John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Indianapolis, IN: Macmillan, 1956 [1859]): pp. 7-8. The lack of institutionalized safeguards to mitigate against the tyranny of the majority in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein, such as those prescribed by Hamilton or proportional representation as prescribed by Mill, heightened fears of marginalization among non-Shiᶜite minorities, especially the Sunnis.

by the UN that credible and genuine elections could be held by January 30, 2005.[115] Eventually, elections were held for a 275-member Transitional National Assembly on January 30, 2005.

The manner in which the 2005 election unfolded only acted to fuel sectarianism. The fault lines reflected sectarian divisions, complete with opposing religious edicts along sectarian lines. Sunni Arabs, who were loath to the loss of power and privilege in the post-Saddam era, were divided over taking part in the elections, with the majority favoring a boycott of the balloting. The Sunni AMSI, which was radically and irrevocably opposed to the entire political process under occupation, called on all Iraqis to boycott the polls.[116] An avalanche of communiqués, statements and pronouncements by other Sunni tribal, religious and community leaders reflected the prevailing Sunni mood leaning toward a boycott. Insurgent groups issued statements denouncing democracy as a form of "apostasy" and threatening to attack those who take part in the "dirty farce" of the elections.[117] Even Sunni parties which had been taking part in the political process, such as the IIP, joined the boycott calls after their demand to postpone the elections for six months to give them a chance to rally a higher Sunni turnout at the polls was not met.[118]

The Sunni Arabs' fears and apprehensions about the elections contrasted sharply with the great hopes and expectations pinned on the balloting by the Shiᶜites. The elections presented the Shiᶜites with a golden opportunity to rectify the political power disparity between them and the Sunni Arabs that had been a fixed feature of the Iraqi political scene since the establishment of the modern Iraqi state. Shiᶜite leaders overwhelmingly called on people to cast their votes, which they characterized as a religious duty. Sistani, for instance, issued an edit on December 10, 2004, saying: "All male and female citizens eligible for voting must

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[115] Allawi, *op. cit*., pp. 226-232.

[116] The Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq, Statement No. 14, "Hawla Mawdhuᶜ al-Intikhabat" ["On the Topic of the Elections"], *Bayanat Hay'at ᶜUlama' al-Muslimin fi al-ᶜIraq*, Vol. 1, *op. cit*., p. 62; see also Statement No. 86, "Hawla al-Intikhabat" ["On Elections"], pp. 179-180.

[117] Jackie Spinner and Bassam Sebti, "Militant Declares War on Iraqi Vote," *The Washington Post*, Monday, January 24, 2005; available at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A30447-2005Jan23.html; accessed on Sunday, April 8, 2012; and Jim Muir, "Terrorist threat to Iraq voters," *The Telegraph*, Friday, December 31, 2004; available at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iraq/1480126/Terrorist-threat-to-Iraq-voters.html; accessed on Sunday, April 8, 2012.

[118] Faris ᶜUmar, "Insihab al-Hizb al-Islami wa Ta'thiruh ᶜala Musharakat al-Sunnah fi al-Intikhabat" [The Islamic Party's Withdrawal and Its Impact on the Sunnis' Participation in the Elections], *Radio Free Iraq*, Tuesday, December 28, 2004; available at: http://www.iraqhurr.org/content/article/1645893.html; accessed on Wednesday, March 28, 2012.

make sure that their names are correctly registered in the voter registry."[119] In a Friday prayers sermon on October 22, 2004, Sistani's representative in Karbala, Shaykh Ahmad al-Safi, called for "heavy participation," arguing that participation "has religious sanctity because the transgressor will enter hellfire."[120]

The extent of Sistani's influence on the electoral process went far beyond rhetorical endorsement of the electoral process and urging the faithful to take part in the balloting. Sistani's office played a key role in inducing the endlessly squabbling Shiᶜite political parties and ever-fractious leaders to unite in a single electoral coalition. Sistani chaired a six-man committee formed "to hammer out the principles that would form the basis of the new alliance, and to bring the main Islamist parties together." The committee established a mechanism for allocating shares of candidates to political parties and entities and the approval of candidates. These efforts came to fruition on December 8, 2004 with the announcement of the United Iraqi Alliance (*al-I'itilaf al-ᶜIraqi al-Muwahhad*), or UIA, a broad-based coalition led by Sayyid Abd al-ᶜAziz al-Hakim of SCIRI. The UIA, which included all major Shiᶜite parties and leaders, put together a slate of 228 candidates for the TNA elections.[121]

The election results represented another foundation stone in consolidating Shiᶜite political dominance in post-Saddam Iraq. The UIA came in first, scooping 140 seats (51 percent), followed by the Kurdistan Alliance (KA) which earned 75 seats (27 percent), while Iraqia took 40 seats (15 percent). A motley collection of smaller parties and electoral coalitions were left with a paltry 20 seats (7 percent). The results are shown in the following table:

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[119] "Istifta' hawla Tasjil al-Asma' fi Sijill al-Nakhibin" [An Edict Sought on the Registration of Names in the Voter Registry], *The Official Website of Grand Ayatollah al-Uzma Seyyid Ali al-Sistani*, dated 26 Shaᶜaban 1425 A.H. [Sunday, October 10, 2004]; available at: http://www.sistani.org/index.php?p=320138&id=242; accessed on Saturday, March 9, 2012. A partisan narrative praising the role played by Ayatollah Sistani in the electoral process in Iraq can be found in Salah Abd al-Razzaq, *al-Marjaᶜiyyah al-Diniyyah fi al-ᶜIraq wa al-Intikhabat al-Wataniyyah wa Taᶜaziz al-Wahdah al-Wataniyyah: Dirasah fi al-Dawr al-Siyasi li al-Marjaᶜiyyah fi al-ᶜIraq al-Muᶜasir* [The Religious Marjaᶜiyyah in Iraq and Parliamentary Elections and Promoting National Unity: A Study of the Political Role of the Marjaᶜiyyah in Contemporary Iraq], 1st Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Muntada al-Maᶜarif, 2010).
[120] "Mumaththil li al-Sistani: al-Mumtaniᶜi ᶜan al-Taswit fi al-Intikhabat Yadkhul Jahannam" [A Sistani Representative: He Who Abstains from Voting in the Elections Enters Hellfire], *Middle East Online*, Friday, October 22, 2004; available at: http://middle-east-online.com/?id=26801; accessed on Saturday, March 9, 2012.
[121] Allawi, *op., cit.*, pp. 343-344.

Table 1: Election Results in the Transitional National Assembly Elections, January 2005[122]

Political Party/List	Number of Seats	Percentage	Sectarian Affiliation
United Iraqi Alliance	140	50.91	Shiᶜite
Kurdistan Alliance	75	27.27	Kurdish
Iraqia	40	14.55	Secular/Non-Sectarian
Iraqiyyun [Iraqis]	5	1.82	Sunni Arab
National Cadres and Elites (Sadrist-affiliated)	3	1.09	Shiᶜite
Front of Iraqi Turkmens	3	1.09	Turkmen
People's Unity (Communist Party)	2	0.73	Secular/Non-Sectarian
Kurdistan Islamic Group	2	0.73	Kurdish/Islamist
Islamic Action Organization in Iraq – Central Command	2	0.73	Shiᶜite
Reconciliation and Liberation Bloc	1	0.36	Sunni Arab
National Democratic Alliance	1	0.36	Secular/Non-Sectarian
National Mesopotamia List	1	0.36	Christian
Total	**275**	**100**	

However, the Sunnis' poor representation in the TNA election soon gave rise to a creeping sense of fear among the Sunni Arabs that the strategy of absenting themselves from the elections was furthering the community's exclusion from the country's politics.[123] The instinct among some Sunni Arabs, born out of this collective fear of political marginalization, was to press for playing a larger role in the constitutional drafting process. This tendency received a boost with the appointment of US ambassador to Baghdad Zalmay Khalilzad who

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[122] Independent Higher Electoral Commission of Iraq (IHEC), "Asma' al-Kiyanat al-Siyasiyyah li Intikhabat al-Jamᶜiyyah al-Wataniyyah wa Majalis al-Muhafadhat" [The Names of the Political Entities in the Elections for the National Assembly and Provincial Councils], the official website of The Independent Higher Electoral Commission of Iraq; available at: http://www.ihec-iq.com/ftpar/election2004/other/name2.pdf; accessed on Wednesday, March 28, 2012.

[123] See ᶜAdnan Muhammad Salman al-Dulaymi, *Akhir al-Mataf: Sirah wa Dhikrayat* [The End of the Journey: A Biography and Memoirs], 1st Edition (Amman, Jordan: Dar al-Ma'mun li al-Nashr wa al-Tawziᶜi, 1432/2012 A.D.): p. 190.

pushed for integrating Sunni Arabs into the emerging political process in hopes of weaning them from pro-insurgency and oppositional stances inimical to US interests. Rankled by feelings of marginalization, indignant Sunni Arabs turned out in large numbers at the ballot box in the general elections held on December 15, 2005 to elect members of a Council of Representatives for a 4-year term. Their vote was in essence an act of identity politics aimed to challenge Shiᶜite domination of government.

Several Sunni-based insurgent groups declared a cessation of armed attacks during the election to enable their supporters to take part in the polls.[124] But Sunni Arabs were not alone in viewing the ballot box as an outlet for expressing communal grievances, aspirations and collective traumas. Much like in the TNA elections, primordial voting was a salient feature of the December 15, 2005 elections. Most Iraqi voters cast their votes to promote the interests of a perceived primordial community – be it ethnic, sectarian, tribal, familial or the like. The emotionally-charged and febrile identitarian political atmosphere provided political parties and elites with incentives to employ primordial identity as a voter mobilization tool. Sectarian rhetoric and symbolism had pride of place in the campaigns of most of the main political parties. Mosques and other places of worship were utilized as political pulpits. Consequently, there was very little voting for political platforms or programs.

The reconstituted UIA list contesting the December polls brought together the same components that made up its slate of candidates for the January election. But, this time around, the Sadrists exercised strong influence within the alliance. Notwithstanding Sistani's declared position not to endorse any list in the elections, the UIA continued to enjoy the tacit support of the Ayatollah. In the run-up to the elections, elements close to Sistani's office issued a widely-publicized communiqué which instructed the faithful to refrain from electing "dangerous" lists, defined as lists that do not subscribe to "religious and national constants," or "weak" lists, defined as lists that enjoy little grassroots support.[125] Although the communiqué did not amount to a *fatwa*, its tremendous impact on Shiᶜite voters cannot be underestimated. The Shiᶜite parties comprising the UIA also resorted to tactics aimed to whip up sectarian and religious passions to rally the Shiᶜite vote behind them. They repeatedly

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[124] Herring and Rangwala, *op. cit.*, p. 44.
[125] The communiqué is reprinted in Usamah Mahdi, "Taftish Amriki Mubaghit li al-Muᶜtaqalat" [Surprise American Inspection of Detention Centers], *Elaph*, Saturday, December 3, 2005; available at: http://www.elaph.com/Web/Politics/2005/12/110161.htm?sectionarchive=Politics; accessed on Saturday, April 8, 2012.

declared their devotion to the *marja^c iyyah*, namely Sistani, using his picture on their campaign literature and posters. Shi^c ite clerics and party activists publicized the alleged notion that the true, albeit undeclared, wish of the *marja^c iyyah* was to vote for the UIA. Some went as far as referring to unofficial, 'under-the-table' edicts embodying this wish. Still, some went even further; promising those who vote for lists other than the UIA eternal damnation and painful torment in the hereafter. They warned the faithful that their wives would be automatically divorced from them and they will not be eligible for burial in Muslim cemeteries if they cast their votes to non-UIA lists.

Overall, the basic electoral arithmetic was similar to that of the January 2005 elections. But the sizeable Sunni Arab participation in the December 2005 elections translated into a larger share of parliament seats won by Sunni Arab candidates. This came at the expense of other major electoral lists whose shares of seats shrank slightly. However, the UIA retained its predominance in the parliament, winning 128 seats (47 percent), down from 140 and ten below the 138-seat threshold required for forming a majority government. It was trailed by the KA with 53 seats (19 percent), down from 75. ^c Allawi's Iraqia scooped 25 seats (9 percent), down from 40. The two Sunni Arab lists, the Iraqi Accordance Front (*Jabhat al-Tawafuq al-^c Iraqiyya*), or IAF, and the Iraqi Front for National Dialogue (*al-Jabhah al-^c Iraqiyyah li al-Hiwar al-Watani*), or IFND, won 44 seats (16 percent) and 11 seats (4 percent), respectively. The remaining 14 seats (5 percent) were taken by a few electoral coalitions. These results are summarized in **Table 2** below:

Table 2: Election Results in the Parliamentary Elections, December 2005[126]

Political Party/List	Number of Seats	Percentage	Sectarian Affiliation
United Iraqi Alliance	128	46.55	Shi^c ite
Kurdistan Alliance	53	19.27	Kurdish
Iraqi Accordance Front	44	16.00	Sunni Arab
Iraqia	25	9.09	Secular/Non-Sectarian
Iraqi Front for National Dialogue	11	4.00	Sunni Arab/Secular-Leaning

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[126] Independent Higher Electoral Commission of Iraq (IHEC), "A^c adha' Majlis al-Nuwwab al-Muntakhabun fi Intikhabat 15 Kanun Awwal 2005" [Members of Parliament Elected in the December 15, 2005 Elections], the official website of The Independent Higher Electoral Commission of Iraq; available at: http://www.ihec-iq.com/ftpar/regulation2005/other/The_names_of_the_members_of_the_House_of_Representatives_ar.pdf; accessed on Friday, April 13, 2012.

Kurdistan Islamic Union	5	1.82	Kurdish/Islamist
Reconciliation and Liberation Bloc	3	1.09	Sunni Arab
Message Bearers [*Risaliyyun*] (Sadrist-affiliated)	2	0.73	Shi^cite
Mithal al-Alusi's List for the Iraqi Nation	1	0.36	Secular/Non-Sectarian
Iraqi Turkmen Front	1	0.36	Turkmen
Ayzidi Movement for Reform and Progress	1	0.36	Yazidi
Mesopotamia List	1	0.36	Christian
Total	**275**	**99.99***	

* Figures do not add up to exactly 100 percent due to rounding

The December 2005 elections highlighted Iraq's growing and deepening societal schisms along primordial divides. Deep-seated communal resentments and aspirations were expressed through the ballot box. The elections, thus, effectively turned into another juncture in the entrenchment of primordial loyalties as a factor in voting behavior and as a primary organizing principle of politics. The March 2010 elections reinforced this pattern of primordial voting, whereby Iraqi voters turn to their ethno-sectarian primordial loyalties when they cast their ballots. The events that unfolded in the run-up to the elections also demonstrated the burgeoning complexity of the political and legal problems resulting from the entrenchment of ethno-sectarian primordial loyalties.

Preparations for the March 2010 elections started off on a negative note with legal challenges and political disputes marring the months leading up to the balloting. The preparations hit a snag during the debate over the enactment of an amendment to Elections Law No. 16 of 2005, which was used for the December 2005 elections. The festering dispute over the status of Kirkuk/Ta'mim, which pits the Kurds, who demand that the province joins the Kurdistan Region, on one side, and the Arabs and Turkmens, who reject the Kurdish demand, on the other, spilled over into the amendment of the electoral law. Determining the number of seats in the upcoming parliament, based on the constitutionally-mandated ratio of "one seat per 100,000 Iraqi persons," proved problematic in the light of the lack of a census to take into

account growth rates since the previous election.[127] Compromise was reached on November 8, 2009, with the passage of the Amendment Law of the Elections Law of 2005. Tellingly, the passage of the law marked the start of deeper political tribulation. Sunni Arabs complained that the 5 percent ratio reserved for compensatory seats effectively amounts to their community's underrepresentation as most of the Iraqis living outside Iraq are Sunni Arabs forced to flee the country as a result of the sectarian civil strife in post-Saddam Iraq. On November 15, one of Iraq's two vice presidents, Tariq al-Hashemi, a Sunni Arab and head of the IIP, vetoed the law, demanding that the compensatory quota be increased to 15 percent.[128] The ensuing stalemate, which effectively led to delaying the parliamentary elections scheduled for January 2010, was broken through a political agreement paving the way for the passage on November 23 of a new amendment which was not fundamentally different from the earlier version. The new amendment maintained the quota designated for compensatory seats at 5 percent but stated that the minority seats, a total of eight, should be taken from the seats allocated to provinces with substantial minority demographic weight. Therefore, all compensatory seats would be distributed to national lists. The law, reaffirmed in a "Clarification Memorandum" specifying the distribution of seats across provinces passed by an extraordinary parliamentary session on December 6, also provided for counting votes cast by Iraqis living abroad in their original provinces, thus affirming the equality of voters

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[127] *Iraqi Constitution*, pp. 30-31. The holding of a population census in post-Saddam Iraq has been repeatedly delayed due to Arab and Turkmen fears that it will be used for the purposes of implementing Article 140 of the constitution which provides for a sequential three-stage process – *viz.*, normalization, census and a referendum – to settle the final status of Kirkuk and other disputed territories. According to Article 140/Second, the executive branch "accomplishes completely (normalization and census and concludes with a referendum in Kirkuk and other disputed territories to determine the will of their citizens), by a date not to exceed the 31st of December 2007" (*Iraqi Constitution*, p. 88). While the Arabs and Turkmens argue that Article 140 is "dead" because its deadline has expired, the Kurds argue that the constitutional obligation placed upon the government to implement the article is still valid. Arabs and Turkmens are adamant that, before holding a general population census, "corrective" (*tashih*) measures must be implemented to address post-2003 disadvantageous demographic changes in Kirkuk. These measures include rolling back the influx of Kurds which took place under the pretext of the return of Kirkuki Kurds displaced under Saddam and a review of the province's voter registry rolls, which the Arabs and Turkmens claim have been tampered with by the Kurdish-dominated provincial authorities to inflate the number of Kurdish voters in the province.

[128] "Iraq VP vetoes new election law," *BBC News*, Wednesday, November 18, 2012; available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8365801.stm; accessed on Monday, April 23, 2012. A report published by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq in 2007 estimated the number of Iraqis living in neighboring countries at approximately 2 million "with an additional outflow of 40,000 to 50,000 per month as conditions continue to worsen." See United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), *Humanitarian Briefing on the Crisis in Iraq*, UNAMI website, May 2, 2007; available at: http://www.uniraq.org/documents/UN-Iraq%20Humanitarian%20Briefing%20Fact%20Sheet%20May%2007.pdf; accessed on Monday, April 23, 2012, p. 3. See also, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Humanitarian Needs of Persons Displaced within Iraq and Across the Country's Borders: An International Response*; UNHCR website, March 30, 2007; available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/type,CONFDOC,,,46499cb62,0.html; accessed on Monday, April 23, 2012, p. 5.

regardless of their location. It stated: "Iraqis, wherever they are, shall cast their votes for the lists of their provinces or their candidates."[129] The amendment, however, stopped short of raising "provincial seat allocations on the basis of anticipated out-of-country-voter returns, thus diluting representation in provinces with significant number of out-of-country voters."[130]

But the final denouement of Iraq's tempestuous electoral drama had yet to be reached. Another imbroglio erupted on January 7, 2010, when the Accountability and Justice Commission, under its Chairman Ahmad Chalabi and Executive Director Ali Faysal al-Lami, both Shiʿites, invoked de-Baʿathification laws to disqualify 496 candidates from running in the parliamentary race. Additional candidates were disqualified on January 19 bringing the number of barred candidates up to 511. The AJC subsequently debarred fifty-nine election candidates for technical reasons, such as mistaken identity. But those reinstated did not include prominent Sunnis. Interestingly, the disqualifications were not always based on former ranking in the Baʿath Party. Some low-ranking members, as well as tribal leaders who never joined the Baʿath Party but took the government's side in the 1991 Uprising, were disqualified.[131] Surprisingly, a judge who served on the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal (*al-Mahkamah al-Jina'iyyah al-ʿIraqiyyah al-ʿUlya*) responsible for trying Saddam Hussein and senior members of his regime, one Hussein al-Musawi, was among those who were originally disqualified.[132] The blacklist included a roughly equal number of Shiʿite and Sunni candidates, as well as some Kurds.[133] But the disqualification was widely perceived as a "plot" by the Shiʿite-led government to marginalize the Sunni Arabs who were "expected to

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[129] "Qanun Taʿadil Qanun al-Intikhabat Raqam 16 li Sanat 2005 (al-Manqudh)" [Law of the Amendment of (the Vetoed) Elections Law No. 16 of 2005], official website of the Iraqi Parliament; available at: http://www.parliament.iq/Iraqi_Council_of_Representatives.php?name=articles_ajsdyawqwqdjasdba46s7a98da s6dasda7das4da6sd8asdsawewqeqw465e4qweq4wq6e4qw8eqwe4qw6eqwe4sadkj&file=showdetails&sid=3350 ; accessed on Monday, April 23, 2012. Kenneth Katzman, *Iraq: Politics, Elections, and Benchmarks*, CRS Report for Congress (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, December 8, 2009); available at: http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/135969.pdf; accessed on Sunday, April 8, 2012., pp. 8-9; and Republic of Iraq, Council of Representatives, Parliamentary Directorate, Legislative Follow-Up Section, "Mudhakkirah Tafsiriyyah" [Explanatory Memorandum], issued on December 6, 2009 (copy on file with author).
[130] Charles P. Trumbull and Julie B. Martin, "Elections and Government Formation in Iraq: An Analysis of the Judiciary's Role," *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (March 2011): p. 349.
[131] Reidar Visser, "The Ruling of the Accountability and Justice Board," *Iraq and Gulf Analysis*, Tuesday, January 19, 2010; available at: http://gulfanalysis.wordpress.com/2010/01/19/the-ruling-of-the-accountability-and-justice-board/; accessed on Monday, December 5, 2011.
[132] Interview with Hussein al-Musawi, Retired Judge on the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal, Baghdad, Tuesday, July 3, 2012.
[133] Hamid Ahmed, "Iraq election chief: More candidates to be banned," *The Seattle Times*, Friday, January 22, 2010; available at: http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/nationworld/2010850513_apmliraq.html; accessed on Friday, December 16, 2011.

come out and vote en masse."[134] This perception was reinforced by the fact that among the disqualified Sunni Arab candidates were leaders who had been cleared for running in, and won, the December 2005 elections. In the case of Salih al-Mutlaq, he was an elected MP leading an 11-strong parliamentary bloc and had served on the Constitutional Drafting Committee in 2005. The disproportionately adverse impact the exclusion had on top Sunni Arab politicians "seal[ed] the increasingly sectarian character of the elections."[135] In other words, it "perpetuated a sectarian political atmosphere."[136]

The main coalitions contesting the 2010 elections reflected the changing realities of the political landscape. But the deployment of communal identities and solidarities to flex communal muscle at the ballot box remained a fixed feature of the electoral race. Internal political competition had led to the splintering of the dominant Shiᶜite alliance, the UIA, into two main coalitions: the Iraqi National Alliance (*al-I'itilaf al-Watani al-ᶜIraqi*) or INA, a coalition of Shiᶜite religious parties including odd bedfellow such as the ISCI and the Sadrists, and the State of Law Coalition or (*I'itilaf Dawlat al-Qanun*) or SLC, a coalition led by the Islamic Daᶜawah Party of prime minister Nouri al-Maliki. The SLC reflected Maliki's attempt to recast his image as a national trans-communal leader. Maliki sought to counter the strong party machines, as well as paramilitary components, of constituent parts of the INA, namely the ISCI and the Sadrists, through political patronage and the formation of his own tribal support (*isnad)* councils.[137]

The secular, Sunni-backed Iraqia presented the two Shiᶜite alliances with a formidable competitor. This time around the salience of Iraqia's Sunni Arab character was accentuated by its incorporation of Sunni Arab political entities. Iraqia's support among Sunni Arabs further surged on the back of growing popular disenchantment with the Islamist IAF, which ran a ticket composed of Sunni Islamist parties. For its part, the Kurdistan Alliance stuck to

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[134] Ranj Alaaldin, "Ba'ath saga haunts Iraq's future," *The Guardian*, Wednesday, January 13, 2012; available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/jan/13/baath-iraq-debaathification-elections; accessed on Monday, April 23, 2012.

[135] Marina Ottaway and Danial Kaysi, "De-Baathification As A Political Tool: Commission Ruling Bans Political Parties and Leaders," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, January 26, 2010; available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/2010/01/26/de-baathification-as-political-tool-commission-ruling-bans-political-parties-and-leaders/7mt; accessed on Saturday, December 24, 2011.

[136] Reidar Visser, "The 511 De-Baathification Cases: Sectarianism or Despotism?" *www.hitoriae.org*, Wednesday, January 20, 2010; available at: http://www.historiae.org/de-Baathification.asp; accessed on Saturday, December 3, 2011.

[137] Hamid al-Kifaey, "Innaha Majalis Isnad al-Maliki" [They Are Maliki's Support Councils], *al-Hayat*, Tuesday, January 6, 2009; available at: http://international.daralhayat.com/archivearticle/282409; accessed on Saturday, April 28, 2012.

its time-honored strategy of fielding a slate of candidates from the two main Kurdish parties, the PUK and the KDP, and a potpourri of smaller Kurdish parties. Also contesting the election were a number of other smaller political coalitions. The March 2010 electoral race was tight with an improved showing of the Sunni Arabs. Iraqia won a plurality of 91 seats (28 percent). Maliki's SLC trailed Iraqiya by a small margin scoring 89 seats (27.38 percent). The INA finished in third place with 70 seats (21.54 percent), while the KA came in a distant fourth, capturing 43 seats (13.23 percent). A host of smaller electoral coalitions shared the remaining 32 seats (9.85 percent). A summary of these results is presented in **Table 3** below:

Table 3: Election Results in the Parliamentary Elections, March 2010[138]

Political Party/List	No. of Seats	Percentage	Sectarian Affiliation
Iraqia	91	28.00	Secular/Sunni-Backed
State of Law Coalition	89	27.38	Shiᶜite
Iraqi National Alliance	70	21.54	Shiᶜite
Kurdistan Alliance	43	13.23	Kurdish
Change List	8	2.46	Kurdish
Iraqi Accordance Front	6	1.85	Sunni Arab
Kurdistan Islamic Union	4	1.23	Kurdish/Islamist
Iraq Unity Alliance	4	1.23	Secular/Non-Sectarian
Mesopotamia List	3	0.92	Christian
Kurdistan Islamic Group	2	0.62	Kurdish/Islamist
Chaldean, Syriac, Assyrian People's Council	2	0.62	Christian
Muhammad Jamshid al-Shabaki	1	0.31	Shabak
Yazidi Movement for Reform and Progress	1	0.31	Yazidi
Khalid Amin Roumi	1	0.31	Mandean (Sabean)
Total	**325**	**100.01***	

* Figures do not add up to exactly 100 percent due to rounding

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[138] Independent Higher Electoral Commission of Iraq (IHEC), "Nata'ij Intikhabat Majlis al-Nuwwab al-ᶜIraqi 2010" [Results of the 2010 Iraqi Parliament Elections], the official website of The Independent Higher Electoral Commission of Iraq; available at: http://www.ihec-iq.com/ar/result.html; accessed on Saturday, April 28, 2012.

One striking result of the elections was the transformation of Iraqia into a coalition representing the interests of a primordial Sunni Arab identity. Outwardly, Iraqia kept a secular, non-sectarian visage. But assertive Sunni Arab communal interests were lurking beneath the thin veneer of Iraqia's innocuous secular nationalist discourse. The sectarian drift of Iraqia occurred in the run-up to the elections as it became a refuge for Sunni Arab coalitions that decided to come together under its umbrella to avoid scattering their votes, to assert their communal interests and to challenge the existing distribution of power resources. These coalitions were also nudged to coalesce behind Iraqia's leader Ayad ʿAllawi, a secular Shiʿite hostile to Iran, by Sunni regional powers, especially Turkey and Saudi Arabia, concerned about the disenfranchisement of Sunni Arabs and rising Iranian influence in Shiʿite-led Iraq. Even insurgent groups opposed to the political process, including those affiliated with the outlawed Baʿath Party, reduced the tempo of their activities around election time and instructed their supporters to vote for Iraqia.[139] The Sunni Arabs and their regional backers were cognizant of the fact that emerging, yet unwritten, conventions in the pecking order arising from the detritus of post-Saddam Iraq allocated the office of the prime minister to the majority Shiʿite community. As such, by dint of being headed by a Shiʿite, Iraqia inspired renewed hope among Sunni Arabs that they can overcome their marginalization in the post-Saddam era and claw their way back to the corridors of power and dominance behind a Shiʿite prime minister adopting their communal interests.[140] Assertive primordial loyalties, therefore, were a determining factor in the Sunni Arab shift to vote overwhelmingly for Iraqia.

With the holding of the March 2010 polls, the electoral saga enjoyed a brief lull only to return to its stormy crisis-ridden gloom. Storm clouds began to blow as soon as reports on election results began to surface. Soon, the political scene was swept in a swirl of claims and counter-claims of fraud and challenges to the election results, leading to a court order for a manual recount of the vote in the Baghdad electoral district. As we will see in the following section,

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[139] However, Salafist insurgent groups affiliated with al-Qaʿida remained faithful to their visceral anti-democratic proclivities and, as such, obstinately opposed to the electoral process. For instance, a non-signed statement distributed in the Hawijah District of Kirkuk/Taʾmim Province in the run-up to the election in late February 2010 warned against taking part in the balloting. The statement characterized those taking part in any aspect of the electoral process, including "anyone who assists in it, encourage it, or accepts and does not repudiate it," as apostates and disbelievers. "Hukm al-Intikhabat al-Barlamaniyyah fi al-Shariʿah al-Islamiyyah" [The Verdict of the Islamic Shariʿah on Parliamentary Elections], non-signed anti-elections statement distributed in the Hawijah District of Kirkuk/Taʾmim Province in late February 2010 (copy on file with the author).
[140] Interview with Shaykh ʿAdnan al-Danbous, former Member of Parliament, Iraqia Bloc, and Shiʿite Tribal Chief of the Kinanah Tribes, Beirut, Wednesday, October 27, 2010.

the attendant communal tensions turned the election and its aftermath into yet another episode in the trajectory of the social construction of sectarian primordial identity in post-Saddam Iraq.

3.2.2.4. Communal Apportionment of Executive Power

"When the state is a state of law, run by institutions, i.e. it is institutional, where no pan outweighs the pan of citizenship, balance becomes automatic. Thinking about it becomes rather meaningless, except as one of the curses of sectarian and ethnic discrimination, whose implementations we have seen in what we have agreed to call quota apportionment, and consociational apportionment, which has taken to camouflaging itself in the appellation of balance."

"*al-Muhassasah Tatabarqaᶜa bi al-Tawazun*"
[Quota Apportionment Camouflages Itself in Balance]
Azzaman, Tuesday, July 3, 2012

The ethno-sectarian distribution of power introduced by the IGC set a precedent that consecrated communal power-sharing as a norm for the future. By dint of its precedential nature, the power-sharing arrangement established by the IGC possessed a regenerative quality which would leave an impact on the various facets of government. It engendered political expectations on the part of communities and their leaders, nurtured feelings of the legitimacy of the apportionment of power along communal lines, and shaped the manner of the formation of governments. In the process, the concept of apportioning political power seeped into the political discourse camouflaged in the idiom of communal balance, rights and entitlements.

Thus, it came as no surprise that the ethno-sectarian calculus at the heart of the IGC arrangement was carried over into the interim government headed by ᶜAllawi and inaugurated on June 2, 2004. The office of the president was held by Ghazi ᶜAjil al-Yawar, a Sunni Arab tribal chief, who had two vice-presidents: Jaᶜafari (Shiᶜite), then leader of the Daᶜawah Party, and Rouj Nuri Shawis (Kurd), a KDP party boss. Offering the presidency to a Sunni Arab was done despite objections by the Kurds who coveted the post and saw the rebuff as

compromising their achievements in post-Saddam Iraq.[141] The secular Shiᶜite prime minister, Ayad ᶜAllawi, had one deputy, Barham Salih (Kurd) of the PUK. **Figure 6** presents a visual representation of the breakdown of the ethno-sectarian identification of the interim government's cabinet ministers.

Figure 6: Ethnic and Denominational Background of the Iraqi Interim Cabinet Headed by Ayad ᶜAllawi

Ethnic and Denominational Background of the Iraqi Interim Cabinet Headed by Ayad ᶜAllawi

Turkmens 6.06%
Christians 3.03%
Sunni Arabs 15.15%
Shíites 54.55%
Kurds 21.21%
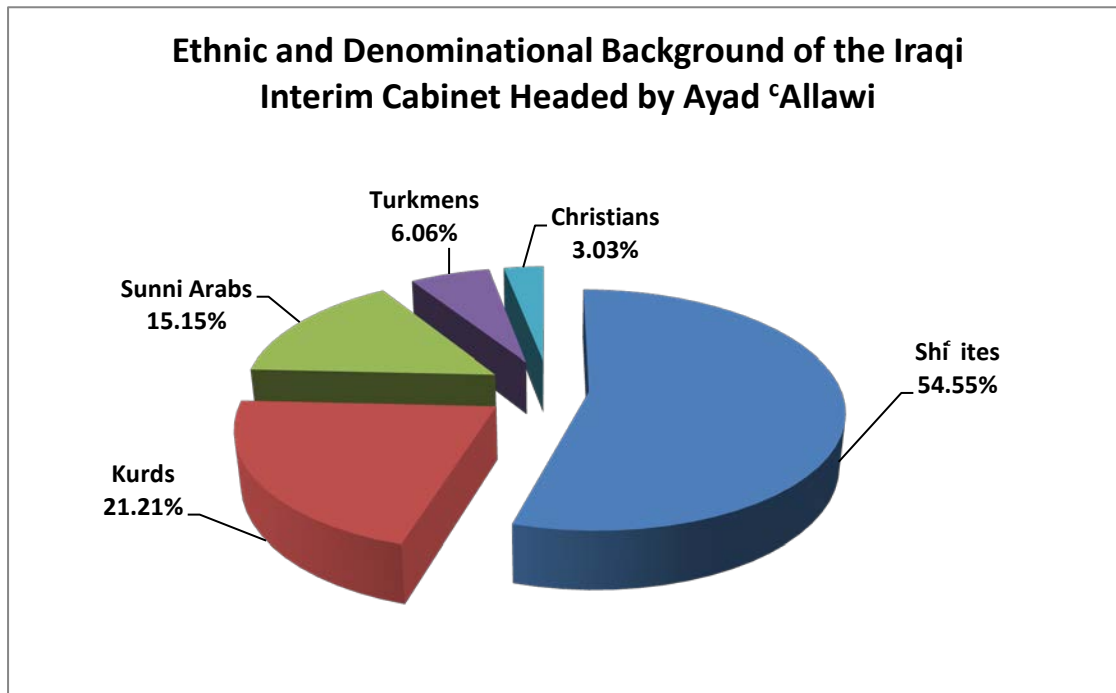
While the composition of the new government favored secular nationalists and marginalized the Shiᶜite Islamists, it maintained denominational ratios that approximated those of the first post-Saddam cabinet. One notable difference was that the ratio of Sunni Arabs declined in percentage terms from 20 percent in the first post-Saddam cabinet to 15.15 percent in the interim cabinet. However, in absolute terms the representation of Sunni Arabs remained constant at 5 cabinet seats. The Turkmen representation showed a slight increase from 4 to 6.06 percent. The ethnic and denominational distribution of posts in the interim government, which was appointed by the CPA, was shaped by a concern to achieve proportional ethnic and sectarian balance. This arrangement was meant to avoid winner-takes-all outcomes, thus acting as a check on the hegemony of a single community at the uppermost levels of government and accommodating competing communal claims to power resources.

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[141] Allawi, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

But the interim government, as its name suggests, was temporary and short-lived. It was soon replaced by a new government formed following the January 2005 elections. Once again, the new cabinet was of a provisional nature. The main task of this cabinet was "drawing up and shepherding the constitution through the National Assembly and getting it ratified."[142] It was only natural that the new government's makeup translates the gains made by the Shiʿites and Kurds at the ballot box. But the two main winning alliances, the UIA and the KA, were hobbled by competition and internal divisions which complicated and prolonged the process of forming a government that satisfies the interests of the two coalitions' constituent components. By far selecting a prime minister was the most contentious issue within the UIA. Dogged opposition by the Sadrists to SCIRI's candidate for the top post, ʿAdil Abd al-Mahdi, led to a compromise that cleared the way for Ibrahim al-Jaʿafari of the Daʿawah Party to take over as prime minister.

Negotiations between the UIA and the Kurds and Iraqia proved difficult, complex and arduous. The KA came forward with a working paper that aimed to regulate its relations with the UIA. The battery of demands listed in the working paper included a commitment by the government to respect the federal arrangements for the Kurdistan Region.[143] Talks with Iraqia, on the other hand, were destined to a dead-end. Iraqia presented a 10-point working paper which listed positions on a number of key issues, such as de-Baʿathification, the political role of the *marjaʿiyyah*, and federalism, which collided most forcefully with the UIA's stands.[144]

The Jaʿafari government announced on May 20, more than three months following the elections, consisted of 36 cabinet seats, including six ministers of state without portfolio. Two main features characterized the lineup of ministers in the cabinet: it was dominated by Shiʿite Islamists and favored returning exiles over insiders. The interim cabinet's makeup reflected the intricate thicket of compromises that went into its formation. Jalal Talabani of the PUK, a constituent part of the KA, got the presidency. He had two vice presidents: one Shiʿite, Abd al-Mahdi, the other Sunni, Ghazi al-Yawar. The post of speaker of the National Assembly went to an Arabized Sunni Turkmen, Hachim al-Hassani, a defector from the IIP. He had two deputies: one Shiʿite, Hussein al-Shahristani (independent), the other Kurd, ʿArif Tayfur of

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[142] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 3rd Edition, p. 290.
[143] *Ibid*., p. 395.
[144] *Ibid*.

the KDP. The prime minister had three deputies: a Shi^{c}ite, Chalabi of the INC, a Kurd, Rouj Nuri Shawis of the KDP, and a Sunni Arab, ^{c}Abed Mutlaq al-Jubouri, a former Staff Major General in the Iraqi army. **Figure 7** shows the distribution of cabinet seats across ethnic and denominational lines:

Figure 7: Ethnic and Denominational Background of the Ja^{c}afari Cabinet
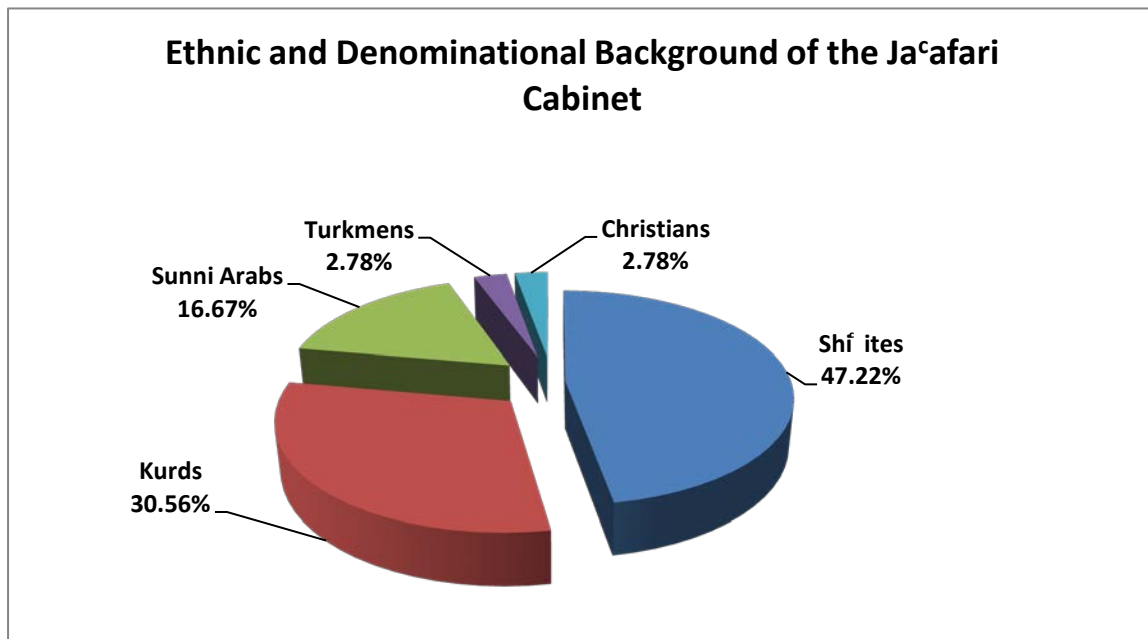
On the face of it, the Shi^{c}ites' share in the Ja^{c}afari cabinet, 47.22 percent, represents a decline from their share in the interim cabinet, 54.55 percent. However, closer examination reveals that the distribution of seats in fact approximates the previous patterns. If the Fayli Kurdish and Turkmen ministers, both of who are members of Shi^{c}ite Islamist parties within the UIA fold, are added to the Shi^{c}ite share, then the total ratio of cabinet seats held by Shi^{c}ites would rise to 52.78 percent. This represents a slight, statistically insignificant slip from the 54.55 percent share they held in the interim cabinet. The Kurdish share would then slide down to 27.78 percent. There was no significant change in the Sunni Arab and Christian shares, 16.67 and 2.78 percent, respectively, compared to the two communities' representation in the interim cabinet, at 15.15 and 3.03 percent, respectively.

The hard bargaining dynamics which characterized the formation of the Ja^{c}afari government were carried over into the process of forming a coalition government following the December 15, 2005 election. However, this time around, the inter-party wrangling and negotiations were lengthier, harder and more complicated. Greater Sunni Arab participation in the balloting

added another element of complexity to the process. Once again, the knottiest issue facing the consummation of a deal over government formation was the selection of the prime minister. Ja'afari won the UIA's nomination for the post with a one-vote margin over Abd al-Mahdi, who faced fierce opposition from the Sadrists, in internal elections. But Ja'afari's nomination for another term in office ran into stiff opposition from various quarters, including the Kurds, Sunni Arabs and the US. Under the compromise that paved the way for Ja'afari to step down, the prime minister's post went to Ja'afari's deputy in the Da'awah Party, the relatively unknown Nuri Kamil al-Maliki. Thus, on April 22, the parliament elected Talabani as president and Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, a Sunni Arab of the IAF, as speaker of parliament. Talabani had two vice-presidents: one Shi'ite, Abd al-Mahdi, the other Sunni Arab, Tariq al-Hashemi of the IIP. Mashhadani had two deputies as well: one Shi'ite, Khalid al-'Atiyyah, an independent UIA member, the other Kurd, Tayfur of the KDP.[145] The Shi'ite prime minister had two deputies: one Kurd, Barham Salih of the PUK, the other Sunni Arab, Salam Zakam Ali al-Zuba'i of the IAF.

But the cabinet lineup announced by Maliki left the security portfolios, i.e., defense, interior and national security ministries, unfilled because of irreconcilable disagreements between Shi'ite, Kurdish and Sunni Arab leaders over who should assume the posts. The deadlock was broken on June 8 when the parties agreed to designate Jawad al-Bulani and Shirwan al-Wa'ili, both Shi'ites, to fill the interior and national security portfolios, respectively, while Lt. Gen. Abd al-Qadir Muhammad Jassim al-'Ubaydi, a Sunni Arab, was appointed as defense minister. Wa'ili had to resign his membership in the Islamic Da'awah Party – Iraq Organization (*Hizb al-Da'awah al-Islamiyyah – Tandhim al-'Iraq*) due to American opposition to the security ministries being led by members of Islamist or sectarian parties. Bulani was an independent who had previously been associated with or close to the Hizbullah – Iraq of Shaykh Abd al-Karim al-Muhammadawi, the Islamic Virtue Party (*Hizb al-Fadhilah al-Islami*), an offshoot of the Sadrist movement, and Chalabi's INC. Two other members were added to the cabinet as ministers of state bringing the total number of cabinet ministers up to 39.[146]

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[145] Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 3rd Edition, pp. 298-299; and Richard Boudreaux, "U.S. Tells Shia Bloc It Opposes Ja'afari as Premier," *Los Angeles Times*, Wednesday, March 29, 2006.
[146] Reidar Visser, "The Completion of the Maliki Government on 8 June 2006," *historiae.org*, Friday, June 9, 2006; available at: http://www.historiae.org/bulani.asp; accessed on Saturday, May 19, 2012.

The allocation of seats in the cabinet adhered to the emerging norm of preserving communal balance in the cabinet makeup. More significant though was the shift toward the institutionalization of a formal process to divvy up top posts between communities and political parties. The implicit rule of maintaining communal and political balance was cast in an explicit mathematical formula. An agreement was reached that each cabinet seat was worth approximately 5 parliamentary seats. The more parliamentary seats a bloc wins, therefore, the more cabinet seats it would be entitled to occupy. However, "sovereign posts" (*al-manasib al-siyadiyyah*), namely, prime minister, president, speaker of parliament and their deputies, were assigned higher scores than cabinet ministries. Accordingly, by occupying any of the "sovereign posts" a political bloc would automatically forfeit its entitlement to several cabinet seats.[147] The discrepancies between the representation of Shi^cites, on the one hand, and that of other communities, on the other, in Maliki's first cabinet are shown in **Figure 8**.

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[147] Ahmad al-Hirmizi, "Tawzi^ci al-Manasib bayna al-Kutal al-Siyasiyyah fi al-^cIraq – Tawafuq Siyasi wa Hisabat Riyadhiyyah" [The Distribution of Posts among Political Blocs in Iraq – Political Accord and Mathematical Calculations], *al-Minbar al-Turkumani* (The Turkmen Tribune), Tuesday, October 19, 2010; available at: http://turkmentribune.com/News/N182-m.htm; accessed on Wednesday, May 30, 2012.

Figure 8: Percentages of Ethnic and Denominational Background of the Maliki Cabinet of 2006

Ethnic and Denominational Background of the Maliki Cabinet of 2006

Turkmens 2.5%

Christians 5%

Sunni Arabs 22.5%

Shí ites 50%

Kurds 20%
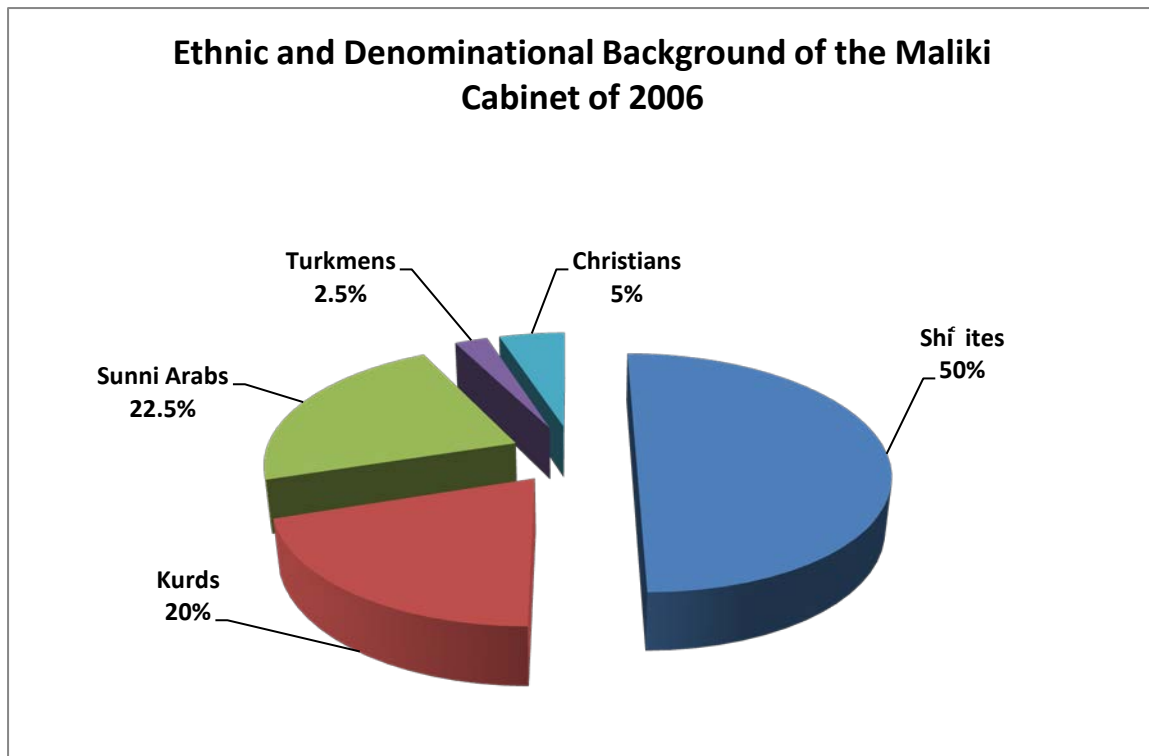
Figure 8 demonstrates that the Shiᶜites retained their dominant position in the first Maliki cabinet at 50 percent. Once again, closer examination of the distribution of seats reveals that the Shiᶜite share in fact stands at 55 percent, thus indicating a relatively fixed representation of Shiᶜites at the top of the executive branch. The percentage is obtained by adding the Shiᶜite Fayli Kurdish and Turkmen ministers, both of who occupied cabinet seats allocated to the UIA, to the Shiᶜite share. We can also observe a significant increase in Sunni Arab representation in the cabinet, which stood at 22.50 percent of cabinet seats, up from 16.67 percent in the previous cabinet. If the Arabized Kurdish minister of planning and development cooperation Ali Baban, a member of the IAF, is counted among the Sunni Arab ministers, then the Sunni Arab share climbs up to 25 percent. The Sunni Arab gains came at the expense of the Kurds whose share sank to 20 percent, down from 30.56 percent in the previous cabinet.

It was *déjà vu* all over again following the March 2010 elections. The serious difficulties that beset assembling Maliki's first cabinet were only a foretaste of worse to come. Wrangling gripped the post-2010 election scene for nine months as political leaders bickered over which electoral bloc had the right to form the cabinet as well as the cabinet makeup. With the

Federal Supreme Court's ratification of the results on March 27, which gave ᶜAllawi's Iraqia a slight plurality of seats in parliament, the twisted path of assembling a cabinet stumbled into a heated dispute over which bloc had the right to form the cabinet. Concerned about the secular agenda and predominantly Sunni Arab composition of Iraqia, the two Shiᶜite coalitions, the INA and the SLC, merged into a new bloc, named the National Alliance (*al-Tahaluf al-Watani*) or NA, even though the two main components of the INA, ISCI and the Sadrists, were implacably opposed to Maliki's return to the prime minister's post. The new bloc had 159 seats, four seats short of an outright majority in the 325 parliament. As such, the new alliance claimed a right to form the cabinet. Iraqia challenged the new alliance's claim. Iraqia leaders argued that their bloc retained the right to form the cabinet because it scooped the largest number of seats prior to the formation of the new alliance.[148] Maliki referred the issue to the Federal Supreme Court which ruled in favor of the NA's interpretation.[149]

But resolving the dispute over the interpretation of parliamentary majority in favor of the NA did not put to rest intense intra-Shiᶜite bargaining and political intrigue over who should get the prime minister's post. Stiff opposition by ISCI and the Sadrists to a second term for Maliki in office rumbled on. It took months of cajoling by religious grandees and outside pressure to end their opposition to Maliki's return to power. Light was not seen at the end of the tunnel until November when a power-sharing deal was reached giving Maliki a second term in office. Sponsored by Barazani and the White House, the deal consisted of a set of written agreements signed by Maliki, ᶜAllawi and Barazani on November 11. Collectively known as the Erbil agreement, the accords were anchored in the principles of mutual concessions and reciprocal gains. Some of the accords set out provisions for the reform of state institutions, such as the security forces, the judiciary, and the executive branch. Other accords addressed issues such as national reconciliation, balance in state institutions, and de-Baᶜathification or Accountability and Justice.

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[148] In an op-ed piece entitled "The Risk of Losing Iraq," *The Washington Post*, Tuesday, June 10, 2010, p. A19, Ayad Allawi asserted: "As the winner of the election, our political bloc should have the first opportunity to try to form government through alliances with other parties. Yet Maliki continues seeking to appropriate that option for his party, defying constitutional convention and the will of the people."

[149] "Federal Supreme Court Opinion on Article 76 of the Constitution Concerning the Nomination of the Prime Minister," *Global Justice Project: Iraq*, March 28, 2010; available at: http://gjpi.org/2010/03/28/federal-supreme-court-opinion-on-article-76-of-the-constitution-concerning-the-nomination-of-the-prime-minister/; accessed on Tuesday, June 12, 2012.

The accords also incorporated a proposal by US vice-president Biden to form an extra-constitutional body to act as a check on the powers of the prime minister. Known as the National Council for Higher Policies (NCHP), the proposed body was to be chaired by ᶜAllawi, who would be assisted by three deputies (one each from SLC, INA, and KA), as part of the broader power-sharing arrangement. The assumption was that the NCHP, which would function as a forum for strategic decision-making on issues of critical importance such as security, energy, economics, diplomacy and governance, would provide ᶜAllawi with a face-saving way to forfeit his claim to the post of prime minister. However, the NCHP never came into existence following the formation of the government. Moreover, an annex to the Erbil agreement included provisions for exempting three Iraqia leaders, Salih al-Mutlaq, Rassim al-ᶜAwwadi, and Dhafir al-ᶜAni, from the de-Baᶜathification process "after the completion of the necessary legal procedures."[150]

The tortuous quest for national unity government came to fruition with the signing of the Erbil agreement on November 11. The political blocs agreed that in return for paving the way for Maliki's second term, Talabani would remain as president while the position of speaker of parliament would go to Usama al-Nujayfi of Hadba', a constituent element of Iraqia. Both Nujayfi and Talabani were elected during a parliamentary session held in the evening of November 11, just hours after the signing of the Erbil agreement. Lawmakers first elected Nujayfi for the speaker of parliament post by 227 out of 295 votes then proceeded to elect his two deputies: Qusay al-Suhayl, a Shiᶜite member of the Sadrist Ahrar (Liberals) bloc in parliament, and ᶜArif Tayfur of the KDP, scooping 235 and 225 votes respectively. Talabani won his second term by 195 out of 213 ballots cast in the second round of voting. Immediately after being sworn in, Talabani named Nuri al-Maliki to form a new cabinet.[151] Talabani would later be given three vice presidents: a Sunni Arab, Tariq al-Hashemi, and two

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[150] The Erbil accords were published in May 2012 amid a deepening political crisis between Maliki and several parties in his national partnership government. See "Nass Ittifaqiyyat Arbil Kamilah" [The Full Text of the Erbil Agreement], *al-Mada*, Wednesday, May 2, 2012; available at: http://www.almadapaper.com/news.php?action=view&id=64861; accessed on Wednesday, May 2, 2012. A translation is provided in Appendix VI. A copy of the controversial draft bill submitted by Iraqia to parliament to delineate the scope of authorities of the NCHP is on file with the author. The annex excluding the three Iraqia leaders from de-Baᶜathification was published as part of the Erbil agreement. A copy of the original handwritten annex is on file with the author. Another handwritten annex was signed on November 13, 2010 by Fu'ad Maᶜassoum (KA/PUK), Hassan al-Sunayd (SLC/Daᶜawah), Rafiᶜi al-ᶜIssawi (Iraqia/Future), Ahmad Chalabi (INA/INC), and Ali al-Adib (SLC/Daᶜawah). It spelled out the steps and procedures to be taken by political parties and government institutions in order to exclude the three Iraqia leaders from de-Baᶜathification, or Accountability and Justice, measures. A copy is on file with the author. A translation is provided in Appendix VII.

[151] This account is based on first-hand observations by the author who attended this historic session.

Shi^cite Arabs, ^cAdil Abd al-Mahdi of ISCI and Khudayyir al-Khuza^ci of the Islamic Da^cawah Party – Iraq Organization.

Prime minister-designate Maliki embarked on the Herculean task of forming his cabinet amid continuing political battles over the distribution of portfolios. The various political blocs made exaggerated assertions regarding what they see as their rightful shares of posts. A way out of the imbroglio of competing claims to shares of power was sought in normative structures and consociational arrangements similar to those that guided the formation of Maliki's first cabinet. However, the power-sharing constructs that molded cabinet seat allocation this time round were more intricate, complex and elaborate. According to the points score system suggested by the SLC and adopted for the allocation of cabinet posts, each bloc earned a number of points determined by dividing the total number of seats it had won by a common denominator of 2.24. Shares were allocated according to a formula which assigned a certain number of points for various tiers of posts. This is illustrated in the following table:

Table 4: Point-Score System Used to Allocate Seats in Maliki's Second Cabinet[152]

Tier of Posts	Points Required
President, Prime Minister, Speaker of Parliament	10
Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister, Deputy Speaker	5
Chairman of the National Council for Higher Policies	8
Deputy Chairman of the National Council for Higher Policies	4
Sovereign Ministries*	3
Higher Services Ministries**	2
Lower Services Ministries†	1.5
State Ministries	1

* Consist of the ministries of foreign affairs, finance, oil and planning and development cooperation. The defense and interior portfolios, which are also classified as sovereign ministries, were dropped from the points score system because of an agreement that they be filled by independents
** These are electricity, trade, agriculture, industry, transportation, telecommunications, water resources, education, higher education and scientific research, science and technology, municipalities, housing and construction, work and social affairs, and youth and sports
† These are environment, culture, tourism and archeology, human rights, and displacement and migration

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[152] Interview with Yassin Majid, Iraqi Member of Parliament, State of Law Coalition, Baghdad, Tuesday, November 23, 2010; and Interview with ^cAbbas al-Bayati, Iraqi Member of Parliament, State of Law Coalition, and Chairman of the Islamic Union of Iraqi Turkmen (Turkmen: *Islami Birlik Irak Turkmani*; Arabic: *al-Ittihad al-Islami li Turkuman al-^cIraq*) Baghdad, Tuesday, November 23, 2010.

After a debilitating and intractable nine-month political standoff Maliki was finally sworn in and presented a new cabinet to parliament on December 21, 2010. However, intrigue and feuding between the political blocs continued even at the time the prime minister and his new cabinet were inaugurated. The line-up of ministers announced by Maliki was incomplete as 13 out of the 45 cabinet seats presented to parliament were filled with acting ministers due to continuous jostling and bickering over posts between feuding blocs and parties. The number of ministers would be increased to 47 in February 2011 to accommodate the demands of some political entities. As the unusually bloated cabinet proved to be cumbersome and came under widespread criticism, its size would be trimmed down (*tarshiq*) to 33 seats on July 18, 2011 to create a leaner and more effective government. The ministries of interior and defense continued to be run in an acting capacity by prime minister Maliki and minister of culture Saᶜadun al-Dulaymi, a pro-Maliki Sunni Arab from Anbar Province, respectively. **Figure 9** presents a summary of the composition of Maliki's second cabinet based on ethnic and sectarian affiliations prior to and after the drawdown:

Figure 9: Ethnic and Denominational Background of the Maliki Cabinet of 2010 before and after the Drawdown of July 2011
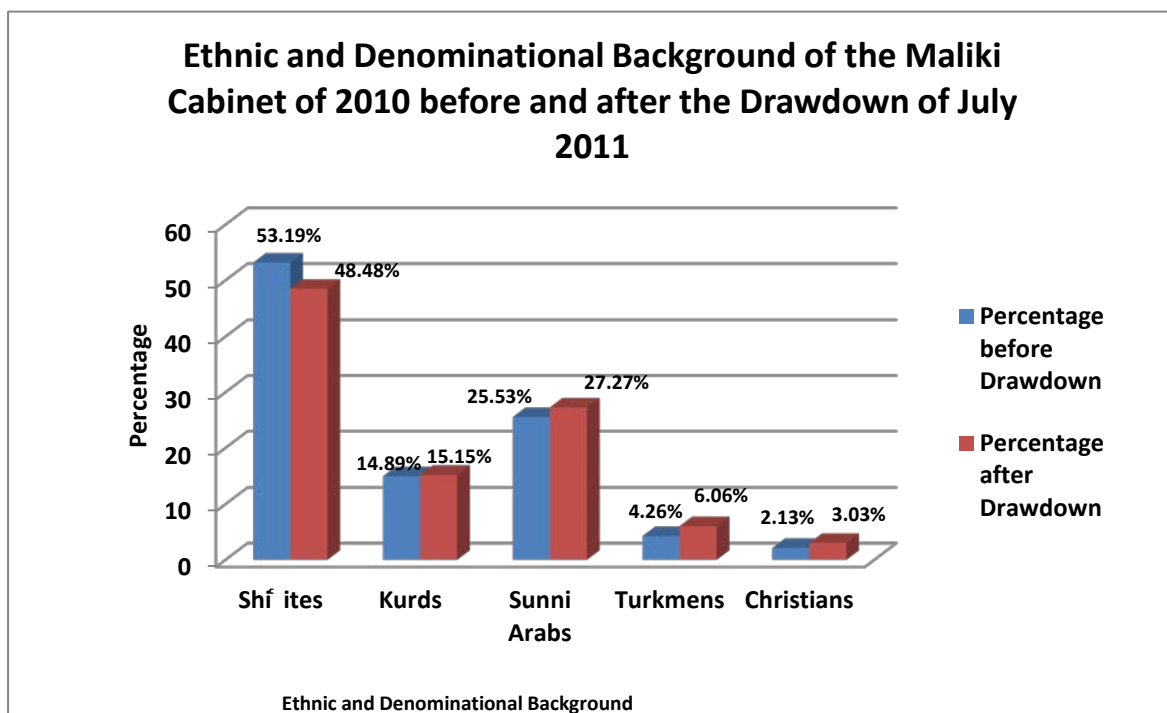
As **Figure 9** shows, while the dominance of the Shiᶜites remained salient, the Sunni Arabs increased their representation slightly compared to the previous cabinet whereas the Kurdish

share dropped. The Shi^cites held an original 53.19 percent share which went down to 48.48 percent following the drawdown of July 2011. These ratios would increase to 57.45 and 51.52 percent, respectively, if the Shi^cite Fayli Kurdish and Shi^cite Islamist Turkmen ministers were added to the Shi^cite share.

The original Sunni Arab share went up to 25.53 percent, and to 27.27 percent following the drawdown, compared to 22.50 in the previous cabinet. To a large extent, this derived from increased Sunni Arab participation in the elections. On the other hand, the Kurdish share dipped from 20 percent in the previous cabinet to 14.89 percent in the original makeup of Maliki's second cabinet, climbing up to 15.15 percent after the drawdown.

Maliki's second cabinet bore all the hallmarks of the consociational arrangements that had been emerging in the post-Saddam period. Positions were allocated in a manner that roughly approximates the estimated demographic weight of communities and political parties as reflected in the elections. The prime minister, a Shi^cite, had three deputies: Hussein al-Shahristani, a Shi^cite, was designated as deputy prime minister for energy affairs; Salih al-Mutlaq, a Sunni Arab, as deputy prime minister for services affairs; while Rouj Nuri Shawis, a Kurd, as deputy prime minister for economic affairs. As the security portfolios – i.e. defense, interior and national security – remained vacant Maliki retained the right to run these ministries while political blocs ironed out an agreement on suitable candidates for the posts. There was agreement in principle that the Sunni-backed Iraqia would nominate a candidate for the defense portfolio subject to approval by the NA. In return, the Shi^cite NA would nominate a candidate for the interior portfolio subject to approval by the Sunni-backed Iraqia. This raised the ire of the Kurds who claimed an equal right to a top security post. They especially angled for the post of chief of the National Intelligence Apparatus (*Jihaz al-Istikhbarat al-Watani*).

As an increasingly elaborate consociational arrangement, the quota system sought to create a representative system which reflects the rich communal diversity of Iraqi society. It was hoped that such arrangement would give communities a stake in the new post-Saddam polity. But as our foregoing investigation has revealed the quota system set the stage for intensifying inter-communal rivalry and disputation. It further stoked inter- and intra-communal competition over state resources, influence, status and public goods that tore at the social fabric of the nation. By recognizing communal divisions, the apportionment of power ended up affirming and reinforcing, rather than diluting and tempering, narrow communal identities

at the expense of a more united national identity. This state of affairs produced a fragile balance of power between the communal fragments of Iraqi society. And the quest for national unidty remained ever more elusive.

3.3. Conclusion: The Reproduction of Sectarian Power Inequality

"Slave, I before reasoned with you, but you have proved yourself unworthy of my condescension. Remember that I have power; you believe yourself miserable, but I can make you so wretched that the light of day will be hateful to you. You are my creator, but I am your master; obey!"

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

As the forgoing discussion has shown, with the establishment of Iraq by the British in the wake of World War I, a political elite stratum anchored to the infant nation-state started to take shape. Created by the workings of the process of state formation, the new oligarchy was characterized by relative closedness. It adopted the nascent nation-state's nationalist ideology and perpetuated itself within the confines of its narrow social base. Although the new political elite stratum was not completely closed to new comers, it constructed family and social networks that were largely based on geographical origins. In this sense, its structure tended to overlap with sectarian cleavages. The new state nobility was narrowly differentiated. It came from a compact minority which combined sectarian, tribal and regional loyalties. It was comprised principally of members of the Sunni Arab minority from the urban centers. Although these Sunni Arab elite were allied to Shi^{c}ite tribal landlords, they did not make serious efforts to efface the imbalance of power at the center.

The highly exclusionary character of the political system was sustained until the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003. The durability of the exclusionary trend in politics, the traditionally weak representation of non-Sunni Arabs at the higher echelons of power, especially at the extreme upper end of state hierarchy, and the striking feebleness of democratic politics were all the legacy of the reproduction of sectarianism in the makeup of the country's political elite. Breaking the hold of the dominant Sunni Arab elite and replacing it with a counter-elite stratum made up of people from other sectarian and ethnic backgrounds would take place

through the intervention of an external military power. But efforts to alleviate inequality across sectarian and ethnic groups in the post-Saddam era paved the way for a system in which primordial affiliations figure as primary determinants of access to power. This made the infant system pregnant with new ingredients for social conflict and a high potential for reverse inequality in the communal distribution of power resources.

The elusive quest for national unity in post-Saddam Iraq directs attention to the fact that efforts from the above to address sectarian power disparity may end up laying the foundation for new structures of inequality and exclusion in society. True, the political order in the post-Saddam period represents in one sense a repudiation of the minority-dominated system which prevailed in Iraq until 2003. But, in many ways, the post-Saddam polity was itself stratified and exclusionary along communal lines. Feelings of exclusion from the new polity were nurtured by the unequal access of communities to state resources.

As the Sunni Arabs lost the hegemonic status they enjoyed since the formation of the modern Iraqi state, the historically marginalized Shi^cite majority enjoyed a pronounced preferential or hegemonic status in the new order. As such, the shift in the ethno-sectarian composition of the political elite occasioned by regime change in Iraq did not involve a complete rupture with ethno-sectarian inequality in terms of participation in the political life of the country. Instead, the drive to make the composition of the elite mirror the communal composition of society created a new dynamic for in-and-out relations that deepened societal rifts.

The political landscape became an arena for advancing communal interests and settling differences across ethno-sectarian lines. Thus, the possibility of instituting a civic nationalism capable of mitigating communal, especially sectarian, polarities cracked under the weight of the new structures of stratification and exclusion. Nothing aggravated the Sunni Arabs' angst over the loss of their privileged status under the former regime more than de-Ba^cathification. This exclusionary mechanism compounded the indelible trauma stamped on their collective consciousness as a result of their loss of power and influence.[153] In practice, de-Ba^cathification turned into a form of structural inequality conferring a differential disadvantage on the Sunni Arabs' access to employment opportunities at various levels of government.

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[153] On the Sunni Arab identity crisis in Iraq engendered by the fall of Saddam, see Ahmed S. Hashim, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006): pp. 60-108.

Ironically, in much the same way as political exclusion fed communal polarization, participatory politics in post-Saddam Iraq also exacerbated us-versus-them antagonisms. Electoral politics in the nascent Iraqi polity promoted the hardening of ethno-sectarian identity in unexpected ways. Coalitions contesting the elections were divided along the ethno-sectarian cleavages in Iraqi society. By reinforcing group boundaries, electoral politics added another building bloc to the process of the institutionalization of identity politics. In many ways, the lack of explicitly established ratios for the distribution of seats across communities according to their relative size turned elections into inter- rather than intra-communal competition over seats up for grab. As such, in their bid to woo voters, candidates and political parties have no incentive to steer clear of unstinting advocacy of extreme positions or to desist from stoking communal fears and grievances, real or imagined. In such a scheme of things, voting becomes a collective identity contest between ethnic and sectarian communities. At the ballot box, voters cast their ballots to lay a communal claim to power, recognition and representation. In such an atmosphere, voting effectively becomes a means to assert communal markers that differentiate voters from each other. In the heat of electoral battles, ethnic and sectarian identities based on dissimilarity and difference rather than civic sameness and equality were asserted. Ultimately, privileging the shared bonds of ethnic and/or sectarian affiliation came at the expense of the universalizing ideal of citizenship.

The logic of communal entitlement that lies at the heart of the quota system was contagious. It spilled over into the state's administrative and institutional machinery, permeating government departments and shaping employment decisions and opportunities. Under the rubric of *tawazun*, communal proportionality and political party affiliations were determining factors in the selection of commissioners to serve on independent commissions. Sectarian and political quotas became ubiquitous to the extent that they were applied to the composition of the groups of pilgrims sent for the Hajj in Mecca whereby the number of Shiᶜites was set at twice the number of Sunnis.[154] Ultimately, the political process in post-Saddam Iraq charted a path for the institutionalization of sectarianism. But the pursuit of more equity and the empowerment of the Shiᶜite majority, who had long been marginalized under successive previous regimes, ended up reaffirming and intensifying sectarian resentments and divisions.

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[154] "Iraq veering toward 'Lebanonization'," *The Daily Tribune*, Monday, December 12, 2011; available at: http://www.tribuneonline.org/commentary/20111216com6.html; accessed on Sunday, December 25, 2011.

The political process became the site of multiple communal contestations where communities compete over claims to power. And competition provided community members with the need to cohere and frame a sense of communal primordial identity against real or imagined adversaries. Amid the resulting proliferation of polarized dualities and codes of oppositional binaries the hope for cementing the all-encompassing Iraqi national identity as a primary object of identification became as forlorn as an Arabian desert.

CHAPTER 4

Education, Resistance and the Reproduction of Primordial Sectarian Identity

"Education is truly a mirror unto a people's social being and it is also the means by which that being is reproduced and passed onto the next generation. For that reason education has been the main ideological battlefield between the economic, political, and cultural forces of oppression and the forces of national liberation and unity."

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Writers in Politics:*
A Re-engagement with Issues of Literature and Society

"Saddam Hussein executed my father," the nine-year-old pupil at an elementary school in the predominantly Shi[c]ite Sadr City in Baghdad told me while tears welled up in his eyes. "He sent the Party who took my father away and executed him," the child went on as he choked back tears. That was on back-to-school day of the first school-year in the post-Saddam period in October 2003. Everything at this dilapidated school – the long-decayed and charred walls, the broken windows and ramshackle furniture, the pungent acrid smell blowing from the bathrooms, and the poorly-dressed and emotionally-scarred pupils and teachers[1] – bespoke the ravages of time, war, repression, sanctions and post-war looting. They bespoke the tragedies which plunged Iraq into the precipice of agony, misery, pain and pauperization. Yet, at the elite al-[c]Aqidah Secondary School for Girls in the predominantly-Sunni Karkh quarter of Baghdad, a polar-opposite scene was on display that very same day. Here, young, well-attired high-school girls, some of who flashing expensive digital video cameras, spoke lovingly of the former president, a hunted fugitive on the run at that time. They called him "Baba Saddam" ('Father Saddam'), the term used by schoolchildren to refer to the former president under Ba[c]ath Party rule. "If I see Baba Saddam," a 16-year-old girl told me, "I will tell him how much I love him. I will tell him how much I miss him. I will tell him how much I long for him to return."[2]

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[1] Some female teachers I spoke to at this school told me that they had lost husbands or other family members, who were executed, died under torture, or killed while fighting in wars or anti-regime uprisings.
[2] A series of interviews with schoolchildren and teachers at schools in Baghdad, Baghdad, Saturday, October 4, 2003.

The contrast between the two images, 'Saddam the Executioner' and "Baba Saddam," was as stark as distressing. It was a poignant illumination of the chasm separating discordant cultural worlds, conflicting loyalties and sharply-drawn identities. It highlighted the fragmented soul of a nation, a divided collective psychic landscape, and the failings of the homogenizing process of national integration. There was something sad and unsettling in this dichotomous landscape about Iraq's pulverized national educational system. The ravages of time seemed to have devoured much of the efforts to foster a particular form of national identity through the educational system. Education as a tool to homogenize heterogeneous communities in Iraq has failed to fulfill its grandiose promises. The educational discourse of the nation-state has failed to instill the consciousness of a homogenizing solidarity and subordinate competing allegiances. It failed to nurture an allegiance to the nation-state as the *summum bonum* of all loyalties.

In this chapter, I investigate how the modern system of mass, national education adopted by the Iraqi nation-state to instill a common national identity inadvertently contributed to the heightening of sectarianism. The chapter explores the 'boomerang effect' of the efforts made by dominant groups in the modern Iraqi nation-state to inculcate a sense of cultural homogeneity and national identity through historical narratives infused with hegemonic communal discourses. Adopting a critical discourse analysis approach, I set out to dissect the historical narratives incorporated in the Iraqi educational curricula and school textbooks to foster a national collective consciousness and a common imaginary of political community. I show how the hegemonic communal discourse shaping the historical narratives adopted by the textbooks transformed education into a site of inter-communal struggles over collective memory of the past. I probe the communal reactions to the dominant historical narratives and hegemonic communal discourses embedded in the curriculum and examine how they fueled divided historical memories and antagonisms that contributed to a renewed salience of primordial sectarian identities.

4.1. The Formative Years of Curriculum Development in Iraq

"Education is not just the filling of a pail; it is the lighting of a fire."

Burrhus Frederic Skinner

On the eve of World War I Iraq had a low level of literacy.[3] Secondary school education was made available to the public with the establishment of the first high school in Baghdad in 1870.[4] Before that, non-Muslim minority communities pioneered the establishment of private modern schools in urban centers. For instance, the Jewish community founded the Alliance School, which introduced modern subjects like Drama to its curriculum, in 1865.[5] The curriculum taught to students at the modern Ottoman public schools in Iraq consisted of such subjects as Arabic and Islamic studies, writing, Turkish and Persian languages, arithmetic and algebra, bookkeeping, drawing, gymnastics, and military training.[6] The sons of wealthy notable families were the first to avail of secondary education opportunities. The realization of the benefits of modern education gradually trickled down to the traditional urban middle strata, such as junior members of the clergy, middle-class merchants, well-to-do artisans and craftsmen, government officials and low-ranking officers, prompting them to send their sons to secondary schools. "Some of the sons of these classes went on to study at the military academy and serve as officers in the Ottoman army."[7] But modern Ottoman education did not penetrate evenly across religious and Muslim sectarian communities. The government discouraged Shiᶜite children from attaining modern education for fear that they would aspire for government jobs. At the same time, while non-Muslim communities ran their own independent schools, the Shiᶜites were reluctant to send their sons to these Ottoman schools lest they imbibe Sunni doctrines. "Thus it came about that Government schools were confined almost wholly to Muslim Sunni children."[8]

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[3] In his "The Elite, the *Effendiyya*, and the Growth of Nationalism and Pan-Arabism in Hashemite Iraq, 1921-1958," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (May 1998): p. 232, Michael Eppel estimates the total number of primary-school enrollment on the eve of World War I at around 7,000.

[4] Taha al-Rawi, *Baghdad Madinat al-Salam* [Baghdad the City of Peace] (Damascus, Syria: Dar al-Mada li al-Thaqafah wa al-Nashr, 2004): p. 65. In large measure, the Ottomans adopted modern, European-style education in the late nineteenth century as an attempt to fend off European colonial encroachment. See Benjamin Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988); and Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908: Islamization, Autocracy, and Discipline* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 2001).

[5] ᶜAziz al-Hajj, *Baghdad Dhalik al-Zaman* [Baghdad during That Time], 2ⁿᵈ Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Dar Mesopotamia li al-Tibaᶜah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawziᶜi, 2011): p. 137; and Nissim Rejwan, *The Last Jews in Baghdad: Remembering a Lost Homeland* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2004): p. xvi.

[6] Matta Akrawi, "Curriculum Construction in the Public Primary Schools of Iraq in the Light of a Study of the Political, Economic, Social, Hygienic and Educational Conditions and Problems of the Country, With Some Reference to the Education of Teachers: A Preliminary Investigation," Ph.D. Thesis, Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University, 1942, p. 128.

[7] Eppel, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

[8] Akrawi, *op. cit.*

Before Iraq became an independent state in 1932, British educational policy effectively restricted access to secondary education for Iraqi children. The British occupation and later mandate authorities reduced funding for higher levels of education, closing secondary schools and concentrating their efforts on "establishing elementary schools supplemented by denominational schools which they fostered and subsidized in order to train minor functionaries for the civil service."[9] British officials judged that it was imprudent to spend too much money on education, arguing that secondary education might produce educated youth in excess of available employment opportunities. They also were concerned about potential dangers inherent in education. Secondary school graduates, they feared, would swell the ranks of anti-British agitators.[10]

With the establishment of the state of Iraq, education was recruited into the project of fostering national unity and forging a unifying emotive Iraqi identity.[11] The foundations of a common national educational system were laid during the early years of modern Iraq. During the first decade of the state, the number of elementary and secondary schools spiked, with elementary school enrollment surging from 12,226 students in 1921, to 29,644 in 1931.[12] Legislation was enacted to impose a uniform educational curriculum with an eye to create a culturally homogeneous population with a distinctive identity. To this end, Public Education Law No. 28 of 1929 made it obligatory for private schools to teach a curriculum in which Arabic, Iraqi history and geography and Arab history were predominant. Article 28 of the law stated:

> "The teaching of the Arabic language, the history and geography of Iraq, and Arab history, according to the curriculum of the ministry of education, is obligatory in all scientific private schools, both primary and secondary. Arabic language lessons

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[9] Reeva Spector Simon, *Iraq Between the Two World Wars: The Militarist Origins of Tyranny*, Updated Edition (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2004 [1986]): *op. cit.*, p. 76.

[10] Peter Sluglett, *Britain in Iraq: Contriving King and Country* (London; and New York, NY: I. B. Tauris, 2007): pp. 193-194.

[11] James Smoot Coleman has aptly drawn our attention to the significance of education for political development or what he describes as the "education-polity nexus." He shows how education lies at the heart of political development and social change. See James S. Coleman, "Introduction," in James S. Coleman, ed., *Education and Political Development* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965): pp. 2-32.

[12] Orit Bashkin, ""When Mu'awiya Entered the Curriculum" – Some Comments on the Iraqi Education System in the Interwar Period," *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 50, No. 3, Special Issue on Islam and Education – Myths and Truths (August 2006): p. 348.

shall not be less than five periods a week for primary classes and three periods a week for secondary classes."[13]

These subjects were thought of as ingredients of a common national identity. Education was not merely a means for the transmission of knowledge, but also a vehicle for inculcating cultural values and political ideas among school children.

4.2. Ideological Pedagogy and Sectarianism

"Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten."

Burrhus Frederic Skinner

The architects of Iraq's educational policy were Arab nationalist ideologues and activists who had taken up the cudgel of the secularization of education. In their effort to use education to delineate and legitimate the nascent nation-state, they used schools as instruments for spreading literacy and, simultaneously, propagating Arab nationalist ideology. Since they saw themselves as men with a mission, they tended to confound education with indoctrination, pedagogy with ideology. Despite their fine differences of opinion about pedagogical methods, they sought to inculcate Pan-Arab political and cultural values in the hearts and minds of school students. To this end, the curricula of the humanities and social studies, especially History, were used to promote selective symbols and historical memories.

It became a tradition under the monarchy that the education portfolio was given to a Shiᶜite. However, many of the directors-general and inspectors-general who were immune from the vagaries of cabinet changes were Sunnis. They were the ones wielding real power over curriculum development and educational policy. Job security that comes from continuity of tenure gave them the ability to act independently, even against the wishes of the minister of education who was subject to be blown out of office by the frequent winds of cabinet

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[13] "Qanun al-Maᶜarif al-ᶜAmmah Raqam 28 li Sanat 1929" [Public Education Law No. 28 of 1929], *Qaᶜidat al-Tashriᶜat al-ᶜIraqiyyah* [Database of Iraqi Legislations]; available at: http://www.iraq-ild.org/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=&SC=160920052250128&PageNum=2; accessed on Tuesday, December 14, 2010.

change.[14] At times, there were episodes of tension between the education minister and the director-general of education Sati'i al-Husari, the foremost Pan-Arab ideologue who suspected the Shi'ites of being lukewarm in their support of the Arab nationalist cause. In Husari's framework, the Shi'ites were suspect on a number of counts, including "their association with Iran and with local and regional solidarities" and their being "separated from the rest of the Arab world by the boundary of religion."[15]

One such episode of tension happened when Husari attempted to block the appointment of the Iraqi Shi'ite poet Muhammad Mahdi al-Jawahiri, who hails from an esteemed Najafi family of notables and clerics, to a teaching position in a Kadhemiyyah school on the grounds that the latter was of Iranian origin.[16] This sparked an altercation between Husari and the Shi'ite minister of education, who had recommended Jawahiri for the teaching post. Husari's recommendation that Jawahiri should not be appointed was overruled by the minister who also helped Jawahiri obtain an Iraqi passport. However, Husari dismissed Jawahiri several weeks later after the poet had published a poem praising the natural beauty of Iran in a provincial newspaper. This sparked lengthy, and sometimes acerbic, exchanges of letters between Husari and the minister, who reinstated Jawahiri. Husari, who argued that the poem was anti-Arab, in favor of Iran over Iraq and *shu'ubi*, confined himself to his house for a month to signal his displeasure with the minister's decision. Jawahiri finally resigned in disgust. Through the intervention of his father and a Shi'ite cleric and notable from Baghdad, Jawahiri was later appointed at the Royal Court, where he served for three years.[17]

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[14] For instance, cabinets under the British Mandate lasted 8 months on average. See Majid Khadduri, *Independent Iraq, 1932-1958: A Study in Iraqi Politics*, 2nd Edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1960): pp. 370-372.

[15] Sami Zubaida, "The rise and fall of civil society in Iraq," in Haldun Gülalp, ed., *Citizenship and Ethnic Conflict: Challenging the nation-state* (London; and New York, NY: Routledge, 2006): p. 122.

[16] In his memoirs, Husari relates the following conversation which he had with Jawahiri. "I told Jawahiri: 'I want to know your nationality.' He replied without hesitation: 'I am an Iranian.' I said: 'In that case we cannot appoint you.' He said: 'Why? Don't we have teachers from Syria and Lebanon?'" Sati'i al-Husari, *Mudhakkarati fi al-'Iraq: 1921-1941* [My Memoirs in Iraq: 1921-1941], Vol. 1 (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Tali'ah, 1967): pp. 588-589.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 588-602; Muhammad Mahdi al-Jawahiri, *Dhikrayati* [My Memoirs], Vol. 1, 1st Edition (Damascus, Syria: Dar al-Rafidayn, 1988): pp. 152-166; Sami Zubaida, "The Fragments Imagine the Nation: The Case of Iraq," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2, Special Issue: Nationalism and the Colonial Legacy in the Middle East and Central Asia (May 2002): p. 213; and Sluglett, *op. cit.*, p. 103. *Shu'ubiyyah* refers to a reaction by the non-Arab *mawali* to the privileged status accorded to Arabs under the Umayyads. See Roy P. Mottahedeh, "The Shu'ubiyah Controversy and the Social History of Early Islamic Iran," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (April 1976): pp. 161-182. For a work that links *shu'ubiyyah* with Shi'ism in Iraq, see Muhammad Abd al-Qadir Hatim, *al-Shu'ubiyyah* (Cairo, Egypt: al-Jam'iyyah al-Misriyyah li al-'Ulum al-Siyasiyyah, 1964). Although Hatim is an Egyptian academic and government official who held

This episode reveals how the dominant Sunni officialdom mobilized a narrow definition of national identity as a force of exclusion aimed to obstruct the integration of an incipient Shi^cite intelligentsia into the bureaucracy of the modern state. If national identity directs attention to sameness, Persian connections were highlighted to draw and invoke particular kinds of distinctions that set the Shi^cites apart. In other words, they were banished to the realm of a transcendent 'Other.' This was compounded by the use of value-laden criteria in the process of exclusion which questioned the loyalty of Shi^cites to Iraq and Arabism. At this stage, the hegemonic discourse of Sunni officialdom, despite its declared commitment to a secularized education system, produced a negative identification by which the Shi^cite 'Other' became an enemy. With such adversarial frames the totalizing and homogenizing thrust of the educational system has been lost. The educational system becomes a central arena for the operation of a logic of exclusion and contestation in a fractured Iraqi nation.

Sati^ci al-Husari (1880-1968), the director-general of education between 1921 and 1927, was the leading Pan-Arab nationalist ideologue shaping the modern educational system in the infant state. Elements of the curriculum developed by Husari, especially in the humanities and social studies subjects, continued to permeate the program of study from primary to secondary levels at Iraqi schools up to the fall of the former regime in 2003. Born into a family of an Ottoman magistrate from Aleppo stationed in Yemen, Husari travelled extensively throughout the Ottoman Empire as his father, Muhammad Hilal ibn al-Sayyid Mustafa al-Husari, was frequently transferred from one station to another. As the family travelled constantly, Husari, whose first language was Turkish, studied at home and did not receive formal elementary school education. He later attended the Royal School (Turkish: *Mülkiye Mektebi*) in Istanbul, which was designed to train Ottoman civil servants. He would later serve in several key positions in education in the Ottoman dominions, including a stint in the Balkans. He became well acquainted with the ideas of nationalism and joined the

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several ministerial portfolios, including culture, information and tourism, under the late Egyptian presidents Jamal Abd al-Nassir and Anwar al-Sadat, the arguments made in his book reflect the standpoints of Arab nationalists in Iraq on this topic. The dual anti-Shi^cite and anti-Persian use of the *shu^cubiyyah* motif is not an exclusive preserve of Sunni Arabs in Iraq. It has been, and continues to be, used extensively by anti-Iranian Arab politicians and media. Mazin El-Naggar observes that politicians and commentators "invoke the anti-Arab racist *Shuoobiyyah* sentiment in the early centuries of Islam so as to identify Iran with anti-Arab Persian chauvinism. The invocation of Safavism and Persian chauvinism is not confined to anti-Iranian Arab regimes and anti-Shia trends; both motifs are exploited also by anti-Iranian secular Iraqi Shias, figures and factions, that resent the predominance of pro-Iranian Shia factions in the current Iraqi political process." See Mazin El-Naggar, "History, Iran and the Arabs," *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*, Issue No. 837, March 22-28, 2007; available at: http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2007/837/op6.htm, accessed on Tuesday, November 03, 2009.

Committee for Union and Progress in 1905. However, the post-World War I dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire was a crucible for a transformational experience for Husari, infusing him with a new sense of identity, purpose and motivation. In 1919, following his conversion to Arab nationalism, Husari left Turkey for Syria where he became minister of education in the cabinet formed by Faisal during his short-lived reign as King of Syria. After Faisal's crowning as King of Iraq in 1921, Husari was granted Iraqi citizenship and appointed director-general of education. In this capacity, Husari embarked on the momentous effort of laying the foundations for a complete modern educational system in Iraq.[18] It was a system which tried to project the theory of Arab nationalism, shaped by a cultural-nationalist *weltanschauung*, onto the realm of pedagogy.

The central features of Husari's views on Arab nationalism have been recapitulated elsewhere.[19] I confine myself here to a brief sketch. In large measure, Husari held that history and language, rather than religion, provide the key elements binding the Arabs in a single organic nation. Following in the footsteps of the German romantics, such as Johann Gottfried Herder[20] and Johann Gottlieb Fichte,[21] Husari laid emphasis on a common historical heritage and a shared linguistic medium of communication as integral components of national identity. In this sense, he "suggested the existence of an Arab *Kulturnation* to which everybody speaking Arabic and sharing Arab history belonged."[22] He held that:

> "The union of these two spheres [i.e., language and history] leads to a union of emotions and aims, sufferings, hopes, and culture. Thus the members of one group see themselves as members of a unitary nation, which distinguishes itself from

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[18] This biographical sketch draws on William L. Cleveland, *The Making of an Arab Nationalist: Ottomanism and Arabism in the Life and Thought of Sati' al-Husri* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1971): pp. 12-77.

[19] *Ibid.*, Part II, "The Arab Nationalist Thought of Sati' al-Husri," pp. 81-175; Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003): pp. 49-74; and Walid Qaziha, "Qira'ah Ukhra fi Mafhum Sati'i al-Husari 'an al-Qawmiyyah al-'Arabiyyah" [Another Reading of Sati'i al-Husari's Concept of Arab Nationalism], in Marwan Bahiri, ed., *al-Hayat al-Fikriyyah fi al-Mashriq al-'Arabi, 1890-1939* [Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1890-1939], 2nd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahdah al-'Arabiyyah, 1997): pp. 173-183.

[20] For an exposition of Herder's thought, see Frederick Mechner Barnard, *Herder's Social and Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965).

[21] See, for example, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation*, edited and translated by Gregory Moore (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[22] Ulrike Freitag, "Writing Arab History: The Search for the Nation," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1994): p. 22.

others. However neither religion nor the state nor a shared economic life are the basic elements of a nation, and nor is common territory."[23]

In Husari's conception of Arab nationalism, language figures as "the soul and the life of the nation," whereas "history is its memory and its consciousness."[24] From Husari's perspective, Arab unity was not necessarily an end in and for itself. Arab unity, he argued, could furnish the basis for a greater unity.[25] Arabism transcended religious or sectarian affiliations.[26]

The Iraqi curriculum developed by Husari, who was stripped of his Iraqi citizenship and deported to Syria for his support of the failed Rashid ᶜAali al-Gaylani's anti-British revolt in 1941, and other architects of the educational system in the newly created Iraqi state emphasized Arab nationalism and Iraq's vanguard role in promoting Arab unity.[27] Upon setting out to work on formulating the educational system, Husari saw himself as being on a sort of a sacred mission to inculcate Arab nationalism. "I will employ every means," he vowed, "to strengthen the feeling of nationalism among the sons of Iraq to spread the belief in the unity of the Arab nation."[28] Reeva Spector Simon has summarized Husari's indefatigable efforts and leading role during the formative years of the Iraqi educational system, saying:

> "al-Husri was directly responsible for creating and instituting the curriculum, implementing teaching methods, choosing textbooks and teachers for primary and secondary schools, establishing a teacher training program, and inculcating in students a pan-Arab ideology. He accomplished this either through the course of study itself or by speeches delivered at the teachers college, law school, and Muthanna Club and articles published regularly in Baghdad newspapers and his

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[23] Quoted in Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: A Critical Inquiry*, translated by Marion Farouk-Sluglett and Peter Sluglett (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1981): p. 122.

[24] *Ibid.*

[25] This argument was articulated in a booklet entitled *al-ᶜUrubah Awwalan* [Arabism First], in *al-Aᶜamal al-Qawmiyyah li Satiᶜi al-Husari* [The Nationalist Works of Satiᶜi al-Husari], Vol. 2, 2nd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahdah al-ᶜArabiyyah, May 1990).

[26] Cleveland, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-126.

[27] For accounts of the Rashid ᶜAali movement, Simon, *op. cit.*, Chapter VI, "The Rashid ʿAli Coup," pp. 135-154; Mohammad A. Tarbush, *The role of the military in politics: A case study of Iraq to 1941* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1982), Chapter 8, "The Rashid ʾAli coup and British intervention," pp. 167-182; Fadhil al-Barrak, *Dawr al-Jaysh al-ᶜIraqi fi Hukumat al-Difaᶜa al-Watani wa al-Harb maᶜa Baritanya Sanat 1941* [The Role of the Iraqi Army in the National Defense Cabinet and the War with Britain in the Year 1941] (no place of publication: al-Dar al-ᶜArabiyyah li al-Tibaᶜah, no date); and Walid M. S. Hamdi, *Rashid Ali al-Gailani and the Nationalist Movement in Iraq, 1939-1941* (London: Darf Publishers Limited, 1987).

[28] Quoted in Cleveland, *op. cit.* p. 62.

pedagogical journals *al-Tarbiyya wa-al-Ta'lim* ("Education and Instruction") and *al-Mu'allim al-Jadid* ("The New Teacher").["][29]

Treading the path of Emile Durkheim's collectivism,[30] Husari was intensely aware of the role of the school in imparting social and cultural values to children. In fact, for him, the school takes precedence over the family in this regard. From Husari's preeminently ideological perspective, the school was not only a place where students acquire knowledge and information on the subject matters listed in the formal syllabus. By privileging value education, the school becomes, above all, a medium for communicating patriotic and nationalist values to students. The upshot of this argument is that the internalization of such values as love of fatherland, primacy of community, discipline, cooperation, and the like, helps students suppress their egoistic drives and desires and develop the altruistic aspects of their nature.[31]

The curriculum developed by Husari borrowed heavily from the French elementary school curriculum of the late nineteenth century. The curriculum was based on a considerable revision of an earlier syllabus drawn up by the British educational authorities and published in 1919. In his landmark study of the elementary school curriculum development in Iraq, Matta Akrawi found that the curriculum developed by Husari "borrowed considerably" from the French curriculum of 1887 and its later revisions. Akrawi, however, could not conclude with certainty "[w]hether this borrowing took place directly from the French course of study or indirectly through the Egyptian and Turkish courses of study."[32]

The primacy of Arab nationalist indoctrination for the entire society was a hallmark of the first elementary school curriculum developed by Husari in 1922 and published in 1923. It was based on reading by the phonetic method, which teaches children sounds associated with

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[29] Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

[30] For an overview of Durkheim's pedagogical ideas, see A. K. C. Ottaway, "The Educational Sociology of Émile Durkheim," *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (September 1955): pp. 213-227; and Marc A. Goldstein, "Durkheim's Sociology of Education: Interpretations of Social Change Through Education," *Educational Theory*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (July 1976): pp. 289-297. Durkheim's pedagogical ideas are articulated in his two major works on education, *Moral Education*, translated by Everett Wilson and Herman Schnurer (New York, NY: Free Press, 1961); and *Education and Sociology*, translated by Sherwood Fox (Glencoe: Free Press, 1956).

[31] See Na'im al-'Atiyyah, "Ma'alim al-Fikr al-Tarbawi fi al-Bilad al-'Arabiyyah fi al-Mi'at Sanah al-Akhirah" [Aspects of Educational Thought in the Arab Countries in the Past Hundred Years], in Fou'ad Sarrouf, ed., *al-Fikr al-'Arabi fi Mi'at Sanah* [Arab Thought in One Hundred Years] (Beirut, Lebanon: American University of Beirut, 1967): p. 527.

[32] Akrawi, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

letters and letter combinations as a step towards enabling them to decode words.[33] However, the curriculum was remarkable for its disregard of the ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity of Iraqi society. In fact, Husari's obsession with nationalist indoctrination bred obliviousness, if not hostility, towards giving special consideration for minorities. He opposed government subsidies for minority schools and the "opening of teacher-training colleges in Mosul and Hillah where the majority of the students might be Christian and Shi'i, fearing a consolidation of community spirit."[34]

In addition, the emphasis placed by Husari's curriculum on Arabic language, Arab-Islamic history and nationalist indoctrination superseded concerns for practical education that could benefit the tribal and rural segments which constituted the majority of the population. The subject matters included in the academic elementary school curriculum of 1926 as amended by Circular Order No. 23 of September 15, 1928 include virtually no practical training. It listed the following subjects and their respective distribution in percentage points: Religion (10.4 percent), Arabic (25.5 percent), Arithmetic and Geometry (17.2 percent), Geography and History (9.4 percent), Object Lessons [Sciences] and Health (6.3 percent), Civic and Moral Information (1.6 percent), English (9.4 percent), Arabic Penmanship (4.7 percent), Drawing and Manual Training (6.7 percent), Physical Education (5.7 percent), and Singing (2.6 percent).[35]

In replying to later criticisms that his curriculum underestimated the importance of practical education, Husari argued that instilling national consciousness into the hearts and minds of

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[33] Husari authored a textbook based on a phonetic approach to teaching beginner elementary school pupils reading and writing. The book was still in use in the mid-1960s. Abu Khaldun – Sati͑i al-Husary, *Mabadi' al-Qira'ah al-Khalduniyyah: al-Alifba'* [The Principles of Khalduni Reading: The Alphabet], 7th Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Dar al-Jumuhuriyyah li al-Tiba͑ah wa al-Nashr, 1965).

[34] Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

[35] See, Akrawi, *op. cit.*, p. 181. The lasting influence of Husari's curriculum, which was heavily slanted toward theoretical subjects, can be seen by examining the syllabus of the academic 6-year elementary school curriculum during the early 1980s. The following are the subjects and their respective distribution in percentage points: Islamic Education and Interpretation (8 percent), Arabic Language and Writing (31 percent), English Language (4 percent), Mathematics (18 percent), National Education (3 percent), History and Geography (4 percent), Life Education (6 percent), Science and Health Education (5 percent), Agricultural Education (3 percent), Art Education (5 percent), Physical Education (8 percent), Music and Anthems (3 percent), and Family Education (1 percent). Christian religion was taught in areas where the majority of the pupils were Christians. It should be noted that the above distribution reflects a slight shift toward boosting science and technical education undertaken by the Ba͑ath Party regime in the 1970s. Percentages were calculated based on the Study Plan for the Primary Stage presented in Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, Directorate General of Educational Planning, *Development of Education in Iraq During 1981/1982 and 1982/1983: A Report Submitted to the XXXIX Session of the International Conference on Education*, UNESCO, Geneva 1984, Translated by the Directorate of Translation (Baghdad, Iraq: al-Jahidh Printing House, 1984): pp. 52-53.

the rural farmers takes precedence over teaching them better agricultural techniques.[36] Husari's critics, however, were not mollified by such arguments. In fact, his contemporaneous critics concentrated their fire on his curriculum's lack of practical training. Chief among those critics were Muhammad Fadhil al-Jamali and his associates, such as Matta Akrawi and Sami Shawkat. Following in the footsteps of John Dewey's educational progressivism,[37] Jamali and his associates embraced the approach of active schooling, which postulates that children learn best through guided experiences and practical training geared toward the development of the students' potential. They also stood for teaching students reading through the word-recognition method, which entails rote learning or the repeated exposure of children to words.

The debate over educational methodology had a bearing on providing Iraqis with an equal educational opportunity and addressing the pedagogical needs of the various segments of the population. Practical education held the promise of benefiting the Shi^cite population, the majority of who led a rural and semi-nomadic life. The debate unfolded in a zone of contestation between a hegemonic, centralizing pedagogical view that privileges the capital and a counter-hegemonic, decentralizing view privileging the interests of the provinces. It was shaped by the different primordial elements sedimented in the backgrounds of the two educators, Husari and Jamali.

Jamali was a descendant of a respected Shi^cite family that traces its roots to Quraysh, the Prophet's tribe. Born in Kadhemiyyah in 1903, Jamali received his early education in religious studies and Arabic at the Imam Khalisi School in Kadhemiyyah before joining the Nemoneh Maktabi, an Ottoman modern school. He went on to pursue his higher education at the Elementary Teachers College in Baghdad. He was later sent on a government scholarship to study at the American University of Beirut where he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in 1927. Following a stint as an instructor at the Elementary Teachers College in Baghdad he was sent on another government scholarship to the United States to pursue a doctoral degree in education at Columbia University's Teachers College, where he imbibed John Dewey's

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[36] ^cAtiyyah, *op. cit.*, p. 528.

[37] John Dewey is recognized as the most eloquent figure in the school of thought in American education known as "educational progressivism." Dewey spelled out his ideas on education in a series of books. The most well-known of these is undoubtedly *Democracy and Education* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1944 [1916]). A brief and useful account of progressivism in twentieth century America can be found in David F. Labaree, "Progressivism, Schools and Schools of Education: An American Romance," *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 41, Nos. 1 & 2 (February 2005): pp. 275-288.

pedagogical approach. He wrote his doctoral thesis on Bedouin education in Iraq working under the supervision of his advisor Paul Monroe, who was invited by the Iraqi government in 1932 to visit Iraq to prepare a study on education in the country. Jamali accompanied Monroe on this mission.[38]

The pedagogical debate broke out into the open when the Monroe Commission published its report, whose recommendations were inspired by current American educational philosophy. In short, the report advocated a decentralized system of education to enable educational institutions to take the local needs into consideration and stressed practical education with special emphasis on agriculture, handicrafts, health, girl education, and mobile schools for Bedouins. But there was an elitist streak in the commission's recommendations that echoed educational policies advocated under the British Mandate. It supported Faysal's idea to set up an elite school and opposed the generalization of secondary education throughout the country under the pretext of the high costs involved. The report, moreover, denounced the excessive nationalism and militarism found in schools at the time.[39]

Husari's reaction was livid with anger. In a series of articles, Husari cast a thick pall of doubt over the utility of the report's recommendations and the credibility of its authors.[40] He questioned whether any benefits would accrue to Iraq from a commission made up of American educational specialists. He rejected any foreign interference in setting Iraq's national educational goals. He denounced the assertion that the general expansion of secondary education would be detrimental for the country.[41]

Shortly upon completing his doctorate and returning to Iraq, Jamali took an active part in steering the country's educational policy and implementing some of the recommendations of the Monroe Commission, especially those relating to decentralization, equal educational opportunity and practical education. Directors-general of education were appointed in the

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[38] The biographical data on Jamali are derived from Simon, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79; and *Muhammad Fadhil al-Jamali: Jihad fi Sabil al-ᶜUrubah wa al-Islam* [Muhammad Fadhil al-Jamali: Jihad for the Sake of Arabism and Islam], 1st Edition (London: Dar al-Hikmah, 1419 A.H./1998 C.E.). Jamali's doctoral thesis was later published by Columbia University. See Mohammed Fadhel Jamali, *The New Iraq: Its Problem of Bedouin Education* (New York, NY: Bureau of Publication, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1934).

[39] Government of Iraq, *Report of the Education Inquiry Commission* (Iraq, Baghdad: Government Press, 1932).

[40] This series of articles was later compiled and published in a book. See Satiᶜi al-Husari, *Naqd Taqrir Lajnat Monroe: Rasa'il Muwajjahah ila al-Ustadh Paul Monroe hawla al-Taqrir al-ladhi Qaddamahu ila Wazarat al-Maᶜarif al-ᶜIraqiyyah* [A Critique of the Monroe Committee Report: Letters Addressed to Mr. Paul Monroe about the Report that He Submitted to the Iraqi Ministry of Education] (Baghdad, Iraq: Matbaᶜat al-Najah, 1932).

[41] Simon, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-84.

provinces, whereas under Husari there were only three directors-general, in Baghdad, Basra and Mosul. Jamali, moreover, took measures to permit and encourage elementary school graduates to attend the teachers training college and then go on scholarships overseas. Under Husari, such programs were open only to secondary school graduates.[42] Jamali's drive to ensure that Shi^cites have access to better quality education, which included the opening of schools in Shi^cite areas such as Najaf, the appointment of Shi^cites in teaching and administrative posts at the ministry of education, and sending Shi^cite students on scholarships abroad drew the ire of some Sunni politicians in Baghdad, such as Yassin al-Hashemi and his brother Chief of Staff of the Army Taha al-Hashemi.[43]

4.3. Sectarian Narratives and Curriculum Development

"The only thing that keeps us from floating off with the wind is our stories. They give us a name and put us in a place, allow us to keep on touching."

Tom Spanbauer,
The Man Who Fell in Love with the Moon

As has already been pointed out, the disagreements between Husari and his adversaries had their foundations in method rather than the nationalist ideological content of the curriculum.[44] Jamali and his associates had no quarrel with Husari's concept of Arab nationalism but rather with the elitist élan of his approach which manifested itself in stands such as opposition to practical training and advocacy for establishing a special school for tribal chiefs and the children of patrician and notable families. They also advocated for introducing schools teaching a reduced number of years into the provinces.[45] Jamali infused Husari's concept of Arab nationalism with an added "mystical concept of the divinely created and guided Arab nation in which Iraq, which had the necessary material and human potential, was the country

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[42] *Ibid*., p. 86.

[43] *Ibid*., p. 87.

[44] In keeping with his Arab nationalist orientation, Jamali articulates a view of education as an instrument for creating a strong nation in his *Wujhat al-Tarbiyah wa al-Ta^calim fi al-^cAalam al-^cArabi: wa Khasatan fi al-^cIraq* [The Direction of Education and Instruction in the Arab World: Especially in Iraq] (Baghdad, Iraq: Matba^cat al-Jazirah, 1354 A.H./1935 C.E.).

[45] Simon, *op. cit*., p. 79; and Liora Lukitz, *Iraq: The Search for National Identity* (London; and Portland, OR: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 2004 [1995]): p. 119.

most qualified for leadership."[46] Such mystical bent prompted socialist thinker and sociologist Abd al-Fattah Ibrahim, a contemporary of Jamali, to condemn Jamali's approach as guilty of "idealism as a viewpoint on life, as a way of thinking and as a Trojan horse for reaction."[47] Ibrahim maintained that universal primary education advocated by Jamali is contingent on a number of political and socio-economic conditions, including democracy and emancipation from the yoke of feudalism.[48] The ideological concurrence between the architects of the educational system in Iraq helped keep the nationalist core of the curriculum developed by Husari intact amid the vicissitudes wrought about by disagreements over method.

Due to the shortage of skilled teachers, non-Iraqi Arab teachers were recruited to teach at Iraqi schools. Most of these teachers came from Syria, Palestine and Lebanon. They were staunch advocates of a strident version of Arab nationalism. They wrote the first textbooks that were incorporated into the curriculum of the modern Iraqi schools. The textbooks that they wrote for the social studies and humanities subjects, especially History, laid emphasis on Pan-Arab political issues. In fact, "[h]istory, followed by instruction in civics and physical education in the form of military drill, was the most important tool used to inculcate national awareness in the younger generation."[49] The Arab nationalist themes struck by these propagandist teachers continue to echo in History textbooks used in Iraqi schools to this day.

In the 1930s, interventions by the ministry of education enforced uniformity in education. Prescribed texts were made mandatory in public as well as private and denominational schools. The ministry also attempted to control what teachers taught in the classrooms through directives "admonishing schools against subversive and divisive political activity which would tend to provoke ethnic and regional differences." Schools were also ordered not to use books that could undermine the spirit of national unity. In 1940, the Public Education Law required that the ministry of education approve teachers teaching national subjects – *viz.*, Arabic, History, Geography and Civics – at private and denominational, including foreign,

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[46] Simon, *ibid.*, p. 81.
[47] Abd al-Fattah Ibrahim, *Ta‘aliq ‘ala Mudhakkirah fi Mustaqbal al-Tarbiyah wa al-Ta‘alim fi al-‘Iraq* [A Commentary on the Memorandum on the Future of Education and Instruction in Iraq] (Baghdad, Iraq: Maktabat Baghdad, no date): p. 4.
[48] *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.
[49] Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 88. The expressions of Arab nationalist thought in the writings and textbooks of some of these non-Iraqi Arab teachers are explored in C. Ernest Dawn, "The Formation of Pan-Arab Ideology in the Interwar Years," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 20. No. 1 (February 1988): pp. 67-91.

schools.[50] Following the failure of the May 1941 anti-British movement led by Rashid ʿAali al-Gaylani, the British regained their influence at the ministry of education through their adviser H. R. Hamley. Teachers with pro-Nazi and pro-Fascist leanings were sacked. The pro-Nazi, pro-Fascist and militaristic content, as well as the emphasis on the Palestinian Question and material vilifying the French Mandate in Syria, were pruned out of the curriculum.[51]

There is no space for neutrality or critical reading in a curriculum where subjects are not free from the restraints of ideology. Forays that seek to establish a critical distance from the glorified past are banished to the realm of heresy and blasphemy. Ideology is uncompromising. And in such an ideologically committed system, the curriculum in Iraq was geared toward constructing accounts portraying the Arab-Islamic past in a positive light. Historical narratives incorporated into the curriculum also satisfied a collective psychological need. They "demonstrated to Iraqi students that the Arabs, just like their colonizers, once had an empire of their own – an empire that had been far superior to modernday Western empires."[52] Although framed in secular terms, the curriculum's focus on the history of the early Arab-Islamic empire, during which the Sunni-Shiʿite division started and took form, made the goal of fostering a portrait of a unified past impossible to attain.

A major part of the History curriculum consisted of profiles of heroes based on sanitized accounts emphasizing the virtuous and pious characters of these personalities. Lists of idealized heroes were adapted according to political considerations. "In the syllabi for the 1920s," notes Reeva Spector Simon, "there were twenty-eight names on the list of heroes, including six women. In 1936 the number was increased to forty and included modern personalities as King Ghazi, King Faysal, [and] King Husayn (of the Hijaz)."[53] The list of idealized heroes included Companions of the Prophet, Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs, prominent Islamic rulers and Muslim leaders leading the fight against European colonialism.[54] The list was revised following the failed Rashid ʿAali movement. Historical Arab military generals and modern anti-western Arab rebel leaders were de-emphasized. The lives of pre-Islamic Mesopotamian and Greek figures were taught to students as well as those

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[50] Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 99.
[51] *Ibid.*, p. 150; and Interview with Najib Muhyi al-Din, Former Chairman of the Iraqi Teachers' Union, Amman, Wednesday, May 19, 2010.
[52] Bashkin, *op. cit.*, p. 352.
[53] Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

of Prophet Muhammad, the four Rightly Guided Caliphs and a host of caliphs, rulers and governors from the Umayyad, ᶜAbbasid and Ottoman periods. However, Ali, the first Shiᶜite Imam and fourth Rightly Guided Caliph, was the only Shiᶜite figure listed in the revised catalogue of heroes. No other Shiᶜite figures were included in the revised list.[55] The fundamental principles set at these early stages of curriculum development continued to shape and inspire educational curricula in Iraq in the subsequent decades. The valorization of heroes remained a constant feature animating the humanities, especially History, textbooks, complete with nationalistic jingoism and sloganeering, and sometimes xenophobic nationalism, under consecutive regimes.

No major curricular changes were introduced with the toppling of the monarchy in 1958. A new course entitled Social Studies and Civics Education (*al-Ijtimaᶜiyyat wa al-Tarbiyah al-Wataniyyah*) was launched.[56] The course represented an organized and centralized effort aimed to cement and promote the new republican ruling ideology among students. General Abd al-Karim Qassim's government initiated minor other ideologically-driven revisions of the curriculum content, stressing Iraq's independence from foreign alliances, that agrarian reform would emancipate farmers from the yoke of feudalism, and that Iraq was dominated by feudalism and exploitation before the 1958 revolution. The 1920 Revolution was also praised in the educational curricula for the first time.[57] However, "most of the Hashemite-era curriculum remained unchanged."[58] The revisions "did not touch the Arabist core of the educational curricula."[59] The prevalent tendency among Iraqi education specialists during this period continued to be inspired by a view of education as an instrument of political indoctrination.[60]

Moreover, during Qassim's reign, efforts were made to provide non-Arab minorities with access to mother tongue education. Kurdish was gradually adopted as the language of

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[55] For a cursory inventory of heroes as per the revised list, see *ibid.*, p. 151.

[56] Nabil Al-Tikriti, "War, State Collapse and the Predicament of Education in Iraq," in André E. Mazawi and Ronald G. Sultana, eds., *Education and the Arab World: Political Projects, Struggles, and Geometries of Power, World Yearbook of Education 2010* (London: Routledge, 2009): p. 351.

[57] Interview with Najib Muhyi al-Din, Former Chairman of the Iraqi Teachers' Union, Amman, Wednesday, May 19, 2010.

[58] Tikriti, *op. cit.*

[59] Interview with Najib Muhyi al-Din, Former Chairman of the Iraqi Teachers' Union, Amman, Wednesday, May 19, 2010.

[60] See, for example, Nuri al-Hafidh, *Ahdaf al-Taᶜalim al-Thanawi wa Mafahimuh wa Falsafatuh fi al-ᶜIraq* [The Objectives, Concepts and Philosophy of Secondary Education in Iraq], A Supplement to the al-*Muᶜallim al-Jadid* [The New Teacher] Magazine (Baghdad, Iraq: al-Muᶜallim al-Jadid Magazine, 1961): esp. pp. 14-15, 20-21 and 28-31.

instruction at the intermediate and secondary levels in Kurdish areas, but curriculum development remained centralized. The Kurdish curriculum simply consisted of translations of the Arabic curriculum. In addition, Arabic was taught as a second language in Kurdish schools. At the same time, the teaching of Kurdish as a second language was introduced into schools in the predominantly Arab areas. However, this policy could not be generalized to all schools throughout the country because of the shortage of qualified Kurdish language teachers. Similarly, some schools in predominantly Turkmen areas began to teach in Turkmen as well. Moreover, under General Qassim, the Director of Education (*Mudir al-Ma^c^arif*), who used to work under the Director-General of Education (*Mudir al-Ta^c^alim al-^c^Aam*), who reports to the minister of education, had two deputies, one Turkmen, the other Kurd.[61] However, no similar measures were undertaken to accommodate the country's religious and sectarian diversity into the curriculum. The most glaring gap in the curriculum, in this regard, remained the same as before toppling the monarchy: the curriculum provided no means for accommodating the historical and religious narrative of the country's Shi^c^ite demographic majority. This was no simple oversight in a country like Iraq whose population consists of a rich mosaic of religious and sectarian communities. It bespoke the failure of the state to enshrine the values of religious tolerance, equality and dialogue within education and civic life.

There were episodes in the early years of the state when Sunni readings of Islamic history by teachers triggered furious reactions by Iraqi Shi^c^ites. In 1927, Anis Zakariyyah al-Nusuli, a Lebanese teacher in the Iraqi fledgling modern school system and an alumnus of the American University of Beirut, published a book on the history of the Umayyads, *al-Dawlah al-Umawiyyah fi al-Sham* [The Umayyad State in Syria]. The account glorified the Umayyads, justified the slaying of the Prophet's grandson, Hussein, and was dotted with remarks and swipes disparaging the Shi^c^ites. The book, which was subsequently banned, earned its author the wrath of Shi^c^ite clerics and notables, prompting the Shi^c^ite minister of education Abd al-Mahdi al-Minitifichi to sack him from his teaching posts at the Baghdad Secondary School and the Teachers College. Nusuli's dismissal sparked student demonstrations emphasizing the right to free speech, in which both Shi^c^ite and Sunni youths

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[61] Interview with Najib Muhyi al-Din, Former Chairman of the Iraqi Teachers' Union, Amman, Wednesday, May 19, 2010.

took part, which ultimately forced the government to reinstate him.[62] While highlighting the growing importance of nationalism and modern associational solidarities cutting across societal segmentation, the Nusuli affair also draws attention to the continued strength of communal sentiments and primordial affiliations. It is true that, at the time, the recruitment of education into the state-building project had made some strides in instilling a sense of nationalism. But primordial loyalties and sentiments were far from being completely erased. Reconstituted elements of these original loyalties remained lurking beneath the surface and could be aroused and mobilized in the service of communal interest – real or perceived. Although framed in the idiom of free speech and scientific historical research, the debate surrounding the Nusuli affair was in essence sparked by sedimented sectarian sentiments.

Perhaps in a bid to minimize differences between Sunnis and Shi^cites, efforts were made by education officials under Ba^cath Party rule to accommodate the Shi^cite point of view and strike a sectarian balance in the lists of heroes taught. For instance, the curricula would rarely refer to Abu Hurayrah [d. *circa* 58-59 A.H./677-679 C.E.], a Companion of the Prophet who enjoys high esteem among the Sunnis, because the Shi^cites view him in negative light.[63] The lists of profiled heroes included Sunni and Shi^cite figures alike.[64] Still, some Shi^cite parents were not satisfied because the curriculum did not include profiles of all the twelve Imams. "Our parents were roiled by the fact that the twelve Imams were not mentioned in the curriculum," Hamid al-Kifaey, former Spokesman of the Iraqi Governing Council, told me in an interview in London. "So, they used to teach their children the biographies of the twelve Imams at home."[65] Moreover, these efforts to accommodate elements of the Shi^cite narrative did not masquerade the peculiarly Sunni reading of historical events that supplied the

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[62] For accounts of the "Nusuli Affair," see Khayri Amin al-^cUmari, *Hikayat Siyasiyyah min Tarikh al-^cIraq al-Hadith* [Political Tales from the History of Modern Iraq], 1st Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Dar al-^cArabiyyah li al-Mawsu^cat, 1428 A.H./2008 C.E.): pp. 121-139; and ^cAbd al-Karim al-Uzri, *Mushkilat al-Hukum fi al-^cIraq: Tahlil li al-^cAwamil al-Ta'ifiyyah wa al-^cUnsuriyyah fi Ta^catil al-Hukum al-Dimuqrati fi al-^cIraq wa al-Hulul al-Dharuriyyah li al-Taghallub ^cAlayaha* [The Problem of Political Governance in Iraq: An Analysis of the Role of Sectarian and Racist Factors in Obstructing Democratic Governance in Iraq and the Solutions Necessary to Overcome Them] (London: no publisher, 1991): pp. 215-230.

[63] For a highly critical view of Abu Hurayrah from a Shi^cite perspective, see Abd al-Hussein Sharaf al-Din al-Musawi al-^cAamili, *Abu Hurayrah*, 2nd Edition (Najaf, Iraq: al-Matba^cah al-Haydariyyah, 1375 A.H./1956 C.E.). For a Sunni laudatory view of Abu Hurayrah, see Abd al-Mun^cim Salih al-Ali al-^cIzzi, *Difa^ca ^can Abi Hurayrah (Radhiya Allah ^cAnh)* [In Defense of Abu Hurayrah (May Allah Be Pleased with Him)], 2nd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Qalam; and Baghdad, Iraq: Dar al-Nahdhah, 1981). ^cIzzi is an Iraqi Sunni Arab cleric and ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood in Iraq. He is more popularly known as Muhammad Ahmad al-Rashid, the penname which he adopted after fleeing Iraq under Ba^cath Party rule.

[64] Interview with Yahya al-Kubaysi, Visiting Scholar at the French Institute for the Near East in Amman, Amman, Wednesday, May 19, 2010.

[65] Interview with Hamid al-Kifaey, Former Spokesman of the Iraqi Governing Council, London, Monday, September 20, 2010.

underlying subtext for the laudatory, sanitized profiles taught to students. Shi^cite imams covered in the curriculum, such as Ali and Hussein, were portrayed as being equal to the other Rightly Guided Caliphs (*al-Khulafa' al-Rashidun*) and other Companions.

The curriculum's unitary discourse summoned portrayals of Arab-Islamic civilization as a monolith engaged in an eternal struggle against 'Others,' both from within and without the fold of Islam. The curriculum's emphasis on sameness and common history concealed crucial events in Arab-Islamic history. It also obfuscated the country's rich ethno-sectarian pluralism. The idealized reading of Islamic history and the roles played by some of the profiled personalities was reared in a decidedly Sunni point of view. This viewpoint shaped the approaches and perspectives adopted to tackle historical developments and seeped through the interstices of the language used. It is true that the textbooks were free of anti-Shi^cite diatribes. But their underlying Sunni subtext broached sensitivities lurking deep within the consciousness and sub-consciousness of Shi^cites. The honorific terminology used to compliment and pay tribute even to personalities revered by the Shi^cites carried Sunni overtones and connotations. For example, the clauses "may Allah be pleased with him" (*radhiya Allah ^canh*),[66] which is usually reserved by Sunnis to pay tribute to the Companions of Prophet Muhammad, or "may Allah honor him" (*karram Allah wajhah*)[67] were used to proclaim reverence for Ali bin Abi Talib, the first Shi^cite Imam, instead of the traditionally Shi^cite clause reserved for this purpose, "peace be upon him" (*^calayhi al-salam*). The curricula would also use the title of Caliph (*Khalifah*) for Ali rather than Imam. This terminology reflected a Sunni point of view on the status of Ali. Whereas the Shi^cites elevate the status of Ali above that of all other Companions, the Sunnis view the Companions as being equally 'just' (*^cudul*). The Sunnis, however, distinguish between categories of stratification among the Companions. The highest of these categories is that of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Yet, this category is internally-stratified as the Sunnis believe that 'the best' (*al-afdhal*) among the Rightly Guided Caliphs was Abu Bakr, followed by ^cUmar bin al-

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[66] See, for instance, Hamad al-Kubaysi, Abd al-Sattar Hamid, and Abd al-Jabbar al-Aalusi, *al-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyyah li al-Saff al-Thani al-Mutawassit* [Islamic Education for the Second Intermediate Class], 17th Edition [Revised] (Baghdad, Iraq: Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, 1419 A.H./1999 C.E.): pp. 32-33.
[67] See, for instance, Hamad ^cUbayd al-Kubaysi, Abd al-Jabbar Abdallah al-Aalusi, and Youssuf Thamer Ahmad, *al-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyyah li al-Saff al-Awwal al-Mutawassit* [Islamic Education for the First Intermediate Class], 16th Edition [Revised] (Baghdad, Iraq: Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, 1418-1419 A.H./1998-1999 C.E.): p. 27.

Khattab, ᶜUthman bin ᶜAffan and Ali bin Abi Talib, respectively.[68] Moreover, the curricula in the decades preceding the fall of Saddam Hussein would adopt the Sunni dates for the birthday of the Prophet, his death, etc.[69] According to the most commonly accepted Sunni view, the 12th of the lunar month of Rabiᶜi al-Awwal marks both the birthday and the anniversary of his death. However, the Shiᶜites believe that he was born on the 17th of Rabiᶜi al-Awwal and passed away on the 28th of the lunar month of Safar.[70]

Sectarian disagreements among Muslims are not mere religious disputes. Contending theological conceptions and interpretations of religious law are compounded by different readings of sacred history. Contradictory readings of critical junctures and personalities in Islamic history define the contours of communal identity and fuel the Muslim sectarian divide. On the one hand, the Sunni reading of Islamic history provides a narrative of a bygone golden age dominated by caliphs and rulers whose rule was informed, to various degrees, by the fundamental values of the faith. Such a golden age serves as a powerful mimetic symbol. The Shiᶜite reading of Islamic history, on the other hand, provides a narrative that is deeply steeped in a collective memory of suffering, betrayal and oppression at the hands of some of the very personalities idealized in the Sunni narrative. Each group stresses different events and differentially interprets controversial episodes. Some of the early Muslim personalities profiled in the Sunni version of history which inspired the Iraqi curriculum, such as the first three Rightly Guided Caliphs, Khalid bin al-Walid and Umayyad Caliph Muᶜawiyah bin Abi

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[68] The Sunni and Shiᶜite points of view on the status of the Companions and Imam Ali are spelled out in numerous voluminous works. For examples of classical sources reflecting the Sunni view on the status and stratification of the Companions, see Ahmad bin Ali bin Muhammad Ibn Hajar al-ᶜAsqalani [d. 852 A.H./1448 C.E.], *al-Isabah fi Tamyiz al-Sahabah* [Being Right on the Mark in Distinguishing the Companions], Vols. 1-9 (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-ᶜIlmiyyah, 1415 A.H./1995 C.E.); and Jalal al-Din Abd al-Rahman bin Abi Bakr al-Suyuti [d. 911/1505 C.E.], *Tadrib al-Rawi fi Sharh Taqrib al-Nawawi* [Training the Narrator in the Interpretation of al-Nawawi's *Taqrib*], edited, reviewed and commentary by Abd al-Wahhab Abd al-Latif, Vol. 2, 2nd Edition (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Kutub al-Hadithah, 1385 A.H./1966 C.E.). For an example of the Shiᶜite view on the status of Ali, see Abu al-Hassan Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Ali bin al-Hassan al-Qummi, popularly known as Ibn Shadhan [d. early 5th century A.H./ 11th century C.E.], *Mi'at Manqabah min Manaqib Amir al-Mu'minin Ali bin Abi Talib wa al-A'immah min Wildeh (ᶜalayhim al-salam)* [One Hundred of the Virtues of the Prince of the Believers Ali bin Abi Talib and the Imams from His Progeny (peace be upon them)], edited by Nabil Ridha ᶜAlwan, 2nd Edition (Qum, Iran: Intisharat Ansariyyan, 1413 A.H./1993 C.E.). For a Shiᶜite critique of the Sunni notion of the "justness" (ᶜadalah) of the Companions, See Hashim Maᶜaruf al-Hassani, *Dirasat fi al-Hadith wa al-Muhaddithin* [Studies on *Hadith* and Narrators of *Hadith*], 2nd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Taᶜaruf li al-Matbuᶜat, 1398 A.H./1978 C.E.): pp. 65-107.

[69] Interview with Yahya al-Kubaysi, Visiting Scholar at the French Institute for the Near East in Amman, Amman, Wednesday, May 19, 2010.

[70] For the dates of the birthday and death of Prophet Muhammad according to the Sunni school, see "The Biography of the Last Prophet: Muhammad" *Inter-Islam* website; available at: http://www.inter-islam.org/Seerah/iSeerah.html; accessed on Wednesday, July 18, 2012. For the Shiᶜite version of these dates, see "A Brief Biography of Prophet Muhammad," *Teachings of Islam* website; available at: http://imamshirazi.com/prophet-biography.html; accessed on Saturday, January 22, 2011.

Sufyan, figure in the Shi^cite historical narrative and lore as villains *par excellence*.[71] Even portrayals of much-valorized Muslim historical heroes, such as Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi (d. 589 A.H./1193 C.E.) who inflicted an ignominious defeat on the Crusaders at Hittin in 1187 C.E., are mired in controversy along sectarian fault lines. The Shi^cites consider the rule of many of these valorized caliphs and rulers as vile, oppressive and unjust.[72] Ultimately, contending narratives ensure that each sectarian school, Shi^cism and Sunnism, "breathes a distinct ethos of faith and piety that nurtures a particular temperament and a unique approach to the question of what it means to be a Muslim."[73]

As if to ensure that there will be no deviation from the one-sided view of the Sunni Arab state on matters of religion at the schools, teachers assigned to teach religious studies subjects came disproportionately from the Sunni community. This policy was applied even to schools in predominantly Shi^cite areas.[74] The biased selection process of religious studies teachers served to preserve the purity of the one-sided sectarian narrative embodied in the curriculum and prevent the dissemination of a counter knowledge on controversial matters of religion and Islamic history. It effectively forestalled the possibility that non-Sunni teachers would impart to students a different version of Islamic history when it comes to controversial issues. Some Sunni teachers of religious studies subjects did little to conceal their firm belief in their sect's hegemonic discourse or claims to 'truth.' One interlocutor interviewed as part of this research recalls that when he was a schoolchild in his native Hindiyyah, a predominantly

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[71] Interview with Hamid al-Kifaey, Former Spokesman of the Iraqi Governing Council, London, Monday, September 20, 2010. For Sunni portrayals of the Companions which romanticize the ideal man, see Ahmad Ibn Hanbal [d. 241 A.H./855 C.E.], *Fadha'il al-Sahabah* [The Virtues of the Companions], edited by Wasiy Allah Muhammad ^cAbbas, Vols. 1-2, 1st Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 1403 A.H./1983 C.E.); and Khalid Muhammad Khalid, *Khulafa' al-Rasul* [The Successors of the Messenger] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kitab al-^cArabi, 1394 A.H./1974 C.E.). For a counter, Shi^cite view which lambasts and demonizes several Companions, see Sulaym bin Qays al-Hilali al-^cAmiri al-Kufi [d. *circa* 90 A.H./708-709 C.E.], *Kitab al-Saqifah* [The Book of the Portico], also known as *Kitab Sulaym bin Qays al-Kufi* [The Book of Sulaym bin Qays al-Kufi] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Funun li al-Tiba^cah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi^ci, 1400 A.H./1980 C.E.); and Muhammad al-Tijani al-Samawi, *al-Shi^cah Hum Ahl al-Sunnah* [The Shi^cites are the People of the Sunnah], 1st Edition (London: Mu'assasat al-Fajr; and Beirut, Lebanon: Shams al-Mashriq, 1413 A.H./1993 C.E.): pp. 170-243.

[72] For a laudatory profile of Salah al-Din in an Iraqi school textbook during Saddam Hussein's rule, see Mahmud Abdallah al-Jader, Khalid Muhsin Isma^cil, and Fathiyyah Hadi Rahim, *al-Mutala^cah li al-Saff al-Sadis al-I^cidadi* [Reading for the Sixth Secondary Class], 7th Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, 1421 A.H./2000 C.E.): pp. 18-21. For a Shi^cite portrayal of Salah al-Din as a villain whose hands are stained with the blood of his Shi^cite victims, including women and children, see Muhammad Jawad Mughniyyeh, *al-Shi^cah wa al-Hakimun* [The Shi^cites and the Rulers], 5th Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Jawad, 1981): pp. 190-194.

[73] Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006): p. 34.

[74] Interview with Abd al-Hussein al-Hindawi, Former Chairman of the Iraqi Independent Higher Electoral Commission, Baghdad, Friday, January 7, 2011.

Shi^cite town to the south of Baghdad, in the 1950s, a religious studies teacher named Sabri used to take him and his classmates to pray behind the Sunni prayer imam at the town's Sunni mosque. The teacher would also teach the Shi^cite students the Sunni version of the call to prayers (*adhan*).[75] Another interlocutor, a Baghdad-born Shi^cite from a family hailing from the countryside of the Maysan Province, recounted that, when he attended elementary school in the Hurriyyah quarter of Baghdad in the early 1960s, an Islamic Education teacher would punish students who take part in mourning rites marking ^cAshura, such as self-flagellation (*latum*) or *tatbir*.[76] The teacher, a Sunni Turkmen from Kirkuk, would look for bodily marks indicating that the student had taken part in such rites. Those found 'guilty' were subjected to corporal punishment, including spanking, beating and hitting on the palms of the hands or the soles of the feet with a stick (the latter form is known as *falaqah* in Arabic).[77]

The underlying hegemonic Sunni Arab discourse embedded in the curriculum was assimilationist in nature. It elicited calls from Shi^cites and non-Arab communities to incorporate into the syllabus elements drawing on their religious, ethnic and/or cultural reservoir. General and broad calls for educational reform figured in Shi^cite demands presented to the state to redress their grievances. The Najaf Charter of March 1935, which listed a catalogue of demands, called for enacting laws that would "refine the educational curricula, and assign grades to the exams of religious lessons much like other lessons."[78] On other occasions, explicit demands were made for ensuring that the curriculum used in the Shi^cite provinces "would draw form Shi'i religion and culture."[79] Calls were also made to

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[75] *Ibid.*

[76] *Tatbir* is the self-inflicted laceration of the head using a blade or a sword that causes bleeding in grief for the slaying of Imam Hussein. The rite, while common among Shi^cites in Iraq, is controversial among Shi^cite religious authorities, some of who have issued rulings proscribing the practice. For a compilation of rulings by Shi^cite mujtahids proclaiming the permissibility of *tatbir*, see *al-Minbar* (Kuwait), Vol. 2, No. 12, Safar 1422 A.H. [April-May 2001 C.E.]. For a recent work in defense of the practice, see Muhammad Jamil Hammoud, *Radd al-Hujum ^can Sha^ca'ir al-Imam al-Hussein al-Madhlum (^calayhi al-salam): Bahth Fiqhi Istidlali Yatanawal Mawdu^c al-Tatbir wa al-Ishkalat ^cAlayh* [Repelling the Attack on the Rites of the Wronged Imam Hussein (peace be upon him): A Deductive Jurisprudential Investigation Addressing the Subject of *Tatbir* and the Specious Criticisms Leveled at It] (Beirut, Lebanon: Markaz al-^cItrah li al-Dirasat wa al-Buhuth, 2004). A classical work opposing *tatbir* is Muhsin al-Amin bin Abdallah bin Abd al-Karim al-Hussayni al-^cAmili [d. 1371 A.H./1952 C.E.], *Risalat al-Tanzih li A^camal al-Shabih* [A Treatise on the Incomparability of the Acts of the Lookalike], 1st Edition (Sidon, Lebanon: Matba^cat al-^cIrafan, 1347 A.H. [1928-1929 C.E.]). On the controversy stirred by Amin's work, see Werner Ende, "The Flagellations of Muḥarram and the Shi^cite ^cUlamā'" *Der Islam*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (1978): pp. 20-36.

[77] Interview with Ali Thwany, Iraqi Architect and Researcher, Amman, Tuesday, September 21, 2010.

[78] Uzri, *Mushkilat al-Hukum fi al-^cIraq*, p. 64. For a translation of the complete text of the Najaf Charter, see Appendix I.

[79] Lukitz, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

include Shi^{c}ite Ja^{c}afari jurisprudence in the curriculum of the Iraqi School of Law.[80] Educational reform remained a constant theme in demands raised by the Shi^{c}ite religious establishment even after the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of the republic.[81] Shortly on the heels of the February 1963 coup, two representatives of the Shi^{c}ite *marji^{c}i taqlid* Grand Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim held a meeting with Ba^{c}athist leaders Hani al-Fukayki and Muhsin al-Shaykh Radhi, both Shi^{c}ites. The two representatives, Mahid al-Hakim, the Ayatollah's son, and Shaykh Ali al-Saghir, conveyed a list of demands, such as state support for Shi^{c}ite religious cultural and educational institutes and changes to the curriculum which include the teaching of Shi^{c}ite jurisprudence.[82]

There were also attempts to mount a dialectical challenge to the hegemony of the Sunni discourse in education by setting up denominational schools where Shi^{c}ite children would imbibe fundamental tenets of their faith and preserve their primordial sectarian identity. The first modern Shi^{c}ite denominational school in Iraq, known as *Maktab al-Taraqqi al-Ja^{c}afari al-^{c}Uthmani* (the Ottoman Ja^{c}afari School of Progress) was established by wealthy Shi^{c}ite businessmen in Baghdad in 1908. The school was renamed as *al-Madrasah al-Ja^{c}afariyyah* (the Ja^{c}afari School) shortly on the heels of the British occupation of the city in 1917.[83] The Ja^{c}afari School, which opened a second, but smaller, branch named *al-Madrasah al-Hashemiyyah* (the Hashemite School), was a pacesetter for similar Shi^{c}ite faith school projects. Another denominational school named *al-Madrasah al-Husayniyyah* (the Husseini School) was launched on May 13, 1920.[84] In 1935, *Muntada al-Nashr* (the 'Publication

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[80] Shi^{c}ite legislators highlighted the issue in deliberations during a parliamentary session on January 18, 1945. See ^{c}Abd al-Karim al-Uzri, *Tarikh fi Dhikrayat: al-^{c}Iraq, 1930-1958* [History in Memoirs: Iraq, 1930-1958], 1st Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: no publisher, 1982): pp. 244-246.

[81] Ali Karim Sa^{c}id, ^{c}*Iraq 8 Shubat 1963 – Min Hiwar al-Mafahim ila Hiwar al-Dam: Muraja^{c}at fi Dhakirat Talib al-Shabib* [The Iraq of February 8, 1963 – From the Dialogue of Concepts to the Dialogue of Blood: Revisions in the Memory of Talib al-Shabib], 1st Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kunuz al-Adabiyyah, 1999): p. 310.

[82] Hani al-Fukayki, *Awkar al-Hazimah: Tajrubati fi Hizb al-Ba^{c}ath al-^{c}Iraqi* [Dens of Defeat: My Experience in the Iraqi Ba^{c}ath Party], 2nd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Riad El-Rayyes Books, April 1997 [March 1993]): p. 274.

[83] Rif^{c}at Marhun al-Saffar, "al-Tahsil al-^{c}Ilmi fi Mahallat Sababigh al-Aal: Awa'il al-Qarn al-^{c}Ishrin" [Seeking Education in the Sababigh al-Aal Quarter: Beginnings of the Twentieth Century], a lecture delivered at the Rubay^{c}i Belle Letters Salon, Baghdad, Tuesday, June 19, 2007. Although admission to the school was open to non-Shi^{c}ites, and even non-Muslims, most students came from Shi^{c}ite families. It should be pointed out the Sunni teachers taught at the Ja^{c}afari schools. Among those teachers are former chairman of the Iraqi Teachers' Union Najib Muhyi al-Din and Abd al-Malik Amin Mahdi al-Ta'i, a Muslim Brotherhood activist from the predominantly Sunni A^{c}adhamiyyah quarter in Baghdad. Interview with Najib Muhyi al-Din, Former Chairman of the Iraqi Teachers' Union, Amman, Wednesday, May 19, 2010. See also, Iman Abd al-Hamid al-Dabbagh, *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun fi al-^{c}Iraq (1959 Miladiyyah – 1971 Miladiyyah)* [The Muslim Brotherhood in Iraq (1959 C.E. – 1971 C.E.)], 1st Edition (Amman, Jordan: Dar al-Ma'mun li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi^{c}i, 1432 A.H./2011 C.E.): p. 216, footnote 4.

[84] Rif^{c}at Marhun al-Saffar, "al-Tahsil al-^{c}Ilmi fi Mahallat Sababigh al-Aal," *op. cit.*

Forum') was founded. It soon set out to establish Shiᶜite denominational schools in several cities, including Baghdad, Basra, Najaf and Karbala. These schools benefitted greatly from the support of the Shiᶜite religious authority Grand Ayatollah Abu al-Hassan al-Isfahani [d. 1365 A.H./1946 C.E.].[85] In the mid-1940s, the Shiᶜite Fayli Kurdish community founded the Fayli School (*al-Madrasah al-Fayliyyah*), which started off as an elementary school but soon evolved into a secondary school and opened an evening school in 1946. The Fayli School adopted the ministry of education's curriculum which was taught in Arabic.[86]

But segregated Shiᶜite education remained a small-scale affair, in large measure due to the availability of free public education, until the late 1950s, when a drive to establish Shiᶜite private faith schools in several cities across the country began. The Islamic Philanthropic Fund Association (*Jamᶜiyyat al-Sunduq al-Khayri al-Islami*), founded in Baghdad in 1958, set up branches in Basra, Diwaniyyah and Hillah. It ran two chains of elementary and secondary schools: one for boys, known as *Madaris al-Imam al-Jawad* (Imam al-Jawad Schools), the other for girls, known as *Madaris al-Zahra'* (al-Zahra' Schools). This drive was part of a broader embryonic Shiᶜite religio-political activism in Iraq following the toppling of the monarchy in July 1958. The late Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr's sister, Aminah, aka Bint al-Huda, who was executed with him in April 1980, was a headmistress at both the al-Zahra' Schools in Kadhemiyyah as well as a Shiᶜite denominational school for girls in Najaf.[87]

Sunni Islamist activism created a parallel impulse to set up denominational schools. In 1949, the Islamic Educational Association headed by the celebrated Sunni cleric Amjad al-Zahawi founded an elementary school which expanded its offerings in less than a decade to include the intermediate and secondary levels. In 1956, the Islamic Public Library Association (*Jamᶜiyyat al-Maktabah al-Islamiyyah al-ᶜAmmah*) opened up an evening intermediate school for boys that adopted the formal curriculum developed by the ministry of education but with a higher dose of religious studies subjects. The Islamic Endowment Directorate in Basra also launched a denominational elementary school. Segregated Sunni education reached its zenith

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[85] Ahmad al-Katib, *Tajrubat al-Thawrah al-Islamiyyah fi al-ᶜIraq: Mundhu 1920 hatta 1980* [The Experience of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq: From 1920 until 1980], 1st Edition (Tehran, Iran: Dar al-Qabas al-Islami, 1402 A.H./1981 C.E.): pp. 101-102.

[86] Hajj, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117.

[87] "Hayat al-Shahidah al-Tahirah Bint al-Huda, Aminah al-Sadr" [The Life of the Chaste Martyr Bint al-Huda, Aminah al-Sadr], Official Website of the Office of Sayyid al-Surkhi al-Hassani, August 26, 2009; available at: http://www.al-hasany.com/vb/showthread.php?t=174517; accessed on: Thursday, January 27, 2011.

in the 1960s following the founding of the al-Amani Association (*Jam^ciyyat al-Amani*), a Muslim Brotherhood front organization. Amani established a chain of denominational kindergartens as well as elementary, intermediate and secondary schools for boys and girls in large Sunni urban centers around the country, such as Baghdad, Basra, Mosul and Kirkuk. In addition to these schools, the Amani Association also founded the College of Islamic Studies (*Kulliyyat al-Dirasat al-Islamiyyah*) – a four-year institute for higher education offering Bachelor's degrees in Islamic Shari^cah and Literature. The Baghdad-based College had two branches, one for males and one for females.[88]

Denominational schools were closed down in the mid-1970s in accordance with a series of Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) decrees, such as RCC Resolution MQ/1/4/2261 of May 9, 1974 and RCC Resolution No. 635 of August 25, 1974, which nationalized non-governmental schools and institutes of higher learning. Resolution 981 of September 9, 1974 placed religious schools under the auspices of the ministry of education. These decrees came in the context of a heated, coercive modernization drive adopted by the Ba^cath Party regime. It was directed at all denominational, private and foreign, schools.[89] For example, in line with this decision, the Hikmah University, a Jesuit institute of higher learning, was closed, and the private al-Mustansiriyyah University was made into a private university.[90] A parallel string of RCC decrees, such as RCC Resolution 281 of March 6, 1974, RCC Resolution 519 of May 19, 1975 and RCC Resolution 1105 of August 21, 1978, provided for the confiscation of the monies and other assets of non-governmental schools.[91]

Furthermore, the government halted plans for a private university in Kufah with a capacity of 20,000 students drawn up by world-renowned Iraqi architect Muhammad Saleh Makkiyyah in the mid-1960s. The project had the support of the Shi^cite religious authorities in Najaf as well as wealthy Shi^cite notables and businessmen. It was hoped that the university will help in the

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[88] Dabbagh, *op. cit.*, pp. 228, 244-248, 298-303, and 426-463.

[89] For a brief overview of foreign, namely Iranian, American and British, schools in Iraq, see Sa'di Khalil, *Education in Iraq*, Information Paper Number 25 (II), (New York, NY: Arab Information Center, January 1966): pp. 53-56; and Fadhil al-Barrak, *al-Madaris al-Yahudiyyah wa al-Iraniyyah fi al-^cIraq: Dirasah Muqaranah* [Jewish and Iranian Schools in Iraq: A Comparative Study] (Baghdad, Iraq: Matba^cat Dar al-Rashid, 1984).

[90] Interview with Yahya al-Kubaysi, Visiting Scholar at the French Institute for the Near East in Amman, Amman, Wednesday, May 19, 2010; Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, Directorate General of Educational Planning, *op. cit.*, p. 9; and Jassim al-Mudhaffar, *al-Tashri^cat al-Tarbawiyyah: Majmu^cat al-Qawanin wa al-Qararat wa al-Andhimah al-Tarbawiyyah* [Educational Legislations: A Compilation of Educational Laws, Decisions and Regulations], Vol. 2, *al-Andhimah* [Regulations] (Baghdad, Iraq: The Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, 1408 A.H./1988 C.E.): p. 881.

[91] Mudhaffar, *op. cit.*, pp. 881-882.

development of south-central Iraq, provide job opportunities to the local population, and help stem the rural-urban migration from the region. However, the implementation of the project, whose design was inspired by old Iraqi Islamic architecture, was halted in 1969 by order of deputy prime minister and interior minister Salih Mahdi ᶜAmmash, who dissolved the Founding Committee of the Kufah University.[92]

In the early years of Baᶜath Party rule, improving education topped the government's list of social priorities. The Provisional Constitution of 1970 promulgated on July 16, 1970 committed the state to eradicating illiteracy. Article 27A stated: "The State commits itself to fighting illiteracy and guarantees the right to free education at all levels, primary, secondary and university, to all citizens."[93] In 1978, a mass literacy campaign aimed at the total eradication of illiteracy was launched. Within ten years, Iraq could claim to have succeeded in raising the literacy rate to 80 percent, up from 52 percent in 1977.[94] However, during Iraq's 8-year war with Iran in the 1980s, the education sector was set on a debilitating downward trend which was intensified by the effects of the UN sanctions imposed on Iraq following its invasion of Kurwait in August 1990.[95]

Moreover, under Baᶜath Party rule, the ideologization of education was enshrined in the Provisional Constitution. Article 28 declared:

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[92] A detailed account of the Kufa University project can be found in Muhammad Makkiyyah, *Khawatir al-Sinin: Sirat Miᶜimari wa Yawmiyyat Mahallah Baghdadiyyah* [Memoirs over the Years: The Biography of an Architect and the Diary of a Baghdadi Quarter], edited by Rashid al-Khayyun (London: Saqi Books, 2005): Chapters 4 and 5. See also, Rashid al-Khayyun, *al-Adyan wa al-Madhahib fi al-ᶜIraq* [Religions and Religious Schools of Thought in Iraq], 2ⁿᵈ Edition (Köln, Germany; and Baghdad, Iraq: al-Jamal Publications, 2007 [2003]): pp. 341-344.

[93] "al-Dustur al-Mu'aqqat li al-Jumhuriyyah al-ᶜIraqiyyah" [The Provisional Constitution of the Republic of Iraq], *Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law*; available at: www.mpil.de/shared/data/pdf/constitution_of_iraq_1970-_arabic.pdf; accessed on Friday, February 11, 2011. It should be noted that eradicating illiteracy was declared as a major Baᶜathist objective at the Party's Sixth Regional Conference in 1963. See Delwin A. Roy, "The Educational System of Iraq," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (April 1993): p. 168.

[94] Agustín Velloso De Santisteban, "Sanctions, War, Occupation and the De-Development of Education in Iraq," *International Review of Education*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (January 2005), p. 65. A good brief overview of the Baᶜath Party government's efforts at the eradication of illiteracy can be found in Alya Sousa, "The Eradication of Illiteracy in Iraq," in Tim Niblock, ed., *Iraq: The Contemporary State* (London: Croom Helm, 1982): pp. 100-108. See also, Christopher J. Lucas, "Arab Illiteracy and the Mass Literacy Campaign in Iraq," *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (February 1981): pp. 74-84.

[95] On the deterioration of education in Iraq since the 1980s, see Santisteban, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-71; and Rakesh Kumar Ranjan and Prakash C. Jain, "The Decline of Educational System in Iraq," *Journal of Peace Studies*, Vol. 16, Nos. 1-2 (January – June 2009); available at: http://www.icpsnet.org/adm/pdf/1251368150.pdf; accessed on Friday, February 11, 2011.

"Education aims to raise and develop the general cultural level, promote scientific thinking, animate the research spirit, respond to requirements of the programs of economic and social advancement and development, create a national, liberated and progressive generation, strong physically and morally, proud of its people, homeland and heritage, aware of the rights of all its nationalities, and which struggles against the capitalist philosophy, exploitation, reaction, Zionism, and colonialism for the purpose of realizing Arab unity, liberty and socialism."[96]

This constitutional provision set the stage for the formulation of so-called "new orientations" for educational policy during the Eighth Regional Congress of the Ba‹ath Party. The new orientations sought to "focus comprehensively on the building of a new educational system which would be in harmony with the principles and aims of the Revolution." This meant that the new system would be designed to "infuse the future generation with the ideals of nationalism and of socialist democracy so that they may realize the ambitions of the Arab Nation, and the basic aims of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party, i.e., Unity, Liberty, and Socialism."[97] By the early 1980s, the government declared that the educational curricula shall embody "the 17-30 July Revolution principles and aim of the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party in achieving the social and economical changes and meeting the demands of society and needs of development plan[ning]."[98] In practice, these "new orientations" paved the way for gearing education toward the crude glorification of the Ba‹ath Party and the propagation of the tenets of Ba‹athist ideology.[99] Pressures were exerted on teachers to join the Ba‹ath Party. Teachers were also subjected to ideological tests and surveillance.[100] Party membership became a requirement for admittance to the teachers training colleges and the Physical Education

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[96] "al-Dustur al-Mu'aqqat li al-Jumhuriyyah al-‹Iraqiyyah," *op. cit.*
[97] Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, Directorate-General of Educational Planning, *Development of Education in Iraq during 1974/75 and 1975/76* (Baghdad, Iraq: Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, Directorate-General of Education Planning, July 1977): p. 29.
[98] Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, Directorate-General of Educational Planning, *Development of Education in Iraq during 1981/1982 and 1982/1983*, p. 21.
[99] Ba‹athist ideological texts became an integral part of the required readings for Iraqi school students. See, for example, al-Jader, *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-102 ("Min Muqarrarat al-Mu'tamar al-Qutri al-Tasi‹i: al-Qiyam wa al-Mumarasat al-Jadidah fi al-Mujtama‹a al-Thawri" [From the Resolutions of the Ninth National (Ba‹ath Party) Congress: The New Values and Practices in the Revolutionary Society]), pp. 111-113 ("Dhikra al-Rasul al-‹Arabi" [The Anniversary of the Arab Prophet]), and pp. 120-123 ("Insaniyyat al-Qawmiyyah al-‹Arabiyyah" [The Humanism of Arab Nationalism]).
[100] Santisteban, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

Department at Baghdad University.[101] A cadre of specialists was employed to "write stories and poems in magazines for little children that extolled the party message."[102]

Moreover, universities, under Baᶜathist rule, began to offer an obligatory subject known as Nationalist Culture (*al-Thaqafah al-Qawmiyyah*), which sought to indoctrinate students with Baᶜathist ideology and imparted a message of boundless reverence for Baᶜath Party leaders, especially Saddam Hussein. Topics taught in this course include "Arab Nationalism and Nationalist Theory," "Aspects of Progressive Nationalism," "the Arab Baᶜath an Historical Necessity," "On Revolutionary Ethics," "People's Organization and Armed Struggle," "The Role of Imperialism in the Arabian Gulf," "The Roots of the Zionist-American Alliance," and "Party Commitment and Discipline."[103] Moreover, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a series of legislations gave minority groups the right to educate their children in their mother tongue. However, these measures were rolled back in the following few years.[104] "Equally insufficient provisions were made for Kurdish students, schools delivered only one or two lessons in Kurdish and only after 10th grade."[105]

The Baᶜathist government in Iraq also tried to reconcile its Arab nationalist ideology with Iraqi particularism. Pre-Islamic Mesopotamian heritage and iconography were wedded to Arab nationalist symbols. "By 1988 Iraqi children were taught that their civilization was at least eight thousand years old and university students were required to take an Iraqi history course that began with the Sumerians."[106] Top figures in the regime provided the ideological justification for this shift. In a 1979 speech at the Bureau of Information, Saddam Hussein admonished Iraqi historians to have a fresh look at their history. "The history of the Arab nation does not start with Islam," he declared. "Rather, it reaches back into ages of remote

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[101] Roy, *op. cit.*, p. 170.
[102] Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 163.
[103] Khulud Ramzi, "Manahij al-ᶜIraq al-Dirasiyyah Tantadhir Taghyiran Shamilan" [Educational Curricula in Iraq Await Comprehensive Change], *Niqash*, Friday, June 4, 2010; available at: http://www.niqash.org/content.php?contentTypeID=74&id=2688&lang=1; accessed on Saturday, July 21, 2012. See also Arab Baᶜath Socialist Party, Pan-Arab Command, Office of Culture, Studies and Partisan Preparation, *al-Minhaj al-Thaqafi al-Markazi* [Central Cultural Curriculum], Vol. 1 (Baghdad, Iraq: Arab Baᶜath Socialist Party, Pan-Arab Command, Office of Culture, Studies and Partisan Preparation, no date). This book was used for the Nationalist Culture subject for first-year university students irrespective of their major or specialization.
[104] Muzaffar, *op. cit.*, p. 867; and Hasan Özmen, *al-Turkuman fi al-ᶜIraq wa Huquq al-Insan* [The Turkmens in Iraq and Human Rights], 1st Edition (Ankara, Turkey: Published by the author, 2002): pp. 139-141.
[105] Kelsey Shanks, "Segregated Education as an Ethnic Defence Strategy – The Case of Kirkuk's Turkmen Community," Paper Presented at the Exeter Centre for Ethno-Political Studies' Inaugural Conference, "Ethno-Politics in a Globalized World," University of Exeter, June 27-30, 2010.
[106] Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

antiquity."[107] The shift sought to instill pride in the homeland, in its people's contribution to human civilization since antiquity, and in its present historical mission of reviving the past glories of Iraq and the Arab nation.

During the Iraq-Iran war (1980-1988), the government ensured that the curriculum became laden with war propaganda and the adulation of Saddam Hussein. Anti-Iranian diatribes, such as those condemning the "savage aggression of the Khomeinists" [*udwan al-Khumayniyyin al-hamajiy*][108] and Iran as the "Persian enemy" (*al-*ʿ*aduw al-Farsi*), the source of the "yellow wind constantly blowing from the east" [*rihan safra' dhallat tahibb min jihat al-sharq*], and the site of "the neo-Magian fire" [*nar al-Majusiyyah al-jadidah*], were introduced into the curriculum.[109] But the content of the curriculum continued to be infused with a Sunni Arab assimilationist élan. In the words of one education minister in the post-2003 period, "History and civics materials pushed the agenda of Ba'ath-led secular slogans and criticism of Persians and traditional Arab monarchies. In Islamic studies, the Shia views and beliefs were totally excluded."[110]

4.4. The Paradoxes of the Search for Pluralist Education

"The need to re-write a people's history is typical of all post-colonial and post-revolutionary societies, and is a natural and a healthy one. … The ghosts of the past must therefore be exorcised, the myths destroyed and new ones created, if only to be destroyed in their turn by a new generation."

Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot,

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[107] Quoted in Amatzia Baram, "Mesopotamian Identity in Ba'thi Iraq," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (October 1983): p. 439.

[108] Jalal al-Khayyat, Baqir Jawad Muhammad, and Youssuf Nimir Dhiyab, *al-Adab wa al-Nusus li al-Saff al-Sadis al-*ʿ*Ilmi* [Literature and Texts for the Sixth Scientific Class], 10th Revised Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, 1422 A.H./2001 C.E.): p. 148.

[109] See text entitled "al-Buʿd al-Qawmi li-Maʿarakat Qadisiyyat Saddam" [The Nationalist Dimension of the Battle of Saddam's Qadisiyyah], in Jader, *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-51. For a detailed study of the image of the Iranians in Iraqi school textbooks, see Talal al-ʿAtrisi, "Surat al-Iraniyyin fi al-Kutub al-Madrasiyyah al-ʿArabiyyah" [The Image of the Iranians in Arab School Textbooks], Paper Presented at the Arab Unity Studies Center and University of Qatar's Panel, "al-ʿAlaqat al-ʿArabiyyah – al-Iraniyyah: al-Ittijahat al-Rahinah wa Afaq al-Mustaqbal" [Arab-Iranian Relations: Current Trends and Future Prospects], Doha, Qatar, September 11-14, 1995, esp. pp. 4-16.

[110] Ala'din A. S. Alwan, *Education in Iraq: Current Situation and New Perspectives – A report on the situation today and our strategies for the immediate future* (Baghdad, Iraq: Ministry of Education, 2004): p. 36; available at: http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/cpa-iraq/ES/Iraqmoe_sit_analysis.pdf; accessed on Saturday, February 5, 2011.

With the toppling of the former regime in 2003, the search for a new curriculum that recognizes and incorporates the diverse communal perspectives in Iraqi society began. But changes to the curricula and textbooks were introduced in stages. Making a clear-cut rupture with the Baᶜathist epoch topped the priority list of educational policymakers in the new political order. Initial steps taken in the immediate aftermath of the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime were aimed at pruning crude Baᶜathist propaganda out of the curriculum. Saddam's pictures and sayings, which had adorned textbooks during the former regime, were removed. Passages and chapters extolling the history and ideology of the Baᶜath Party, the presumed qualities and character traits of its leaders, Saddam Hussein's leadership and the wars that Iraq fought during his reign were omitted from the textbooks.[111] Further haphazard changes followed over the next few years. These included the replacement of the Nationalist Culture subject taught under the former regime with a Democracy and Human Rights subject.[112]

Other minor changes sought to inject a Shiᶜite perspective into the curriculum, especially in the textbooks used for subjects in the social studies, religion and humanities fields. These included inserting the traditionally Shiᶜite honorific clauses "may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his household" (*salla Allah ᶜalayhi wa alihi wa sallam*) and "peace be upon him" (*ᶜalayhi al-salam*) to proclaim reverence for Prophet Muhammad and the Shiᶜite Imams, respectively, whenever they are mentioned. This infused the terminology used in the curriculum to pay tribute to personalities revered by various Muslim sects with an element of hybridity. The conventionally Sunni honorific "may Allah be pleased with him/them" (*radhiya Allah ᶜanhu/ᶜanhum*) remained in use after the mention of the first three Rightly-Guided Caliphs and the Companions of the Prophet. In the case of the first Shiᶜite Imam, Ali, the Sunni collective honorific "may Allah be pleased with them" is sometimes used when his name is lumped together with those of the other three Rightly-Guided Caliphs.[113]

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[111] Interview with Ali al-Ibrahimi, Deputy Minister of Education, Baghdad, Monday, July 2, 2012.

[112] Ramzi, *op. cit.*

[113] See, for example, Abd al-Rahman al-ᶜAani, Hassan Faysal Zuᶜayn, and Abd al-Amir Daksan, *al-Tarikh al-ᶜArabi al-Islami li al-Saff al-Thani Mutawassit* [Arab Islamic History for the Second Intermediate Class], 22nd

Measures were taken to guarantee mother tongue education to minorities. The right to mother-tongue education was enshrined in the new constitution. Article 3 recognized the nation's cultural pluralism. It defined Iraq as "a country of multiple nationalities, religions, and sects." Article 4/First specified Arabic and Kurdish as "the two official languages of Iraq." It further stipulated that the Iraqis' right "to educate their children in their mother tongue, such as Turkmen, Assyrian, and Armenian shall be guaranteed in government educational institutions in accordance with educational guidelines, or in any other language in private educational institutions." Article 4/Fourth also recognized Turkmen and Syriac as "two other official languages in the administrative units in which they constitute density of population."[114]

The introduction of cultural pluralism into the realm of education bred an educational landscape populated by multiple curricula. The semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region, which has effectively remained outside central government control since the 1991 Uprising, has developed its own separate curriculum. The Kurdish curriculum, especially Social Studies textbooks which combine History, Geography and Civics, is radically different from that developed by the ministry of education in Baghdad. It lays emphasis, and allocates more content, on Kurdistan as an entity rather than on Iraq as a whole. For instance, Ninth Grade students in the Kurdistan Region are taught a fast-paced survey of the physical and human geography of Iraq, while they are provided with a richly detailed examination of the geography and topography of the Kurdistan Region.[115] The Kurdish curriculum serves an explicitly nationalist political project. It articulates a relationship between place and identity that is utterly at variance with a competing geographic nationalist view adopted by the Iraqi ministry of education's curriculum which seeks to define the spatial scope of the Arab nation in terms of the territory encompassed within the borders of member states of the Arab League

Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, General Directorate of Curricula, 1430 A.H./2009 C.E.): p. 41; and Ministry of Education Committee, *al-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyyah li al-Saff al-Thalith al-Mutawassit* [Islamic Education for the Third Intermediate Class], Revised Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, 1429 A.H./2008 C.E.): pp. 3 and 30-50.

[114] *Iraqi Constitution* (Baghdad, Iraq: Iraqi Council of Representatives, Media Directorate, no date): pp. 6-8.

[115] Sulayman Abdallah Isma'il, Tahsin Abd al-Rahim 'Aziz, Hikmat Abd al-'Aziz Hamad and Suzan Muwaffaq Abd al-'Aziz, "Jografi Iraq, Bary Sroshti wa Mroyi wa Abori Wlati Iraq" [Iraq's Geography: Natural Geography, Climate and Economic Situation of Iraq] in Kurdistan Regional Government – Iraq, Ministry of Education, General Directorate of Curricula and Publications, *Babati Komalayati bo Poli Noyami Benarati* [Textbook of Social Studies for the 9th Elementary Class], 4th Edition (Erbil, Iraq: Kurdistan Regional Government – Iraq, Ministry of Education, General Directorate of Curricula and Publications, 1429 A.H/2708 Kurdish/2008 C.E.), in Kurdish.

plus historic Palestine and Eritrea.[116] The Kurdish nationalists' pursuit to delineate the borders of a geographic homeland for the Kurds in Iraq and beyond is embraced wholesale by the Kurdish curriculum. Textbooks reiterate the Kurdish nationalist claims not only to the disputed internal areas in the provinces of Kirkuk/Ta'mim, Ninawah, Salah al-Din and Diyala, but also to areas as far south as the Badrah District in Wasit Province in south-central Iraq which are claimed by Kurdish nationalists as parts of historic Kurdistan.[117] The Kurdish curriculum, moreover, adopts content where the term "Kurdistan" is used to refer to "Greater Kurdistan," i.e., the Kurdish-populated areas in Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria.[118] The Kurdish textbooks, moreover, provide an ethno-history *par excellence*. The historical narrative taught to students presents a romantic portrayal of a national community and a nationalist movement engaged in a perpetual titanic struggle against foreign invaders and occupiers and for independence.[119]

Cultural pluralism in education also contributed to a degree of chaos and confusion in the formulation and implementation of educational policies, especially in disputed mixed areas. For instance, in Kirkuk/Ta'mim Province, some schools were divided into Arabic, Kurdish, Turkmen and Assyrian categories based on the ethnicity of the majority of neighborhood residents. Some schools were also divided into multiple ethnic learning institutions. This arrangement, which resulted in the use of multiple curricula throughout the province, was not without its problems. Parents in mixed neighborhoods found it difficult to send their children to schools in other neighborhoods to ensure that they study in their preferred language. Non-Arab, especially Kurdish and Turkmen, families who wanted their children to study in Arabic to guarantee them broader higher education and employment opportunities in the future did not always have access to Arabic language schools in close proximity to their places of residence. While the Kurdish schools in the mixed areas use the curriculum developed by the Kurdistan Region's ministry of education, Turkmen and Assyrian schools teach all the

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[116] Ibrahim Sharif, Salih Flayyih Hassan, Khalidah Rashidah Abd al-Rahman, and Saᶜid Abd al-Latif, *Jughrafyat al-Watan al-ᶜArabi li al-Saff al-Thani al-Mutawassit* [The Geography of the Arab Homeland for the Second Intermediate Class], 27th Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, General Directorate of Curricula, 1430 A.H./2009 C.E.): p. 3

[117] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[118] Qadir Muhammad Pishdary, Delir Ismaᶜil Haqqi Shawis, Saᶜadi Othman Hussein and Muhammad Abd al-Karim Kaka Sor, "Mizho Nowi wa Hacharkh" [Modern and Contemporary History] in Kurdistan Regional Government – Iraq, Ministry of Education, General Directorate of Curricula and Publications, *Babati Komalayati bo Poli Noyami Benarati* [Textbook of Social Studies for the 9th Elementary Class], 4th Edition (Erbil, Iraq: Kurdistan Regional Government – Iraq, Ministry of Education, General Directorate of Curricula and Publications, 1429 A.H/2708 Kurdish/ 2008 C.E.), in Kurdish.

[119] See, for example, *ibid.*, esp. pp. 118-137.

subjects of the Iraqi ministry of education's curriculum in Arabic but add a Turkmen Language or Assyrian Language subject. Some Turkmen schools, known as *Asas* (Fundamental), however, teach all subjects of the Iraqi ministry of education's curriculum in Turkmen, except for the Arabic Language, Islamic Education and Qur'an subjects which are taught in Arabic. For their part, Assyrian schools also teach a Christian Religion subject.

The procedures and rules governing the issuance of licenses for private schools were laid out in ministry of education Instructions No. 2, dated January 1, 2004, and an Iraqi Governing Council memorandum, dated April 13, 2004. In accordance with Article 12 of the Instructions, private schools were obligated to "teach the curricula and textbooks set for the general culture subjects." However, the Instructions permitted a private school to also "teach curricula and textbooks for other subjects provided that it obtains the approval of the ministry [of education] for this."[120] This made it possible for organizational structures of various sectarian communities to establish private schools with distinct sectarian characters. For instance, the Sunni Endowment Diwan (*Diwan al-Waqf al-Sunni*) runs schools in several predominantly Sunni areas of the country which teach a host of religious studies subjects with a marked Sunni slant.[121]

The multiplicity of educational structures and types of curricula has given rise to concerns that the resultant multi-furcated school system contributes to the hardening of communal identities and undermines the development of a distinct, collective, trans-communal national identity. The Turkmen schools' use of the Latin alphabet rather than the Ottoman script – a variant of the Arabic script – has been denounced as a "disservice to national unity" and

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[120] Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, "Taᶜalimat Raqam 2 li Sanat 2004: Manh al-Ijazah li Ta'asis al-Madaris al-Ahliyyah wa al-Ajnabiyyah" [Instructions No. 2 of 2004: Granting the License to Establish Private and Foreign Schools], *Iraqi Local Governance Law Library*; available at: http://www.iraq-lg-law.org/en/node/1507; accessed on Sunday, July 22, 2012. See also "*al-Bayyinah* Tuhawir Muᶜawin al-Mudir al-ᶜAam li al-Taᶜalim al-Masa'i wa al-Ahli" [al-Bayyinah Interviews the Assistant Director-General of Evening and Private Education], *al-Bayyinah*, Wednesday, Rajab 6, 1429 A.H./July 9, 2008 C.E.; available at: http://www.al-bayyna.com/modules.php?name=News&file=print&sid=18640; accessed on Sunday, July 22, 2012.

[121] For information on the schools run by the Sunni Endowment Diwan, refer to the website of the Diwan's Directorate of Islamic Education (*Da'irat al-Taᶜalim al-Islami*) at: http://www.islamtal.edu.iq/index.htm; accessed on Friday, July 27, 2012. See also, "Muᶜawin al-Mudir al-ᶜAam li Da'irat al-Taᶜalim al-Islami/al-Waqf al-Sunni Ahmad Jassim al-Mashhadani: al-Tansiq Qa'im maᶜa Dawa'ir al-Taᶜalim fi al-Waqf al-Shiᶜi fi Kull Shay' Illa al-Manahij" [Assistant Director-General of the Directorate of Islamic Education/Sunni Endowment Ahmad Jassim al-Mashhadani: Coordination with the Educational Departments in the Shiᶜite Endowment Is Underway in Everything Except for the Curricula], *al-Sabah*, Wednesday, November 5, 2008; available at: http://www.alsabaah.com/paper.php?source=akbar&mlf=copy&sid=72500; accessed on Sunday, September 26, 2010.

undermining "efforts exerted toward winning the [new] generation over to brotherhood and correct citizenship since Arabic is the language of homeland and religion."[122] Highlighting the linkage between education and national identity, one educational specialist expressed fears that separate schools and curricula in Iraq "obliterate the idea of national coexistence." In his opinion, while affording children of different ethnic groups the opportunity to study in their mother tongues, the multiplicity of educational landscapes allows the use of "language as a façade for a political project."[123] In a similar vein, a former Chairman of the Iraqi Teachers' Union deplored the use of multiple curricula in post-Saddam Iraq, arguing that the use of a single curriculum throughout the country promotes national unity. He cited the case of Lebanon where sectarian communities are allowed to have their own faith schools, observing that these faith schools "have deepened sectarianism in Lebanon."[124]

As has already been mentioned earlier, the curriculum developed by the Iraqi ministry of education did not undergo significant changes in the first few years following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. However, the pace of change picked up speed in 2008. The push for a major overhaul of the curriculum was prompted by growing criticism from various quarters, including international organizations such as UNICEF. The criticism centered on the outdated content of the textbooks. Most textbooks had been in use for more than two decades. The obsolescence of the curriculum had long been acknowledged by education officials in the post-Saddam government. In the words of former minister of education Ala'din A. S. Alwan: "The curriculum can be described as both narrow and shallow and has not been thoroughly updated for two decades. It is often rigid and lacks emphasis on in-depth understanding, reasoning, or analysis and synthesis."[125] In some subjects, especially the sciences, the textbooks had not kept pace with developments in their respective fields. In the social studies subjects, such as Geography and History, the textbooks included factual errors, such as

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[122] Letter by Hussein Yarah Ahmad al-Jaf, Director-General of the Ministry of Education's General Directorate for Kurdish Education and Other Nationalities (*al-Mudiriyyah al-ᶜAammah li al-Dirasah al-Kurdiyyah wa al-Qawmiyyat al-Ukhra*), to the Minister of Education, No. 10481, Dated May 23, 2005 (copy on file with the author). The Iraqi Turkmen Front has articulated the case for using the Latin alphabet for teaching Turkmen in an internal memo. Iraqi Turkmen Front, Director-General of the Education and Culture Department, "al-Asbab wa al-Dawafiᶜi li al-Tadris bi al-Huruf al-Latiniyyah al-Hadithah" [Reasons and Motives for Teaching in the Modern Latin Alphabet], Internal Mimeograph, No. 84, Saturday, June 20, 2009 (copy on file with the author).
[123] Interview with Abd al-Karim Khalifah, Lecturer at the School of Education, Kirkuk University, Kirkuk, Thursday, March 18, 2010.
[124] Interview with Najib Muhyi al-Din, Former Chairman of the Iraqi Teachers' Union, Amman, Wednesday, May 19, 2010.
[125] Alwan, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

references to the Baghdad-Kirkuk-Erbil railway which had been out of service since the 1970s.[126]

Joint committees comprised of university professors and representatives of the ministries of education and higher education and scientific research were formed to review and make changes required to meet perceived needs. Naturally, the review sought to prune factual errors and outdated content out of the curriculum and bring it up to date with recent developments in various fields of knowledge as well as modern teaching methodologies. Reviewing the curriculum used for the so-called hard sciences, such as Mathematics, Physics, Biology and Chemistry, was a fairly straightforward matter. However, the social sciences and humanities, especially the History and Islamic Studies subjects, were an inevitably more controversial terrain since different communities cling tenaciously to contending and conflicting historical narratives on critical events of Islamic history as well as an array of interpretations of some aspects of religion. In an attempt to avoid equating Iraqness with Arabness, space was given to a multiplicity of communal and cultural voices. The works of Arab, Kurdish and Turkmen Iraqi poets and writers were added to Literature and Reading textbooks, which under the former regime tended to incorporate more content from non-Iraqi Arab poets and writers.[127] This was a clear challenge to the Arab nationalist ideology of previous consecutive regimes which sought to construct a national identity that excludes non-Arab minority groups. In order to acknowledge Muslim sectarian diversity, the works of Shiᶜite poets and writers were also inserted. For instance, high school students were taught the works of Shiᶜite poets of the ᶜAbbasid period Duᶜubul al-Khuzaᶜi [d. 246 A.H./860-861 C.E.] and al-Sharif al-Radhi [d. 406 A.H./1015-1016 C.E.], as well as that of the Shiᶜite poet of the 17th century Ibn Maᶜtuq al-Musawi [d. 1087 A.H./1676-1677 C.E.].[128]

The content of the Islamic Studies and History textbooks proved to be the most sensitive of the curriculum's subjects. While the Arabist core of the curriculum was kept fairly intact, it

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[126] Interview with Ali al-Ibrahimi, Deputy Minister of Education, Baghdad, Monday, July 2, 2012.

[127] Interview with Ali al-Ibrahimi, Deputy Minister of Education, Baghdad, Sunday, July 8, 2012. Former Chairman of the Iraqi Teachers' Union Najib Muhyi al-Din stated that educational policy in Iraq since independence in 1932 has been shaped by an Arab nationalist discourse that "neglected non-Arab national groups or underestimated them." Interview with Najib Muhyi al-Din, Former Chairman of the Iraqi Teachers' Union, Amman, Wednesday, May 19, 2010.

[128] Abd al-Latif al-Ta'i, Abdallah Abd al-Rahim al-Sudani, ᶜUhud Abd al-Wahid al-ᶜAkili, and ᶜAlwan Abd al-Hassan al-Salman, *al-Adab wa al-Nusus li al-Saff al-Khamis al-ᶜIlmi* [Literature and Texts for the Fifth Scientific Class], 2nd Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, General Directorate of Curricula, 1431 A.H./2010 C.E.): pp. 12-15, 35-39 and 146-149, respectively.

was stripped of its original crude Ba^{c}athist ideological passages, jingoism and sloganeering. In terms of style and content, fervent themes and idioms central to radical Pan-Arabism propagated since the 1920s and 1930s by the nationalist stalwarts of Iraq's educational system continued to animate History textbooks used in schools in post-Saddam Iraq. These textbooks make no bones about their commitment to providing an Arab ethno-history and are at times dotted with nationalistic Pan-Arab hyperbole. The authors of one History textbook bluntly profess their commitment to an avowedly nationalist perspective. For them the study of history is ideologically purposeful. "History is the most important factor in developing nationalist consciousness," they write in the introduction. "Through [the study of history] attention is drawn to the dangers that faced the Arab homeland."[129] Throughout its seven chapters, the textbook embraces the view that the historic roots of Arab unity go back to pre-Islamic times. Another History textbook underlines the Arab identity of the Prophet of Islam, referring to him as the "Arab Prophet" (*al-Nabi al-^{c}Arabi*).[130] Similarly, a Literature textbook contains a reference to the Prophet as the "Arab Messenger" (*al-Rasul a-^{c}Arabi*). It also refers to the Muslim conquerors of Syria and Iraq as "the sons of Arabism who believe in religion" (*abna' al-^{c}Urubah al-mu'minun bi al-din*).[131] The Semitic wave theory, glorification of the military, conspiracy theory, as well as the dualisms of fragmentation and unity and colonialism and resistance, are among other themes associated with radical Arab nationalist discourse which continue to figure prominently in History school textbooks in the post-Saddam period.[132]

In putting an accent on Arab nationalist themes, the ethos of the new curriculum, while acknowledging diversity, fell short of affirming and valuing the mixed heritages of Iraqi communities and challenging their entrenched bigotries, prejudices and stereotypes. A glaring

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[129] Fadhil Abd al-Wahid Ali, Faruq Nassir al-Rawi, Sami Sa^{c}id al-Ahmad, and Tamadhar Abd al-Wahid al-Durubi, *al-Tarikh al-Qadim li al-Watan al-^{c}Arabi li al-Saff al-Awwal al-Mutawassit* [Ancient History of the Arab Homeland for the First Intermediate Class], 17th Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, 1428 A.H./2007 C.E.): p. 5.

[130] ^{c}Aani, *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[131] Samir Kadhum al-Khalil, Abd al-^{c}Abbas Abd al-Jassim, and Turki Abd al-Ghafur al-Rawi, *al-Adab wa al-Nusus li al-Saff al-Rabi^{c}i al-^{c}Ilmi* [Literature and Texts for the Fourth Scientific Class], 2nd Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, General Directorate of Curricula, 1430 A.H./2009 C.E.): pp. 74 and 103, respectively.

[132] For examples, see Ali, *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-38 (Semitic wave theory); ^{c}Aani, *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-76 (glorification of the military), and 88 and 96 (colonialism and resistance); and Muhammad Mudhaffar al-Adhami, Khalil Ibrahim Ahmad, and Jassim Muhammad Hadi, *al-Tarikh al-Hadith wa al-Mu^{c}asir li al-Watan al-^{c}Arabi li al-Saff al-Thalith al-Mutawassit* [Modern and Contemporary History of the Arab Homeland for the Third Intermediate Class], 16th Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, 1428 A.H./2007 C.E.): pp. 5 and 14 (fragmentation and unity), 20, 26, 40, 70 and 72 (colonialism and resistance), and 15, 17-18 and 70 (conspiracy theory).

omission in the History textbooks lies in their obliviousness to the cosmopolitan, multicultural aspects of Arab-Islamic civilization. Little effort is devoted to celebrate the positive achievements of non-Arab peoples who lived in the extensive areas ruled by consecutive caliphal states. If not consigned to the realm of invisibility in the History textbooks, non-Arab intellectuals, philosophers, scientists, scholars and men of letters during the heydays of Islamic civilization are given an Arab identity. For example, the works of the noted non-Arab Muslim philosophers Abu Nasr al-Farabi, an ethnic Turk, and Abu Ali Ibn Sina, an ethnic Persian known in the West as Avicenna, are discussed in a subsection dealing with "Most Famous Arab Muslim Philosophers" (*Ashhar al-Falasifah al-ᶜArab al-Muslimin*).[133] In a similar vein, the Muslim mathematician Muhammad bin Musa al-Khawarizmi is referred to as "the first Arab Muslim author in this discipline [i.e., algorithms and algebra]" (*awwal al-mu'allifin al-ᶜArab al-Muslimin fi hadha al-ᶜilm*).[134] When contributions of non-Arabs are explicitly mentioned they are often couched in vague terms. For instance, "artists from various countries and peoples" are said to have contributed to the development of the Islamic art of architecture.[135]

Representations of non-Arab Muslims in the textbooks tend to be negative. There is a conspicuous tendency to demonize the non-Arab 'Other' as posing a near-permanent threat to Arab-Islamic civilization. The rhythmic pattern of rise and decline in the history of the Arab-Islamic civilization is explained in terms of the vagaries and fluctuating fortunes of the Arab ruling class. The weakness which began to creep into the body politic of the Arab-Islamic state during the ᶜAbbasid period is blamed squarely on the rising influence of the Turks in the civil administration and the army.[136] The argument is couched in sweeping statements interspersed through the pages of textbooks without providing any logical, sociological or causal factors that demonstrate the linkage between the growing influence of a non-Arab ethnic group in the corridors and inner sanctums of state power and state decline. Moreover, the history of two non-Arab dynasties that exerted hegemony over the ᶜAbbasid caliphate, the Buyids and the Saljuqs, are treated in a subsection entitled "Foreign Presence in Iraq" [*al-*

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[133] Ministry of Education Committee, *Tarikh al-Hadharah al-ᶜArabiyyah al-Islamiyyah li al-Saff al-Rabiᶜi al-ᶜAam* [History of Arab Islamic Civilization for the Fourth General Class], 27th Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, 1428 A.H./2007 C.E.): pp. 165-166.
[134] *Ibid.*, p. 185.
[135] *Ibid.*, p. 211.
[136] ᶜAani, *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 85 and 97-98.

Wujud al-Ajnabi fi al-ᶜIraq].[137] Curiously, the fact that the Sunni Saljuqs were sectarian arch-enemies of the Shiᶜite Buyids is overlooked.

At times, the demonization of the non-Arab 'Other' borders on whipping up paranoia. This is a legacy of the curriculum used under the former regime. Students are taught that the Arab world "enjoys a host of characteristics which made it a target of covetous foreigners. Its abundant resources and important geographic location drove several foreign peoples, and throughout different periods of history, to exploit the weakness of political authority and internal fragmentation to invade and dominate it."[138] Traces of the negative portrayal of the Iranians as a menacing force harboring covetous designs and awaiting a chance to attack the Arabs, which occupied pride of place in textbooks under the former regime, continue to dot textbooks in the post-Saddam period. Students are taught that, towards the beginning of the 16th century, European colonialists and the Safavids capitalized on the disunity of the Arabs. "The Safavids benefitted from the state of weakness, division, and decline that Iraq endured during the domination of the White Sheep state," one textbook reads.[139] The textbook provides a novel interpretation of the Safavid invasions of Iraq and Safavid-Ottoman conflict which glosses over the role of sectarian motives. The quintessential motivations of Safavid and Ottoman policies in Iraq as they figure in this narrative lie in racism and lust for colonialist expansion. Both powers, which are said to have used sectarianism in the service of their imperial designs, come across as the taproot of the Muslim sectarian rift in Iraqi society. As such, a governor of Baghdad appointed by Shah Ismaᶜil is said to have "practiced a racist policy camouflaged in sectarianism so as to sow the seeds of discord among the people."[140] The Ottomans, according to the History curriculum, were as guilty as the Safavids of embracing a colonialist project that employs religion as camouflage disguising covetous designs. "Both states [the Safavid and Ottoman] cloaked themselves in religion and sect to achieve expansionist colonialist objectives," one textbook declares.[141]

More ominously, an undercurrent of xenophobia is still detectable in the account of episodes of the Safavid-Ottoman conflict that unfolded in Iraq as related in the post-Saddam curriculum. Citizens of the two states living in Iraq, and their descendants, are portrayed as

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[137] *Ibid.*, p. 95.
[138] Ali, *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
[139] al-Adhami, *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
[140] *Ibid.*
[141] *Ibid.*, p. 19.

fifth columnists or quislings collaborating with their mother countries' expansionist designs. In the words of one History textbook:

> "The Safavids and Ottomans controlled Iraq many times to achieve their acquisitive expansionist ambitions. The presence of the holy tombs and shrines in Iraq played a role in prompting the Ottomans and Safavids to encourage their citizens to emigrate and settle permanently in Iraq. It was only natural that those outsiders would help facilitate the occupation of Iraq by the party to which they belong."[142]

It goes without saying that such accusatory statements amount to suspecting the loyalty of Iraqis of Turkish and Persian origin.

Turkic states that ruled Iraq are painted in negative light, making use of hackneyed and tired stereotypes about the backwardness of the Turks. Under the Turkic White and Black Sheep states "the Iraqis' suffering intensified due to negligence and backwardness, agriculture deteriorated, diseases and epidemics spread, and the blood of many Iraqis was spilled."[143] During their four-century rule, the Ottomans devoted their energies and resources to "firming up the pillars of their rule, and preventing the Arabs from establishing an independent political entity."[144] Moreover, students are taught that "the Arab world faced during Ottoman rule many problems, foremost of which were the increase in the illiteracy rate among the inhabitants and the spread of epidemics and diseases."[145] There is no reference to educational reform efforts in Iraq during the Ottoman Tanzimat era (1839-1876).[146]

The Ottoman response to European encroachment is portrayed as flaccid. The History textbook for the Third Intermediate Class maintains that the Ottomans, who ruled sizeable parts of the Arab world, had a disappointing record in defending the Gulf region against threats from rising European colonialist powers. "The Ottomans failed in putting an end to European attacks in the Arabian Gulf, in spite of sending many navies," it reads. "This stemmed from their preoccupation with the conflict with the Safavids, who entered into an alliance with the Portuguese, the remoteness of their naval bases from the region, and the

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[142] *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

[143] Adhami, *et. al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

[144] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[145] *Ibid.*

[146] A classic work on the history of education in Iraq under Ottoman rule is Abd al-Razzaq al-Hilali's *Tarikh al-Taᶜalim fi al-ᶜIraq fi al-ᶜAhd al-ᶜUthmani, 1638-1917 Miladiyyah* [History of Education in Iraq during the Ottoman Period, 1638-1917 C.E.] (Baghdad, Iraq: Sharikat al-Tabuᶜu wa al-Nashr al-Ahliyyah, 1959).

weakness of their navy."[147] According to the textbook the Arabs stepped in to fill this vacuum. The Arabs, students are told, were the vanguards of resistance to foreign encroachment and colonialist expansion into the Gulf region.

> "The Arabs of the Arabian Gulf shouldered the responsibility of confronting the foreign colonialist attacks. The Arabian Gulf region witnessed, during the emergence of the Ya^{c}arubi state in Oman in 1624 C.E., especially during the reigns of its leaders Nassir bin Murshid and Sultan bin Sayf, … a widespread movement to liberate the Arabian Gulf, and expel the colonialist powers, especially the Portuguese, who were forced to withdraw from the Arabian Gulf after the battle of the liberation of Muscat in 1650 C.E."[148]

The implicit message here is one of self-reliance. As the Safavids are in cahoots with the European colonialists and the Ottomans are weak, Arabs have to rely on themselves and cannot count on Islamic solidarity to help them fend off colonial expansionism.

The negative portrait of the Turks that marks the Arabic curricula is highly offensive to Iraqi Turkmens. It compounds the dismay felt by the Turkmens, as a non-Arab community, as a result of the curriculum's accent on Arab nationalism.[149] Appeals by Turkmen community representatives to the ministry of education to remove the negative portrayals of the Ottomans and other Turkic dynasties from the curriculum have fallen on deaf ears. One contemporary Iraqi Turkmen writer fretted that the educational system in Iraq

> "neither imparts to students well-rounded education nor introduces them to correct knowledge about other communities. After Britain had taken over the governance of Iraq from the Ottoman Empire, it designed the curriculum in Iraq in a manner that deliberately tarnishes the image of the Ottomans, portraying them and previous Turkic dynasties as uncivilized savages whose rule was characterized by destruction and devastation."[150]

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[147] Adhami, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
[148] *Ibid.*
[149] Interview with Anwar Bayraqdar, Chairman of the Iraqi Turkmen Justice Party (Turkmen: *Irak Turkmen Adalet Partisi*; Arabic: *Hizb al-^{c}Adalah al-Turkumani al-^{c}Iraqi*), Kirkuk, Monday, June 21, 2010.
[150] Interview with an Iraqi Turkmen Writer, Kirkuk, Wednesday, April 21, 2012. The name has been withheld to protect the interviewee's anonymity.

While the Arab nationalist themes embedded in the curriculum rubbed against deep currents of communal sensitivities among non-Arab communities, religious content brewed resentments along sectarian lines. Paradoxically, this occurred despite the conscious and deliberate efforts of education policymakers to find a middle way through the minefields of differing sectarian interpretations of the sacred. To this end, differences of opinion on matters of religion between the two main Muslim sectarian communities in Iraq, Sunnis and Shiᶜites, were largely glossed over rather than recognized. This involved the omission of facts about Islamic religious traditions, schools of thought, and history. "In Islamic Studies, we emphasized, in the post-2003 period, common grounds," explained Ali al-Ibrahimi, deputy minister of education.

> "We taught prayers, fasting and hajj, but did not mention *khums* or *zakat*. We emphasized the rites of worship which unify people. We emphasized the [Qur'anic] verses which encourage work, honesty, and general ethical values; as well as the *hadiths* [Prophetic traditions or sayings] which are recognized by all schools."[151]

But the pursuit of a common ground through the smoke and din of centuries-old culture wars unfolding across sectarian lines produced a syncretic narrative. And it was a narrative that mirrors a truncated mosaic of diverse sectarian traditions while giving primacy to the Shiᶜite view of religious matters and plot of Islamic history.

In trying to navigate the tortuous shoals of multiple, divergent, if not radically opposed, Muslim sectarian historical narratives the new curriculum profiled Sunni and Shiᶜite

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[151] Interview with Ali al-Ibrahimi, Deputy Minister of Education, Baghdad, Sunday, July 8, 2012. Notwithstanding Ibrahimi's assertion, *zakat* is dealt with from a Shiᶜite perspective in a section in an Islamic Education textbook chapter dealing with the Islamic economic system. See, Ministry of Education Committee, *al-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyyah li al-Saff al-Sadis al-Iᶜidadi* [Islamic Education for the Sixth Secondary Class], Revised Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, 1428 A.H./2007 C.E.): pp. 76-80. *Zakat* and *khums* are compulsory Muslim religious taxes subject to radically different interpretations by Sunni and Shiᶜite jurists. While Sunni jurists argue that *zakat* is a one-fortieth taxation of a believer's total assets and financial wealth, their Shiᶜite counterparts limit this tax to certain species of grazing livestock, grains, and silver and gold coinage. Similarly, whereas in Sunni jurisprudence *khums* is applicable to spoils of war and treasure, in Shiᶜite jurisprudence *khums* is also, and primarily, a tax of one fifth of a believer's annual financial gains. *Khums* is normally paid to religious authorities or their agents and representatives. On *zakat* from a Sunni perspective, see Muhammad Abd al-Maqsud Dawud, *al-Ahkam al-Jaliyyah fi Zakat al-Amwal al-ᶜAsriyyah* [The Clear Rules of the *Zakat* of Contemporary Monies] (Alexandria, Egypt: Dar al-Jamiᶜah al-Jadidah, 1425 A.H./2004-2005 C.E.). Hassan al-Husseini al-Qazwini articulates the Shiᶜite view on *khums* in his *al-Khums fi al-Shariᶜah al-Islamiyyah: Tashriᶜuh wa Ahkamuh* [*Khums* in the Islamic Shariᶜah: Its Legislation and Rules], 2ⁿᵈ Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Zahra' li al-Tibaᶜah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawziᶜi, 1979).

personalities. In this regard, it sang ritualistic paeans to both the Shi[c]ite Imams and as well as the Companions of the Prophet revered by the Sunnis. The list of profiled Companions includes figures traditionally vilified by Shi[c]ites, such as Khalid bin al-Walid.[152] Guidelines to Islamic Education teachers instructed them to "instill the love of the Messenger of Allah (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his household) and the Prophets and Messengers (peace be upon them), and the love of the pure household of the Messenger of Allah (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him and his household) and his noble Companions (may Allah be pleased with them)."[153] This premeditated evenhandedness stemmed from a desire "to bring about balance" in the curriculum.[154] But the reverence reserved for the Companions did not always extend to other controversial personalities in Islamic history, namely those whose names have gone down in the Shi[c]ite annals of infamy. For instance, [c]Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid is portrayed as a merciless tyrant determined to wipe out any foe, challenger or opposition. One History textbook has this to say about him:

> "al-Rashid continued the policy of his [c]Abbasid predecessors by repressing opposition to his caliphate and eliminating power centers. Foremost among them are the Barmakids who stood by his side for long years and he later inflicted a calamity on them, which became known as "the Barmakids' calamity," as well as his stance represented by imprisoning Imam Musa bin Ja[c]afar (peace be upon him)."[155]

The curriculum also toned down disagreements over the interpretation of highly controversial historical events. For example, one History textbook states that "Muslims from the *Muhajirin* and *Ansar*" swore allegiance to Abu Bakr after their meeting at the Portico of Bani Sa[c]idah. It also says that "a large number of Muslims swore allegiance to him the following day during their meeting at the mosque."[156] The mention of "a large number of Muslims" is an implicit reference to the lack of consensus among the early Muslim community on the selection of Abu Bakr as caliph. In a questions section, students are asked to "justify" Abu Bakr's

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[152] Ministry of Education Committee, *al-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyyah li al-Saff al-Thalith al-Mutawassit*, pp. 30-50.
[153] *Ibid*., p. 51.
[154] Interview with Ali al-Ibrahimi, Deputy Minister of Education, Baghdad, Sunday, July 8, 2012.
[155] [c]Aani, *et. al*., *op. cit*., p. 87. Musa bin Ja[c]afar is the seventh Imam of Twelver Shi[c]ism. For a biography, see Baqir Sharif al-Qarashi, *Hayat al-Imam Musa bin Ja[c]afar ([c]alayhi al-salam): Dirasah wa Tahlil* [The Life of Imam Musa bin Ja[c]afar (peace be upon him): A Study and Analysis], Vols. 1-2, 1[st] Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Balaghah, 1409 A.H./1988 C.E.).
[156] *Ibid*., pp. 41-42.

selection to the caliphate by the Muslim community.[157] But the chapter itself provides very little details on Abu Bakr's selection. This leaves the door wide open for students to answer based on the reading of the events surrounding Abu Bakr's accession to the caliphate adopted by their respective sectarian communities. It also gives teachers the opportunity to exercise their pedagogical authority to impress elements of their own denominational narratives on students and shape their answers.

The account of the tragic events surrounding the slaying of the third Shiᶜite Imam, Hussein, in Karbala in 61 A.H./680 C.E. is fast-paced and brief.[158] This appears to be a calculated move on the part of education policymakers who feared that presenting students with a more detailed historical account runs the risk of "inflaming sectarian sensitivities and sentiments."[159] Be that as it may, the Karbala tragedy is described as a "revolution" (*thawrah*), a typically modern Shiᶜite characterization. The analysis of Hussein's rising against the Umayyad tyrant Yazid rests on a manifestly Shiᶜite interpretation. Students are told that the rising posed a challenge to both the Umayyads' move to institute the foundations of hereditary rule and the "deviation of Umayyad rule during the reign of Yazid bin Muᶜawiyah bin Abi Sufian from the right principles of Islam."[160] Other dreadful acts committed by Yazid, such as ordering the invasion of Medina which resulted in a bloodbath that claimed the lives of many surviving Companions in 63 A.H./683 C.E., and his army's shelling of the Kaᶜabah with catapults when it was deployed to Mecca to subdue an armed revolt a year later, are mentioned only in passing.[161]

While the inclusion of the biographical sketch of Hussein evoked no public objection from the Sunnis, the profile of his brother Hassan, which listed him as a fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph, thus placing him on a par with his four predecessors, raised the ire of some Sunni clerics.[162] Hassan, Ali's first son and the second Shiᶜite Imam, succeeded his father to the caliphate and ruled for about six months before he relinquished power to Muᶜawiyah in

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[157] *Ibid.*, p. 62.
[158] *Ibid.*, pp. 65-67; and Ministry of Education Committee, *al-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyyah li al-Saff al-Thalith al-Mutawassit*, p. 46.
[159] Interview with Ali al-Ibrahimi, Deputy Minister of Education, Baghdad, Sunday, July 8, 2012.
[160] ᶜAani, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
[161] Ministry of Education Committee, *Tarikh al-Hadharah al-ᶜArabiyyah al-Islamiyyah li al-Saff al-Rabiᶜi al-ᶜAam*, pp. 40-41. On the invasion of Medina and the shelling of the Kaᶜabah with catapults by Yazid's army, see Ali bin Ahmad bin Saᶜid Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi al-Dhahiri [d. 456 A.H./1064 C.E.], *Jawamiᶜi al-Sirah wa Khams Rasa'il Ukhra* [The Anthologies of the Biography (of the Prophet) and Five Other Treatises], edited by Ihsan ᶜAbbas, 1st Edition (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Maᶜarif, 1900): pp. 357-358.
[162] *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40 provides a biographical sketch which profiles Imam Hassan as a fifth Rightly-Guided Caliph.

accordance with the terms of a peace treaty between the two which put an end to the first internal Muslim-on-Muslim war in Islamic history.[163] The Sunni objection sounded more like a hairsplitting argument. It took up the cudgel of defending the traditional notion that limits the number of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs to four.[164]

Sunnis also raised objections against some selections of *hadith* narrations attributed to Prophet Muhammad used in the curriculum. It is true that in an apparent goodwill gesture toward the Sunnis the new curriculum used narrations culled from *hadith* compilations deemed authentic by the Sunni jurists, such as those of Abu Abdallah Muhammad bin Isma'il al-Bukhari [d. 256 A.H./870 C.E.] and Muslim bin al-Hajjaj bin Muslim al-Qushayri al-Naysaburi [d. 261 A.H./874-875 C.E.].[165] Still, Sunni clerics objected to the removal of narrations related by Abu Hurayrah that had been in use in the previous curriculum. Some also fretted about the introduction of sayings attributed to Imam Ali into the new curriculum.[166] For Shi'ite education policymakers such criticism is unwarranted, unreasonable, if not even outright whiny. I conveyed the complaint of some Sunni clerics about the removal of Abu Hurayrah's narrations from the curriculum to deputy education minister Ali al-Ibrahimi, a Shi'ite follower of Muqtada al-Sadr. "And is Abu Hurayrah the one and only narrator of *hadith* so that we take just from him?!" he shot back rhetorically.[167]

Overall, the Sunni criticisms centered on the primacy given by the new curriculum to the Shi'ite interpretation of some controversial religious matters and episodes in Islamic history.[168] These criticisms stem mainly from growing feelings among Sunnis in post-Saddam Iraq of being a community under attack. There are widespread concerns among Sunni parents about imparting Shi'ite doctrines and ideas to their children at school.

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[163] On Hassan's political career, see Ja'afar Murtadha al-'Aameli, *al-Hayat al-Siyasiyyah li al-Imam al-Hassan 'alayhi al-salam fi 'Ahd al-Rasul Salla Allah 'alayhi wa Aalih wa al-Khulafa' al-Thalathah min ba'adih: Dirasah wa Tahlil* [The Political Life of Imam al-Hassan Peace Be upon Him during the Era of the Messenger May the Mercy of Allah Be upon Him and His Household and the Three Caliphs after Him: A Study and Analysis] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Sirah, 1414 A.H./[1993-1994 C.E.].

[164] 'Ala' Youssuf, "Rafdh Taghyir Manahij al-Ta'alim fi al-'Iraq" [Changing Educational Curricula in Iraq Rejected], *Aljazeera.net*, Saturday, September 25, 2010; available at: http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/ab9941f0-baf4-488b-89ac-d02b3c03baa2; accessed on Friday, July 27, 2012.

[165] Ministry of Education Committee, *al-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyyah li al-Saff al-Sadis al-I'idadi*, pp. 5-27.

[166] Youssuf, *op. cit.*

[167] Interview with Ali al-Ibrahimi, Deputy Minister of Education, Baghdad, Sunday, July 8, 2012.

[168] Nassir Salah al-Din catalogues Sunni criticisms of the new curriculum in his "Mashari'i al-Taghyir al-Ta'ifi Tatal al-Manahij al-Tarbawiyyah bi 'Iraq ma ba'ad al-Ihtilal" [Sectarian Change Projects Extend to Educational Curricula in Post-Occupation Iraq], *al-Ra'id*, No. 49, Wednesday, January 13, 2010; available at: http://www.al-raeed.net/raeedmag/preview.php?id=1807; accessed on Saturday, March 20, 2010.

Compounding these concerns are perceptions of the ministry of education as a bastion of Shiᶜite fanaticism prevalent among Sunnis. Abysmal performance of students in Sunni areas in the centralized final examinations administered by the ministry of education is attributed to unfairness in the grading of examinations. The prevalence of such communal fears nurtured a tendency among the Sunnis to characterize changes introduced into the curriculum in post-Saddam Iraq as being inspired by purely Shiᶜite sectarian motives.[169]

In an apparent bid to mollify vociferous Sunni critics of the curriculum, the ministry of education in 2009 invited the Sunni Endowment Diwan to provide written feedback, observations and recommendations on the curriculum. To this end, the Sunni Endowment formed a committee of experts who examined the textbooks and formulated a recommended list of content and textbooks to be taught at various levels. While encompassing the whole gamut of subject areas included in the ministry of education's curriculum, the recommendations focused primarily on the Islamic Education, Qur'an and History subjects. Remarkably, the Sunni Endowment's recommended content and textbooks for these sensitive subject matters draw solely on Sunni scholarly religious heritage. A close examination of the lists of recommended textbooks reveals that they are likely to have been originally designed for schools run by the Sunni Endowment.[170] Little wonder that the recommendations were viewed by Shiᶜite officials at the ministry of education as an expression of a maximalist desire to restore the *status quo ante* in the field of education rather than as prescriptions for an ameliorative policy. "The Sunni Endowment wants to go back to the previous curriculum which was written for one sect," grumbled deputy minister of education Ibrahimi. "Their objections are baseless."[171]

The objections raised by Sunni Endowment officials highlight the nature of the field of education in Iraq as a contested public domain where discordant sectarian views of the past compete for recognition, legitimization and hegemony. In the heat of this competition,

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[169] Youssuf, *op. cit.*; and Ibrahim Ahmad al-Baghdadi, "al-ᶜIraq al-Jadid: al-Manahij al-Dirasiyyah" [The New Iraq: The Educational Curricula], *Albasrah.net*, Thursday, 10 Jumada al-Thani 1430 A.H./June 4, 2009 C.E.; available at: http://www.albasrah.net/ar_articles_2009/0609/ibrahim_040609.htm; accessed on Saturday, March 20, 2010. *Albasrah.net* is a pro-insurgency, pro-Baᶜath website.

[170] Letter by Shaykh Ahmad Abd al-Ghafur al-Samarra'i, Chairman of the Sunni Endowment Diwan, to the Office of the Advisor of the Minister of Education about Examining the Textbooks of the Islamic Education Curriculum, No. 4759, Dated Jumada al-Thani 24, 1431 A.H./June 7, 2010 C.E. (copy on file with the author); List of Recommended Textbooks by the Sunni Endowment Diwan for the Intermediate Level for the School Year 2010-2011 (copy on file with the author); and List of Recommended Textbooks by the Sunni Endowment Diwan for the Secondary Level for the School Year 2010-2011 (copy on file with the author).

[171] Interview with Ali al-Ibrahimi, Deputy Minister of Education, Baghdad, Sunday, July 8, 2012.

education officials find themselves under cross pressures. Notwithstanding the primacy of the Shiᶜite narrative in the curriculum, assertive Shiᶜite clerical circles have bemoaned the space given to the Sunni narrative in the present syllabus and called for injecting more Shiᶜite religious content into the curriculum. The Shiᶜite clerical discontents have argued that the curriculum shows undue favoritism or deference to the Sunni narrative at the expense of the Shiᶜite version, which in their view represents the 'truth.' They have contended that there is an irony in the field of education in Iraq whereby the children of the Shiᶜite majority study elements or fragments of the narrative of the Sunni minority.[172] Grand Ayatollah Shaykh Bashir al-Najafi, one of four senior-most Najaf-based *marajiᶜi taqlid*, has issued the strongest and most strident public calls for the hegemony of the Shiᶜite narrative in the curriculum. He has demanded the adoption of multiple religious studies curricula, whereby the Shiᶜite narrative would be taught in predominantly Shiᶜite areas and the Sunni narrative would be taught in predominantly Sunni areas.[173] Hence, the cross pressures placed on educational policymaking lay bare the contest over educational curricula as a competition where discourses about the past mesh with the processes of power relations, inter-group inequalities and societal asymmetries. Here, the search for historicity, which consists of narratives seeking to reconstruct the past, is inextricably linked to the present processes of identity formation, and, in turn, to notions of sameness and otherness.

4.5. Conclusion: Sectarian Primordial Identity and the Art of Cultural Resistance

"Today, when we think we wish to free the mind so it will soar, we are still, nevertheless, bound by the ancient paradox, for we must hold our culture together through clinging to old ideas lest, in adopting new ones, we literally cease to exist."

Jules Henry,
"Education and the Human Condition"

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[172] *Ibid.*; and "Tamim Yakhriq Bunud Ittifaqiyyat Arbil wa al-Marjiᶜiyyah Tuᶜidduhu Intisaran li al-Baᶜathiyyin wa al-Takfiriyyin" [Tamim Violates the Articles of the Erbil Agreement and the Marjiᶜiyyah Considers This a Victory for the Baᶜathists and Takfiris], *al-Muwatin*, Monday, May 21, 2012; available at: http://almowatennews.com/news.php?action=view&id=42222; accessed on Tuesday, July 31, 2012.
[173] "Mudir Maktab Samahat al-Marjiᶜi (dam dhilluh): ᶜAla al-Mas'ulin Muraᶜat Muᶜtaqadat Mukawwinat al-Shaᶜab fi al-Manahij al-Dirasiyyah" [The Director of the Office of the Marjiᶜi (may his shadow be extended): Officials Must Take into Consideration the Beliefs of the Components of the People in the Educational Curricula], Official Website of Grand Ayatollah Shaykh Bashir al-Najafi; available at: http://www.alnajafy.com/list/main-1-444-846-1280757347.html; accessed on Tuesday, July 31, 2012.

The forgoing foray into the politics of education in Iraq has shown how state efforts to inculcate a distinctive national identity through pedagogy became entangled in cultural wars unfolding across sectarian fault lines. Instead of socializing individuals into a unitary discourse of a common overarching citizenship, these efforts engendered masked forms of resistance among subaltern groups to the primacy of the dominant group's sectarian discourse in education that cloaked existing power inequalities.[174] While subordinate communities, which understood the importance of modern education for the social mobility of their children, showed a degree of outward acceptance of the narrative propagated through the educational curriculum, they also sought to resist the dominant narrative by turning inward toward their sectarian primordial identities and narratives. As James C. Scott has perceptively observed, the political life of subordinate groups "might make use of disguise, deception, and indirection while maintaining an outward impression, in power-laden situations, of willing, even enthusiastic consent."[175]

Away from the structures of state domination and the earshot of the state's apparatuses of repression, there grew a hidden counter-hegemonic space of resistance, adopting dissident, contrapuntal, subversive ethno-sectarian narratives. In the words of James C. Scott, "[e]very subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a "hidden transcript" that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant."[176] In this context, sectarian 'hidden transcripts'[177] have been propagated behind the veneer of consent and quiescence to counteract the official public transcript. These hidden transcripts have been propagated through the family, the mosques, the neighborhood, and the tribe. At times, they have also been transmitted at schools.

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[174] The notion of masked forms of resistance conjures up images of a technology and practice of resistance reminiscent to those of Michel Foucault's analysis of the technology of power and domination. See his *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated from the French by Alan Sheridan (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1977).

[175] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT; and London: Yale University Press, 1990): p. 17.

[176] *Ibid*., p. xii.

[177] Scott, *ibid*., pp. 4-5, defines "hidden transcript" as "discourse that takes place "offstage," beyond direct observation by powerholders. The hidden transcript is thus derivative in the sense that it consists of those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript."

When propagated through the schools, the transmission of the sectarian hidden transcript is dependent on the school's location. It is only possible in areas where the inhabitants belong predominantly or wholly to one sectarian community. A Shi^cite teacher would not be able to disseminate allusions to this hidden text in a predominantly Sunni area or vice versa. Under the consecutive Sunni-dominated regimes that ruled Iraq until 2003, teachers in predominantly Shi^cite areas would make allusions, remarks and statements, whether explicitly or by innuendo, privileging the Shi^cite narrative, such as arguing that Ali was the rightful successor of the Prophet or making swipes at the other Rightly Guided Caliphs. They would also interject negative references and allusions to passages in the textbooks dealing with controversial issues. Shi^cite parents under the former regime would often belittle and vilify the school textbooks in front of their children. They would tell their children that the Islamic Education, History and other textbooks used at their schools are "government textbooks" (*kutub al-hukumah*), implying that reality was different than the official narratives embodied in these textbooks. The content of these "government books," some Shi^cite parents would advise their children, is to be learnt for the sole purpose of passing the school exams.[178]

In the post-Saddam period, a similar, but inverse dynamic, can be observed. The refrain that school textbooks are merely "government textbooks" gained currency among Sunnis. Some schools in the Sunni areas have been reluctant to use the ministry of education's Islamic Education textbooks altogether, preferring to teach imported textbooks that privilege the Sunni narrative instead. Shi^cite government officials say that some of these alternative textbooks are imported from Saudi Arabia and laden with anti-Shi^cite hate content and diatribes.[179] In some instances, teachers in predominantly Sunni areas simply skip teaching certain chapters in the Islamic Education textbooks which privilege the Shi^cite narrative. In other instances, Sunni teachers would use their pedagogical authority in the classroom setting

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[178] Interview with Hamid al-Kifaey, Former Spokesman of the Iraqi Governing Council, London, Monday, September 20, 2010; and Interview with Yahya al-Kubaysi, Visiting Scholar at the French Institute for the Near East in Amman, Amman, Wednesday, May 19, 2010. As a child, Mr. Kubaysi, who hails from a Sunni family from the town of Kabisah in Anbar Province, studied in both Mosul, a predominantly Sunni city in northern Iraq, and Kut, a predominantly Shi^cite city in south-central Iraq. He recalled that in Kut he used to hear allusions and statements from the teachers of the Islamic Education and History subjects arguing that Ali was the rightful successor of the Prophet. Officially, such opinions, he remarked, were neither part of the curriculum nor listed in the textbooks.
[179] Interview with Shi^cite Cabinet Minister, State of Law Coalition, Baghdad, Thursday, November 17, 2011. The name has been withheld to protect the interviewee's anonymity

to propagate a Sunni hidden transcript to counter the dominance of the Shiᶜite discourse in the curriculum.[180]

Away from the tightening grip of the repressive state apparatus, parallel systems of informal education at home, which act as vehicles to impart the secret text to school children and students, have emerged. Acting as custodians of religious knowledge, local clerics have oftentimes been enthusiastic about the opportunity to spread the hidden sectarian text and narrative through informal education. Religious families would teach their children their sectarian version of history and interpretation of religious 'truth' at home.[181] This requires that parents possess a sufficient level of religious knowledge and can spare some time to be devoted to teaching their children. Other families would opt to send their children to study religious matters at local mosques.[182] Informal sectarian education has mainly been sought by poor or lower middle-class families in the shrine cities, urban centers and provincial towns. Upper middle-class and wealthy families, which are more interested in integrating into the established elite, are less inclined to seek informal educational opportunities where their children would imbibe the hidden sectarian text.[183] Moreover, school children would also imbibe elements of the hidden text from peers and neighbors in their neighborhoods. That is especially the case in staunchly religious areas, such as the Shiᶜite shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala, or Sunni Arab Fallujah in Anbar Province, where there is abundant supply of religious knowledge in the local community. The purely sectarian nature of the substantive content of informal education, where children are not taught to transcend the conflict-ridden history of sectarian relations, serves more than the mere purpose of the transmission of sectarian knowledge. It also functions as spiritual fortification for the children against what their parents see as unhealthy potential of socialization, or 'proselytization,' into the dominant sectarian narrative propagated through the curriculum. It becomes a part of the reinforcement and reproduction of sectarian primordial affiliations and loyalties.

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[180] Interview with Yahya al-Kubaysi, Visiting Scholar at the French Institute for the Near East in Amman, Amman, Wednesday, May 19, 2010.

[181] Interview with Abd al-Hussein al-Hindawi, Former Chairman of the Iraqi Independent Higher Electoral Commission, Baghdad, Friday, January 7, 2011.

[182] Interview with Ali Thwany, Iraqi Architect and Researcher, Amman, Tuesday, September 21, 2010. Thwany recalls that the late Ayatollah Sadiq Khalkhali, the former Iranian Revolutionary Prosecutor General who became known as the Islamic revolution's "hanging judge" for his efforts in weeding out "counter-revolutionaries," taught him at a poor Shiᶜite neighborhood mosque in the Hurriyyah quarter of Baghdad, where he attended informal religious education as a child in the 1960s.

[183] Interview with Abd al-Hussein al-Hindawi, Former Chairman of the Iraqi Independent Higher Electoral Commission, Baghdad, Friday, January 7, 2011.

Rituals and ceremonies held to mark religious occasions, such as the birth and death of the Prophet and the twelve Imams, have been another medium through which the hidden transcript is propagated.[184] Historical narratives of events that had taken place in a sectarian primordial time figure prominently in both the rituals performed and the discourse used in speeches and sermons delivered at community gatherings to mark these occasions. History in these narratives, which are narrated in a style that combines storytelling with emotional fervor, is not mediated through the school textbooks. These ceremonies, especially the ͨAshura rites, become a medium through which sectarian consciousness and identity are reinforced and reproduced.[185] Concerned about the reservoir of metaphors and religious tropes with anti-government connotations embedded in the ͨAshura rites, the government under Baͨath Party rule tried to suppress these ritual expressions of faith, collective memory and identity. However, faithful Shiͨites continued to hold such ceremonies in the privacy of their homes.[186]

From a fragmented social landscape through efforts to foster national identity to a resurgent primordialism in a contested socio-political terrain: over more than nine decades, education in Iraq went through an intense arc. To a certain extent, the unified educational system in Iraq, promoting a version of totality, contributed to the formation of a national cultural outlook and an imagination of an Iraqi nation-state. However, the resulting cultural outlook fell short of a total erosion of differences and fully integrating the diverse and plural country into a sense of singular nationhood. As Sami Zubaida poignantly observed, it was a "fractured" concept of nationhood which emerged. Within such a scheme of things, "the

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[184] Interview with Yahya al-Kubaysi, Visiting Scholar at the French Institute for the Near East in Amman, Amman, Wednesday, May 19, 2010; and Interview with Hamid al-Kifaey, Former Spokesman of the Iraqi Governing Council, London, Monday, September 20, 2010.

[185] See Ibrahim al-Haydari, *Trajidya Karbala': Sosyolojya al-Khitab al-Shiͨi* [The Karbala Tragedy: The Sociology of Shiͨite Discourse] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Saqi, 1999). According to David R. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988): p. 150, "Popular rites of community solidarity, with their well-developed symbolism, their legacy of emotional fervor, and the power that comes with sharing with others in regular ritual performances, have the power that comes from communal effervescence, *joyeustés collectives*. It is indeed a power that can be used to deflect social tensions, but it also can be used for quite different purposes."

[186] A provincial Baͨath Party boss was dismissed from his post and put under surveillance for failing to act against a Shiͨite family in the southern provincial capital of Nasseriyyah for holding a ceremony in commemoration of Imam Hussein's martyrdom at its house. The security services had forwarded to him a report by its operatives giving an account of the event in the expectation that he takes punitive measures against the family in question. Interview with Former Secretary of the Baͨath Party in Dhi Qar Province and Former Governor of Diyala, Baghdad, Monday, January 3, 2011. The name has been withheld to protect the interviewee's anonymity.

political field thus created was one of contestation among different conceptions of the nation that, in turn, were related to communal, regional, and class interests."[187]

Much like the sequential pattern of an action-reaction cycle, efforts to institutionalize uniformity through education created a momentum among communities to assert their own particularistic solidarities. Given the contradictions and divisions among the population of Iraq, promoting Arab nationalist identity was a means to bridge the Sunni-Shi^cite divide, as most Iraqi Shi^cites are Arabs. With its Islamic gloss, the Arab nationalist outlook harnessed by the architects of the educational system was also a means to build a common denominator and arrest the centrifugal tendencies of the Kurds and, to a much lesser extent, the Turkmens. But non-Sunni Arab communities saw government efforts to promote uniformity through education as attempts to undermine their religious or ethnic sets of beliefs and value systems and promote the superiority of one community. This was due to the dual nature of the Arab nationalist outlook embodied in the curriculum. On the one hand, Arab nationalist ideology has its secular component inspired by European nationalist thought and couched in the idiom of modernism. On the other hand, the discourse of Arab nationalism attached, with unmistakable vigor, pronounced importance to the Arab-Islamic heritage and cultural experience.

In the post-2003 period, attempts to present both the Shi^cite and Sunni views of Islamic history as equally legitimate did not conceal the privileged status of the Shi^cite narrative in the educational curriculum. It also failed to replace the discourse of the old curriculum, which privileged the Sunni Arab view, with an inclusive discourse that transcends the communal segmentation of Iraqi society and the associated binaries of sameness and otherness. Although formulated in modern idiom, the accent placed on the Shi^cite historical and religious narrative in the curriculum gave rise to fears among the Sunnis of superimposing a Shi^cite identity over Iraqi society. In a divided society where zero-sum logic dominates perceptions of communal interactions, privileging the Shi^cite narrative can only nurture feelings of unease and malaise among the Sunnis.

Reactions often surfaced in the guise of a counter-discourse rooted in thinly concealed primordial particularisms, which possessed their own sites, discourses and tropes. The tension between the hegemonic official Sunni- or Shi^cite-tainted curriculum taught in schools and the

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[187] Zubaida, "The Fragments Imagine the Nation," p. 206.

counter texts and discourses propagated through the homes, places of worship, family, tribe, neighborhood, etc. sowed a schizoid national soul. This became a factor in the awakening of sectarian primordial consciousnesses whose subtexts are both sectarian and national at one and the same time. This echoes the proposition advanced by Tawil and Harley that education has the potential to act as an "accomplice" to conflict.[188]

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[188] Sobhi Tawil and Alexandra Harley, "Education and Identity-based Conflict: Assessing curriculum policy for social and civic reconstruction," in Sobhi Tawil and Alexandra Harley, eds., *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion* (Paris, France; and Geneva, Switzerland: UNESCO International Bureau of Education, 2004): pp. 1-36. Similarly, Kenneth D. Bush and Diana Saltarelli, eds., *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict* (Florence, Italy: United Nations Children's Fund, Innocenti Research Centre, 2000): p. 33, have observed that "in many conflicts around the world, education is part of the problem, not the solution, because it serves to divide and antagonize groups both intentionally and unintentionally."

CHAPTER 5

Contending Visions of Collective Identity

"In the same way that amnesia is not merely a local disturbance of the individual's memory but causes more or less serious perturbations in his personality, the absence, or voluntary or involuntary loss, of collective memory among peoples and nations can cause serious problems of collective identity."

Jacque Le Goff, *History and Memory*

For many citizens across Iraq, April 9, 2003 was a day for an unusual blend of celebration and chaos.[1] In their wild euphoria at the collapse of Saddam Hussein's hold on power, crowds of jubilant Iraqis in Baghdad surged to the streets dancing, singing, chanting slogans and venting their anger at symbols of the overthrown Baᶜathist regime. Some used shoes and slippers to beat the ubiquitous statues and pictures of the fallen Iraqi dictator.[2] Others went on a gleeful looting spree, descending mostly on facilities of the government that ruled them with an iron fist for decades and making off with anything that they could carry, while invading American soldiers made little effort to stop the rampage. But in the poor and densely populated Saddam City, formerly Revolution City (*Madinat al-Thawrah*) and soon to be re-named Sadr City, in eastern Baghdad, anarchy was not the only enduring symbol of the day. Here expressions of joy at the demise of Baᶜath Party rule were mixed with assertive manifestations of sectarian identity. Crowds of joyous Shiᶜites rhythmically beat their chests and shouted Shiᶜite religious slogans. "Yes, yes to the Shiᶜites" (*Naᶜam, naᶜam li al-Shiᶜah*), many in the crowds chanted. Some carried posters of Shiᶜite religious leaders and waved prayer clay tablets.[3]

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[1] Firsthand reporting on the festivities and anarchy that gripped Baghdad upon the fall of Saddam Hussein is voluminous. See, for example, Hamza Hindawi, "Iraqis exult over toppled statue of Saddam," *The Boston Globe*, April 9, 2003; available at: http://www.boston.com/news/daily/09/war_baghdad.htm; accessed on Thursday, September 22, 2011; Michael Slackman and John Daniszewski, "To Wary Baghdad Shopkeepers, 'Liberation' Looks Like a Jungle," *Los Angeles Times*, Saturday, April 12, 2003; available at: http://articles.latimes.com/2003/apr/12/news/war-baghdad12; accessed on Thursday, September 22, 2011.

[2] Striking someone with shoes amounts to a cardinal insult in Arab culture.

[3] The Shiᶜites usually place a small clay tablet in front of them when they pray. The worshipper's forehead touches the tablet when he/she prostrates him/herself in prayer. The tablets, commonly known as *turbah* (literally 'soil'), are made of clay from Shiᶜite shrine cities. However, clay tablets from the shrine city of Karbala, whose soil is considered by Shiᶜite scholars as possessing special sanctity and blessedness, are

The brandishing of assertive manifestations of Shiᶜite sectarian identity to express jubilation at the demise of the fearsome Saddam regime was reflective of the failure of the modern Iraqi nation-state in promoting an inclusive ideology absorbing and giving space to the rich ethnic and sectarian plurality in the country. In its pursuit of uniformity, homogenization and unification, the modern Iraqi state promoted a collective identity based on Pan-Arabism. But Pan-Arabism, in its incarnation as state ideology in Iraq, appropriated core understandings of the past inspired by the Sunni narrative of Islamic history and conceptions of the legacy of a golden age. As Fanar Haddad aptly notes:

> "The myths of the Arabs as presented by successive Iraqi regimes revolved around glorification of the Arab Islamic empires particularly the Abbasid Empire. The glorification of the companions of the Prophet has also been a feature of pan-Arab and Arab nationalist rhetoric. The heroes of Arab history, venerated for military prowess or state building are almost all viewed with suspicion, if not outright disdain, in Shi'a folklore: Omar ibn al-Khattab, Saladin, Harun al-Rashid and other rulers of Islamic empires throughout history will be inimical to Shi'as who identify with Shi'a mythology."[4]

This chapter seeks to unravel the ways in which primordial sectarianism in Iraq fed off clashing visions of collective identity. In sketching out the ideological resources employed by the state to inculcate national identity, I analyze how ideological concepts adopted by the Arab nationalist discourse in Iraq to demarcate 'in groups' and 'out groups' crippled its unitary and inclusive momentum. Beyond nostalgia, the historical memory at the core of the state's Pan-Arab ideology combined historical narrative in its Sunni rendition with Sunni communal fears and phobias that tended to be amplified at times of increased tension

preferred and more commonly used. They are known as *turbah Husayniyyah* (Husseini soil). According to Shiᶜite jurisprudence, prostration in prayer must be performed on pure earth or plants growing out of it, provided that they are not edible or used as textile material. The practice sometimes draws accusations of polytheism and idol worshipping from extremist Sunnis, especially Salafists. For Shiᶜite sources on this topic, see Muhammad Mahdi al-Khirsan, *al-Sujud ᶜala al-Turbah al-Husayniyyah* [Prostration on Husseini Soil] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Mihajjah al-Baydha', 2008); Muhammad bin al-Hussein Al Kashef al-Ghita', *al-Ardh wa al-Turbah al-Husayniyyah* [The Earth and the Husseini Soil] (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'assassat Ahl al-Bayt, 1402 A.H./1982 C.E.); and Abd al-Hussein al-Amini, *al-Sujud ᶜala al-Turbah al-Husayniyyah* [Prostration on Husseini Soil] (no place of publication: Markaz al-Ishᶜaᶜa al-Islami li al-Dirasat wa al-Buhuth al-Islamiyyah, no date), published online on the *Fikr al-Shiᶜah* [Shiᶜite Thought] website at: http://www.fekralshia.com/?p=1767; accessed on Wednesday, September 21, 2011. For a Sunni criticism of the practice, see "al-Radd ᶜala al-Rafidhah fi Ishtiratihim al-Sujud ᶜala al-Ardh aw Turab aw Mushtaqqatih!" [The Refutation of the Rejectionists in Their Requiring Prostration on Earth, Soil or Its Derivatives], *al-Islam Su'al wa Jawab* [Islam Question and Answer] website; available at: http://www.islamqa.com/ar/ref/117579; accessed on Wednesday, September 21, 2011.
[4] Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity* (London: Hurst & Company, 2011): p. 38.

between the Shi^cites and the rigid state. Anti-Shi^cism in the discourse of Pan-Arabism in Iraq hid behind a thin veneer of xenophobic anti-Persianism. As will be explored in this section, the anti-Persian motifs embedded in the Iraqi state's Pan-Arab discourse reduced the Shi^cites into a potentially duplicitous 'fifth-columnist' community which can only undertake the rite of passage from an 'out-group' to an 'in-group' status by turning its back on its communal cultural heritage and subscribing to Pan-Arabism. The hegemony of this Pan-Arab nationalist discourse also had serious implications for conceptions of citizenship and the state's policy toward its Shi^cite citizens.

The toppling of Saddam Hussein, which represented the final nail in the coffin of a Pan-Arabism that had long gone stale and bankrupt, opened vistas for the recovery or creation of an inclusive foundational myth that avoids identification with a particular ethnic or sectarian identity. But the emergent discourse on national unity is plagued by sharp disagreements over the nature of the nascent political community and collective identity. In this space, the slide towards disintegration is unmistakable. A fuzzy cluster of conceptual formulations drawing on primordial solidarities echoes the fragmentation, chaos, and inter-communal discord that have been the bane of post-Saddam Iraq. The competing visions embedded in this discourse on national identity reflect, to use the phrase coined by Zygmunt Bauman, "the balkanization of human existence" in Iraq.[5] The divisions are so deep to the degree that the possibility of the emergence of a unitary vision seems to be light years from actualization.

This excursus, therefore, seeks to examine the contextual, dynamic and relational nature of primordial sectarianism in Iraq as a product of struggles between contending visions of collective identity. It engages in analyzing discourse as an agent of the construction of collective, primordial sectarian consciousness in the fragmented social ontology of Iraq. It embarks on an investigative journey into how contradictions in ideological reinterpretations of the sense of collective selfhood effectively impaired their potential to de-pluralize Iraqi communities into a homogeneous national whole. It demonstrates that the progressive retreat from the mobilization of a collective national consciousness as a primary marker of identification in Iraq underscores the fluidity, contingency and constrcutiveness of primordial sectarian identity in Iraq. This excursus, ultimately, shows the dialectic nature of primordial sectarianism in Iraq: it feeds on, and feeds, social fragmentation. Hence, rather than spawning

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[5] Zygmunt Bauman, *The Individualised Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001): p. 96.

the homogenization of society, the ideological discourses on collective identity in Iraq acted only to reproduce and reinforce heterogeneity, fragmentation and binary oppositions.

5.1. Persian Ghosts: The Shi‘ite 'Other' in Pan-Arab Thought

"The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living."

Karl Marx,
The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte

Ideology was situated at the heart of the historical memory marshaled by the Iraqi nation-state to promote social cohesion. But the ideological Pan-Arab discourse of the Iraqi state often drifted into the delineation of Manichean dichotomies of good and evil, patriots and enemies, faithful loyalists and duplicitous traitors, which ultimately stunted the development of an inclusionary national identity and political community. The image of Persians as evil incarnate figured prominently in this discourse and fanned the flames of anti-Persian xenophobia. Drawing a connection between Shi‘ites and Persians was used to discredit Shi‘ite activism and opposition and, sometimes, to even question the loyalty and Arabness of Iraqi Shi‘ites.[6] Accordingly, anti-Persianism figured as an instrument of social control and exclusion at one and the same time.

Anti-Persian motifs had pride of place in a 'rhetoric of stigma' seeking to banish political opponents and adversaries to the category of an outside "Other" that dates back to the early years of the modern nation-state. Since then, the stigma of 'foreignness' was liberally used to evoke implicit and explicit negative portrayals of opposition to the Sunni-dominated political establishment and its Arab nationalist ideological discourse, laden as they were with Sunni symbolism and narratives, as internal subversion posing a threat to national unity in the service of malicious foreign plots. In the closing days of the 1920 Revolution, Muzahim al-Pachachi, an influential Badghdadi politician who would later become a prominent figure in

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[6] See Hassan al-ʿAlawi, *al-Shiʿah wa al-Dawlah al-Qawmiyyah fi al-ʿIraq* [The Shiʿites and the Nation-State in Iraq] (Paris: CEDI Press, 1989).

the ruling Sunni elite, described the armed rebellion as "not purely an Arab movement" and "mixed with an alien element."[7]

In a bid to curb mounting Shi^cite clerical opposition to the ratification of the Anglo-Iraqi treaty of 1922, the criminal law was amended in June 1923 to grant authorities powers to deport foreigners engaged in oppositional activities that they deem to be detrimental to public safety. A government statement lambasted the mujtahids engaged in campaigning against elections for the Constituent Assembly that would ratify the treaty, describing them as "intruders who have nothing to do with the Arab cause" and "fanatical foreigners" engaged "in deception … in the name of religion."[8] The government then moved to expel Shi^cite mujtahid Shaykh Mahdi al-Khalisi, who was at the forefront of opposition to the treaty, and other members of his family on the pretext of cracking down on, in the words of a government statement, "foreign whims in the guise of religious authority fooling around with vital matters related to the nation's rights."[9] When other senior Shi^cite clerics announced their intention to leave the country in protest at Khalisi's deportation, hoping to ignite a popular rebellion, the government escorted the Iranian nationals among them, a total of nine accompanied by 25 followers, to Iran.[10] But Khalisi was not of Persian stock. He belonged to a family hailing from the Banu Assad, an Arab tribe, but his forefathers, like many Arab Shi^cites, had taken up Iranian citizenship to evade conscription into the Ottoman military.

Intellectuals played a leading role in providing theoretical and conceptual foundations for casting doubt on the Arab identity of political opponents in general, and the Shi^cites in particular. The *shu^cubiyyah* concept was recalled to overlay a historical dimension on the association between Iran and opponents of the establishment and its Pan-Arab ideology. But the *shu^cubiyyah* concept was also laden with symbolisms where racial fears came together with sectarian animus. The first elaborate scholarly expression of the *shu^cubiyyah* stigma to vilify the Shi^cites appeared in an Arab nationalist pamphlet published in June 1933 by Abd al-Razzaq al-Hassan. In this tract, entitled *al-^cUrubah fi al-Mizan: Nadhrah fi Tarikh al-^cIraq*

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[7] Arnold Wilson, *Mesopotamia 1917-1920: A Clash of Loyalties – A Personal and Historical Record*, Vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1931): p. 321.

[8] Ali al-Wardi, *Lamahat Ijtima^ciyyah min Tarikh al-^cIraq al-Hadith* [Social Glimpses from the History of Modern Iraq], Vol. 6 (Qum, Iran: al-Maktabah al-Haydariyyah, 1378-1379 S.H. [Solar Hijri Calendar]): pp. 223-224. See also Haddad, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42; and Adeed Dawisha, *Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation* (Princeton, NJ; and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009): p. 24.

[9] Wardi, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 228-229.

al-Siyasi [Arabism in the Balance: A Look at the Political History of Iraq], Iraqi Shi^cites as a collectivity were portrayed in no uncertain terms as *shu^cubis*, Persians and descendants of the Sassanids. The treatise also cast doubts on the Shi^cites' ability to give primacy to Arab nationalism over their sectarian loyalty.[11] The controversy engendered by this book led to Shi^cite rebuttals in the press as well as impassioned demonstrations and armed disturbances in the Shi^cite shrine cities. Although the author was imprisoned and the book confiscated, many Shi^cites viewed the punishment as too lenient for such an assault against their patriotism and loyalty to the homeland.[12]

The theme of the *shu^cubiyyah* as being locked in an age-old mortal combat against Arab-Islamic civilization was further refined and articulated by the late historian Abd al-^cAziz al-Duri in his *al-Judhur al-Tarikhiyyah li al-Shu^cubiyyah* [The Historical Roots of *Shu^cubiyyah*]. Duri's book provides a conservative, Pan-Arabist 'emplotment'[13] of the rise of the *shu^cubiyyah* movement as a multi-faceted attack aimed "to destabilize Arab power, or weaken Islam and sow confusion in [its ranks], to hold off the current of Arab-Islamic culture and to shatter the heritage (*al-turath*), and also tried to consolidate political and religious consciousness in its own ranks and revive its cultural heritage."[14] Duri restricted the purview of his analysis to the Persian cultural, literary and religious influences propagated by the *shu^cubiyyah* movement during the ^cAbbasid era.

A fundamental premise of this approach is that internal threats to the primacy of the Arabs and their culture during the ^cAbbasid era take precedence over, and are deemed to be more pernicious than, external threats. The *shu^cubiyyah* movement, from Duri's perspective, consisted of "the secret movements which pretend to be Muslim and work to destroy Arab-Islamic power or to destroy Islam, or the trends that try to shatter Islam and the Arabs from

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[11] Abd al-Razzaq al-Hassan, *al-^cUrubah fi al-Mizan: Nadhrah fi Tarikh al-^cIraq al-Siyasi* [Arabism in the Balance: A Look at the Political History of Iraq] (Baghdad, Iraq: Matba^cat al-^cAhd, 1933).

[12] Reeva Spector Simon, *Iraq Between the Two World Wars: The Militarist Origins of Tyranny*, Updated Edition (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2004 [1986]): pp. 54-55; and Liora Lukitz, *Iraq: The Search for National Identity* (London; and Portland, OR: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 2004 [1995]): p. 62.

[13] I use the term "emplotment" in the sense defined by Hayden White, who maintained that: "Providing the 'meaning' of a story by identifying the *kind of story* that has been told is called explanation by emplotmnet. If, in the course of narrating his story, the historian provides it with the plot structure of a Tragedy, he has 'explained' it in one way; if he has structured it as a Comedy, he has 'explained' it in another way. Emplotment is the way by which a sequence of events fashioned into a story is gradually revealed to be a story of a particular kind." Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973): p. 7. Accordingly, Duri provides his story of the *shu^cubiyyah* movement with the plot structure of conspiracy theory.

[14] Abd al-^cAziz al-Duri, *al-Judhur al-Tarikhiyyah li al-Shu^cubiyyah* [The Historical Roots of *Shu^cubiyyah*] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Tali^cah, February 1962): p. 13.

within."[15] In Duri's conspiracy theory interpretation, the Persian intelligentsia, senior government bureaucrats and administrative clerks emerge as key players in a sustained and calibrated grand design aimed to resuscitate their pre-Islamic cultural practices, heritage and religious beliefs, mock and denigrate the Arabs' culture, value system and language, and express skepticism over fundamental Islamic beliefs.[16]

The scholarly rigor of Duri's analysis, with its extensive use of works by ᶜAbbasid authors and poets, is punctuated with ideological polemics. In Duri's articulation, the allegorical meaning of the *shuᶜubiyyah* movement had relevance to his contemporary times, fraught as they were with an intense struggle between Iraqist and Pan-Arabist ideological visions of nationalism:

> "What we want here is nothing but to look at a narrow aspect, i.e. *shuᶜubiyyah*. It is a natural attempt necessitated by our conditions. Some voices have been raised calling for renouncing the heritage and belittling Arab culture. They attacked the Arab-Islamic ideals and considered every look back at them to be reaction. They assaulted Arab consciousness and the concept of an Arab nation and set out to sow the seeds of discord in the name of racialism or regionalism."[17]

For Duri, the fury of the *shuᶜubiyyah* movement's hostility towards Arabism and Islam is ever present, at times covert or latent, at other times overt and blatant. "Its substances and elements continue to exist. When it subsides it awaits the right conditions to resume its activity. But the fundamental approaches and methods remain the same."[18] Iraq, as "frontier country" (*balad haddi*) where cultural and other interactions between the Arabs and the Persians have been taking place for millennia, has been, and continues to be, particularly susceptible to *shuᶜubi* influences and subversion. This places on Iraq, as "the gate of the Arab cultural region," a heavy burden that "transcends its geographic scope, in terms of civilization

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[15] *Ibid*., p. 12.
[16] *Ibid*., p. 120. A useful scholarly study of one cultural aspect of *shuᶜubiyyah* can be found in Lutz Richter-Bernburg, "Linguistic Shuᶜubiya and Early Neo-Persian Prose," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 94, No. 1 (January-March 1974): pp. 55-64.
[17] Duri, *op. cit*., p. 7.
[18] *Ibid*., p. 127.

and culture." The logical upshot of this line of reasoning is a view that "conflict in Iraq is over Arabism and Islam."[19]

The implications of Duri's historiography in the modern Iraqi context are enormous. The *shuᶜubiyyah* theme raised the specters of dubious citizenship, questioning of the loyalties of Iraqis to their homeland based on "their adherence to a purported historical memory that rejects Arabism," as well as a centuries-old dark view of Shiᶜites as 'fifth columnists.' One consequence of his understanding of the nature of *shuᶜubiyyah* as a static phenomenon, i.e., that its pernicious and hostile nature is immutable and not amenable to change, is tarnishing "the Iraqi Shiᶜa who are often identified with their Persian coreligionists in the minds of Iraq's Sunni Arab minority." Duri's historiography also promoted a paranoid siege mentality where Sunni Arab culture is viewed "as permanently under siege" and where Sunni Arabs must "remain vigilant in relation to the Other, whether Arabs of Persian ethnic origins, Shiᶜis, Kurds, Christians, or other minorities."[20]

The *shuᶜubiyyah* metaphor shaped the Arab nationalists' understanding of their struggle against ideological and political adversaries. It featured prominently in the frenzied ensemble of vitriol and vituperation that they employed to derogate their enemies. At the height of the Arab nationalists' struggle against the Iraqi Communist Party in the 1950s and 1960s, the *shuᶜubiyyah* metaphor emerged as an acrid charge of evil leveled at the Iraqist nationalists and leftists who voiced reservations over or opposition to Arab unity. In this charged political atmosphere, the discursive negative representations of the *shuᶜubiyyah* metaphor were directed at the Qassim regime that banked on support by leftists and Iraqist nationalists. For example, Ahmad Fawzi, an Arab nationalist writer from that time, employed frames of negative pathologies to lambast Qassim as "acting under the inspiration of a *shuᶜubi* faction that never gets satiated with the blood of the people of Iraq."[21]

Whereas for Duri the history of the *shuᶜubiyyah* movement starts in the late Umayyad period,[22] under Baᶜath Party rule attempts were made to stretch the historical scope of the

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[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 124-126.
[20] Eric Davis, *Memories of State: Politics, History, and Collective Identity in Modern Iraq* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2005): p. 132.
[21] Ahmad Fawzi, *Thawrat 14 Ramdhan* [The Ramadan 14 Revolution], 1ˢᵗ Edition (Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt: Dar al-Kitab al-ᶜArabi, March 1963): p. 58.
[22] Duri, *op. cit.*, p. 9, says: "The *shuᶜubiyyah* movement started in the late Umayyad period, and proceeded strongly in the ᶜAbbasid era."

shu^cubiyyah motif back to ancient times. This was the narrative advanced and propagated by Saddam Hussein who argued:

> "Iraqis have always been an important source of benevolence for humanity and the Arabs have always been a source of illumination as well as necessary and advanced benevolence for humanity. But whenever the Persians had risen up on any given day they were aggressive invaders expanding at the expense of others and destroying the civilization of other nations. And we also have many historical proofs [of this], not only from before Islam but also from after Islam."[23]

Pursuing this line of analysis, Sa^cadun Hammadi, a Shi^cite senior Ba^cathist and top government official, went on to suggest that the ancient Persian "covetous designs" on neighboring Arab countries, as well as deep-seated "Persian bigotry and hatred of Arabs," shaped Iranian policy towards the Arab world under the Shah's regime and the Islamic Republic.[24] He contended that the modern Iranians, much like their Persian brethren in the ^cAbbasid period, cloak themselves in Islamic garb to carry out their malevolent covetous designs against the Arabs and Islam.[25]

In Saddam's political demonology the Persian enemy's motivations are nurtured by hidden enmity to Islam and lingering sedimentations of pre-Islamic religious beliefs. He asserts:

> "We must understand these realities and understand that those who want to deal with the Arabs from above can never be Muslims. He who respects the Arabs .. respects their rights .. respects their sovereignty .. respects their security, and is a Muslim .. then he is a good Muslim. He who comes and talks about Islam and does not respect all of these can never be a Muslim. This can never be anything

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[23] Saddam Hussein, *Nass al-Khitab al-Tarikhi al-ladhi Alqah al-Ra'is al-Qa'id Batal al-Tahrir al-Muhib al-Rukun Saddam Hussein fi 4 Tishrin al-Thani 1980 fi al-Majlis al-Watani* [Text of the Historical Speech Delivered by Leader President, Hero of Liberation, Staff Marshall Saddam Hussein on November 4, 1980 at the National Assembly] (Beirut, Lebanon: Embassy of Iraq, Media Consultant Department, November 1980): p. 8.
[24] Sa^cadun Hammadi, *Mulahadhat hawla Qadhiyyat al-Harb ma^ca Iran* [Remarks on the Question of War with Iran], in *al-A^camal al-Kamilah li al-Duktur Sa^cadun Hammadi* [The Complete Works of Dr. Sa^cadun Hammadi], Vol. 3, 1st Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahdah al-^cArabiyyah, March 2008): pp. 575-576.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 583. See also pp. 595-598.

but a new path or a new cover for the expression of a concealed Zoroastrianism. That is the reality."[26]

Again the imagery that pervades Saddam's reformulation of the *shuᶜubiyyah* motif is one of internal plots and machinations by the enemy within working in coordination with the Persians to the east. By implication, the Shiᶜites are perceived as prone to acts of subversion, deception and treason. "By reformulating the al-Shuᶜubiya controversy to include all Persians across time," Davis insightfully observes, "Saddam casts a pall of suspicion over Iraq's entire Shiᶜi community, secular and religious, throughout all of history because they are alleged to harbor continuous feelings of disloyalty and evil intent toward the Iraqi nation-state."[27] Iraqi citizens of Iranian extraction, or those labeled by the government as such, became subject to greater suspicion during the Iraq-Iran war. Hammadi accused the infant Islamic regime in Iran of "reorganizing" the Iranian communities in neighboring Arab countries in its pursuit to "destabilize these regimes and direct blows at them one after the other."[28]

The definition of the Persians, and by implication the Shiᶜite opponents of the regime, as innately hostile and potentially subversive elements paved the way for representations using animal metaphors and imagery that reduces them to a sub-human category. A pamphlet written by Khayrallah Talfah, Saddam's maternal uncle and father-in-law, characterized Persians as animals masquerading as human beings. "The Persians are animals that Allah created in the form of human beings" Talfah bluntly declared. "The only human feature they possess is that they walk on two legs like chicken and birds." Beyond animal imagery, Talfah's representation of the Persians depicts them as promoting disbelief, corruption, decadence, debauchery and shameless other immoral vices.

> "Their morals are corrupt, their dispositions evil, their creeds licentious. There is
> no proof of this better than that they had taken Zoroaster, Mazdak, and Hamdan
> the Qarmatian as lords apart from Allah. That is so because they did not recognize
> Allah as God. They rather recognized Zoroaster, Mazdak and Hamdan the

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[26] Hussein, *Nass al-Khitab al-Tarikhi*, p. 11. It should be noted that the image of Arabs and Iranians as being locked in a perpetual struggle became a central theme of state efforts to re-write history under the direction of Saddam Hussein himself. See, for example, Majmuᶜah min al-Mu'allifin [A Group of Authors], *al-ᶜIraq fi al-Tarikh* [Iraq through History], Supervised with an Introduction by Salih Ahmad al-Ali (Baghdad, Iraq: Dar al-Hurriyyah li al-Tibaᶜah, 1983); and Majmuᶜah min al-Mu'allifin [A Group of Authors], *al- Siraᶜa al-ᶜIraqi al-Farisi* [The Iraqi-Persian Conflict] (Baghdad, Iraq: Dar al-Hurriyyah li al-Tibaᶜah, 1983).
[27] Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 188.
[28] Hammadi, *op. cit.*, p. 585.

Qarmatian as god other than Allah much as they claim now that Tehran's Khomeini is Allah and there is no god other than him for he has described himself as the Spirit of God."[29]

Talfah's dehumanizing rhetoric is wedded to a crude and vulgar conspiracy-theory interpretation that posits that "these creatures," i.e. the Persians, have since time immemorial been responsible for setting up secret societies dedicated "to corrupt the creed of mankind, in terms of religion, ethics and order." The attribution of evil to the Persian 'Other' in Talfah's conspiracy theory is clearly intended to whip up anti-Persian paranoia, frenzy and hysteria. To this end, it runs roughshod over historical facts.

"My Arab brother! Persia is your first enemy, for they are the ones who resisted the Islamic call in the early Islamic period. They are the ones who killed the second caliph ʿUmar bin al-Khattab and caused the slaying of the third caliph and stirring the discord of the Kharijites which divided Islam into two camps. They are the ones who killed the fourth caliph, our master Ali bin Abi Talib, may Allah honor him which caused the Arabs to lose their first scholar, their first knight, and their first Muslim at the hands of one of their *Shuʿubis* Abd al-Rahman bin Maljam, one of the *Shuʿubis* of the Persians and from among their Jews. They are the ones who brought about the downfall of the Umayyads and the state of the ʿAbbasids. Finally, they occupied the Arab Ahwaz and the Arab islands of the

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[29] Khayrallah Talfah, *Thalathah Kana ʿala Allah An La Yakhliquhum wa Hum: al-Furs wa al-Yahud wa al-Dhubban* [Three Whom Allah Should Not Have Created and They Are: Persians, Jews and Flies] (Baghdad, Iraq: Dar al-Hurriyyah li al-Tibaʿah, 1982): pp. 991-1026. Zoroaster is the founder of Zoroastrianism in ancient Iran while Mazdak is the founder of an offshoot of Zoroastrianism that blended elements of Zoroastrianism and Manicheanism. For useful accounts of these religions, see Mary Boyce, *Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (London: Routledge, 2007); Peter Clark, *Zoroastrianism: An Introduction to an Ancient Faith* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 1998); and Ehsan Yarshater, "Mazdakism," in Ehsan Yarshater, ed., *The Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. III, Pt. 2, *The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996 [1983]). Hamdan the Qarmatian is Hamdan bin al-Ashʿath the eponymous founder of the Qarmatian movement, an offshoot of Ismaʿili Shiʿism, which rose up against the ʿAbbasids in southern Iraq and later established a utopian republic in eastern Arabia between the 9th and 11th centuries C.E. For brief historical accounts of the Qarmatians, see Cyril Glassé, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition (London: Stacey International, 2002 [1989]): pp. 368-370; and Nejla M. Abu-Izzeddin, *The Druzes: A New Study of Their History, Faith, and Society* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1993): pp. 21-26. "Spirit of God" is the literal translation of Ayatollah Khomeini's first name, Ruhollah, which is one of the descriptions given for Jesus in the Qur'an. "The Messiah, Isa son of Marium is only an apostle of Allah and His Word which He communicated to Marium and a *spirit* from Him" (Qur'an IV: 171, italics added).

Gulf and they set out committing aggression against Iraq, not in its capacity as Iraq, but in its capacity as part of the Arab nation in its greater homeland."[30]

During the Iraq-Iran war, the discourse underlying state-sponsored cultural production and propaganda demonstrated two important features. Firstly, Islamic religious symbols, idioms and imagery were privileged at the expense of the secular component of the Ba^cath Party's discourse. A key driver of this shift was a desire to counter revolutionary Iran's Islamic message. In a bid to strip revolutionary Iran of its claims to religious legitimacy, the regime blended its Arab nationalist discourse with religiously-inspired rhetoric, including Qur'anic metaphors related to fighting and warfare, to bolster its Islamic credentials. Saddam Hussein wrapped himself in an Islamic garb, claiming a line of descent from Prophet Muhammad. Public appearances at mosques and shrines where Saddam could be seen engaged in prayer and other religious rites were artfully staged as media events and photo opportunities designed to portray the president as a pious person.[31] In some cases, attempts were made to appropriate Shi^cite symbols in a bid to contain rising Shi^cite resentment. Saddam Hussein made ostentatious visitations to Shi^cite shrines which provided photo opportunities that supplied grist for the government's propaganda machine. Long-range missiles added to Iraq's stockpiles and used to hit Iranian cities during the war were called after the third Shi^cite Imam, al-Hussein, and his brother al-^cAbbas.[32]

Secondly, anti-Persian motifs and stereotypes provided grist for the government's war propaganda mill which framed the Persians as a menace to the Arab nation for millennia. War propaganda spawned a new literary genre, *Adab al-Ma^carakah* (War Literature), which presented a romantic patriotic view extolling marshal values, warfare and the battlefield, and denigrating, vilifying and dehumanizing the enemy. State media as well as government-sponsored works of prose, poetry and art in this genre depicted Iraq's war against Iran as a

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[30] Talfah, *op. cit.*

[31] Zuhayr al-Jaza'iri, *al-Mustabid: Sina^cat Qa'id, Sina^cat Sha^cab* [The Despot: Manufacturing a Leader, Manufacturing a People], 1st Edition (Baghdad, Iraq; and Beirut, Lebanon: Ma^cahad al-Dirasat al-Istratijiyyah, 2006): p. 195; and Sami Zubaida, "The rise and fall of civil society in Iraq," in Haldun Gülalp, ed., *Citizenship and Ethnic Conflict: Challenging the nation-state* (London; and New York, NY: Routledge, 2006): p. 129. A golden tree showing a genealogical lineage for Saddam's Al-Bu Nassir tribe that goes back to the Prophet was custom made for that purpose. Attempts were made to get the tree blessed and approved by senior religious clerics. See Talib al-Hassan, "*al-Bayyina al-Jadidah* Taftah Malaf Qaryat al-^cUjah wa Fusul min Sultat al-Nazihin min Rif Takrit" ["*al-Bayyinah al-Jadidah* Opens the Dossier of the ^cUjah Village and Chapters from the Authority of the Migrants from the Tikrit Countryside"], *al-Bayyinah al-Jadidah*, Sunday, June 1, 2008; available at: http://www.albayyna-new.com/archef/592/albayyna-new/pag7.html; accessed on Friday, August 27, 2010.

[32] Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 191. Davis erroneously mentions the names of the missiles as Ali and al-Hussein.

fight against the ersatz Islam of the Persians. Iraqi soldiers were portrayed as fighting against "Magians" (*Majus*), "Khomeinists" and "ᶜAjam."[33] The framing of the Persians as an inherently evil and hostile 'Other' invoked a rhetoric of extermination that leaves no room for dialogue with the enemy other than through the language of fire, blood and killing. This dehumanizing discourse was fluid and free-floating. It could easily be shifted from targeting outside enemies to potentially subversive oppositional elements inside society. As Iraqi novelist and literary critic Salam ᶜAbboud incisively observes: "Fondness with the occupation of others and the pervasiveness of the language of conquest and slaughter were the logical premise for a comprehensive permission for the occupation of the souls of our mothers, sisters, fathers, brothers, and slaughtering them, mercilessly, by the authorities."[34]

Indeed, relegating the Shiᶜite opposition to the category of sub-human enemy-'Other' provided the main fodder for government propaganda to justify the mass slaughter accompanying the brutal suppression of the 1991 Uprising which was discredited as a foreign plot. The rebels were vilified as "mobs" (*ghawgha'*) in cahoots with a foreign power, read Iran, and the rebellion was disparaged as "the page of perfidy and treason" (*safhat al-ghadr wa al-khiyanah*). More ominously, the regime's drive to de-legitimize the Uprising did not shy away from pulling to the surface centuries-old idioms of anti-Shiᶜite bigotry, prejudice and stereotypes. This tendency was best exemplified by a series of infamous articles published in the ruling Baᶜath Party's newspaper *al-Thawrah* shortly after the rebellion. The articles, believed to be authored by Saddam Hussein, appeared in *al-Thawrah* between April 3 and 7, 1991. The author of the articles, which make for particularly disturbing and shocking reading, portrays southern Iraqi Shiᶜites, especially the March Arabs, as backward, uneducated, susceptible to Iranian sectarianism, subscribing to perverse morality, and guilty of deviant sexual practices. The articles do not shy away from either casting aspersions on Shiᶜite rituals during Muharram or disparaging the Shiᶜite faith. The Shiᶜites are accused of "studying religion primarily through the sayings of Imam Ali rather than the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions."[35]

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[33] Salam ᶜAbboud, *Thaqafat al-ᶜUnf fi al-ᶜIraq* [The Culture of Violence in Iraq], 1ˢᵗ Edition (Köln, Germany: al-Jamal Publications, 2002): p. 127.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 203.

[35] "Madha Hasul fi Awakhir ᶜAam 1990 wa Hadhihi al-Ashhur min ᶜAam 1991 .. wa Limadha Hasul al-Ladhi Hasul?" [What Happened towards the End of the Year 1990 and These Months of the Year 1991 .. And Why Did That Which Had Happened Happen?], Parts 1-4, *al-Thawrah*, April 3, 4, 5, 7, 1991. Copies of these articles

The staying power of this chimerical world where anti-Persian xenophobia and anti-Shi^cite sectarian bigotry merge and blur was not reduced following the fall of Saddam Hussein. In fact, it was fully embraced and trenchantly advanced by those opposed to the Shi^cite-dominated post-Saddam political order. In its new incarnation, this discourse is also colored by a shrill rhetoric of victimhood. While statements by al-Qa^cida and its Salafist ilk attack Shi^cites qua Shi^cites, Islamist-nationalist and nationalist insurgent groups, Sunni opposition figures, and even some staunchly secular Shi^cite figures decry the dominance of Shi^cite Islamist political parties as a byproduct of growing Iranian influence in Iraq.

Salafist insurgent groups in post-Saddam Iraq took traditional Wahhabi anti-Shi^cite hate rhetoric to a new plateau.[36] The anti-Shi^cite tirades of the late Jordanian-born al-Qa^cida leader in Iraq Ahmad Fadhil Nazzal al-Khalaylah, better known by his *nom de guerre* Abu Mus^cab al-Zarqawi, are emblematic of this new trend. The *Rafidhah* (Rejectionists), the derogatory appellation reserved by Salafists for Shi^cites, figure in Zarqawi's pantheon of hate as a curious amalgam of evil, enmity, cunning and disloyalty. In a message addressed to al-Qa^cida leaders Usama bin Laden and Ayman al-Dhawahiri and published in January 2004, Zarqawi marshals a battery of dehumanizing negative imagery representing the Shi^cites as "an indomitable obstacle, a lurking snake, the scorpion of deviousness and malice, an enemy lying in wait, and the lethal poison." Thusly framed, the *Rafidhah* have posed an ever-present looming danger to Islam. Present-day Shi^cites have inherited "the legacy of the esoteric sects that appeared in the history of Islam and left indelible scars on its face."[37]

Such explicit anti-Shi^cite diatribes were largely excised from the oppositional discourse of non-Salafist, Sunni-based adversaries and challengers of the post-Saddam Shi^cite-dominated political order. However, anti-Shi^cism in this discourse is primarily couched in the idiom of disloyalty to the homeland. In the eyes of the Ba^cath Party and Sunni-based insurgent groups, Iran figures as a metaphor for internal disloyalty to the homeland and a neighbor blinded by perpetual covetousness and primordial enmity. Iran is a member of a triumvirate intent on

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are on file with the author. For a rejoinder to this series of articles by a Shi^cite activist, see Sa^cid al-Samarra'i, *Saddam wa Shi^cat al-^cIraq* [Saddam and the Shi^cites of Iraq] (London: Mu'assassat al-Fajr, 1991).

[36] On the Wahhabi intellectual roots of anti-Shi^cism in Jihadist Salafist discourse in Iraq, see Guido Steinberg, "Jihadi-Salafism and the Shi'is: Remarks about the Intellectual Roots of anti-Shi'ism," in Roel Meijer, ed., *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (New York, NY; and Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2009): pp. 107-125.

[37] "Nass Risalat al-Mujrim al-Nasibi Abu Mus^cab al-Zarqawi" [Text of the Message of the Criminal Enemy Abu Mus^cab al-Zarqawi], *Shabakat al-Shi^cah al-^cAalamiyyah* [Shi^cite Global Network]; available at: http://www.shiaweb.org/News/al-nawaseb/zarqawi_al-shath.html; accessed on Sunday, August 05, 2012.

harming Iraq; the other two members being the US and Israel. These odd bedfellows make up an undifferentiated demonic axis of evil that looms larger than life as it is portrayed as being responsible for most of the miseries, ills and tribulations that have visited Iraq following the fall of Saddam. The Iraqi Shiᶜite-dominated government, the Shiᶜite Islamist parties and Shiᶜite political and religious leaders are framed as Iranian lackeys and agents of occupying powers. Accordingly, "the agent Maliki government is a pliant tool in the service of the American occupiers and their Zionist and Iranian allies."[38] Popular Shiᶜite support for the Shiᶜite Islamist political parties that returned to Iraq in the wake of the US-led war is interpreted in terms that conjure up images of collective brainwashing.

> "As for the Shiᶜites, most of them have been politicized by the parties coming from outside. These parties wanted these [Shiᶜite] *marajiᶜi* to be sectarian so as the Sunnites also, or the Sunnis, would be sectarian as well. Iraq would then be divided, because the project of the occupation is to sow divisions. The Kurdish leaders and the Shiᶜite political leaders have agreed on division. They were supported in this regard by the occupation and Iran. How? What are their methods to achieve this? These [methods] are to propagate a sectarian spirit in the Shiᶜite street first and then in the Sunni street."[39]

The general tendency among the exponents of this oppositional discourse is to lay much of the seemingly irrational violence and sectarian bloodshed at the door of Iraqi Shiᶜite elements presumably working in cooperation with Iran. The attack that hit the ᶜAskariyyah shrine in Samarra in February 2006, triggering an orgy of sectarian bloodletting, is thus seen as having been carried out by Iraqi interior ministry commandos working in coordination with Iranian intelligence, with the knowledge of the US forces.[40] Iran, "the wicked neighbor," is said to have worked in coordination with the US to instigate Shiᶜite militias to spark civil strife in order "to distract, even if partially, the Iraqi resistance while it was in its heyday of striking attacks away from the head of evil, America."[41] Similarly, the responsibility for mass-casualty attacks is pinned squarely on this tripartite axis of evil. A Baᶜath Party statement

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[38] Statement by the Arab Baᶜath Socialist Party, Iraq Regional Command, Culture and Media Office, issued in Baghdad, datelined October 4, 2011; copy on file with the author.

[39] Interview with Sunni Arab Cleric Affiliated with Insurgent Groups, Amman, Thursday, February 4, 2010.

[40] Interview with Sunni Arab Cleric Affiliated with Insurgent Groups, Amman, Sunday, August 15, 2010.

[41] Statement by the Islamic Army in Iraq, datelined Thursday, Sahwwal 17, 1432 A.H./September 15, 2011 C.E. For an English Translation of the Statement, see "Islamic Army in Iraq slams Shi'i cleric's call to halt attacks against US troops," *BBC Monitoring*, Friday, September 16, 2011.

accused "the agent Maliki government and the forces of the Iranian Quds Brigade, as well as (Sunni and Shiᶜite) sectarian militias affiliated with both Iran and America" of staging a wave of coordinated attacks that hit several cities in October 2011.[42]

The firm belief among proponents of this discourse in the hidden hand of plotters knows no bounds or limits. Shiᶜite groups engaged in armed attacks against the US-led Coalition forces are portrayed not as "resistance" movements but rather as militias whose hands are stained with the blood of Sunnis and serving an Iranian agenda. Accordingly, groups such as Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army (*Jaysh al-Mahdi*) are "militias that committed brutal crimes against innocent Sunnis in Iraq, especially mosque goers and notable figures." And "limited operations ... by some [Shiᶜite] militias against occupation troops," so this logic goes, "were ordered and backed by Iran's leadership in order to pile more pressure in the negotiations over Iran's nuclear project, with the full backing of the Al-Maliki government."[43] Even the terrorist activities of al-Qaᶜida are believed to be staged as part of the ceaseless drive of the perceived demonic triumvirate to plunge Iraq into a whirlpool of blood, destruction and mayhem. Seen through the glasses of such conspiracy theory ratiocination, Iran and the US are believed to be bound by "a strategic accord" to work together to "direct al-Qaᶜida to strike in Iraq [to cause] death and destruction."[44] Within this atmosphere of illusion, the execution of Saddam Hussein is, moreover, interpreted as a "message to all the sons of the Arab nation that Zionism and America, in cooperation with racist Iranian elites, are capable of liquidating any leader who seriously objects to their colonialist and thieving designs."[45]

No matter how meager the bonds of some Shiᶜite Islamist parties are to the Islamic Republic, they are still portrayed as doing Iran's bidding. For instance, the Shiᶜite anti-Iranian Islamic Virtue Party (*Hizb al-Fadhilah al-Islami*) is portrayed as "treading the path of the Iranian plot as it sends its cadres in various specialties – security, educational and investment – for

[42] Statement by the Arab Baᶜath Socialist Party, Iraq Regional Command, Culture and Media Office, issued in Baghdad, datelined October 4, 2011; copy on file with the author.

[43] Statement by the Islamic Army in Iraq, *op. cit.*

[44] Aba al-Hakam, "Limadha Yughalit al-Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah?!" [Why Is Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah Falling into Fallacies?!], *Shabakat al-Mansour: Sawt al-Muqawamah al-ᶜIraqiyyah al-Basilah wa al-Baᶜath al-Mujahid* [al-Mansour Network: Voice of the Valliant Iraqi Resistance and the Mujahid Baᶜath], Sunday, February 26, 2012; available at: http://www.almansore.com/Art.php?id=27505; accessed on Sunday, February, 26, 2012.

[45] Statement by the Arab Baᶜath Socialist Party, Pan-Arab Command, Culture and Media Office, datelined November 6, 2011, *Shabakat al-Mansour: Sawt al-Muqawamah al-ᶜIraqiyyah al-Basilah wa al-Baᶜath al-Mujahid* [al-Mansour Network: Voice of the Valliant Iraqi Resistance and the Mujahid Baᶜath]; available at: http://www.almansore.com/bayanaybQtr/BQ-Th20-11-09.htm; accessed on Monday, November 6, 2011.

training and development there." The Party is also accused of involvement in a "plot to liquidate the Sunnis in Basra."[46] But Fadhilah's anti-Iranian credentials are impeccable, so to speak. These include public criticisms of the Iranian role and influence in Iraq and accusations leveled at the Islamic Republic of masterminding or involvement in attempts on the lives of its leaders.[47]

The logical upshot of this line of reasoning is that the US troop pullout in December 2011 did not mark the end of foreign occupation. A statement by the Political Bureau of the Islamic Group in Iraq (*al-Jama*ᶜ*ah al-Islamiyyah fi al-*ᶜ*Iraq*) maintains that when the US withdrew its troops from Iraq "against its will it left behind an occupation more sinister and dirtier than itself, i.e. the dastardly, covetous Iranian occupation."[48] Insurgent groups, therefore, remain committed to armed struggle as an effective method to end perceived Iranian occupation. "Iranian hegemony over Iraq is not less dangerous or harmful for Iraq and its people than the American occupation," fumed a Sunni Arab cleric affiliated with several Islamist-nationalist and nationalist insurgent groups. "For this reason, the resistance will keep its weapons, at least until all these reasons and fears are removed."[49] According to this view, liberation would ultimately pave the way for a national government that stands up to Iranian influence. "The future government in Iraq must be an Iraqi nationalist government," the Sunni Arab cleric asserted. "The affiliation of its officials with any particular sect or ethnic component does not matter. It must defend Iraq in the face of covetous designs and interferences, especially regional ones, and particularly Iranian interference."[50]

Such perceptions act as a distorting prism clouding the minds of their proponents and those holding them. They lead them to misjudge the motives of Iraqi and non-Iraqi political actors. The ubiquity of views demonizing the sectarian 'Other' fosters a climate of paranoia,

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[46] "al-Milishyat Hadharat Iran" [The Militias Are Iran's Civilization], *Mawsu*ᶜ*at al-Radhid*, Thursday, August 27, 2009; available at: http://www.alrashead.net/index.php?partd=24&derid=1312; accessed on Sunday, August, 5, 2012. *Mawsu*ᶜ*at al-Rashid* is a pro-insurgency website.

[47] "Hizb al-Fadhilah al-Islami Yattahim Iran bi Itharat al-ᶜUnf fi al-ᶜIraq" [The Islamic Virtue Party Accuses Iran of Stirring Up Violence in Iraq], *al-Mustaqbal*, Wednesday, August 23, 2006; available at: http://www.almoustaqbal.com/storiesv4.aspx?storyid=192235; accessed on Sunday, August 05, 2012. See also Jassem Dakhil, "Hizb "al-Fadhilah" Yattahim Iran bi Annaha wara' Muhawalat li Istihdaf Qiyadatih" ["Virtue" Party Accuses Iran of Being behind Attempts Targeting Its Leaders], *Asharq al-Awsat*, Friday, Rabiᶜi al-Thani 2, 2008 A.H./April 20, 2007 C.E.; available at: http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?issueno=10261&article=415885; accessed on Sunday, August 05, 2012.

[48] "Fi al-Dhikra al-Tasiᶜah li Suqut Baghdad: Iran ᶜAdow al-Jamaᶜat al-Musallahah" [On the Ninth Anniversary of the Fall of Baghdad: Iran Is the Enemy of Armed Groups], *al-Hayat*, Tuesday, April 10, 2012; available at: http://international.daralhayat.com/internationalarticle/383878; accessed on Tuesday, April 10, 2012.

[49] Interview with Sunni Arab Cleric Affiliated with Insurgent Groups, Amman, Tuesday, December 29, 2011.

[50] Interview with Sunni Arab Cleric Affiliated with Insurgent Groups, Amman, Sunday, August 15, 2010.

suspiciousness and fear that precludes the emergence of cross-sectarian cooperation. Slightest attempts by one side to influence the course of events on the Iraqi political scene or promote communal interests are seen by their sectarian adversaries as being carried out at the behest of malevolent external powers and, therefore, amount to outright treachery. Driven out of the bounds of upright citizenship and loyalty to the homeland, political opponents advocating the interests of rival communities can neither be tolerated nor dealt with. Compromise with them amounts to sellout. More ominously, such a climate of suspiciousness and mistrust creates an atmosphere that predicates sectarian bloodshed. Defining the sectarian 'Otherness' in terms of innately hostile subhuman alien-ness makes it easier to overcome the natural human aversion to killing.

5.2. Differential Citizenship, Deportation and Collective Victimization

"Which one of us knows to whom we belong:
We to you with this wrinkled face?
Or you to us, we the patrons of no-return roads?
Or do both of us, O Baghdad,
belong to the hangman?"

Fawzi Karim, "The Scent of Mulberry"

Exclusionary discourse feeds and shapes exclusionary policies and practices. The exclusionary tenor of the Pan-Arab nationalist ideology in Iraq not only turned the Shi^cites into a potential enemy figure but also spawned inequality of citizenship rights in society. In principle, citizenship involves three dimensions: inclusion or membership in a polity, equal rights and obligations, and access to political power.[51] However, citizenship can also be used by the state to structure social inequality through the differential positioning of groups in society.[52] Patterns of differential or unequal citizenship in Iraq constitute a departure from the universal concept of citizenship. As we will see in this section, while citizenship laws which

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[51] Jane Jenson, "Recognizing Difference: Distinct Societies, Citizenship Regimes and Partnership," in Roger Gibbins and Guy Laforest, eds., *Beyond the Impasse: Toward Reconciliation* (Montreal, Canada: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1989): 215-239.

[52] Malcolm Waters, "Citizenship and the Constitution of Structured Social Inequality," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 30, Nos. 3-4 (1989): pp. 159-180.

provided a legal underpinning for citizenship to be experienced differently by sectarian communities might have been intended to foster a homogeneous national identity, they effectively created an underprivileged category of citizens and paved the way for their victimization.

Prior to the British occupation of Iraq, Iraqis were imperial subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Until the Ottoman *Tanzimat* reforms were implemented between 1839 and 1876, the prevalent concept of belonging to political community in the Ottoman domains was shaped by the traditional Islamic legal perspective which divides the world into two parts: the Abode of Islam (*Dar al-Islam*) and the Abode of War (*Dar al-Harb*). At the risk of oversimplification, whereas the former denotes a realm of peace where Islam dominates, the latter refers to a realm dominated by unbelievers and is liable to warfare or jihad.[53] "Generally, the view taken is that anyone who embraces the faith and takes up domicile in *dār al-Islām* is a citizen of the Islamic state." In many ways, this division of the world, whereby faith constitutes the fundamental political bond, "reflected the political and military superiority of Muslim powers."[54] Non-Muslims residing in the Islamic state were considered *Dhimmis* ('Protected People') whose lives and property were protected in return for paying a special tax and submitting to Islamic rule.[55] Haunted by a desire to preserve the Ottoman state's territorial integrity in the face of growing centrifugal nationalist tendencies and great power interferences, the *Tanzimat* reforms attempted to foster a broad notion of membership in an Ottoman polity that transcends religious, ethnic, national, tribal or other primordial solidarities. To this end, the Ottoman Nationality Law (Turkish: *Tabiyet-i Osmaniye Kanunu*), promulgated on January 19, 1869, introduced the model of a civil, territorial citizenship. Article 1 of the Law embraced a version of *jus sanguinis* ('right of blood')

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[53] Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1955).

[54] Mohammad Hashim Kamali, "Citizenship: an Islamic perspective," *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (May 2009): p. 122. On the evolution of the concept of modern citizenship in Islam, see Nawaf A. Salam, "The Emergence of Citizenship in Islamdom," *Arab Law Quarterly*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (1997): pp. 125-147.

[55] C. E. Bosworth, "The Concept of *Dhimma* in Early Islam," in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, Vol. 1 (London; and New York, NY: Holmes & Meier Publishing, 1982): pp. 35-51. For a classical formulation of the concept, see Muhammad bin Abi Bakr bin Ayyub bin Saᶜad Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah [d. 751 A.H./1349 C.E.] *Ahkam Ahl al-Dhimmah* [Rulings Concerning the People of *Dhimmah*], edited by Muhammad Abd al-Salam Ibrahim, Vols. 1-4 (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-ᶜIlmiyyah, 1411 A.H./1991 C.E.).

whereby citizenship would be acquired by patrilineal descent. Anyone born to Ottoman parents or an Ottoman father would be considered Ottoman citizen.[56]

The fall of the imperial Ottoman governing order and the establishment of the Iraqi modern nation-state created an impulse for drawing up a legal framework to institutionalize a concept of citizenship in the infant state. The Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 stated that "Turkish subjects habitually resident in territory which in accordance with the provisions of the present Treaty is detached from Turkey will become *ipso facto*, in the conditions laid down by the local law, nationals of the State to which such territory is transferred."[57] These conditions were spelled out in the Iraqi Citizenship Law No. 42 promulgated on October 9, 1924. Article 3 of the Law stated that: "Anyone who, on August 6, 1924, had been of Ottoman citizenship, and habitually a resident of Iraq, shall be stripped of his Ottoman citizenship and shall be considered as having acquired the Iraqi citizenship on the aforementioned date." Moreover, Article 8 (b) extended eligibility to Iraqi citizenship to non-Ottoman citizens provided that the person is "born in Iraq and comes of age [i.e., reaches 18 years of age] if his father was born in Iraq and he was habitually a resident of it when his son was born." Article 13 of the law established conditions for the loss of Iraqi citizenship: "Any Iraqi who gets naturalized with a foreign citizenship and a foreign state out of his own volition shall be stripped of his Iraqi nationality. His new citizenship shall not be recognized in Iraq unless the Iraqi government authorizes it. If he returns to Iraq, the Iraqi government shall have the right to consider him Iraqi or to deport him from Iraq."[58]

In practice, the law provided a legal underpinning for unequal citizenship in Iraq. Not all residents of Iraq were Ottoman citizens. Many residents of Iraq held Iranian citizenship by dint of their descent from Iranian Shi^c^ite clerics, pilgrims or merchants who had settled and lived in Iraq, especially in the shrine cities, for generations. Some others were Arabs who had obtained Iranian nationality to avoid conscription or heavy taxation, or to enjoy privileges

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[56] Abd al-Hussein Sha^c^aban, *Jadal al-Hawiyyat fi al-^c^Iraq: al-Dawlah wa al-Muwatanah* [The Dialectics of Identities in Iraq: The State and Citizenship], 1st Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Dar al-^c^Arabiyyah li al-^c^Ulum Nashirun, 1431 A.H./2010 C.E.): p. 53; and Yassin al-Sayyid Tahir al-Yasseri, *al-Wafi fi Sharh Qanun al-Jinsiyyah al-^c^Iraqi* [The Sufficient Explanation of the Iraqi Nationality Law], 3rd Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Sharikat al-Wifaq li al-Tiba^c^ah al-Fanniyyah, 2010): pp. 85-87.

[57] "Lausanne Treaty," *Hellenic Resources Network*; available at: http://www.hri.org/docs/lausanne/; accessed on Thursday, August 9, 2012.

[58] "Qanun al-Jinsiyyah al-^c^Iraqiyyah" [Iraqi Citizenship Law], *Qa^c^idat al-Tashri^c^at al-^c^Iraqiyyah* [Database of Iraqi Legislations]; available at: http://www.iraq-ild.org/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=SUB&SC=130920056959363&Year=1924&PageNum=1; accessed on Thursday, August 9, 2012.

granted to foreigners under Ottoman rule. Thus, Law No. 42 created two categories of Iraqi citizens: descendants of holders of Ottoman nationality (*taba^c iyyah ^c Uthmaniyyah*) and descendants of holders of Iranian nationality (*taba^c iyyah Iraniyyah*). In some cases, this resulted in peculiar situations where members of the same family with different *taba^c iyyahs* were placed in different citizenship categories. Iraqis in the Iranian nationality category had their citizenship identification cards marked in red to clearly identify them.[59] Years later, different serial numbers for Iraqi citizenship documentation and identification cards would be adopted to identify Iraqis of Iranian descent.

Law No. 42 of 1924, which had been amended on several subsequent occasions, was repealed with the enactment of a new citizenship law promulgated on May 30, 1963. According to Article 3 of the Iraqi Citizenship Law No. 43 of 1963, "he who had held the Ottoman citizenship, been over 18 years of age, and residing in Iraq habitually shall be stripped of his Ottoman citizenship and deemed a holder of Iraqi citizenship as of the sixth of August 1924." A descendant of such individual "shall also be deemed an Iraqi national."[60] The new law introduced stricter conditions for the granting of the Iraqi citizenship. It empowered the minister of interior to grant and revoke Iraqi citizenship. Article 6 invested in the minister the power "to deem as Iraqi a person who was born in Iraq and come of age in it to a foreign father also born in it and who had been habitually residing in it upon the birth of his son."[61] Moreover, the minister of interior, according to Article 19, was empowered to "withdraw the Iraqi citizenship from a foreigner who had acquired it if he commits or attempts to commit an act deemed to pose a threat to the security or safety of the state."[62] Subsequent amendments, such as Law No. 206 promulgated on May 12, 1964, expanded the discretionary powers invested in the minister of interior to grant and revoke citizenship. Article 6 empowered the minister of interior to "deem as Iraqi he who had been born in Iraq and come of age in it to a foreign father also born in Iraq and who had been habitually residing in it upon the birth of the son provided that the son submits an application to acquire the Iraqi citizenship within

[59] ^c Aziz al-Hajj, *Baghdad Dhalik al-Zaman* [Baghdad during That Time], 2nd Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Dar Mesopotamia li al-Tiba^c ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi^c i, 2011): pp. 41 and 118.

[60] "Qanun al-Jinsiyyah al- ^c Iraqiyyah Raqam 43 li Sanat 1963" [Iraqi Citizenship Law No. 43 of 1963], *Qa^c idat al-Tashri^c at al-^c Iraqiyyah* [Database of Iraqi Legislations]; available at: "Qanun al-Jinsiyyah al- ^c Iraqiyyah" [Iraqi Citizenship Law], *Qa^c idat al-Tashri^c at al-^c Iraqiyyah* [Database of Iraqi Legislations]; available at: http://www.iraq-ild.org/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=SUB&SC=130920056959363&Year=1924&PageNum=1; accessed on Thursday, August 9, 2012.

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] *Ibid.*

two years of his coming of age."[63] These powers were further strengthened following the 1968 coup which brought the Ba'ath Party to power. For example, Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) Resolution No. 180 granted the minister of interior full discretionary powers to grant Iraqi citizenship to members of specified tribes and ethnic groups as well as to foreign males married to Iraqi women provided that they meet certain conditions, such as residency requirements and proof of not posing a threat to the security and safety of the state.[64]

The stratification created by the purview of the Iraqi citizenship laws, coupled with the anti-Persian streak in the state's Pan-Arab ideology, did lay the foundations of the targeting of a segment of Iraqis under the rubric of national origin and disloyalty to the homeland. Iraqi Shi'ites were particularly vulnerable to exclusionary and discriminatory practices under the pretext of allegations of disloyalty, treachery, subversion, and duplicity. Those identified as hailing from ancestors holding Iranian nationality became fair game for political purposes. Following its takeover of power in the 1968 coup, the Ba'ath Party government began to take repressive measures against the *hawzah* with an eye to contain mounting Shi'ite Islamist activism. Iraqis of Iranian origin or Iranian nationals residing in Iraq were especially targeted by the government's intimidation tactics, thus triggering a wave of migration back to Iran among them. The campaign also prompted Iranian clergymen and seminarians residing in Iraq and their followers to dispatch "telegrams objecting to the harassments."[65] The government's conflation of its anti-Shi'ite Islamist policies and anti-Iranian measures served to deflect criticism of its campaign of repression as hardly a single Iraqi political party or community leader would have gained kudos for coming out publicly in support of the Iranians.

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[63] See, for example, "Qanun al-Ta'adil al-Awwal li Qanun al-Jinsiyyah al-'Iraqiyyah Raqam 43 li Sanat 1963" [Law of the First Amendment of the Iraqi Citizenship Law No. 43 of 1963], *Qa'idat al-Tashri'at al-'Iraqiyyah* [Database of Iraqi Legislations]; available at: http://www.iraq-ild.org/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=SUB&SC=120120018526675&Year=1964&PageNum=1; accessed on Thursday, August 9, 2012.

[64] "Qarar Majlis Qiyadat al-Thawrah Raqam 180: Shurut Tajannus al-Ajnabi al-Jinsiyyah al-'Iraqiyyah" [Revolutionary Command Council Resolution No. 180: Requirements for the Naturalization of a Foreigner as Iraqi Citizen], *Qa'idat al-Tashri'at al-'Iraqiyyah* [Database of Iraqi Legislations]; available at: http://www.iraq-ild.org/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=SUB&SC=281120059045854&Year=1980&PageNum=1; accessed on Friday, August 10, 2012.

[65] Shahrough Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1980): p. 131.

As the regime became twitchier about the continued rise of Shiᶜite Islamist activism, it embarked on a campaign of deportations. Some 20,000 Iraqis of Iranian descent or longtime Iranian residents of the Shiᶜite shrine cities were deported in 1970. Many of the deportees were students at the Najaf *hawzah*. The deportations came against the backdrop of the confluence of several developments, including a rise in Shiᶜite Islamist underground political activism, an attempted coup blamed on plotters supported by Iran, cross-border hostilities between Iraq and Iran over the Shatt al-Arab waterway, and the refusal of Iraq's then-preeminent Shiᶜite mujtahid Grand Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim to condemn the Iranian government.[66] Iran's seizure of the three islands of the Greater and Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa in the Gulf in November 1971 triggered another wave of mass deportation from Iraq which targeted some 40,000 Fayli Kurds and some 60,000 residents of Iranian origin.[67] The deportees were allowed to take their money with them.[68] As the government's campaign of persecution escalated, an Iranian mujtahid, Ayatollah Ahmad al-Musawi al-Khwansari, wrote to the Shah in late 1974 appealing to him to extend assistance and protection to Iranian Shiᶜite residents of Iraq.[69]

Anti-Shiᶜite repression took a particularly bloody turn following the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979. Iraqis of Iranian descent were increasingly targeted with mass deportations. Fadhil al-Barrak, then director of intelligence, declared the government's intention to deport any Iraqi who supports the Islamic revolution in Iran.[70] RCC Resolution No. 666 of May 7, 1980 provided the legal instrument establishing grounds for these deportations. The text of Resolution 666 of 1980 read:

> "In accordance with the provisions of Clause A of Article 42 of the Provisional Constitution, the Revolutionary Command Council decided, in its meeting held on 31/03/1980 C.E., the following: Article 1: Iraqi citizenship shall be withdrawn from any Iraqi of foreign origin if his disloyalty to the homeland, the people and

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[66] Laurence Louër, *Transnational Shia Politics: Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf* (London: Hurst & Company, 2009): p. 87.

[67] *Ibid.*

[68] *Jara'im Saddam: ᶜAradh Watha'iqi* [Saddam's Crimes: A Documentary Presentation], 1st Edition (Tehran, Iran: al-Markaz al-Islami li al-Abhath al-Siyasiyyah – Hizb al-Daᶜawah al-Islamiyyah, 1404 A.H./1983 C.E.): p. 15.

[69] Akhavi, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-132.

[70] Ahmad al-Katib, *Tajrubat al-Thawrah al-Islamiyyah fi al-ᶜIraq: Mundhu 1920 hatta 1980* [The Experience of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq: From 1920 until 1980], 1st Edition (Tehran, Iran: Dar al-Qabas al-Islami, 1402 A.H./1981 C.E.): pp. 207-208.

the sublime nationalist and social goals of the revolution is established. Article 2: The interior minister must order the deportation of anyone from who the Iraqi citizenship has been withdrawn in accordance with Clause 1 [i.e., Article 1] unless he is convinced, based on sufficient grounds, that his stay in Iraq is a matter necessitated by a judicial or legal requirement or the preservation of the officially documented rights of others. Article 3: The interior minister shall be tasked with implementing this decision.

[Signed] Saddam Hussein, Chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council."[71]

The deportation policy's characteristic viciousness and arbitrariness was spelled out in a string of government directives. A secret interior ministry telegram dated April 10, 1980 ordered the deportation of all Iranians on Iraqi soil, including those who had submitted applications for Iraqi citizenships. Families of Iranian descent who had some members holding Iraqi citizenship were to be deported in their entirety based on a so-called principle of "the unity of the family behind the borders" (*wahdat al-ᶜa'ilah khalf al-hudud*). Members of these families serving in the armed forces and young men between 18 and 28 years old were not to be deported but rather turned over to the military disciplinary authorities or detained in their provinces. Armenians of Iranian origin, Iranian political refugees, and ethnic Arab Iranians were exempt from deportation.[72] Although no explicit exemption was issued for them, Assyrian Christians hailing from non-Iraqi, mainly Turkish or Iranian, origins were effectively excluded from this campaign.[73] It is not difficult to decipher the intent of these exemptions. Excluding military personnel and young men from deportation was clearly intended to preclude the possibility of them joining the ranks of the opposition in exile or the Iranian armed forces. The exemption of Christian Armenians and Assyrians exposes the deportation policy as little more than a politically calculated measure targeting Shiᶜites of Iranian descent and Shiᶜite Iranian nationals. Other measures encouraged Iraqi citizens to

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[71] "Qarar Majlis Qiyadat al-Thawrah Raqam 666: Isqat al-Jinsiyyah al-ᶜIraqiyyah ᶜan Kul Man Iktasab wa Tabayyan ᶜAdam Wala'ih li al-Watan wa al-Shaᶜab wa al-Thawrah" [Revolutionary Command Council Resolution No. 666: Revoking the Iraqi Citizenship of Anyone Who Had Acquired It and Proven Disloyal to the Homeland, the People and the Revolution], *Qaᶜidat al-Tashriᶜat al-ᶜIraqiyyah* [Database of Iraqi Legislations]; available at: http://www.iraq-ild.org/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=SUB&SC=301120059849898&Year=1980&PageNum=1; accessed on Saturday, May 7, 2011.
[72] *Jara'im Saddam*, pp. 29-31.
[73] Interview with "Majid," Former Fayli Kurdish Detainee, Kirkuk, Friday, May 13, 2011. The name of the interlocutor has been withheld because he requested anonymity.

divorce their wives who hail from Iranian origin in return for monetary rewards. Instructions were issued to deport the divorced women.[74] Instructions were also issued to the Economic Section of the General Directorate of Intelligence (*Mudiriyyat al-Amn al-ᶜAammah*) to adopt strict measures and scrutiny in issuing import licenses to traders of Iranian origin under the pretext of the "Arabization" (*Taᶜarib*) of Baghdad's main historical retail bazaar, the Shorjah.[75]

The waves of deportation intensified following the onset of the Iraq-Iran war of 1980-1988. An estimated 200,000 to 1,000,000 Iraqis of Iranian descent or Iranian residents of Iraq were ejected from the country in the ensuing wave of deportations.[76] They were rounded up from their homes, shops, offices or on the streets and expelled to Iran in the most inhuman conditions possible. They were loaded on trucks and dumped without food, water, money or identification documents at the border. Their properties and belongings were confiscated and distributed to other Iraqis. Orders were given to border guards to shoot to kill those attempting to return to the country. In most cases, able-bodied men were hauled to detention centers while women, children and the elderly were forced to march across the border into Iranian territory. Expulsions continued to take place, although on a lower scale, into the 1990s.[77] Thousands fled the country in fear. The Shiᶜite Fayli Kurds, who lived mainly in central and southeastern Iraq, bore more of the brunt of this campaign than any other community. Their vulnerability stemmed mainly from their 'multiple Otherness.' They were Shiᶜites, Kurds and of Iranian origin at one and the same time.

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[74] "Qarar Majlis Qiyadat al-Thawrah Raqam 474: Yusraf li al-Zawj al-ᶜIraqi al-Mutazawwij Iraniyyah ᶜind Talaqiha aw Tasfiriha Mablagh Arbaᶜat Alaf Dinar Idha Kan ᶜAskariyyan wa 2500 Dinar idha Kan Madaniyyan" [Revolutionary Command Council Resolution No. 474: An Iraqi Husband Married to an Iranian Woman would Be Rewarded an Amount of Four Thousand Dinars upon Divorcing or Sending Her Outside the Country if He Is a Member of the Military and 2500 Dinar If He Is Civilian], *Qaᶜidat al-Tashriᶜat al-ᶜIraqiyyah* [Database of Iraqi Legislations]; available at: http://www.iraq-ild.org/LoadLawBook.aspx?SP=REF&SC=261120056441054&Year=1981&PageNum=1; accessed on Friday, August 10, 2012. See also *Jara'im Saddam*, pp. 32-33.

[75] Interview with Mu'ayyad al-Windawi, Former Professor of Contemporary Iraqi History at Baghdad University and Former Officer at the Directorate-General of Intelligence, Amman, Monday, June 28, 2012.

[76] International Federation for Human Rights, *Iraq: continuous and silent ethnic cleansing – Displaced persons in Iraqi Kurdistan and Iraqi refugees in Iran* (Paris, France: International Federation for Human Rights, January 2003): p. 7; Salim Matar, *al-Dhat al-Jarihah: Ishkaliyyat al-Hawiyyah fi al-ᶜIraq wa al-ᶜAlam al-ᶜArabi "al-Sharqmutawassiti"* [The Wounded Self: Identity Problematiques in Iraq and the "Eastern-Mediterranean" Arab World], 2nd Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Mu'assasah al-ᶜArabiyyah lil-Dirasat wa al-Nashr, 2000 [1997]): pp. 121-122; and Hajj, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

[77] Munir Morad, "The situation of Kurds in Iraq and Turkey: current trends and prospects," in Philip G. Kreyenboek and Stefan Sperl, eds., *The Kurds: A contemporary overview* (Oxon; and New York, NY: Routledge, 1992): p. 130.

The first shot in this mass deportation campaign was carried out by way of subterfuge and deception. It came on the heels of an assassination attempt on then-foreign minister Tariq ᶜAziz at the Mustansiriyyah University in Baghdad carried out by one Samir Mir Ghulam, a Fayli Kurd, on April 1, 1980. In remarks that he made during a visit to the university campus the following day, Saddam Hussein vowed revenge. Blood begets blood, he thundered.

> "Yesterday, the chaste blood of the young men and women of al-Mustansiriyyah was spilled. The perpetrator is an agent named Samir Mir Ghulam. He and his masters thought that they had achieved something big. We say to them and to all the forces of foreign imperialism that are thinking to defeat the revolution: 'Let them try! The Iraqi people are a strong mountain that will not be shaken by all their bombs. By God, by God, by God! By every grain of the sand of Mesopotamia, the pure blood that was spilled in al-Mustansiriyyah will not go to waste."[78]

The following day, wealthy Baghdadi Fayli businessmen were summoned to a meeting at the Chamber of Commerce at 9:00 AM on the pretext of discussing opportunities for lucrative import licenses. They were arrested on the spot, deported to Iran through the Mundhiriyyah border crossing in Diyala without even informing their families, and their wealth and properties confiscated.[79] Fayli Kurds had seen their economic fortunes boosted dramatically with the migration of most Iraqi Jews following the establishment of Israel. "In many instances, Jewish merchants simply handed their businesses over to loyal Faili employees, who became the new class of merchants, dominating the retail sector of the economy for many years to come."[80] The Fayli Kurdish merchant class's dominance of the Shorjah enabled it to flex its economic muscle in Iraq's biggest wholesale market, Souk Jamilah, in eastern Baghdad. Removing the wealthy Fayli Kurdish merchant class was likely intended to decapitate the community's business and influential elite before moving against it root and branch. In the evening of the same day, thousands of armed security personnel, aided by

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[78] "Tariq ᶜAziz wa Hadith al-Mustansiriyyah" [Tariq ᶜAziz and the Mustansiriyyah Incident], *Saddam's Cruelty Blog*, Sunday, May 2, 2010; available at: http://saddamscruelty.blogspot.com/2010/04/blog-post_20.html; accessed on Saturday, August 11, 2012.

[79] Majeed Jafar, "Fayli Kurds and Their Role in the Iraqi Kurdish National Movement," the website of the Faylee Kurds Democratic Union; available at: http://www.faylee.org/english/studies/doc3.php; accessed on Saturday, August 11, 2012; and Interview with "Majid," Former Fayli Kurdish Detainee, Kirkuk, Friday, May 13, 2011. The name of the interlocutor has been withheld because he requested anonymity.

[80] Morad, *op., cit*., p. 131.

intelligence operatives and Baᶜath Party paramilitary irregulars, fanned through the streets of Shiᶜite neighborhoods in Baghdad and other cities. They stormed the houses of Fayli Kurds and other Iraqis of Iranian descent. Entire families were apprehended at local intelligence offices before they were transferred to detention centers and prisons. In Baghdad, most able-bodied male detainees, some of who were as young as 12 years old, were detained at the notorious Abu Ghrayb or Fudhayliyyah prisons. Women, children and the elderly were detained in the Tasfirat jail's booking center near al-Shaᶜab Stadium where they endured harsh conditions and ill-treatment before they were deported, in some cases months later.[81]

Survivors of the deportations and detentions relate heartrending tales of hardships, humiliation, torture, and utter horrors that they had to endure. The story of "Majid," a Fayli Kurdish engineer, is emblematic of the tragedy that typifies the suffering of the victims of the deportation campaign.[82] His detention saga started with a knock at the door around mid-night on March 31, 1982. Majid was still up watching TV with his mother, while his sister, two brothers and the wife and four children of one of the men were fast asleep. When he opened the door, Majid saw six or seven gunmen in civilian clothing "armed to the hilt." They informed him that the family had five minutes to get ready and leave with them. Majid told the gunmen that the children were asleep. The short-tempered gunmen were in no mood to show mercy or kindness. They insisted that he wakes everyone up and that all get ready to leave in five minutes. The entire family was taken to the local office of the Directorate-General of Intelligence in al-Karkh quarter in Baghdad. The following day, the men were separated from the women and children and led to the Fudhayliyyah prison where they were detained for one year before being transferred to the Abu Ghrayb prison where they spent another year and a half. Majid and his two brothers ended up among some 4,000 Fayli Kurds who were later transferred to the Nuqrat al-Salman prison in the southern desert of Samawah near the Saudi border.

The detainees languished there until their release on January 10, 1988 as part of an amnesty issued by Saddam Hussein. Only some 700 out of the original 4,000 detainees survived. The rest had perished as a result of the harsh and crowded detention conditions, ill-treatment, and the stifling sultry heat. Throughout his nearly 6 years in detention, Majid was neither charged

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[81] Interview with "Majid," Former Fayli Kurdish Detainee, Kirkuk, Friday, May 13, 2011. The name of the interlocutor has been withheld because he requested anonymity.
[82] The following story is based on an interview with the interlocutor. *Ibid*.

nor appeared before a court of law. After his release, he was regularly summoned for interrogation by the Directorate-General of Intelligence every 4 or 5 months. Majid did not know what happened to his mother, sister and brother's family until after the fall of Saddam. Inquiring about their whereabouts could have landed him in trouble with the authorities. The women and children were detained for 10 months in Baghdad before they were deported to Iran where they spent 20 years in a refugee camp. The mother passed away of natural causes in Iran. The sister lost her life when she wandered into a minefield at the border as she attempted to cross back alone into Iraq in an act of extreme desperation in 1991. Only his sister-in-law and her children returned to Iraq shortly after the war in 2003. The family's house in a posh Baghdad neighborhood was confiscated and given to an Assyrian family. Some eight years following the fall of Saddam, Majid was still struggling with the snail-paced and convoluted Iraqi bureaucracy to reclaim the family's property.

The resulting emotional scars nurtured a collective sense of victimhood among Iraqi Shi^cites. This sense was intensified following the brutal suppression of the 1991 *Intifadhah*. It was added to an age-old collective repertoire of trauma dominated by a self-perception as being the victim of brutality, mass killings and marginalization. It was only natural that the Shi^cites of Iraq would internalize these modern experiences and "transform them into powerful cultural narratives which become an integral part of the[ir] social identity."[83] The resulting socially-constructed collective narrative would weigh heavily on how the community would articulate its aspirations and relate to the sectarian 'Other' in the future.[84] When relating to the communal 'Other,' a collective sense of victimhood spawns feelings of self-righteousness and moral uprightness. This is a moral superiority consecrated through pain and suffering and deemed to shield the victim from criticism. The problem is that victimhood also generates anger, and, in divided societies, anger is capable of spawning retribution and revenge.

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[83] Antonius C. G. M. Robben and Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozeo, *Cultures under Siege: Collective Violence and Trauma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000): p. 23. For a social-psychological elaboration of the concept of social identity, see Naomi Ellemers, Russell Spears, and Bertjan Doosje, eds., *Social Identity: Context, Commitment, Content* (Oxford; and Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999).

[84] James H. Liu and Denis J. Hilton, "How the past weighs on the present: Social representations of history and their role in identity politics," *British Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (December 2005): pp. 537-556.

5.3. Venting Steam: Shi^cite Victimhood and the Discourse of Rage

"This above all, to refuse to be a victim. Unless I can do that I can do nothing. I have to recant, give up the old belief that I am powerless and because of it nothing I can do will ever hurt anyone. A lie which was always more disastrous than the truth would have been. The word games, the winning and losing games are finished; at the moment there are no others but they will have to be invented, withdrawing is no longer possible and the alternative is death."

Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing*

With such an extensive catalogue of repression and victimization, it was only natural that a sense of relief would prevail among the Shi^cites at the fall of Saddam Hussein. It is true that the invading US forces were not greeted with open arms as liberators by Iraqis, Shi^cites and Sunnis alike, as per the fallacious prophecies of the neoconservative advocates of the Iraq war. Instead, "the Anglo-American forces had been greeted by a measure of reserve and silence as well, as they made their way from the southern part of the country to the capital. A brutalized people were unable to take on good faith that the Americans had come to decapitate the regime this time around."[85] Still the Shi^cite community breathed a collective sigh of relief to see the back of the 35 years of bloody Ba^cath Party dictatorship. That was an inescapable feeling which dawned on visitors of the predominantly Shi^cite areas in Baghdad and central and southern Iraq in the months that followed the war. It was a feeling that stayed with me during my four trips to Iraq between 2003 and 2005.

Against the backdrop of the roiling pent-up feelings of victimization, the triumphant discourse of power that accompanied the Shi^cites' rise to political prominence in post-Saddam Iraq wedded victimhood to anti-Arabism. Much like wind blows across water, anti-Arabism was a mood that swept across Iraq following the US-led war, in some quarters merely ruffling the surface, but in others, especially among Shi^cites and Kurds, setting in motion powerful waves. Iraqi Shi^cites vented their anger at an Arab world whom they accused of turning a blind eye to their suffering under Saddam's despotic rule. Jamil Matar, an Egyptian writer, captures this mood in an article in the London-based, Saudi-owned Pan-Arab daily *al-Hayat* shortly on the heels of the overthrow of Saddam.

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[85] Fouad Ajami, *The Foreigner's Gift: The Americans, the Arabs and the Iraqis in Iraq* (New York, London, Toronto, and Sydney: Free Press, 2006): p. 87.

"I am puzzled by the stance of some sectors of the Iraqi people who have been ceaselessly reproaching the Arab brethren, both states and peoples, who had ignored the plight of the Iraqi people throughout three decades or more. Perhaps the word reproach does not capture the reality and essence of this stance. I have heard, on satellite TVs and from the mouths of Iraqis, words that are harsher than reproach. I have heard charges of collaboration [with the former regime] and charges of deriving benefits [from it] and opportunism. This stance was adopted by prominent and renowned intellectuals, university professors and media professionals. An expression of this stance has been reiterated by the man on the street."[86]

This anti-Arab attitude also seeped through statements and stands made by officials in the fledgling post-Saddam political order. It was put on display in full view of the world's TV cameras through a spontaneous outburst of anger at the press conference inaugurating the Iraqi Governing Council in July 2003. In response to reporters' questions insinuating that the IGC was a mere creature of the Americans, IGC members broke into an angry harangue about the Arab media's lack of interest in publicizing the suffering of the Iraqi people under Ba°ath Party rule. "All Arab TV coverage of the war and Liberation had been one-sided, biased against the Iraqis," ranted IGC member Sayyid Muhammad Bahr al-°Ulum, a turbaned Shi°ite cleric. "You people from Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya and others – you never covered the atrocities committed by Saddam! He killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqis! He gassed Iraqis! Why haven't you shown the mass graves to your audiences?"[87]

Expressions of the Iraqi Shi°ites' bitterness nursed by the Arab world's indifference to their suffering under Saddam went beyond spontaneous outbursts of anger. In analyzing the meaning and causes of what they perceived as the Arab media's pro-Saddam bias, some Iraqi Shi°ite writers pulled out the hoary chestnuts of sectarian motives. The Arab media's stand against democratization in post-Saddam Iraq, runs their argument, is reminiscent of the vehemently anti-Qassim line adopted by the pro-Nasserite media in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Muhammad Hassan al-Musawi, a proponent of this argument, makes his case as follows:

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[86] Jamil Matar, "al-°Iraq wa al-°Arab: Astaghrib Mawqifayn .. Lakinnani Atafahham" [I Am Puzzled by Two Stances .. But I Understand], *al-Hayat*, Wednesday, July 30, 2003.
[87] Quoted in L. Paul Bremer III, with Malcolm McConnell, *My Year in Iraq: The Struggle to Build a Future of Hope* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney: Simon & Schuster, 2006): p. 102.

"The Arab media today deals with the process of democratic change in Iraq in much the same way as it previously dealt with Qassimite rule. The reason for this lies in the similarities between the agendas of these media which stem from the similarities between the two cases of change. Similarities between the two cases of change are that they shook the pillars of the political system upon which the Iraqi state was founded, provided all Iraqis with opportunities for political participation, dealt a blow to the chauvinistic nationalist sectarian thought, focused on the Iraq First slogan, and put the interests of Iraq and Iraqis above all. They also put an end to the process of the organized theft of the riches of Iraq in the name of Palestine and the Arab nation. This led to their rejection by the sectarian and racist forces."[88]

There is no doubt in Musawi's mind that sectarianism had the sole hand in constituting and shaping the Arab media's biased coverage of Iraq. "What then is the real reason behind the negative stance of the Arab media toward the two changes?" he asks. "In my assessment it is a purely sectarian reason, even if it is undeclared."[89]

Accordingly, anti-Shi^{c}ite sectarian bigotry, rather than political ideology or outlook, is seen as very much involved in the Arab media's coverage of attacks staged by armed groups in post-Saddam Iraq. The valorization of these attacks as acts of resistance by some Arab media outlets is an affront. "It is therefore obnoxious sectarianism," Musawi ruminates, "which turns the slaughter of a Shi^{c}ite Arab human being into a virtue and an act of heroism just because he belongs to a sect other than the sect of the killer who belongs to the same sect of the Arab media. What double standards, what hypocritical media? It is the Umayyad Arab media and its historical hatred of Alid Iraq."[90]

The sentiment expressed by Musawi captured the prevailing temperament among the bulk of the ruling Shi^{c}ite elite in post-Saddam Iraq not only toward the Arab media but also toward insurgent activity in Iraq. The Shi^{c}ites feared that the insurgency's main goal was to restore the *status quo ante*, to bring back Ba^{c}ath Party rule, to reinstate Sunni domination. Statements

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[88] Muhammad Hassan al-Musawi, "al-I^{c}ilam al-^{c}Arabi wa al-^{c}Iraq .. Taghyiran wa al-Mawqif Wahid" [The Arab Media and Iraq .. Two Changes and One Stance], *Shabakat al-Nabaa al-Ma^{c}alumatiyyah*, Thursday, Rajab 8, 1427 A.H./July 3, 2006 C.E.; available at: http://www.annabaa.org/nbanews/58/250.htm; accessed on Friday, August 24, 2012.
[89] *Ibid*.
[90] *Ibid*.

by insurgent groups affiliated with the Ba^cath party, as well as slogans and graffiti on the walls in predominantly Sunni neighborhoods and areas glorifying the Ba^cath, Saddam Hussein and his fearsome intelligence apparatus, intensified these fears. Thus, the Shi^cite political elite refused to recognize the notion of armed resistance against foreign troops in Iraq. They conflated insurgent activity with terrorism and criminal violence. For them, there were no resistance fighters in Iraq; only terrorists, criminals, salafist '*takfiris*' ('those who excommunicate other Muslims'), Ba^cathists, 'remnants' (*fulul*) of the former regime, and 'orphans' (*aytam*) of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. Naturally, such portrayals leave no space for insurgent activity inspired or spurred by nationalist, communalist, ideological or religious motivations. Any non-state armed activity is *ipso facto* subsumed under the categories of terroristic or criminal violence. The landscape of the insurgency where anti-Coalition armed attacks, terrorism and criminal activity overlapped only served to reinforce these perceptions.

Perhaps to ward off sweeping charges of 'collaboration' with foreign occupiers leveled at them throughout the predominantly Sunni Arab world, perhaps to redeem the image of the Shi^cites as the vanguards of resistance to western colonial encroachment in modern Iraqi history, the Shi^cite power elite justified their engagement with the US-led Coalition authorities under the rubric of 'political resistance' (*al-muqawamah al-siyasiyyah*). They argued that political engagement is more fruitful in extracting concessions from the Coalition than armed activity which could only provoke retaliatory counter-insurgency operations that inflict more harm and pain on the Iraqi people. Even the Sadrists, who in principle had no quarrel with the notion of armed resistance against occupation, always qualified their support for insurgent activity. In their bid to distance themselves from gruesome and merciless attacks against civilians the Sadrists drew a distinction between 'honorable resistance' (*al-muqawamah al-sharifah*) and 'non-honorable resistance' (*al-muqawamah ghayr al-sharifah*). While the former presumably directs its attacks exclusively on foreign troops, the latter has no qualms about spilling the blood of innocent Iraqis. "There are two resistances: honorable resistance and non-honorable resistance," declared Muqtada al-Sadr in a televised interview. "Those who target the Iraqis, their homes and their cities, I do not call resistance. Resistance

[includes in its ranks] he who considers the occupier as his sole enemy. If he considers the Iraqi people as his enemy then this is not resistance in my view."[91]

By the same token, Sunni leaders generally tended to characterize Shi^cite insurgent groups, such as the Sadrist Promised Day Brigade (*Liwa' al-Yawm al-Maw^cud*) and the Leagues of the People of Righteousness (*^cAsa'ib Ahl al-Haqq*), as merely criminal militias and death squads responsible for the killing, maiming and torture of Sunnis as well as attacks against Sunni mosques. This split vision on insurgent activity accentuated the ethical dilemma captured by the adage: "One man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." The outlook on each side of the sectarian divide deprived insurgent activities by groups affiliated with the other side of legitimacy and morality. As such, the division revealed a darker truth about post-Saddam Iraq. In times of heightened sectarian passions, even the possibility of ethical violence becomes the exclusive preserve of one's own sectarian group.

Be that as it may, a focus on the victimization of Shi^cites not only valorizes pain and suffering but also marks the starting point for re-figuring the meaning of Shi^cite identity in Iraq. Here, privileging victimization is the breeding ground for an ascendant Shi^cite particularism. In this context, the mass graves of Shi^cite victims of Saddam Hussein's atrocious campaigns to suppress the Shi^cites emerge not only as symbols of Shi^cite victimization and the evilness of a brutal regime but also as markers of Shi^cite identity. In the words of Musawi:

> "Mass graves are no longer a symbol for the cause of persecution and suffering or a symbol for an epoch of oppression and tyranny or an evidence of the cruelty of dictatorship toward a certain social and sectarian segment. They have rather become a symbol and an indicator for a social and human belonging, i.e. belonging to Shi^cism in its human and social, rather than dogmatic, dimension. In other words, mass graves … have come to point to a social identity for a human mass which possesses a cultural dimension and is held together through social, historical and religious bonds. This human mass is [comprised of] the Shi^cites of Iraq who, by dint of the suffering and tragedy to which they were subjected for

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[91] Interview with Muqtada al-Sadr, *al-Baghdadiyyah TV*, Tuesday, July 27, 2010.

long decades, have grown to be a society or a social mass which possesses a particularism distinguishing it from others."[92]

For the exponents of the Shi^cite anti-Arabist discourse, Pan-Arabism which established its hegemony as state ideology since the creation of modern Iraq was ultimately responsible for taking Iraq down the ghastly road of the mass killing of Shi^cites under Saddam. In their view, Pan-Arab ideologues, especially Sati^ci al-Husari, have always harbored exterminationist intents toward the Shi^cites of Iraq. For those ideologues, sectarian cleansing of the Shi^cites served the purposes of rectifying the demographic imbalance which favors the Shi^cites over the privileged Sunni minority.

> "The mastermind of the Shi^cites' Holocaust (the mass graves) aimed to target the indigenous residents of Iraq as a social entity above all else. … If the conditions of the monarchic period precluded the Husaris' implementation of their racist and eradicationist project against the preponderant majority, i.e. the Shi^cites, Saddamism found an opportunity at hand to implement the Husarist theory which is based on the sectarian liquidation of the Shi^cites, scattering them in exiles (the Diaspora), mass killing them in order to bring an end to them as a social and political majority, and replacing them with others who in sectarian terms belong to the same sect of the ruling authorities. The purpose is to address the minority complex from which the ruling authorities suffer."[93]

In exhibiting hostility toward a Pan-Arabism that reigned supreme as state ideology in pre-2003 Iraq, the Shi^cite anti-Arabist discourse in the post-Saddam period took up the cudgel of Iraq's special character. A slide of this discourse toward a rupture with Pan-Arabism effectively translated into a tilt toward privileging Iraqi nationalism or patriotism (*wataniyyah*) over Pan-Arab nationalism (*qawmiyyah*). If citizens of other Arab countries place loyalty to their nation-states above loyalty to Arabism, then Iraqis should not be asked

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[92] Muhammad Hassan al-Musawi, "Ala Takfi al-Maqabir al-Jama^ciyyah Khususiyyatan?" [Aren't Mass Graves Particularism Enough?], *Shabakat al-Nabaa al-Ma^calumatiyyah*, Wednesday, Jumada al-Ula 27, 1426 A.H./August 3, 2005 C.E.; available at: http://www.annabaa.org/nbanews/49/106.htm; accessed on Friday, August 24, 2012.
[93] *Ibid*.

or expected "to place loyalty to nationalism above loyalty to patriotism and Iraq."[94] The hope is that privileging Iraqi nationalism deprives state sectarianism of the opportunity to cloak itself in the secular garb of Arab nationalism. The modern state in pre-2003 Iraq, which was established on supposedly secular foundations and principles of equal citizenship, adopted a "condescending view" toward the Shiᶜites – a view that was bequeathed to the modern Iraqi nation-state from the Ottoman Empire. Shiᶜites who subscribe to the Pan-Arab ideology in any of its multiple manifestations in fact embrace a 'false consciousness' and turn their backs on their authentic communal identity.[95]

Thus, the Iraqist nationalist streak that has found expression in Iraqi intellectual circles since the early days of the 1920s provided a paradigm for the Shiᶜite anti-Arabist discourse in post-Saddam Iraq. Distrustful of the translation of the emerging Iraqi nation-state in terms of Sunni hegemony, the Shiᶜites remained reluctant to identify totally with the new nation-state. Being Arabs themselves, the Shiᶜites had no difficulties in accepting the ethnic dimensions of Arab identity. They were, however, wary of the official Sunni expressions of Arab nationalism whose focus encompassed "the idea of an Arab nation in which the Sunni Arabs were politically and culturally predominant."[96] They feared losing their numerical majority position and being further marginalized politically should Iraq join a larger Arab confederation.[97]

Accordingly, in framing their conception of what it means to be Iraqi, the Shiᶜites, in general, were more inclined to subscribe to an Iraqi nationalism where Arab culture figures as a component of identity and accent is placed on Iraq's pre-Islamic Mesopotamian civilization. Perhaps the foremost exponent of this view was the Iraqi Shiᶜite poet and writer Ali al-Sharqi who articulated

> "a vision of Iraqi nationalism that built on the strong tribal character of Iraqi society and the historical role of Iraq's tribes in preserving the "true" spirit of Arabism in the country. He advocated the development of an Iraqi national

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[94] Muhammad Hassan al-Musawi, "Abtal Qawmiyyun am Abtal Wataniyyun?" [Nationalist Heroes or Patriotic Heroes?], *Shabakat al-Barlaman al-ᶜIraqi*, Sunday, July 8, 2007; available at: http://www.irqparliament.com/vb/showthread.php?t=13390; accessed on Friday, August 17, 2012.
[95] Musawi, "Ala Takfi al-Maqabir al-Jamaᶜiyyah Khususiyyatan?"
[96] Lukitz *op. cit.*, p. 80.
[97] Yitzhak Nakash, *Reaching for Power: The Shi'a in the Modern Arab World* (Princeton, NJ; and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006): p. 85.

history, arguing that Iraq needed a nationalist ideology that combined Eastern and Arab elements with Iraqi values and heritage."[98]

These divergences in conceptions of what it means to be Iraqi transformed the Iraqi polity into a site of political contestation which unfolded along an Arabism-Iraqism spectrum. Throughout Iraqi history, the two extremes, Arabism and Iraqism, have rarely been mutually exclusive. They both spanned wide arrays of views that sometimes tended to mesh with each other. It is true that there were Sunnis and Shiᶜites on both sides of the ideological divide. Yet, ideological Pan-Arab nationalism, tinged with a slight Islamic streak, hit a responsive chord among Sunnis, a numerical minority but a dominant social group that played a hegemonic role in government and the armed forces. Of course, many Shiᶜite figures were also staunch Arabists, and many Sunnis subscribed to Iraqism. But, in general, Iraqism, especially in its leftist incarnation with its resolutely anti-communitarian and secular streaks, captured the yearnings of the Shiᶜites, Kurds, and religious minorities for inclusion into the political order.

The alliance between Shiᶜite victimization and particularism in the early post-Saddam period gave rise to calls for mobilizing a collective form of agency in pursuit of schemes that border on separatism. The Shiᶜites, as guardians of a traumatic legacy, were called upon by some Shiᶜite writers to translate their pain and rage into constructive action aimed at securing independence. Bassem al-ᶜAwwadi, a writer affiliated with the ISCI, proposed independence for the Shiᶜite areas in southern and south-central Iraq. He argued that independence is a "more honorable" option for the Shiᶜites of Iraq than coexistence with other communities who share in the riches of their areas and spill their blood. "Isn't independence more honorable for you, O Shiᶜites of Iraq?" he asked rhetorically. "Aren't the sparing of your blood and the exploitation of your own riches by you more honorable for you away from he who shares your food during the day and assaults your women at night?" In ᶜAwwadi's view, the Shiᶜites constitute "a people and a nation possessing all the requirements for developing

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[98] *Ibid.*, p. 84. Sharqi's vision of Iraqi nationalism is interspersed in his writings and poetry. For examples, see *Diwan al-Sharqi* [al-Sharqi's Collection of Poetry], compiled and edited by Ibrahim al-Wa'ili and Musa Ibrahim al-Karbasi (Baghdad, Iraq: Ministry of Culture and the Arts, 1979); Ali al-Sharqi, *al-ᶜArab wa al-ᶜIraq* [Arabs and Iraq], 1ˢᵗ Edition (Baghdad, Iraq: Sharikat al-Tabuᶜ wa al-Nashr al-Ahliyyah, 1963); and Ali al-Sharqi, *ᶜAwatif wa ᶜAwasif: Diwan* [Emotions and Storms: A Collection of Poetry] (Baghdad, Iraq: Matbaᶜat al-Maᶜarif, 1953).

statehood in terms of geography, wealth, cadres, let alone the history buried in our land."[99] According to ᶜAwwadi, if Shiᶜite independence is unrealizable, the establishment of a federal region comprised of the nine predominantly Shiᶜite provinces in south-central and southern Iraq is the second-best option for the Shiᶜites of Iraq. The question of federalism in Iraq will be discussed at length in the following section. Suffice it to say here that the borders of the Shiᶜite federal region proposed by ᶜAwwadi include all the areas detached from these provinces and attached to predominantly Sunni provinces as part of changes introduced to the boundaries of administrative units since 1958. There is an inescapable undercurrent of vengeance, comeuppance and haughty pride in ᶜAwwadi's Shiᶜite independence and federal schemes. ᶜAwwadi is cavalierly confident about the future prospects of the Shiᶜite state or region of southern Iraq. It is destined to become the "equivalent of a thousand Dubais," he averred. "They [i.e. the Sunnis] know very well," fulminated ᶜAwwadi, "that, without the oil of the south, they would be barefooted, naked, lowly, despised and loathed, begging for a job opportunity in the ports, refineries, municipalities or capital of the south."[100] True, ᶜAwwadi's tirades have all the hallmarks of fringe and outlandish views and give the reader the impression of drifting into a hallucinogenic haze. However, they encapsulated sentiments prevailing among segments of the Shiᶜite public in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Saddam. They encapsulated the anger of a wounded pride, the mood of exultation at deliverance from a dark epoch of tyranny that once seemed to last forever, the intoxicating euphoria of redemption, but also the natural human impulse to settle-scores.

As the Shiᶜites consolidated their grip on power, the angry and shrill anti-Arabist rhetoric subsided. The ebbing of such negative expressions of empowerment opened a space for the emergence of positive expressions based on the affirmation of the self. The Shiᶜites' sense of security in their place in the corridors of power bred a conception of Iraqi nationalism grounded in the fragmentation of Iraqi national identity and society. This "ascendant Shiᶜite nationalism," to use the terminology coined by Iraqi writer Haidar Saᶜid, has three distinctive

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[99] Bassem al-ᶜAwwadi, "Alays al-Istiqlal Ashraf li al-Shiᶜah mimma Yahsul al-Aan?" [Isn't Independence More Honorable for the Shiᶜites than What's Happening Now?], *Shabakat al-ᶜIraq al-Thaqafiyyah*, Monday, September 20, 2004; available at: http://www.iraqcenter.net/vb/showthread.php?t=9079; accessed on Tuesday, August 28, 2012.
[100] Bassem al-ᶜAwwadi, "Ruddu ᶜAlayhim bi al-Istiqlal aw al-Fidraliyyah" [Respond to Them with Independence or Federalism], *Shabakat Ansar al-Hussein*, Sunday, January 8, 2006; available at: http://www.ansarh.cc/showthread.php?1620518-%D8%B1%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%A7-
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%D8%A7%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%8A; accessed on Tuesday, August 28, 2012.

features: a centralist streak, in that it champions a strong central government without being hostile to notions of decentralization including federalism; a strong sense of Arabism as a cultural component which sets Iraqi Shiᶜism apart from Iranian Shiᶜism; and an acceptance of power-sharing arrangements with other Iraqi communities.[101] A conception of nationalism that revolves around sectarian affiliation is by definition divisive and anathema to the notion of an overarching national identity. Conceptualizing sectarian affiliation as identity signifier reinforces rather than dilutes existing notions of sameness and difference along sectarian fault lines. In situating the Shiᶜites as a distinct "Us," the notion of Shiᶜite nationalism consigns other communities, primarily the Sunnis, to the realm of the "Other."

5.4. Federalism and Fractured National Identity

"Nothing is more certain than the indispensable necessity of government, and it is equally undeniable, that whenever and however it is instituted, the people must cede to it some of their natural rights in order to vest it with requisite powers. It is well worthy of consideration therefore, whether it would conduce more to the interest of America that they should, to all general purposes, be one nation, under one federal government, or that they should divide themselves into separate confederacies, and give to the head of each the same kind of powers which they are advised to place in one national government."

John Jay, "Natural Advantages of Union,"
The Federalist Papers, No. 2

Perhaps nothing symbolizes the fractured national identity in today's Iraq more than the raging debate over federalism. It is true that the fragmentation of national identity in Iraq has yet to usher in a total collapse of the notion of a coherent collective Iraqi self. Iraqis, in general, continue to think of themselves as possessing a singular, binding Iraqi identity. It is also natural that Iraqis' subjectivities be informed by a plurality of sub-national, such as sectarian, tribal, regional and other, identities. But federalist schemes in Iraq tend to be informed by ethno-sectarian concepts of identity, or 'imagined identities,' that are incompatible with the notion of a coherent and unified national identity. The manner in which

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[101] Haidar Saᶜid, "Wataniyyah Shiᶜiyyah Saᶜidah wa Lamarkaziyyah Hadi'ah: Qira'ah fi Intikhabat Majalis al-Muhafadhat fi al-ᶜIraq/Kanun al-Thani 2009" [Ascendant Shiᶜite Nationalism and Soft Decentralization: A Reading into the Provincial Council Elections in Iraq/January 2009] (Baghdad, Iraq: Markaz al-Abhath al-ᶜIraqiyyah, April 2009): p. 5.

the debate over federalism has been unfolding in Iraq, as a relational territorial space between communities, gives shape and expression to antagonistic notions of collective identity. Thus, the proliferation of federalist schemes in Iraq underscores the failure of the state-centric discourses, policies and practices of homogenization of the modern nation-state. In other words, it indicates the failure of the modern nation-state in subsuming an assemblage of narrow primordial identities under an overarching national identity.

There is no shortage of proposed schemes, in the Iraqi federalist debate, for setting up federal regions. Leaders from across the spectrum of communities have put forward proposals in this regard. The Kurds have been among the most vocal advocates of federalism in Iraq.[102] Their successful federalist experiment in the Kurdistan Region is often cited by federalists throughout the country as evidence of the advantages of federalism. Calls for setting up a special province or region for Chaldo-Assyrian-Syriac Christians in the Ninewah Plateau have gained momentum since the fall of Saddam.[103] A raft of federalist schemes has been proposed by various Turkmen political parties. Foremost among these schemes is a highly controversial proposal to turn Kirkuk/Ta'amim Province into a standalone region. Another equally controversial proposal calls for setting up a Turkmen autonomous region encompassing the areas from Tallafar in Ninewah Province in the northwest of Iraq, through Kirkuk/Ta'amim Province and Tuz Khurmatu District in Salah al-Din Province in north-central Iraq, to Mandali District in Diyala Province northeast of Baghdad. This proposed crescent-shaped region, traversing areas between the Iraqi-Syrian border in the west and the Iraqi-Iranian border in the east, is known to the Turkmens as *Turkmeneli* (Turkmen Homeland).[104] While interesting in their own right, such schemes are largely beyond the scope of this discussion which focuses primarily on Shi'ite and Sunni schemes for federalism.

Centralization of power is a fundamental feature of dictatorship. The centralization of state decision-making under Ba'ath Party rule grew by leaps and bounds under Saddam Hussein

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[102] See Quil Lawrence, *Invisible Nation: How the Kurds' Quest for Statehood Is Shaping Iraq and the Middle East* (New York, NY: Walker & Company, 2008); and Brendan O'Leary, John McGarry, and Khaled Salih, eds., *The future of Kurdistan in Iraq* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005).

[103] "Iraqi Christians demand an autonomous region," *Al Arabiya News Channel*, Tuesday, April 5, 2011; available at: http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/04/05/144308.html; accessed on Saturday, September 01, 2012; and Bassem Francis, "al-Tawajjuhat ila Tashkil Aqalim fi al-ᶜIraq Tuᶜazziz Matalib al-Masihiyyin bi Muhafadhah" [The Tendencies to Form Regions in Iraq Strengthen the Christians' Demands to (Form) a Province], *al-Hayat*, Wednesday, November 2, 2011; available at: http://international.daralhayat.com/internationalarticle/324861; accessed on Wednesday, November 2, 2011

[104] Hussein ᶜAwni, *Iqlim Karkuk: Min al-Shaᶜab ila al-Shaᶜab* [Kirkuk Region: From the People to the People] (Baghdad, Iraq: Matbaᶜat Alif Dal, 2008).

due to his personalized style of rule. It was not only the linkage between centralization and brutal repression that earned the concentration of power at the center a bad name in Saddam's Iraq. Excessively centralized control under Ba ͨath Party rule also exhibited many of the downsides associated with centralization in terms of effectiveness in the functioning of state institutions. These drawbacks included "interminable delays in decision-making, bureaucratic inefficiency, a widening inter-regional gap, increased dependence on the central government, lethargy and lack of initiative at the local level."[105] In essence, over-concentration of decision-making and power at the center, where none other than Saddam Hussein exerted real influence over policy, effectively marginalized the periphery. Baghdad-based ministries maintained full discretion and control over setting priorities and allocating funds at the local level.[106]

Devolution of power to sub-national units thus derived its appeal from the fact that, in theory, it presented the antidote to the much-maligned monopolization of power by the head of state under Ba ͨath Party rule. Assumptions of a weak central government and a shift of power away from the center to the periphery in the post-Saddam period also seeped into post-conflict reconstruction planning. The US-led coalition sought to foster the development of "local power bases built on legitimacy and accountability, and underpinned by formal powers and authorities enshrined by law."[107]

The original impetus for federalism in post-Saddam Iraq can be traced back to the upsurge of oppositional activity in the 1990s. Seeking to induce the Kurds to take part in the Iraqi opposition conference held in Vienna in June 1992, conference organizers dangled the carrot of the right to self-determination before Kurdish leaders. Kurdish opposition groups were in an advantageous position *vis-à-vis* their Arab counterparts due to the fact that they had been exerting full control over a large swath of territory in northern Iraq, which they ran as a *de facto* independent state, following the 1991 Uprising. The Kurds' right to self-determination, albeit "short of separation," was included in the resolutions of the Vienna conference.[108] In

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[105] Nasr Salem, "Iraq faces further turmoil as key issues about constitutional future remain unresolved," *Crescent International*, Vol. 34, No. 7 (Rajab-Sha'aban 1426 A.H./September 2005): p. 11

[106] For instance, the coverage of local news by provincial media outlets flowed from, or required prior approval by, the information ministry in Baghdad, thus leaving no room for creativity at the provincial and local levels.

[107] Michael Knights and Eamon McCarthy, *Provincial Politics in Iraq: Fragmentation or New Awakening*, Policy Focus #81, (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, April 2008): p. 5.

[108] ͨAziz Qadir al-Summanji, *Qitar al-Mu ͨaradhah al- ͨIraqiyyah min Bayrut 1991 ila Baghdad 2003* [The Train of the Iraqi Opposition from Beirut 1991 to Baghdad 2003], 1st Edition (London: Dar al-Hikmah, 2009): pp. 101-127.

August 1992, the Kurdistan Regional Government hosted another meeting for the Iraqi opposition at the Salah al-Din resort. The Salah al-Din conference, which set up the Iraqi National Congress (*al-Mu'tamar al-Watani al-ᶜIraqi*) or INC as an umbrella organization, also endorsed federalism as a future system of government in post-Saddam Iraq. In May, the Kurdistan Regional Parliament had unanimously adopted federalism as a framework organizing the Kurdistan Region's legal relations with the central government.[109] But the endorsement of federalism was not set for easy sailing at Salah al-Din. Several Arab parties and leaders, both Sunni and Shiᶜite alike, raised reservations about federalism. Others, such as Muhammad al-Alusi of the Islamic Bloc (*al-Kutlah al-Islamiyyah*), a Sunni Arab Islamist group, withdrew from the conference in protest at the endorsement of federalism.[110]

The Kurds continued to assiduously assert their claims to federalism following the Salah al-Din conference, ensuring that it consistently featured in official communiqués and resolutions issued by subsequent opposition forums and conferences. The landmark London opposition conference in December 2002 endorsed federalism as a system of government in a post-Saddam Iraq. Federalism was characterized as a necessary condition for laying the foundations for democratic governance in Iraq. The "Final Report on the Transition to Democracy in Iraq" adopted by the conference declared that "*no future state in Iraq will be democratic if it is not at the same time federal in structure.*"[111] The document was cognizant of the potential pitfalls of setting up ethnic or national federal units. To safeguard against this, it advanced the notion of territorial or administrative, rather than national, federalism as a system of government befitting Iraq.[112] In so doing, the document was simply taking refuge in verbal gymnastics. The "Kurdish experience in northern Iraq," which it described as the "driving force behind the injection of this new idea, federalism," is for all intents and purposes based on a Kurdish nationalist idea.[113] Federalism was in fact the second-best option for the Kurds, whose ultimate objective was independence. The Kurds' acceptance of

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[109] Please note that the March 1970 agreement between the central government and the Kurds provided for autonomy for the Kurds. See, Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 3rd Edition (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2012 [1985]): pp. 152-154.

[110] Summanji, *op. cit*., pp. 134-135.

[111] Democratic Principles Working Group, "Final Report on the Transition to Democracy in Iraq," Final version of the working document of the Conference of the Iraqi Opposition as amended by the members of the Democratic Principles Work Group, November 2002, p. 94; italics in original. Still, some delegates at the London conference, such as those representing the Iraqi Turkmen Front, expressed reservations on the document's endorsement of federalism.

[112] *Ibid*., pp. 96-97.

[113] *Ibid*., p. 95.

federalism was dictated by pragmatic considerations as they realized the infeasibility of achieving independence under existing geostrategic conditions.

The TAL defined the system of government in Iraq as "republican, federal, democratic, and pluralistic." It laid out a multi-level framework of governance where "powers shall be shared between the federal government and the regional governments, governorates, municipalities, and local administrations" (Article 4). This arrangement was purposeful in the sense that it was designed to "to prevent the concentration of power in the federal government that allowed the continuation of decades of tyranny and oppression under the previous regime" (Article 53). The TAL also conferred on provinces the right to form other self-governing regions. Article 53/C provided that:

> "Any group of no more than three governorates outside the Kurdistan region, with the exception of Baghdad and Kirkuk, shall have the right to form regions from amongst themselves. The mechanisms for forming such regions may be proposed by the Iraqi Interim Government, and shall be presented and considered by the elected National Assembly for enactment into law."[114]

By devolving significant authority to sub-national units Iraq's permanent constitution, endorsed by a nation-wide referendum in October 2005, laid out a similar model of decentralized political and administrative government. The constitution defined Iraq as "a single federal, independent and fully sovereign state in which the system of government is republican, representative, parliamentary, and democratic" (Article 1).[115] It provided for the continuation of the *status quo* of self-government in the Kurdistan Region, which it recognized, "along with its existing authorities, as a federal region" (Article 117/First).[116] It, furthermore, confirmed the right of provinces to form additional self-governing regions, stipulating that any province or group of provinces "shall have the right to organize into a region based on a request to be voted on in a referendum." The request can be submitted either by one-third of the provincial council members in each of the provinces "intending to form a region" or by a petition signed by one-tenth of the voters in each of these provinces

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[114] "Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period," the official website of the Coalition Provisional Authority; available at: http://www.constitution.org/cons/iraq/TAL.html; accessed on Tuesday, February 28, 2012.
[115] *Iraqi Constitution* (Baghdad, Iraq: Iraqi Council of Representatives, Media Directorate, no date): p. 5.
[116] *Ibid*., p. 71.

(Article 119).[117] Interestingly, the constitution gives primacy to regional legislation over national legislation. "In case of a contradiction between regional and national legislation in respect to a matter outside the exclusive authorities of the federal government, the regional power shall have the right to amend the application of the national legislation within that region" (Article 121/Second).[118] Effectively, this gives the Kurdistan Regional Government the right to modify federal legislation within its jurisdiction. But this right contradicts the "paramountcy doctrine" applicable in many federal countries, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia. The doctrine demands that in cases of contradiction between federal law and regional or provincial legislation the former is paramount and prevails over the latter, rendering it inoperative to the extent that it is inconsistent with federal law.[119]

In October 2006, the Iraqi parliament passed a legislation allowing provinces to hold referendums to form regions or to merge into larger federal regions, thus creating 'super-regions.' But, as part of a compromise between supporters and opponents of federalism, the Law of Mechanisms and Procedures to Form Regions (*Qanun Aaliyyat wa Ijra'at Tashkil al-Aqalim*) also introduced an 18-month moratorium on the law's entry into force. The law spelled out a step-by-step sequential process for the formation of, or merger with, a region. A request in this regard triggered by a vote of one-third of the provincial council members or one-tenth of the voters in a province would be submitted to the office of the prime minister who would refer it to the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), which is to start taking measures to hold a referendum within three month.[120]

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[117] *Ibid*., p. 72.

[118] *Ibid*., p. 73.

[119] See Christopher Edward Taucar, *Canadian Federalism and Quebec Sovereignty* (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2004 [2000]): pp. 147-149. See also Sharda Prasad Singh, *Paramountcy in Indian Federalism* (New Delhi, India: Swarna Prasad, 1986). The Australian constitution provides for federal paramountcy in Section 109 which states: "When a law of a State is inconsistent with a law of the Commonwealth, the latter shall prevail, and the former shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be invalid." "The Australian Constitution," the official website of the Parliament of Australia; available at: http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Senate/Powers_practice_n_procedures/Constitution.aspx; accessed on Thursday, September 06, 2012. Likewise, the United States constitution provides for federal paramountcy in Article 6/Clause 2, also known as the "supremacy clause," which stipulates that: "This Constitution, and the Laws of the United States which shall be made in Pursuance thereof; and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the Authority of the United States, shall be the supreme Law of the Land; and the Judges in every State shall be bound thereby, any Thing in the Constitution or Laws of any State to the Contrary notwithstanding." "Constitution of the United States," the official website of the United States Senate; available at: http://www.senate.gov/civics/constitution_item/constitution.htm; accessed on Thursday, September 06, 2012.

[120] Nuᶜman al-Haymas, "Mas'ul Barlamani: al-Istifta' al-Shaᶜabi al-Rakizah al-Asasiyyah li Sharᶜiyyat al-Fidraliyyah" [Parliamentary Official: Popular Referendum the Fulcrum of the Legitimacy of Federalism], *Asharq al-Awsat*, Saturday, Ramadhan 21, 1427 A.H./October 14, 2006; available at:

The entire process of enshrining federalism in the constitution, along with the passage of implementing legislation, was shrouded in controversy which unfolded along ethnic and sectarian lines. The grim realities of inter-communal divisions were evident in the debate that flared up during the drafting and passage of the TAL, the permanent constitution, and the Law of Mechanisms and Procedures to Form Regions. The Kurdish nationalist parties were the strongest proponents of a federal architecture of the Iraqi state within the framework of dual sovereignty between the central government and the regions. Their notion of a Kurdish region embodies strong irredentist ambitions as it calls for incorporating into this federal unit the entire oil-rich Kirkuk/Ta'amim Province, which they have designated as the "Jerusalem of Kurdistan" (Kurdish: *Quds-e Kurdistan*) and the "heart of Kurdistan" (Kurdish: *dili Kurdistan*), as well as parts of Diyala, Salah al-Din and Ninewah Provinces. They lay a claim to these disputed internal areas as inseparable parts of historic Kurdistan. The maximalist notion of federalism advocated by the Kurdish parties would effectively guarantee regions all aspects of independence except for the name.

The degree of autonomy and prosperity enjoyed by the Kurdistan Region turned the Kurdish federalist experience into a pacesetter. It fostered a belief among some influential Shi'ite circles that federalism would be a panacea for all the problems impeding proper provision of services at the provincial and local levels. The allure of territorial autonomy had the power to titillate the yearnings of some Shi'ite leaders to exert control over their own fiefdom(s) with its rich resources away from the tight grip of the central government. But, unlike the Kurds who subscribed to a single vision for the Kurdish region as encompassing swathes where the Kurdish population was historically concentrated, Shi'ite advocates of federalism posited multiple notions and schemes of federalism. Some made a case for setting up a number of regions in the predominantly Shi'ite southern and south-central parts of Iraq. One scheme envisaged the creation of the South Region (*Iqlim al-Janub*) comprising the three provinces of Basra, Dhi Qar and Maysan. The Shi'ite federalists made their case for regionalization in reactive terms. They argued that federalism is a reaction to the over-centralization of government decision-making and the excessive marginalization and deprivation to which

their oil-rich areas were subjected under the former regime.[121] This argument hit a responsive chord among some Sunnis and other minorities in Basra who complained of ill-treatment under the Ba^cath Party regime simply because they hailed from the south. The drive to form the South Region was also a reaction to continued centralization of decision-making in the post-Saddam period and the slow pace of postwar reconstruction. This sentiment was expressed in an editorial in the Basra-based newspaper, *al-Manarah*, which asserted:

> "All that the people of the South want is that the capital desists from appointing he who represents us, desists from appointing our ministers, and desists from sending only its surplus money to the forgotten provinces of the South. The capital has disappointed us as it receives our sons as if they have come to it from Senegal and not from Basra, Nasseriyyah and ^cAmarah."[122]

In many ways, the agitation for the establishment of a South Region modeled along the lines of the Kurdistan Region reflects Basran particularism. It expressed primal distrust between the Shi^cites of Basra and "their co-religionists in central Iraq, particularly in Baghdad and the shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala'." Tensions between Basra and the shrine cities have been traced back to the efflorescence of Islamic Shi^cite activism in the 1960s.[123] Thus, what we see in the drive to set up a southern region centered on Basra is the coexistence of sectarian and regional identities in tension even at a time of heightened sectarian passions.

Pan-Shi^cism presented the particularist streak that lies at the heart of the agitation for the South Region with a formidable challenge. The ISCI spearheaded a campaign to rally support for setting up a larger Shi^cite federated region comprising all the nine predominantly Shi^cite southern and south-central provinces. "Regarding federalism, we think that it is necessary to form one entire region in the south," the late ISCI chairman Abd al-^cAziz al-Hakim told a mass rally in Najaf in August 2005. This Shi^cite-dominated 'super-region,' which excludes

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[121] Khalil Osman, "al-Janub al-^cIraqi wa Irhasat al-Fidraliyyah" [The Iraqi South and the Early Stages of Federalism], *BBCArabic.com*, Thursday, February 10, 2005; available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/arabic/middle_east_news/newsid_4255000/4255523.stm; accessed on Friday, September 7, 2012.

[122] Khalaf al-Minshidi, "Infisal al-Janub .. Bid^cah am Haqiqah?!" [The Separation of the South .. Innovation or Reality?!], *al-Manarah*, October 3-5, 2004, p. 1.

[123] Rider Visser, "Basra, the Reluctant Seat of "Shiastan"," *Middle East Report*, No. 242 (Spring 2007); available at: http://www.merip.org/mer/mer242/basra-reluctant-seat-shiastan; accessed on Friday, September 07, 2012.

Baghdad, has sometimes been dubbed "Shiastan."[124] It would embrace one-third of the total area of Iraq, stretching from the port of Um Qasr to the outskirts of Baghdad. Some have accused ISCI of seeking to establish an Iranian-style clerically-dominated rule in southern Iraq. ISCI's 'super-region' scheme met its Waterloo in the party's poor showing in the provincial elections of January 2009 and parliamentary elections of March 2010. The ignominious electoral defeat reflected popular dissatisfaction with ISCI's performance in government, its schemes to decentralize power out of Baghdad, and its close ties to Iran.

The federalist debate proved divisive in the Shi'ite community as the Sadrists, with their strong Iraqi nationalist streak, stood firmly against federalism. Other Shi'ite groups such as the Islamic Virtue Party also opposed federalism on nationalist grounds. Shi'ite detractors of federalism advocated a decentralized system of government which devolves some of the powers of the central government to the provinces. The distinction between federalism and decentralization was articulated by the Sadrist-dominated Maysan provincial council which maintained:

> "This talk about decentralization should not be understood as a license to establish a federation, as this is a different issue. The first should mean giving more authorities to the local government, which is what is applied in many European and other advanced countries. [The] implementation of a federation under these unstable conditions, characterized by security tension and religious and national sensitivities, may precipitate the issue of dividing Iraq in the mentality of the Iraqi citizens, who are still ignorant of the form of the state of Iraq. . . . .[That] is because most of the Iraqi people do not look at written paragraphs, whether it was the Iraqi constitution or calming slogans, instead they live it in the form of a pessimist reality, at least for now. Thus, the solution is to widen the authority of local governments and not to draw borders for new regions."[125]

Sunni Arabs, who were overwhelmingly opposed to federalism, especially outside the Kurdistan Region, shared with the Shi'ite detractors of federalism suspicions that the establishment of regions was a prelude to dividing and dismembering the country. They often equated the formation of regions with separatism. The Sunni Arabs' opposition to federalism

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[124] Rory Carroll, "Clerics push for Shiastan in southern Iraq," *The Guardian*, Friday, August 12, 2005; available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/aug/12/iraq.rorycarroll; accessed on Friday, September 07, 2012.
[125] Quoted in Knights and McCarthy, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

wedded their strongly centralist predilections to hard economic calculations. They were dismayed by the likelihood that, since Iraq's oil resources are concentrated in the Shi^cite south and in Kirkuk, federalism would allow the Shi^cites and Kurds to receive the bulk of the revenues generated by the production of oil. Fears of economic impoverishment seeped through a statement voicing opposition to federalism issued by the IIP on August 17, 2005 which called for the distribution of the nation's wealth "according to needs and development plans." Sunni Arabs agonized over the prospect of wealth inequities and economic deprivation compounding their political marginalization in post-Saddam Iraq. But their objections to federalism also exhibited deep-seated sectarian paranoia. The IIP's statement rejected demands for self-rule regionalization outside the Kurdistan region.[126] This was an oblique reference to the IIP's rejection of the Shi^cite drive to form regions.

Ironically, the collective feeling of marginalization among Sunni Arabs, which fostered staunch opposition to federalism in the early post-Saddam period, would later create momentum for Sunni Arab federalist agitation. The concentration of power at the Shi^cite-dominated center and persistent and deepening feelings of marginalization among Sunni Arabs bred estrangement from the central government that fueled calls for federalism in Sunni Arab provinces following the March 2010 elections. Sunni Arabs came to see in federalism a way to alleviate political and economic marginalization and to fend off the overweening grip of the Shi'ite-dominated central government. Former IAF chairman ^cAdnan al-Dulaymi candidly admitted that the shift in the Sunni Arabs' position on federalism lies in their desire "to weaken the central government which is dominated by the Shi^cite parties since strengthening the government is not in the interest of the Sunnis."[127]

The early stirrings of a nascent Sunni Arab federalist drive were kindled by a group of Amman-based wealthy expatriate Iraqi Sunni Arab businessmen, politicians and activists. Frustrated with the failure of the Sunni-backed Iraqia to form the government following the March 2010 elections these community leaders advanced the notion of forming a Sunni region as a way to gain access to the valued resources of power and influence at a sub-national level. Amman became abuzz with meetings held by exiled Sunni Arab tycoons and

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[126] Salem, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

[127] "^cAdnan al-Dulaymi: Mutalabatuna bi Iqlim Sunni Hadafuha Idh^caf al-Hukumah al-Markaziyyah al-Lati Yusaytir ^cAlayha al-Shi^cah" [^cAdnan al-Dulaymi: Our Demand of a Sunni Region Aims at Weakening the Shi^cite-Dominated Central Government], *Alsumaria News*, Friday, September 23, 2011; available at: http://www.alsumarianews.com/ar/iraq-politics-news/-1-28546.html; accessed on Saturday, September 24, 2011.

politicians to thrash out scenarios, options and formulas for the formation of a Sunni region.[128] Recent oil explorations that revealed new significant finds in the desert of Anbar were cited to dispel fears that the proposed region in the Sunni Arab central and western parts of Iraq would be resource parched and impoverished. But feelings of sectarian victimhood and the need to right sectarian wrongs experienced by the Sunni Arab community in the post-Saddam period provided the primary rationale for the Sunni federalists' case. Taha Hamed al-Dulaymi, a Sunni Arab Salafist activist, was adamant that the establishment of a Sunni Arab region is a cure-all for the exclusionary practices and heavy-handedness of the Shiᶜite-dominated government toward the Sunni Arab community. "Administrative decentralization or federalism," he declared, "is aimed at the preservation of the existence and identity of the Sunni Arab component … and its protection from being dissolved, uprooted, subject to identity change, and made to bear wrongs, such as killing, assassination, raiding, detention, torture and displacement." For Dulaymi, the Sunni federal region also serves a broader regional geo-strategic purpose as it would provide Iraq's neighboring Arab countries with a buffer zone to "protect them against Iranian Shiᶜite encroachment."[129]

Much like its Shiᶜite counterpart, the Sunni Arab federalist agitation lacked a sense of focus. It had no unifying vision of the shape, size and composition of the hoped for Sunni Arab region. The surfeit of regional particularisms within the Sunni Arab community was evident in proposals calling for the establishment of regions in each of the four predominantly Sunni Arab provinces: *viz*., Diyala, Salah al-Din, Ninewah and Anbar. Others advocated the establishment of a 'super-region' comprising all four provinces. Another version of the 'super-region' model envisaged a two-stage process whereby the separate regions set up in the predominantly Sunni Arab provinces would be merged into a larger Sunni Arab region. Still others envisioned a larger multi-ethnic Sunni confederation formed by merging the Sunni Arab region(s) with the predominantly Sunni Kurdistan Region. Apparently, the idea of a non-ethnic Sunni sectarian alliance appealed to some Sunni regional states, including

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[128] For instance, former IAF chairman ᶜAdnan al-Dulaymi hosted several meetings that deliberated on the notion of Sunni federalism at his house in Talaᶜa al-Ali in Amman in January 2011. The meetings brought together former Sunni Arab lawmakers, tribal leaders, businessmen and community notables. Khamis al-Khinjar, a Sunni Arab tycoon and chief financier of Iraqia, also convened a panel to discuss the idea of forming a Sunni federal region in Amman on January 5, 2011. Interview with Yahya al-Kubaysi, Visiting Scholar at the French Institute for the Near East in Amman, Amman, Wednesday, January 19, 2011.

[129] Taha Hamed al-Dulaymi, "al-Fidraliyyah aw al-Lamarkaziyyah al-Idariyyah: Hifdh li Wahdat al-ᶜIraq al-Muhaddadah .. wa Insaf li Mukawwinatih al-Mutaᶜaddidah" [Federalism or Administrative Decentralization: Preservation of the Threatened Unity of Iraq .. and Fairness to Its Many Components], unpublished paper manuscript dated June 1, 2011 (copy on file with author): pp. 17 and 28, respectively.

Saudi Arabia and Turkey, who tend to various degrees to view the Kurdistan Region as a Sunni bastion and source of power for Iraqi Sunnis in their protracted political tug-of-war with the Shi^cite-dominated central government.[130]

These proposed schemes drew fire from anti-federalist Sunni religious leaders, the underground Ba^cath Party and insurgent groups. In making their case against the establishment of Sunni regions, the anti-federalists reiterated the now-all-too-familiar argument that federalism presages the fragmentation and breakup of Iraq. Shaykh Abd al-Karim Zaydan, a prominent Sunni jurist and former leader of the Iraqi branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, forbade campaigning for federalism "in word or deed," arguing that advocating federalism is "among the greater sins whose perpetrator should be subjected to corporal punishment, and this corporal punishment might ultimately reach slaying." The same sentiment was echoed by Shaykh Abd al-Hakim Abd al-Rahman al-Sa^cadi who inveighed against federalism in an edict (*fatwa*) dated January 19, 2010, declaring that federalist activists are liable to "the punishment deserved by apostates in the Shari^cah."[131] In a similar vein, a Ba^cath Party statement lambasted proponents of federalism and called on "the freemen and heroic *mujahids* of Iraq" to "resist with all your power and jihad the suspicious calls for setting up regions and nip them in the bud."[132] Sunni Arabs in the disputed Kirkuk/Ta'amim Province, whose fears of incorporating their province into the Kurdistan Region take precedence over disputes with the Shi^cite-controlled central government, were particularly disturbed by the federalist agitation. The Arab Political Council in Kirkuk (*al-Majlis al-Siyasi al-^cArabi fi Karkuk*) expressed apprehension toward federalist schemes which it characterized as "a clear threat to the political and constitutional future of Kirkuk."[133] Its rival Arab Project

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[130] Interview with Sunni Arab Tribal Chief of the ^cUbayd Tribe, Kirkuk, Sunday, January 16, 2011. The name has been withheld to protect the interviewee's anonymity.

[131] *Fatwa* proscribing federalism by Shaykh Abd al-Hakim Abd al-Rahman al-Sa^cadi entitled "al-Taqsim bi cUnwan al-Fidraliyyah" [Division in the Name of Federalism], dated Muharram 13, 1432 A.H./December 19, 2010 C.E., copy on file with the author and *Fatwa* proscribing federalism by Shaykh Abd al-Karim Zaydan dated Muharram 10, 1432 A.H./December 16, 2010 C.E., copy on file with the author.

[132] Statement by the Arab Ba^cath Socialist Party, Iraq Regional Command, Culture and Media Office, issued in Baghdad, datelined late October 2011, *Shabakat al-Mansour: Sawt al-Muqawamah al-^cIraqiyyah al-Basilah wa al-Ba^cath al-Mujahid* [al-Mansour Network: Voice of the Valliant Iraqi Resistance and the Mujahid Ba^cath], November 1, 2011; available at: http://www.almansore.com/Art.php?id=26273; accessed on Tuesday, November 1, 2011. Similar statements in this regard have also been issued by Ba^cath-affiliated insurgent groups. See, for example, Statement by the Patriotic, Nationalist, and Islamic Front, Media Office, datelined October 29, 2011 (copy on file with the author).

[133] Statement by the Arab Political Council in Kirkuk, datelined November 5, 2011 (copy on file with the author).

Trend (*Tayyar al-Mashru^c al-^cArabi*) declared its implacable opposition to "every call to establish any sectarian or racist region in Iraq."[134]

The federalist ferment of Sunni Arab expatriates simply provided intellectual fodder for Sunni Arab federalism. The first practical move aimed at establishing a Sunni Arab region was taken by the Salah al-Din provincial council in response to the dismissal in October 2011 of hundreds of university professors and employees at Tikrit University on charges of links to the dissolved Ba^cath Party. The dismissals were part of an anti-Ba^cathist campaign which also saw the arrest of hundreds on charges of plotting to overthrow the government. On October 27, the Salah al-Din provincial council proclaimed the province an autonomous region. Prime minister Nouri al-Maliki was quick to point out that the constitution provides for a declaration of autonomy only after a referendum. Thus, on January 12, 2012, the provincial council launched a campaign to collect signatures to request the executive branch to take measures to hold a referendum on the formation of Salah al-Din region.

The drive for Sunni federalism proved contagious, resulting in something akin to a chain reaction sweeping the Sunni provinces. In mid-December, the Diyala provincial council voted in favor of declaring the province an independent administrative and economic region. The request was submitted to the Council of Ministers for referral to the IHEC to start making preparations for a referendum. In justifying the move, one provincial official cited "the policy of exclusion and marginalization, the reduction of the administrative and financial authorizations, and the small budget allocated to the province."[135] The move by the Iraqia-dominated Diyala provincial council triggered a strong reaction from Baghdad, including the issuance of arrest warrants against several provincial council members. It also provoked anger among the province's Shi^cites who erected roadblocks, staged armed demonstrations, and attacked the provincial government's compound. The predominantly Shi^cite Khalis District of Diyala also threatened to split and join Baghdad if the provincial council persists in its federalist drive.[136] The western Anbar Province adopted a less confrontational approach to its federalist pitch. The Anbar provincial council issued a two-week ultimatum to the federal government to meet a host of demands otherwise it threatened to invoke constitutional

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[134] Statement by the Arab Project Trend, datelined October 30, 2011 (copy on file with the author). See, also, Statement by the Arab Project Trend, datelined August 2, 2011 (copy on file with the author).

[135] "Diyala Governor Advisor: Diyala prepared to be administrative, economic region," *National Iraqi News Agency (NINA)*, Wednesday, November 2, 2011.

[136] "Diyala PC spokesman: gathering of tribal Sheikhs, members of local councils rejecting the announcement of Diyala as a region," *National Iraqi News Agency (NINA)*, Tuesday, December 13, 2012.

provisions to form a region. The demands, presented on December 20, 2011, included the withdrawal of Iraqi government troops from the province, allocating more funds to the province, putting an end to random arrests and raids, and turning the Habbaniyyah military airbase into a civilian airport.[137] For their part, provincial authorities in Ninewah started consultations with community and tribal leaders on the prospects of turning the province into a region.[138]

The federalist domino effect spilled over into the Shi°ite provinces. Proponents of turning Basra into a region demanded that the central government takes action on a request to form a federal region that was approved and submitted by the Basra provincial council in September 2010. Interestingly, a host of Basra lawmakers and provincial council members affiliated with the prime minister's centralist Da°awah Party joined the calls for finalizing Basra's request to form a region and blamed the central government for the anemic economic development and reconstruction efforts in the province.[139] An ISCI lawmaker from Babil Province, Ali Shubbar, hinted at unilateral moves to declare the province a region, citing neglect and marginalization at the hands of the central government.[140]

Maliki took up the gauntlet of preserving Iraq's unity and staged a spirited attack on the federalist drive. "We will not allow the establishment of federalism in the Iraqi provinces because it will be a cause for tearing the country," he declared. "We don't reject the demand but we say that the time is not appropriate for it."[141] He also vowed to prevent the establishment of federal regions inspired by sectarian motives.[142] But Maliki was acutely aware that the proponents of federalism also viewed the formation of regions as a means to

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[137] "Anbar gives 14-day notice to central government," *Aswat al-Iraq*, Tuesday, December 20, 2011; available at:
http://en.aswataliraq.info/(S(cqyadz554lhjed45oa1vsa55))/Default1.aspx?page=article_page&id=146116&l=1; accessed on Saturday, September 08, 2012.
[138] °Uday Hatim and Ahmad Wahid, "Muhafadhat al-Musul Tastatli°i Ara' al-Ahali fi al-Tahawwul ila Iqlim wa al-Basra Tutalib bi al-Fidraliyyah" [Mosul Province Surveys the Inhabitants' Opinions on Turning into a Region and Basra Demands Federalism], *al-Hayat*, Monday, November 1, 2011; available at: http://international.daralhayat.com/internationalarticle/324489; accessed on Tuesday, November 1, 2011.
[139] *Ibid.*
[140] "al-Majlis al-A°ala Yuhaddid bi I°ilan Babil Iqliman" [The Supreme Council Threatens to Declare Babil a Region], *al-Mada*, Friday, February 3, 2012; available at: http://www.almadapaper.net/news.php?action=view&id=59022; accessed on Friday, February 3, 2012.
[141] "Maliki: Iraq is not ready for federalism," *AKnews*, Sunday, February 12, 2012; available at: http://aknews.com/en/aknews/4/289426/; accessed on Sunday, February 12, 2012.
[142] Ahmad Wahid, "al-Maliki Yattahim Du°at al-Fidraliyyah bi Ihtidhan al-Ba°ath" [Maliki Accuses Advocates of Federalism of Embracing the Ba°ath], *al-Hayat*, Saturday, November 5, 2011; available at: http://international.daralhayat.com/internationalarticle/325806; accessed on Saturday, November 5, 2012.

devolve decision-making powers to the provinces and to enhance provincial revenues to break out of the cycle of poverty. Thus, in an effort to take the sting out of the federalist drive, he met some of the demands presented by the provinces seeking to attain the federal region status. For example, he gave his approval to turning the Habbaniyyah airbase in Anbar into a civilian airport. He also delegated some executive powers to the governor of Basra to speed up decision-making.[143]

More importantly, he ignored the requests to start proceedings to set up regions submitted to the council of ministers and simply declined to refer them to the IHEC within the 15-day period stipulated in Article 3/B of Law No. 13 of 2008, entitled "Executive Procedures to Form Regions" (*Qanun al-Ijra'at al-Tanfidhiyyah al-Khassah bi Takwin al-Aqalim*). The law did not specify what is to be done in cases of non-referral of requests to the IHEC. And, IHEC had no authority to embark on preparations for a referendum on region formation without explicit instructions from the council of ministers in this regard.[144] While Maliki succeeded in neutralizing the drive to form regions, he has not stamped out the conceptual and ideational underpinnings of identity politics that induce communities to seek identity-based federalism. The arguments and claims marshaled by the proponents of federalism might have ebbed and lain low but they remain alive and well. They have joined a constellation of idioms, tropes and demands that can be deployed during political debate and episodes of heightened inter-party rivalry and discord.

5.5. Conclusion: The Dialectics of Unity and Fragmentation

> "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst

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[143] Ahmad Wahid, "al-Basra Ta'mal fi Hal Azamatiha al-Mutarakimah baᶜadama Munihat Salahiyyat Wasiᶜah" [Basra Hopes to Resolve Its Accumulated Crises after It Was Granted Broad Powers], *al-Hayat*, Friday, February 17, 2012; available at: http://international.daralhayat.com/internationalarticle/363487; accessed on Friday, February 17, 2012.

[144] Letter by Faraj Mirza al-Haydari, Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission, to the Basra Provincial Council on the Basra Region Proposal, No. Kh./11/422, Dated July 17, 2011 (copy on file with the author). See, also, "Qanun al-Ijra'at al-Khasah bi Takwin al-Aqalim" [Law of Executive Procedures to Form Regions], official website of the Iraqi Parliament; available at: http://www.parliament.iq/dirrasd/law/2008/13.pdf; accessed on Saturday, September 8, 2012.

Are full of passionate intensity."

William Butler Yeats,
The Second Coming

The foregoing discussion shows that the unitary momentum of the Iraqi nation-state's ideology, steeped in the discourse of Arab nationalism, has been trumped by the fragmentary impulse of ascendant primordial identifications – themselves fuelled by political marginalization and state repression. The discourse of Pan-Arabism offered the ruling Sunni elites with solace when it came to confronting the ethno-sectarian pluralism of the country. It served purposes that can be dubbed 'hegemonic' in the Gramscian sense, involving a dialectical integration or unity of domination and the "manufacture of consent" of subaltern groups.[145] But, aside from the platitudinous mantras of cross-communal national unity, this discourse was bereft of the inclusive symbolism needed to shape the contours of an all-encompassing "social imaginary," to use the concept articulated by philosopher Charles Taylor. As Taylor explains, social imaginary refers to "the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations."[146]

In many ways, the xenophobic anti-Persian streak in Arab nationalist ideology camouflaged anti-Shi'ite sectarian attitudes. In addition to delegitimizing opposition, the paranoid apprehensions concerning presumed malevolent powers of lurking internal enemies evoked by the *shuᶜubiyyah* theme were not conducive to fostering inter-communal trust and harmony. The obsession with delineating the contours of inclusion and exclusion in the nation-state complicated inter-sectarian harmony and inclusion and sowed the seeds of inter-communal distrust. By cultivating perceptions of existential internal threats, it made the possibility of compromise ever more distant and inter-communal conflict became a potentially self-fulfilling prophecy. In this sense, the national foundational myths promoted by Pan-Arabism contained one thing and its opposite, both the thesis of inclusiveness and its antithesis, i.e. the

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[145] The concept of hegemony was formulated by Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci. See his *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971). Eric Davis, *op. cit.*, uses the Gramscian concept of hegemony to explore the relationship between state power, historical memory and dictatorship in modern Iraq.

[146] Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC; and London: Duke University Press, 2004): p. 23.

exclusion of plurality. The Shi'ites found themselves ineluctably drawn into defending their loyalty to the country and defining themselves in opposition to the state's narrative.

The overthrow of the Ba'athist Leviathan nurtured hopes for restructuring the state in a radically different way in the post-Saddam period. It held the promise of transparent and inclusive multitudinous decision-making arrangements where people exercise power from below at the local level, thus improving the provision of government services to better meet local needs. But the emergent discourse on national identity in post-Saddam Iraq is caught in the throes of a "passive revolution" characterized by the lack of hegemony in the Gramscian sense. "The concept of passive revolution," Robert Cox maintains, "is a counterpart to the concept of hegemony in that it describes the conditions of a non-hegemonic society – one in which no dominant class has been able to establish hegemony in Gramsci's sense of the term."[147]

Narratives of collective victimization emerged as markers of identity on both sides of the Muslim sectarian divide in post-Saddam Iraq. On the Shi'ite side, the rhetoric of victimhood was imbued with triumphalism. The infusion of triumphalism into collective victimization produced a sense of moral superiority that was advanced to lay claims to privileges of power under the rubric of redressing the injustices, marginalization and exclusion endured under successive governments since the establishment of the modern state. On the Sunni side, feelings of being victimized by the post-Saddam state nurtured a sense of nostalgia oriented toward recalling a past of privilege and predominance in the corridors of power. This was a realm of a newfound underdog status. And in this realm the narrative of victimization was deployed in the production of a discourse of protest against the new boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in the new political order. But narratives of victimization revolving around sectarian markers or signifiers of identity only served to bolster primordial sectarian notions of sameness and difference that have been a legacy of decades of dictatorship. Naturally, this nurtured a perception of the Sunni-Shi'ite divide as marking the boundaries of two distinct and differentiated components of Iraqi society. While living on the same territory, each has its own self-understanding against the backdrop of separate concerns and historical memory. Thus, the possibility of fostering a strong and overarching sense of national identity became more distant than ever before.

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[147] Robert W. Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1987): p. 167.

Division, however, begets division. And in the case of post-Saddam Iraq hardening sectarian solidarities could not resist an atomistic impulse which fostered the emergence of intra-sectarian particularisms. It was in the federalist debate where this logic of fragmentation into ever smaller and more particularistic units found its expression. Federalist schemes galore have been proposed on both sides of the sectarian divide. They mainly took up the gauntlet of addressing political and economic marginalization. The plurality of imagined intra-sectarian collectivities on which this plethora of schemes is based is beyond the scope of this study. Suffice it to say here that the federalist debate draws attention to an increasing social fragmentation as a result of fraying social cohesion and a surfeit of feelings of exclusion and marginalization. Efforts aimed at constituting new sub-national regional borders are a symptom of the ghettoization of identity in post-Saddam Iraq.

CONCLUSION

"We shall not cease from our exploration.
And at the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time."

T. S. Eliot, "The Four Quartets"

This study sought to contribute to broadening the scope of social scientific explanations of the relationship between sectarianism and nation-state formation by exploring and appraising this relationship from a political science perspective in the case of modern Iraq. This relationship highlights the relevance of primordial sectarian attachments for the study of state-making and nation-building. But the primordialism line of analysis is undoubtedly not without its limitations. Recognizing the limitations of an essentialist understanding which conceives of primordial attachments as being ascribed and innate, in other words givens or fixed data, the study proceeded from a constructivist standpoint that sought to capture how primordial attachments are continuously reconstructed and articulated against the backdrop of historical change. By jettisoning the essentialist approach to the claims of primordialism, I argued for a reconfigured concept of primordialism governed by a shift to an understanding of primordial attachments as socially constructed realities. Thusly reconfigured, primordial attachments mesh with the socio-political, ideational, institutional and other contexts in which they operate. They ebb and flow as they are continuously reconstructed and rearticulated in tandem with developments at the socio-political level.

6.1. The Social Construction of Primordial Sectarianism in Iraq

"You cannot step into the same river twice, for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you."

Heraclitus of Ephesus

It was in this theoretical spirit that the foregoing chapters waded into analytical waters to uncover the factors that blunted the homogenizing edge of the modern Iraqi nation-state, thus making sectarianism an enduring feature of the state-making trajectory in Iraq. These chapters investigated the failure of the modern Iraqi nation-state to resolve inherent tensions between primordial sectarian identities and concepts of unified statehood and uniform citizenry. For all its claims of being a homogenizing enterprise, the process of building a nation-state in Iraq did not stem the possibility of the resurgence of lurking primordial particularisms, especially sectarianism. To the contrary, as we showed in this study, it seems to have helped fuel that resurgence. This study unraveled the multiple roots of sectarianism which undermined the integrative impulse of the modern Iraqi nation-state. It showed how sectarian imbalance in the composition of the country's political and military elites collaborated with historical narratives embedded in the curriculum and contending discourses on collective identity to sharpen sectarianism. The preceding chapters interweaved the effects of the makeup of political elites, the content of educational curricula, and contending visions of collective identity, into our narrative of the problem of sectarianism in Iraq. While the analysis traced each component of this trinity – elites, curricula and visions of collective identity – separately, it did not lose sight of how they influenced and shaped each other. The themes addressed in these chapters do not constitute an assemblage of divergent topics but rather interconnected aspects or faces of the multifaceted phenomenon of sectarianism in Iraq.

From our constructivist standpoint, which liberates the understanding of primordialism from the fetters of essentialism, the past and the present are ineluctably bound up together. History is important in the production of frames of reference for a collective memory and culture which infuse a group with bonds of unity and a sense, even myths, of uniqueness. By looking at the primordial past we showed that Sunni-Shiᶜite interactions before the creation of Iraq as a Westphalian, territorial nation-state cultivated repositories of divergent collective memories and motifs that are transferred from one generation to another. Equally important, they also shaped dynamics of inclusion and exclusion favorable to the Sunni Arabs following the establishment of Iraq.

But traumas have also been core ingredients of the remembered pasts of the Sunni and Shiᶜite communities in Iraq. The cumulative effect of multiple traumas seeped into the collective consciousness of both sectarian communities over centuries of inter-communal strife. It was

only natural for responses to such traumatic events, and the accompanying mass deaths and bloodshed, to "involve elements of fear and a sense of vulnerability." Such trauma-laden collective memories left simmering sectarian tensions that could be recalled in times of crisis. "When collective sadness is accompanied by anger," Arthur G. Neal reminds us, "a volatile situation frequently develops."[1]

Primordial sectarianism in modern Iraq grew in part out of the feelings of entitlement and/or exclusion stoked by the uneven distribution of political power and privileges among members of self-conscious sectarian entities irrespective of their religious devotion or piety. Drawing on primary and secondary sources and field interviews, this study traced the link between the uneven sectarian composition of the upper political elite stratum and the accentuation of primordial sectarian solidarities despite the adoption of homogenizing policies by the modern state. It found that this uneven sectarian makeup of the ruling elites nurtured exclusionary practices and concomitant feelings of political marginalization among subaltern sectarian groups, the Shiᶜites before 2003 and the Sunnis in the post-2003 period, which hardened primordial sectarian identities. The relative political advantage of the Sunni Arabs in the corridors of power under the monarchy contributed to the perpetuation of a minority-dominated political system. Rule continued to be identified with the narrow interests of the Sunni Arab elite after the establishment of the republic. The Sunni Arabs' preponderance in the officer corps and military command stacked the deck in their favor. Their political leverage under military rule reflected their high numbers in the officer corps which was a breeding ground for successive regime changes through military takeovers of power. Thus, Sunni preeminence in the military became a source of the disadvantageous imbalance that continued to beset the Shiᶜites following the toppling of the monarchy. This perpetuated a historical trend of political marginalization of Shiᶜites. Under the Ottomans Shiᶜites were institutionally marginalized and mistrusted. Consequently, they were largely shut out of the military and the bureaucracy. The transformation of the state under Saddam Hussein into a system of clan rule, which derives its main support from Sunni Arab tribes in the Sunni triangle, further undermined communitarian inclusion, reawakened sub-national affinities and identities and, in turn, deepened societal cleavages.

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[1] Arthur G. Neal, *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century* (Armonk, NY; and London: M. E. Sharpe Inc., 1998): pp. 4-5.

This research project demonstrated that prior to the toppling of Saddam Hussein, the uneven distribution of power resources among ethno-sectarian communities which favored Sunni Arabs was an informal, unwritten and non-institutionalized reality of political life in Iraq. Our study investigated the institutionalization of the communally-based stratification of the ruling elite in the Shiᶜite-dominated post-2003 state apparatus through the manipulation of lustration laws as well as the emerging explicit consociational power-sharing arrangements. The fall of Saddam's carapace of tyranny and the flawed attempts to build a post-Saddam power-sharing order served only to aggravate communal tensions that transformed the Iraqi political scene into an ethno-sectarian minefield. Our examination showed that, rather than weakening the sectarian solidarities sharpened during decades of dictatorship, the new system created conditions that made Iraqis more inclined to place their sectarian sub-national identity at a premium. As we saw in this study, the IGC established a norm of political conduct that was destined to have repercussions on the composition of government bodies and inter-communal relations. By parceling out power according to communal identities, the IGC inaugurated a system of governance based on identity politics that thrives on widening communal differences. The respective quotas assigned to different communities would set a precedent with wider implications for the distribution of posts in state institutions and bureaucracy in the future. The effects of the logic of identity politics embodied in the IGC were exacerbated by an increasingly shrill ethno-sectarian political discourse.

The apportionment of power to reflect society's communal constellations, which was aimed at instituting a fair distribution of power resources with an eye to reduce inter-communal tensions, did not produce its desired outcome. More ominously, it fostered the conduct of politics and popular mobilization along primordial sectarian identifications. As we saw in this study, divvying up power among political blocs representing ethno-sectarian communities increased the importance of sectarian identification as a main organizing principle of politics. By nurturing a permissive environment for political parties and politicians to advocate communal interests and articulate demands along communal lines, the quota system cultivated a politics of identity that values primordial differences. In such an atmosphere, primordial ethnic and sectarian affiliations are not mere properties of individual identity but rather attributes of group solidarities. This confirms observations by scholars who have

argued that, instead of regulating conflict in a divided society, consociational arrangements tend to re-affirm and deepen societal divisions.[2]

The Sunni Arab community has accumulated a catalogue of grievances in post-Saddam Iraq. These grievances stem mainly from the disenfranchisement of tens of thousands of former soldiers and government employees, acts of violence and reprisal attacks against Sunni civilians and mosques by Shiᶜite militias, and heavy-handed counter-insurgency measures by the US-led coalition and Iraqi troops such as mass arrests, indiscriminate destruction of property, and the rough treatment of suspected insurgents in front of their wives and children. This study explained that, as a form of political exclusion, de-Baᶜathification gained prominence is the oppositional political discourse of Sunni Arabs who repeatedly called for putting an end, or at least a fundamental shift in the application of, this policy. It nurtured feelings of being reduced to an inferior 'Other' among Sunni Arabs. Disillusioned Sunni Arabs felt shut out of effective and meaningful participation in the decision-making process by virtue of their identity and that their needs and aspirations are not addressed or taken seriously.

In the final analysis, rather than acting as a unifying commonwealth promoting the common good for the entire people or society, the state became an arena where sectarian, ethnic and other divisions are played out. Politics tended to increasingly slide into a zero-sum communal contest over power resources, thus providing an added impetus for political organization based on ethno-sectarian grounds which had taken root in the Iraqi opposition to Saddam Hussein. The inability of the new polity to be inclusive in a context defined by differentiated social segments contributed to a dynamic of polarization and steadily deepening rifts that inexorably fueled the tendency for mass mobilization along communal lines. Amid the resulting chain reaction of incessant communal polarization, political power was no longer viewed as a national patrimony, but rather a communal entitlement.

As such, the modern diffusion or reproduction of the primordial self-images of sectarian groups, and their attendant differentiation, in Iraq has been inexorably connected to power politics. It occurred under the influence of multiple struggles over power and symbolic resources, as well as several socio-political developments, set into motion by the creation of

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[2] Ben Reilly and Andrew Reynolds, *Electoral Systems and Conflict in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1999): p. 30.

the nation-state. As we saw in the preceding chapters, the key turning points that helped breathe a new life into primordial sectarian identities in modern Iraq have been linked to politics. Our investigative foray into the patterns of inclusion and exclusion in Iraqi political life laid bare their functional utility as means of maintaining social control and systems of domination. The ever-present play of moments of political contestation and struggle for power resources in this ongoing saga of sectarianism underscores the nature of the question of primordial sectarianism in Iraq as political *par excellence*.

It is not only the politics of inclusion and exclusion in Iraq that lays bare the fact that Iraqi communities coexist in fragile balance. If the uneven communal makeup of the ruling elites spawned an imbalance between communities in the corridors of power, nurturing perceptions of entitlement and deprivation, the government's educational policy unwittingly contributed to widening the gap between communities rather than narrowing it. As we explained in this study, state efforts to recruit education into the project of fostering a unifying supra-communal national identity have backfired and created an added impetus to the socialization of ethno-sectarian identity and, by implication, exacerbated the potential for mobilization along primordial loyalties. Ironically, the efforts made by dominant groups to instill in students a sense of cultural homogeneity and attachment to the territorial state strengthened the awareness of us-versus-them differences along ethno-sectarian communal lines.

Narratives reconstructing the past adopted in the curriculum in pre- and post-2003 Iraq became enmeshed with divergent sectarian discourses about history and communal power relations. This study examined the 'boomerang effect' of the modern system of standardized state education in Iraq, which was aimed at instilling a common national identity but inadvertently contributed to the heightening of sectarianism. By giving primacy to the historical narrative of dominant sectarian groups, history textbooks in Iraq transformed education into a site of struggle between divergent communal historical narratives. Moreover, embedding hegemonic communal narratives in the curriculum undermined the credibility of the educational system in the eyes of subaltern sectarian groups and weakened the homogenizing potential of state-governed mass education in Iraq. Although formulated in modern idiom, the accent placed on the Sunni and Shiᶜite historical and religious narratives in the pre- and post-2003 curricula, respectively, gave rise to fears among communities of superimposing a single sectarian narrative and identity over Iraqi society. In a divided society where zero-sum logic dominates perceptions of communal interactions, privileging a certain

communal narrative can only nurture feelings of unease and malaise among other communities.

The injection of a certain communal discourse in the official corpus of curricular knowledge of history, which mirrored the political hegemony of dominant sectarian groups, rubbed against the grain of communal sentiment and engendered emotional and cognitive dissonance among non-dominant groups. Little wonder, then, that it provoked masked forms of resistance that heightened the prominence of sectarian identification as a marker of identity. This study uncovered the dynamics of the consequent communal reactions, including the promotion of sectarian 'hidden transcripts' among subaltern groups behind the back of state power, which implicated education in the renewed salience of primordial sectarian identification. The forms of resistance engendered by the premium placed on sectarian narratives in the curriculum accentuated the sectarian notions of sameness and difference in society.

The study, moreover, showed that the effects of hierarchies of political and cultural power on sectarian polarization in Iraq were compounded by clashing visions of collective identity. In examining the ideational facets of primordial sectarianism in Iraq, the study looked at discourse as the site of the production of representations of the self and the 'Other.' It dissected the sectarian dimensions of the Arab nationalist discourse which embodied raw sectarian prejudices defining the delimitation of the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in the political community. Anti-Shiᶜism in the Iraqi discourse of Arab nationalism, which has provided the ideological moorings of the modern Iraqi state established following World War I, masqueraded in the garb of xenophobic anti-Persian motifs. The study found that, by camouflaging anti-Shiᶜite sectarianism, the anti-Persian streak in the nation-state's Pan-Arab ideology undermined Iraq's national integration project. As we showed, this discourse, which implicitly reduced the Shiᶜites into a potentially disloyal community, had serious implications for conceptions of citizenship, giving rise to inequality of status and treatment based on sectarian affiliation. By painting certain categories of citizens with the brush of 'Otherness,' this discourse nurtured differential access to citizenship or unequal citizenship. It also paved the way for efforts by the Baᶜath Party regime to frame the descendants of Iraqi Shiᶜites who had held Persian citizenship during the Ottoman times as outsiders. The resultant differential positioning of communities in society, as well as the attendant questioning of the loyalty of a sectarian community to the state, led to the legitimation of the excessive use of state violent

and repressive measures against this sectarian group, including mass deportation. The case of the Shiᶜite Fayli Kurds, who were deported *en masse* from the country in the late 1970s and early 1980s, was explored as an example where representations of alienness were invoked by the government to legitimize its march down the grim road of mass deportation and extermination against certain categories of citizens.

The study found that the toppling of the Baᶜath Party regime did not usher in a radical shift in the visions of collective identity towards the recovery or construction of an all-inclusive national imagery that steers clear of consecrating primordial ethno-sectarian affiliations as primary foci of identification. It explained that the slide from a totalizing Pan-Arab ideology in the pre-2003 period toward the atomistic thrust of the federalist debate in the post-2003 period is symptomatic of the ghettoization of identity in Iraq, where sectarian and intra-sectarian particularisms are locked in a competition over the status of a primary focus of allegiance. The federalist debate has highlighted an aspect of societal rifts along ethno-sectarian fault lines that evolved beyond a mere struggle for the spoils of office and into a clash over the principles undergirding discordant perceptions of the primary markers of collective identity. The profusion of conceptual formulations in the emergent discourse on collective identity mirrors the slide toward societal disintegration and inter-communal discord in post-Saddam Iraq. This investigative undertaking effectively showed the dialectic, dual function of this discourse as a medium for both the production and expression of a fractured society and a schizoid national soul. Discourse here acts as a vehicle for the reinforcement and cultivation of communal binary oppositions and segmentation rather than a means for the development of justifications and opportunities for inter-communal coexistence and coalescence in a richly diverse societal landscape.

The story of the resurgence of primordial sectarian affiliations in Iraq reveals a distraught society reeling under the effects of sanctions, war, repression and inter-communal violence. It also informs us that there is nothing immutable or inevitable about the articulation of collective or communal identities. Identification is not rooted in nature but rather a fluid constructivist process. It shifts in tandem with the twists and turns of the vicissitudes of an oftentimes convoluted history. There is no essentialist attribution of intrinsic, fundamental qualities of a collectivity or community. Nor is there any *a priori* supposition about the nature of relations between them. No cosmic law rendered Sunni-Shiᶜite interactions in Iraq intrinsically antagonistic or inured to hostility. Sunnis and Shiᶜites in Iraq were at times able

to make a move beyond discord, hostility and division towards a growing sense of harmony, solidarity and being integral parts of a single religious community facing common danger.

As we saw in the preceding chapters, primordial sectarianism, in the case of Iraq, proved malleable and sectarian identity became a primary source of mobilization. The implications of this resurgence of primordial attachments can be far reaching. As Michael J. Piore has pointed out, identity-based mobilization is potentially problematic because it tends to spawn isolated "communities of meaning." Being narrowly focused, identity-based mobilization is not conducive for cross-community exchanges.[3] Herein resides the dialectic nature of the resurgence of primordial identities. Much as they are by-products of power contests, resurgent primordial attachments also have the capacity to nurture and exacerbate the intensity of political competition. This dialectic web of interdependencies was captured by Robert W. Hefner, who writes: "If "primordial" social identities in modern states have any meaning at all, they will remain vital precisely because they can be rendered so new, responding to and redefining the play of social forces in national polity and culture."[4]

In spite of deliberate efforts to banish or disparage it from public discourses under the modern state system, sectarianism has nevertheless been an integral part of the modern Iraqi experience. Sectarianism was embedded in the body politic of the secular Iraqi state. Passionate proclamations of commitment to an all-embracing nationalism camouflaged and sought to deflect resentment of other marginalized groups. A deep look at Iraqi society today reveals that the Iraqis' identity is torn between multiple, sometimes contradictory and conflicting, focal points of primordial loyalty, visions of collective selfhood, and social imaginaries. The ideological hegemony of Pan-Arabism has not been conducive to the nurturing of inter-communal trust and inculcating a sense of unified nationhood, uniform citizenry and national homogeneity. The failure of the Pan-Arab foundational myths in fostering a strong, overarching sense of collective identity is indicative of the broader failure of the integrative impetus of nation-building in Iraq. As the contours of an overarching Iraqi national identity became increasingly foggy in the emergent post-Saddam polity, communities deployed the notion and demands of identity-based federalism to stake claims to what they saw as a fairer share of power and influence.

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[3] Michael J. Piore, *Beyond Individualism*, 1st Edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Universtiy Press, 1995).
[4] Robert W. Hefner, "Politics and Social Identity: Introduction," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (August 1987): p. 493.

As this study informs us, the continued controversy over the frontiers of imagined collective identity underscores the fact that Iraqi identity has yet to take root as the principal moral good providing a unitary organizing principle in the territorial nation-state of Iraq. As a sense of group belonging, Iraqi identity is flanked by competing divisional cleavages along communal lines. While it survives, Iraqi identity finds itself besieged by a mounting upsurge in the valorization of ethnic, sectarian and other communal differences. But when a collective identity defines itself in terms of a sectarian "Us," it does so based on a reference to a non-territorialized sectarian "Other." In Iraq's social setting of multiple group identity, the integration project of the modern nation-state accentuated, rather than diluted, primordial notions of identification. Iraqi identity as an overarching sense of belonging coterminous with the nation-state has failed to prevail.

6.2. Towards Rethinking the Modern State in the Arab East

"He who practices this science needs to know the rules of statecraft, the nature of existing things, and the difference between nations, regions and tribes in regard to way of life, qualities of character, customs, sects, schools of thought, and so on. He must distinguish the similarities and differences between the present and past, and know the various origins of dynasties and communities, the reason for their coming into existence, the circumstances of the persons involved in them, and their history. He must go on until he has complete knowledge of the causes of every event, and then he will examine the information which has been handed down in the light of his principles of explanation. If they are in harmony, this information is sound, otherwise it is spurious."

Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*,
translated by Franz Rosenthal

The amorphousness of national identity in Iraq is an indication that the formation of the nation-state as a homogenizing commonwealth remains incomplete. It is not that a central government has not been able to put in place the bureaucratic machinery necessary to exercise control over its territory, but rather that the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in state formation inspired by *raison d'état* have paradoxically constrained and undermined its homogenizing efforts. The accentuation, if not even radicalization, of primordial sectarian loyalties in the course of the making of nation and state in Iraq calls for rethinking some assumptions about the modernizing thrust of the modern state in Iraq. I am of the mind that

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the insights gained from this reconsideration are also applicable, to varying degrees, to the modernizing role of the state in the context of the Arab East in general. The salience of a multiplicity of primordial loyalties in the various countries of the Arab East presents efforts to build a modern state and fashion a homogeneous national identity with similar challenges. In an attempt to contribute to rethinking the assumptions about the modernizing effects of the modern state, the following are some ruminations and reflections presented along three fault lines: state-society, state-religion/sect and national identity-primordial identification.

6.2.1. The State – Society Fault Line

One of the striking features of the modern and modernizing state in Iraq is that the state's relative autonomy from the fetters of social forces fostered policies that undermined the development of a national consensus necessary to bridge societal rifts along sub-national primordial line. The state's autonomy has been exemplified particularly by its ability to mobilize excessive force against communities. The Baᶜathists who came to power in 1968 instituted a regime which employed the resources of the state to terrorize the populace into submission. When the Baᶜath Party took over power, it had not managed to penetrate society. With its very weak grassroots foothold, the new regime concentrated on the political-organizational and crude coercive means of the state to expand its base and coerce loyalty. Under Baᶜath Party rule, the process of building Party-led bureaucracy, civil administration and repressive apparatus reached its zenith. The colossal Baᶜath Party-led state machine, which was propelled by increasing oil revenues, featured the culmination of a trend which saw a constantly expanding organizational state apparatus since the formation of the modern Iraqi nation-state. This apparatus helped the regime extend its controls over society and centralization. But the Baᶜathist state apparatus was not only larger than its predecessors, it was also capable of acting while paying less heed to opposition in society than any of the earlier regimes could ever have imagined. In the words of Fouad Ajami, "the alienness of the state, and the independence from the society afforded it by the oil revenues, turned it into a criminal enterprise, bereft of mercy and restraint."[5]

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[5] Fouad Ajami, *The Foreigner's Gift: The Americans, the Arabs and the Iraqis in Iraq* (New York, London, Toronto, and Sydney: Free Press, 2006): p. 334. A good, but concise, analysis of the conceptual underpinnings of despotism under Baᶜath Party rule can be found in Ismaᶜil Shakir al-Rifaᶜi, *Tashrih al-Istibdad: al-Nidham al-*

The modern Iraqi state administration operated in a heterogeneous social space where various segments of the population recognized different traditional sources of power, authority and identity. Foremost among the multiple primary sources of identity were religious, linguistic, ethnic, tribal and sectarian solidarities. This rich pluralism complicated the challenge of molding a civic national identity using the power of the state. Power relationships in the process of nation-building and the exigencies of regime consolidation exposed the fragility of cross-communal coalition building. Incessant competition between rival political elites institutionalized the unequal distribution of power among communities and stunted the march to nationhood, whereby the primary foundations of solidarity shift to an overarching allegiance to a national community and a common national interest. These power struggles for leadership and competing claims for communal shares in the power pie tended to strengthen residual sub-national solidarities and their role in the arena of national politics.

In the guise of defending the cause of Arab nationalism and social revolution, Ba^{c}ath Party repression against any sign of political opposition, real or perceived, destroyed the possibility for any autonomous societal activism or mass politics outside the scope of government structures. Bloody repression under the Ba^{c}ath picked up pace gradually through the 1970s. Institutions and associations of civil society, such as professional organizations and labor unions, became appendages of the authoritarian state. The Ba^{c}ath Party itself was transformed into an instrument of social control and loyalty to the ruling clique, dominating not only key positions in the corridors of power but also institutions of state and society. In Ba^{c}athist Iraq, the public sphere, with its democratic aspirations where citizens can engage in critical debate over issues of concern to public policy and society, was obliterated. All that remained was an utter public void. As Sami Zubaida puts it:

> "The society of citizens was eliminated. They were regimented into the ranks of the party and of loyalty to the ruling clique, their intellectual and cultural products dictated by these considerations. Those that resisted suffered the usual horrors of imprisonment, torture, and execution and often the victimization of their families. The lucky ones escaped to join the over-expanding communities of exiles (estimated in the millions). Those that remained were reduced to voices of the

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^{c}*Iraqi Namudhajan* [An Autopsy of Despotism: The Iraqi Regime as an Example], 1st Edition (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kunuz al-Adabiyyah, 1999).

rulers, often persecuted and humiliated by party and security thugs put in charge of universities and cultural institutions."[6]

In this atmosphere of national trauma, primordial loyalties were plumbed and accentuated away from the watchful eye of the totalitarian state. Repressed Shiᶜite sectarian identity became a repository of alienation from the state. It lurked beneath the surface only to explode to the fore with the loosening repressive grip of the regime in 1991. A by-product of the employment of atavistic forms of state violence to suppress the post-Gulf War Uprising in southern Iraq, and the communal fears that the rebellion engendered among Iraqi Sunnis, strengthened lingering resentments among the Shiᶜites, contributed to fueling a subterranean groundswell of primordial sectarian identity in society, and ultimately deepened the Sunni-Shiᶜite sectarian rift.

From the outset, power was distributed differentially among communities in Iraq. Unequal access to political power along communal lines fostered diversified communal perceptions of, and relations with, the Iraqi state. The differential distribution of power led to social stratification whereby communities occupied different places in the political order. Sectarian affiliation was one determinant of this social stratification. This constricted the state's ability to cultivate a moral texture of Sunni-Shiᶜite harmony in Iraq. While minority Sunni Arabs held a disproportionate share of power, the Shiᶜite majority was marginalized in the political architecture that the British fashioned for the modern Iraqi nation-state. This unequal distribution of power resources continued down through the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime only to pave the way for new forms of inclusion and exclusion that further stoked sectarian identification.

6.2.2. The State – Religion/Sect Fault Line

Conceptually, the notion of nation-building and state-making is premised on the assumption, whether implicit or explicit, that the process of building modern state machinery and fostering a homogenizing national identity that transcends sub-national affiliations is at its core a secularizing exercise. Accordingly, secularism and the banishment of the sacred from

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[6] Sami Zubaida, "The rise and fall of civil society in Iraq," in Haldun Gülalp, ed., *Citizenship and Ethnic Conflict: Challenging the nation-state* (London; and New York, NY: Routledge, 2006): p. 127.

the political sphere are the *sine qua non* of modern statehood. But, as the case of Iraq shows, the presumed general secularizing impact of the state seems to be overstated. Nation-building and state-making in Iraq did not consign religiosity and sectarianism to exile. The advance of the process of building a modern state in Iraq merely masked the schizoid and fragmented character of Iraqi society along sectarian lines. In the process of building modern state institutions, political life became a site of intersection and contestation between state and sectarian affiliations. Within such a scheme of things, sectarianism and sectarian passions tended to heighten at critical historical junctures that entail a re-negotiation of state-society relations and communal access to state and power resources. The inescapable irony is that policies and efforts designed to strengthen the state were compounded by internal conflicts that hardened particularistic sectarian identities and undermined the formation of a new national identity coterminous with the boundaries of the new state.

The strengthening of the state in Iraq did not always involve increased secularization. Prompted by *raison d'état* politics and the imperatives of regime survival to jump on the religiosity bandwagon in the 1990s, the Iraqi state adopted policies that strengthened primordial sectarian solidarities among Iraqis. Rising piety in the 1990s was set on a dialectical course, i.e. exacerbating the gulf separating Iraq's two main Muslim communities. The increased religious observance was a highly cognitive process characterized by a marked doctrinal orientation. It prompted the faithful on both sides of the Muslim sectarian divide to develop a keen interest in theological details and key historical way-stations or nodal points in the development of their respective sectarian groups. Concern for doctrinal truth and uniformity made them acutely aware of the differences defining the Sunni-Shi͗ite divide. As Fanar Haddad has pointed out, "the more observant someone is, the more he/she will have to identify with and follow a school of thought; the more this is the case, the more it will be necessary to exclude the other from one's religious view as an impure or wanting version of 'the truth.'"[7] More ominously, the salience of sectarian sub-national primordial affiliations and self-identification comes at the expense of the supra-communal national identity. During times of heightened primordial attachments, membership in sub-national groups tends to become exclusionary in the sense that compatriots from other sub-national groups are, *ipso facto*, exiled to categories of communal 'Others.' With sectarian communities, adherence to correct doctrine and/or descent defines who is in and who is out. Little wonder that increased

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[7] Fanar Haddad, *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic Visions of Unity* (London: Hurst & Company, 2011): p. 105.

religiosity across the sectarian divide in Iraq in the 1990s gave heightened expression to the staying power of pre-existing primordial sectarian identities.

The resurgence of the sacred that attended the unfolding of the process of nation-building and state-making in Iraq does not only call into question the presumed secularizing teleology of the modern state. It also calls for a paradigm shift toward a reconsideration of the relationship between religion and the state, of the presumed dichotomy between the heavenly realm of God and the worldly realm of Caesar. Much as this shift entails an end to the presumed exclusion of religion from public life, it does not entail the dethronement of Caesar. It rather entails a new vision that does not lose sight of the complementarities and links between the two realms. As Jürgen Habermas has aptly noted: "Both religious and secular mentalities must be open to a complementary learning process if we are to balance shared citizenship and cultural difference."[8]

6.2.3. *The National Identity – Primordial Identity Fault Line*

In the preceding chapters, we explored how a nominally non-sectarian modern state based on a concept of a unified nationhood ended up deepening primordial loyalties, including sectarianism, rather than promoting the crystallization of an Iraqi national identity. As progressive integration failed to extinguish primordial loyalties to the tribe, sect or ethnic group, sectarianism persisted as an enduring feature of the process of state-making in Iraq. It was a tale of how Iraqis became ever more conscious of their primordial sectarian group associations following the establishment of the modern Iraqi nation-state. Yet, the sharpening of sectarian identification did not amount to a complete displacement of national identity. Sunnis and Shiʿites in Iraq continue to view themselves as Iraqis. Notwithstanding the heightening of primordial sectarian solidarities, Iraqi national identity is alive, albeit weakened. In other words, national identity coexists or cohabitates with primordial identities. This sounds a warning against making any exaggerated claims of primordialism. In fact, this study has shown that, while multiple markers of identity lurk within the confines of the individual and collective psyches, the sharpening of any particular marker is contextualized,

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[8] Jürgen Habermas, "Notes on a post-secular society," *singandsight.com*; available at: http://www.signandsight.com/features/1714.html; accessed on: Saturday, September 22, 2012.

reflecting its relation to manifold and shifting interactions and developments that make up the panoply of human experience.

Primordialism, in the process of state-making and nation-building, matters and has meaning or relevance not at the individual level, but rather in the course of inter-group competition and antagonism. One potentially perilous or dark side of the modern nation-state is that submerged primordial attachments and sentiments are indeed capable, in their own right, of infusing sectarianism, as well as ethnic and other primordial biases, into the structure of the state. In fact, overlapping and shifting loyalties exist in any given society spawning moments of both divisiveness and harmony in cross-communal interactions. Pre-state primordial solidarities do linger after the emergence of new state structures and loyalties.

In the final analysis, the process of national integration in Iraq built a state but failed to build a nation. It reinforced political inequality that stoked the fires of ethnic and sectarian identities. By failing to curtail, let alone obliterate, the centrifugal tendencies of communal, especially ethnic and sectarian, identities, national integration fell short of fostering a national identity as the primary focus of allegiance amid a multitude of competing allegiances. National cohesion could not be achieved solely through forced political centralization, social obedience and coercive control. The fragile unity of the Iraqi state looked ever more precarious at the time of the US-led invasion. The state lacked any reliable local-political means to reach, reorganize and reorient society. Whatever support it had proved politically unreliable and ineffective.

6.3. The Way Forward: Research Limitations and Potential Future Directions

> ""Beauty is truth, truth beauty," - that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."
>
> John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

Limitations present researchers with boundaries which make their research efforts more focused and practical. This study was limited to the resurgence of primordial sectarianism

within the trajectory of the making of nation and state in Iraq. Due to the multiplicity of primordial attachments in Iraq, which include kinship, tribal, regional, ethnic, and other solidarities, limiting the exploration to a single primordial solidarity, i.e. sectarianism, afforded the research a degree of specificity that allowed an in-depth exploration of the interaction between sectarianism and the process of state-making and nation-building in Iraq. However, our approach which focused on the main Muslim sectarian divide did not include the broader spectrum of religious and sectarian affiliations in Iraq. Highlighting a certain primordial attachment and solidarity should not overshadow the relevance of other loyalties to the study of primordialism. Iraq is home to several other Muslim and non-Muslim religious communities, such as Shabaks, Kaka'is, Christians, Jews, Eyzidis (Yazidis) and Sabeans (Mandeans). The social construction of collective primordial identity among these communities and its relation to state-making and nation-building presents social scientists from various disciplines with a plethora of uncharted research opportunities. Naturally, a focus on sectarianism leaves out important questions regarding the relationship between other primordial attachments and the process of state-making and nation-building. This leaves space for future research activities to lay out for themselves the task of broadening the scope of analysis to include other primordial attachments, such as tribal and ethnic solidarities. The general tendency of most researchers working on Iraq is to view ethnic plurality as being confined to the country's three main ethnic groups: Arabs, Kurds and Turkmens. This is an oversimplification of the rich ethnic societal landscape in Iraq which also includes smaller communities such as Armenians, Blacks, especially in Basra, and Iraqis of Persian and Indo-Pakistani descent.

Limitations also involve difficulties in broadening the scope of research. This study started off with the realization that the phenomenon of sectarianism is not restricted to the realms of politics, education policy, state ideology or visions of collective identity, but finds expressions in other spheres of social existence. The original plan was to explore the sectarian symbolic capital in Iraqi society which thrives on implicit sectarian social prejudices that are often expressed inadvertently through negative associations toward particular groups, dressed up as social satire and jokes, or cloaked in terminology, indeed slurs, disparaging certain sectarian groups. A case in point is the negative use by urbanites of the derogatory terms of *shuruqi* or *mi^{c}idan* to refer to rural or water buffalo herding Shi^{c}ite Arabs in southern Iraq. These terms are sometimes used more broadly to refer to rural migrants from southern Iraq in general. However, continued instability and large-scale

violence in Iraq, despite security gains over the past few years, precluded the possibility of conducting the necessary field research to probe this aspect of sectarianism. The longed for restoration of peace and security in Iraq would make this kind of field research possible in the future. It is hoped that upon reaching the sunny uplands of stability, Iraq would also be different in many respects: an Iraq that celebrates diversity but is free of its multiple polarities; an Iraq where heterogeneity is seen as a God-given bounty to treasure rather than a sort of a Mesopotamian spell or curse; and an Iraq that is at peace with itself and its region.

APPENDIX I
The Najaf Charter of 1935[1]

We, the undersigned chiefs of Middle Euphrates tribes, have submitted our legitimate demands, whose aim was purely to reform the situation of the Iraqi Kingdom so that Iraq would progress to the level of developed nations and march forward on the basis of justice and equality among all its classes, and races, and prove its fitness for independence under the banner of his Hashemite majesty, may his power last. We have submitted our demands to his eminence our spiritual leader, the greatest reformer, the proof of Islam and the Muslims, Shaykh Muhammad Hussein Aal Kashif al-Ghita', so that he presents them to our venerated king his majesty King Ghazi I and his esteemed government, and request him to fulfill them. His eminence acts as a representative for all of us. He is authorized [to act] with respect to these [demands] and his authority is exercised over us, as far as our interests are concerned. We have given him this covenant as a bearer of witness and attestation on us, along with a commitment and pledge from us all to preserve the interests of the foreigners in the country, to completely comply with international treaties, as well as to persevere to achieve these reformist articles and accomplish our legal wishes regardless of what that would cost us. This has been written as an exposition.

Article 1: The Iraqi government has, since its formation until today, followed a foolish policy that does not coincide with the interests of the people and has adopted sectarian discrimination as a basis for governance, whereby it represented the majority of the people by one or two ministers from among those who (for the most part) acquiesce with the government's policy. It has followed a similar path in the employment policy whereby bias appeared clearly in selecting the employees and the members of the National Council, whereas the Organic Law did not discriminate between the sons of the nation, as stated in Article Six of the Organic Law. So, in order to foster serenity and tranquility in the souls of the people and remove discrimination between the sons of the nation, all must take part in the

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[1] ʿAbd al-Karim al-Uzri, *Mushkilat al-Hukum fi al-ʿIraq: Tahlil li al-ʿAwamil al-Taʾifiyyah wa al-ʿUnsuriyyah fi Taʿatil al-Hukum al-Dimuqrati fi al-ʿIraq wa al-Hulul al-Dharuriyyah li al-Taghallub ʿAlayaha* [The Problem of Political Governance in Iraq: An Analysis of the Role of Sectarian and Racist Factors in Obstructing Democratic Governance in Iraq and the Solutions Necessary to Overcome Them] (London: no publisher, 1991): pp. 62-65.

Council of Ministers, the National Council, and the remaining positions of government, in addition to contributing to soldiery and taxation.

Article 2: The method of parliamentary elections has been abused to the extent that the National Council no longer provides true representation of the people. To ensure the elimination of manipulation on the part of the government, we are of the opinion that the amendment of the elections law on the basis of guaranteeing absolute freedom by imposing restrictions on indirect elections and considering every province as an independent electoral district is a must.

Article 3: Since Article 77 of the Organic Law states that judges must be appointed from among [the members of] the sect to which the majority of the population [in a certain area] belongs, we, therefore, demand the implementation of the provisions of the said article of the Organic Law, together with the necessity to teach the rulings of Ja^cafari jurisprudence in the Iraqi Law School.

Article 4: Since the Iraqi Cassation Court is the reference point for preserving the souls and monies of the people, and the Christian and Israelite sects as well as other races had previously been represented in it, we, therefore, demand having a Shi^cite member in each branch of the said court so that the hearts would be contented with the rulings of the courts.

Article 5: Since the press is the mouthpiece of the people, then all freedoms must be given to the press, administrative restrictions must be lifted, and responsibilities must be vested exclusively in the judicial authorities in line with the spirit of Article 12 of the Organic Law.

Article 6: Since the general endowments are Islamic and dedicated to serving the noble Shari^cah and providing for the livelihood of those devoted to this service, and that which branches out of it, while the government's policy went into other directions, and their revenues came to be spent on the administrative formations of the endowments, and the houses of learning and the mosques dedicated for worship were neglected, then this policy in administering the general endowments must be abandoned and their revenues must be spent on Islamic institutions generally.

Article 7: [We demand] broadening the scope of and introducing changes to the land settlement committees, through which agricultural settlement is achieved. We also demand expediting the implementation of the agricultural and industrial bank law and the granting of ownership of the plots of land to their holders without payment.

Article 8: [We demand] repealing the land and water taxes, the replacement of the quota tax levied on livestock with a consumption tax, and not to impose a tax on crane machinery.

Article 9: Positions in state administration are constantly swelling due to the instability of staffing, and the salaries of the employees are increasing in a manner that does not correspond to the economic situation, and to the standard of living. Moreover, the employees have gone too far in disregarding the interests of the people by not abiding by the laws. Therefore, fast measures must be taken to replace state employees who are known for misconduct and [enjoy an] unsavory reputation, to cut government spending by reducing the large salaries of employees to a reasonable level, and to reduce civilian and military pensions.

Article 10: Most state health, developmental, and educational institutions have not taken into account a fair ratio in the distribution of their [staffing] among the sons of the people, especially in the southern region of Iraq. Moreover, regulations and laws must be enacted to prevent the spread of social and moral diseases, to overhaul the educational curricula, to give religious classes a grade in the exams like other classes, and to pursue the preservation of morality by banning prostitution, the brazen selling of spirits, gambling and all that leads to the corruption of morality.

Article 11: [We call for] not harassing those who have taken part in the present nationalist movements from among the sons of the people, the employees or the members of the army and the police.

Article 12: [We demand] rescinding the provisions of the laws which contradict these demands and replacing them with that which guarantees fulfilling the abovementioned demands.

APPENDIX II
Shaykh Muhammad Ridha al-Shabibi's Memorandum of 1965[2]

Kind greetings, and thereafter,

I am glad to refer to our brief telephone conversation on the morrow of your assumption of the burdens of your office and the kind wishes of success which it included for you. I am also pleased to reinforce this conversation with this memorandum which clarifies a host of serious issues and problems facing the country. I wish you success in examining it point by point in order to pave the way for adopting its content as much as possible. What encouraged me to submit this memorandum in these very circumstances is that the premiership is occupied by a man of law and this is a good step. And what is better is that the official enjoys strong popular support and this is something that we are unsure of right now.

The patriotic feeling in Iraq used to find its expression in national devotion to and deep love of the land of the fathers and forefathers. That feeling was the primary incentive to protect the unity of the country. However, the events and catastrophes that had befallen it as a result of the conflict of beliefs and the sowing of divisions have undermined this noble feeling and banished it to far distances and bottomless depths, which, we worry, might give the lurking foreigner the opportunity to undermine our holy national unity. It is no longer a secret for anyone that the Iraqi nation is passing, in its present circumstances, through an epoch of its life for which it cannot be envied. How it could be envied for epochs characterized with an abundance of fears and problems, and the suspicions and possibilities permeating them. I recently had the opportunity to contact a group of the sons of the nation, and to discern the loci of their pain and sense the anger and disgruntlement rankling in their hearts. I am able, and rather see it as my duty, to briefly list aspects of this in the following points:

1. Mr. Prime Minister has said in his press conference: "The government is determined to restore constitutional life to the country and to hold free elections. Accordingly, the provisional period will evidently come to an end, the situation in the country will stabilize and the people will be able to exercise their legal right to elect those they deem fit to run the country and to bear its weighty responsibilities.

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[2] Samarra'i, Saᶜid al-, *al-Ta'ifiyyah fi al-ᶜIraq: al-Waqᶜi wa al-Hall* [Sectarianism in Iraq: The Fact and the Solution], 1ˢᵗ Edition (London: Mu'assat al-Fajr, 1413 A.H./1993 C.E.): pp. 399-404.

We emphasize the necessity to move soon to lay the foundations of the general elections law and present them to the people so as to express their opinion regarding them in order for the direct elections to be held at the time set in the provisional constitution, provided that this takes place under the supervision of an authority known for impartiality and uprightness, an authority that guarantees for the public the freedom of the press, opinion and expression.

2. In his press conference, Mr. Prime Minister addressed the issue of Arab unity and union and answered big queries which were raised about his statements. In our opinion, regardless of our political and social attitudes on Arab causes, geographic unity and the unity of history and fate are capable at any time to produce unity of action among us with which we face the challenges and dangers. Arab unity, in our opinion, is a goal that can be realized through a referendum on it by the people, and Arab solidarity is a means to protect it.

3. The government of Iraq has, specifically during our age, been steadily soaked in whims and animosities, although these animosities were camouflaged or wrapped in charming words. Criticizing the abovementioned government has not been easy, because in its outward form it is derived from principles on which the laws in force have been built. And sectarianism according to these laws has been deemed a punishable crime. But the essential point does not lie in abstract words and camouflaged legislations but rather in sound enforcement and accurate comprehension of the spirit of these laws. Sectarian discrimination has never been a barefaced problem of governance as it is today. It would not have been a source of anxiety preoccupying the people had you denounced discrimination, struggled against it and called for refraining from this obnoxious approach, and as long as sincere people call for following a different approach which takes into consideration absolute equality that has been emphasized by heavenly and positive law.

Rising Against the Policy of Discrimination

It is clear that the Iraqi people have risen up more than once against the loathsome policy of discrimination, and have worked, since their first revolt in 1920, toward the establishment of a national democratic government in whose building all the sons of the people partake and in whose bounties they bask, without any discrimination based on race or religion or sect. This people have blessed the July 14 Revolution and

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pinned great hopes on it. The sincere ones expected it to uproot the divisive bigotries by extirpating the bases and pillars of colonialism. However, the recent events have, with great regret, proven the resurrection of the spirit of division in forms that are more severe and violent than before.

We would not be revealing a secret if we say that the majority of the people are extremely infuriated because of that and believe that their dignity is insulted, their rights infringed upon, especially since this has been accompanied by the poor selection of some of those who represent them in the apparatus of government. If it was possible for this popular majority to turn a blind eye to some of its rights in government posts and to leave its educated youths who have high degrees as well as others jobless; if it was also possible for this majority to turn a blind eye to deliberate negligence toward revising its cultural, economic and social institutions; and if it was permissible for it to turn a blind eye to its honorable stands in jihad and sacrifice; it cannot turn a blind eye to the disparagement of its Arabism, authenticity, dignity and sincerity to the homeland and the state which it established on the skulls of its blessed martyrs – this being an irritating disparagement that is evoked by some officials and hireling newspapers.

As long as the present government has declared its commitment to candor in statements and correcting the deviant situation, we took the initiative to remind it of this reality, because the state and its apparatuses, functions, and fields of work are not the sole domain of one sect to the exclusion of another. Rather its duties are to be distributed according to merit. Perhaps a deep scrutiny of the large diwans and the persons occupying them would be sufficient to indicate a policy of favoritism, especially since most of those favored are often shorn of qualifications, abilities and sincerity.

4. There is no doubt that preserving national unity, sparing bloods and restoring tranquility and peace to our land in the dear north require us to undertake a close examination of the protracted Kurdish question. Since Arabs and Kurds are partners in this homeland, sharing its losses and benefits, we are of the opinion that our Kurdish brothers have the right to enjoy their legitimate rights by applying administrative decentralization within the framework of Iraqi unity. This is the principle that must be adopted as a method of rule in Iraq on the administrative level.

5. Syndicates in Iraq have been subjected to various kinds of political pressure which made them deviate from serving their members within the bounds of their powers and professional goals. The working segments have also borne the consequences of this. Many have been laid off and imprisoned and their families have been deprived of the sources of their sustenance. Accordingly, the government must reconsider the regulations of the labor law, taking into consideration the risks that have appeared during the implementation of the said law, and allow the emergence of professional syndicates that take the interests of their members seriously.

6. We do not want to wade into a debate on socialism as to whether it is suitable for Iraq or not. But we restrict ourselves to turning to the truths of the matters and to the outcomes that have actually resulted so that the judgment would be made based on reality rather than fiction. We notice that, when the socialist decisions were implemented on July 14, 1964, the financial and economic situation of Iraq has become increasingly chaotic and confused – rising unemployment, production shortage, squandering the state's money through the smuggling of national capital, and budget deficit.

Mr. Prime Minister has alluded to the nature of this socialism by saying in the press conference that this socialism did not change the economic and social situation in the country. Rather the conditions of a certain stratum of public servants and those who benefit at the expense of others have improved.

We believe that economic democracy is the system that suits our circumstance and needs. We believe in social justice and consider vast economic differences in our society to be a violation of the principles of this justice. Therefore, work could be undertaken towards reducing these differences through the distribution of taxes, increasing the gains of the working class, formulating a comprehensive economic development plan, and increasing public income.

We call on the government to address the joblessness that has resulted from this extemporary policy by finding jobs that guarantee for the jobless a level of living in line with the dignity of man. We also demand a reconsideration of the economic situation through the delineation of the fields of the public sector and the private sector so that citizens can set about performing their jobs with full freedom and complete assuredness.

The agricultural sector in Iraq represents a main source of public wealth. Some flaws that have appeared in the land reform law have led to the backwardness of agriculture.

For this reason, we demand a reconsideration of the bases of the said law in the light of the flaws that appeared during the implementation phase. We call for action to develop the conditions of agriculture, determine the duties of the farmers, and work to compensate those whose lands have been appropriated – the holders of the prescriptive right (*lazma*) – because we do not approve of the principle of confiscation at all.

We demand a reconsideration of the issue of taxes, especially the income tax and the corporate tax, and its amendments that have been done lately, and we encourage [conducting] a scientific study based on the experiences that these laws have had during implementation and we demand a review of the other laws which were enacted in conditions of haste so that they effectively contravened the principles of our Islamic Shariᶜah and were not suitable for our social conditions traditions. The Islamic Shariᶜah is the solid foundation upon which legislation is based. Any law or regulation that contravenes it rubs against the grain of the nation's sentiment and cherished creed.

7. Negotiations over oil between the Iraqi government and the companies working in Iraq continue to be shrouded in secrecy and their details are yet to become known. With all our due respect to the efforts that are being exerted to obtain Iraq's rights from the foreign companies, we see in Law No. 80 of the year 1063 and the National Oil Company a national gain that must be preserved. We urge the government to present the outcome of the negotiations to the representatives of the people when constitutional life in the country is restored so that the people say their word in it before committing itself to it.

8. The main goal of the formation of the Arab Socialist Union in Iraq was to include the members of syndicates and various working segments. But this organization has not been successful in spite of the support lent to it by the authorities, materially and morally. That is so because whims have turned it into an arena of conflict from the beginning. In addition, it was founded on the principle of monopolizing political activism and the notion of one-party and we do not approve of this as a method of rule in the country. Therefore, we demand that the government hastens to amend the law according to whose purview this organization was founded so that national segments which derive their opinions from the heart of this nation would be able to exercise their political activism.

In order to express our loyalty to our nation and homeland, to fulfill the duty which is incumbent upon us, and to clean our slate, we took the initiative to spell out the most important contemporary problems that occupy the minds of the masses. We hope that you will study them carefully and exert your efforts for the sake of reaching the right solutions for all of the abovementioned problems.

In conclusion we beseech Allah, the Sublime and the All-Powerful, to guide our steps. He is the Grantor of Success.

October 28, 1965

APPENDIX III
The Text of the Fatwa Issued by Ayatollah Abu al-Qassim al-Kho'i on March 5, 1991

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful

My dear faithful sons,

May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you.

Praise be to Allah for His graces and bounties, and may peace and blessings be upon the noblest of His prophets, Muhammad, and his pure household.

Now then: There is no doubt that preserving the territory of Islam and paying heed to its sanctities is a duty for every Muslim. I, in my turn, as I pray to Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, to grant you success in [achieving] everything in which uprightness for the Islamic *Ummah* lies, I urge you to be a good example for the sublime Islamic values by carefully following the precepts of the *Shari^cah* in all your action, and to put Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, in full view of your eyes in all your actions. You must preserve the people's properties, money and honor, as well as all public institutions, for they belong to all, and any deprivation from them is a deprivation for all.

I also urge you to bury all the corpses that are lying in the streets according to the principles of the *Shari^cah*, not to mutilate anybody, for it [i.e. mutilation] is not from among our ethics, and to refrain from being rash in taking non-calculated individual decisions which contradict the precepts of the *Shari^cah* and public interests.

May Allah preserve and protect you, and may He guide you towards what He likes and what He is content with.

May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you.

18 Sha^caban 1411

[Signed] al-Kho'i

Holy Najaf

APPENDIX IV

The Text of the Fatwa Issued by Ayatollah Abu al-Qassim al-Kho'i on March 7, 1991

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and from Him we seek assistance, and may the mercy of Allah be upon Muhammad and his pure household.

Now then: The country nowadays is going through a hard period during which it is in need of the maintenance of order, the establishment of security and stability, and overseeing public matters, as well as religious and social affairs, to avoid the deviation of public interests from proper administration to disorder and futility.

To this end, we find that the public interest of society requires us to appoint a supreme committee to oversee the administration of all its affairs, whereby its opinion represents our opinion and whatever comes forth from it comes forth from us.

We have chosen for this purpose a select group of their excellencies the ᶜulama' whose names are mentioned hereunder and in whose qualifications and good abilities in conducting affairs we trust. Our faithful sons must follow them, obey them, follow their orders and instructions, and help them in accomplishing this mission. We beseech Allah, may He be dignified and glorified, to grant them success in performing this public service which pleases Him, may He be glorified and exalted, and His messenger (peace be upon him).

He is the Master Who grants success, and He suffices us, and He is the Most Trustworthy.

May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you.

1. Sayyid Muhyi al-Din al-Ghurayfi
2. Sayyid Muhammad Ridha al-Musawi al-Khalkhali
3. Sayyid Jaᶜafar Bahr al-ᶜUlum
4. Sayyid ᶜIzz al-Din Bahr al-ᶜUlum

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5. Sayyid Muhammad Ridha al-Khirsan

6. Sayyid Muhammad al-Sabzawari

7. Sayyid Muhammad Taqi al-Kho'i

Holy Najaf on the Twentieth of Sha^caban, the Glorified [month], of the year 1411 A.H.

[Signed] al-Kho'i

P.S.

It was decided to add Sayyid Muhammad Salih Sayyid Abd al-Rasul al-Khirsan to the above-mentioned committee.

In 21 Sha^caban 1411 A.H.

[Signed] al-Kho'i

APPENDIX V
Declaration of the Shia of Iraq[1]

Background note

July 2002

The "*Declaration of the Shia of Iraq*" is the result of two years of discussions and deliberations by a broad range of academics, professionals, religious leaders, intellectuals, military personnel, tribal leaders and businessmen, all of whom were joined by a common concern for the welfare of Iraq in general and the Shia in particular. The document is aimed at confronting the issue of sectarianism and the anti-Shia biases of the Iraqi state. This issue has been one of the great taboos of Iraq even though it directly and detrimentally affects the lives of the majority of Iraq's population.

The document strives to elucidate a Shia perspective on the future of Iraq and the necessary changes that have to be undertaken to reconstruct the state along lines of fairness and justice. We believe that the decent and equitable society that all Iraqis deserve cannot be established without dismantling the entire apparatus of state sectarianism and the deliberate disadvantaging of the majority community. The signatories believe that Iraq can only be revivified if its future is based on the three principles of democracy, federalism and community rights.

The Shia in Iraq have suffered from the deliberate targeting of their community identity, institutions and leadership. In the last two decades, the level of state repression has reached unprecedented heights, with mass expulsions, expropriations, destruction of schools and colleges, and wholesale murder and assassinations of the Shia leadership. The situation that the Shia face now is truly intolerable. Iraq is at a critical juncture in its history. The tyranny that has been inflicted on Iraq will pass, but the conditions that have allowed dictatorship to flourish must be removed once and for all if we are not to fall back into another form of

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[1] The English translation of the "Declaration of the Shia of Iraq" published on *www.al-bab.com*; available at: http://www.al-bab.com/arab/docs/iraq/shia02a.htm; accessed on Friday, July 22, 2011.

misrule and oppression. What the Shia want from the Iraqi state is therefore a genuine and legitimate question.

The "*Declaration of the Shia of Iraq*" aims to answer this question.

Introduction

A series of meetings were held in London during 2001 and 2002 to discuss the sectarian problem in Iraq and its effects on Iraq's present conditions and future. A broad range of personalities were involved in these meetings ranging from intellectuals, politicians, military personnel, writers, tribal chiefs, academics, to businessmen and professionals, drawn from a wide political spectrum, including Islamists, nationalists, socialists and liberals. These meetings were not constrained by any particular ideological or organisational considerations, with the participants being motivated primarily by a concern for the national interests of Iraq. The ideas expressed at these meetings were strictly those of the participants in their individual capacities, even though a number of them were attached to specific political groups or ideational currents.

The meetings had the important effect of facilitating the formulation of commonly accepted parameters regarding the sectarian problem in Iraq, and the methods that should be employed to tackle this issue in any future restructuring of the political order in the country. This document – *Declaration of the Shia of Iraq* – is the result of these discussions and deliberations.

1. The Genesis of the problem

Following the establishment of the constitutional entity that became modern Iraq in 1923, and the organisation of its administrative and political affairs, the sectarian paradigm became a key organising principle of the governing powers. It then quickly evolved into a set of fixed political rules of power and control that has continued into present times.

A number of Iraq's leading political figures were acutely aware of the dangers of pursuing a deliberate sectarian policy on the part of the state and its deleterious effects on the country. They introduced a number of political initiatives and programmes that were designed to highlight and reverse the sectarian framework of governmental policies, and to counter the hardening of official sectarian discrimination against the Shia. The most important of these initiatives would include:

- The detailed letter that King Faysal I addressed to his ministers in 1932, and in which he highlighted the injustice that has been afflicted on the Shia and the critical importance of addressing their concerns and sense of betrayal by the state.

- The letter that was addressed to the Iraqi Government by Sheikh Muhammed Hussein Kashif al-Ghita in which he drew attention to the discrimination that has been meted out to the Shia and the necessity of removing its causes and manifestations.

- The initiative of the Shia religious authorities under the guidance of the Imam Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim in the 1960's that encompassed representations to the authorities on the sectarian issue.

- The 1964 letter of Sheikh Muhammed Ridha al-Shibibi that was addressed to the then Prime Minister of Iraq, Abdul Rahman Al Bazzaz, and which detailed the condition of the Shia and their grievances.

All of these initiatives shared a common concern that rejected the sectarian bases of political power and authority in Iraq, and its decidedly anti-Shia bias. These initiatives called for the abandonment of these sectarian policies, the granting of full political and civil rights to the Shia, and called for their treatment within the framework of sound constitutional principles based on a notion of citizenship that was inherently inclusive and fair.

These initiatives also provided the catalyst for subsequent activities in the fight against sectarianism that was joined by writers, intellectuals and the *ulema*, all of whom called for the dissolution of the sectarian structures of policy-making and the confirmation of the Shia's civil and political rights in line with those of other groups in society.

However, none of these initiatives and activities met with anything but total rejection by the state, which continued in its sectarian biases irrespective of the damage that this caused, and would continue to cause, to the fabric of society and its integrity. The authorities simply

ignored the catastrophic consequences of these policies, which were to influence all Iraqis regardless of their sectarian, ethnic or religious affiliations.

The Iraqi Shia problem is now a globally recognised fault line and is no longer restricted to the confines of Iraq's territory. It has ceased to be a local issue, for the international community and its organisations (such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the UN's Special Rapporteur on Iraq) have now acknowledged openly the existence of a serious sectarian problem in Iraq, and have expressed their sympathy and solidarity with the plight of the Shia of Iraq and the sectarian biases that they daily encounter from the authorities.

The sectarian issue has now emerged into the light of day in spite of the Iraqi authorities' attempts, through their political and media apparatuses, to cover up its reality. The rights of the Shia are now an issue that is central to the present and future conditions of Iraq, and must now be included in any plan or programme that tries to tackle the reconstruction of the Iraqi state. It is for the very reason of its criticality that a calm and reasoned debate is now called for to discuss the rights and demands of the Shia.

This declaration draws on the long line of similar efforts made in the past by the leaders of the Shia in Iraq. It follows closely on their path of calling, responsibly and persistently, for the legitimate rights that are due the Shia, and in a manner that reflects properly the views of the Iraqi Shia as a whole. This is especially relevant today where the Shia in Iraq do not have an authoritative leadership that can tackle the issues and problems that concern them, not least their political, cultural and civil rights.

2. Who are the Shia?

A dictionary definition of the Shia would be those who claim a historic loyalty to the Household of the Prophet and their school of Islam. In the context of Iraq however, the Shii is any person who belongs to the Jaafari sect of Islam either by birth or choice. The Shia in Iraq are not an ethnic group nor a race nor nation, but rather, can comprise any social combination that believes that its Shia fealty has led it to suffer from persistent sectarian disadvantage over the centuries.

The policies of discrimination against the Shia of Iraq have caused every Shii to believe that he or she is targeted because of their Shiism and for no other reason. The Shii is treated as a second-class citizen almost from birth, and is deliberately distanced from any major position of authority or responsibility. He or she suffers from an in-built preference given to others even though others are less skilled or qualified.

This sectarian pattern has been employed in Iraq over the centuries. The Shia were frequently the objects of the retribution and oppression of the authorities simply because of sectarian considerations, even though the intensity and frequency of the anti-Shia activities of the authorities might have ebbed and flowed. However, the oppression has been ratcheted up drastically over the past twenty years.

The determination of the authorities to implement these policies and their insistence on the continuing isolation of the Shia from any meaningful exercise of power has contributed, in the modern period, to the transformation of the Iraqi Shia into a recognisable social entity with its own peculiarities, far from any specific ideological and religious considerations. In other words the crystallisation of the Shia as a distinct group owes far more to the policies of discrimination and retribution than to any specifically sectarian or religious considerations. This condition now defines the status of the Shia in Iraq irrespective of the individual Shii's doctrinal, religious or political orientations.

3. The Shia and the modern Iraqi state

The Shia's disillusioning experience with the circumstances that underpinned the formation of the first Iraqi government in 1920 was the defining historical factor in their political evolution. This statement can be amply justified by any number of impartial historical studies. The Iraqi state was designed within clear sectarian boundaries, with the intention of distancing the Shia and their leadership from the decision-making structures of the nascent state. And even though the sectarian principles of power and authority were not explicitly set out in the original basic law of the country, they became the unwritten code for generations of politicians in both monarchical and republican Iraq.

This is painfully ironic in as much as the Shia played a pivotal role in establishing the conditions for an independent Iraq, being the main actors in the Iraqi Uprising of 1920. The subsequent gross diminution of the position of the Shia in the Iraqi state cannot be reconciled in any way therefore with the importance that their leaders had in the struggle against foreign rule. The connivance of the foreign controlling power in the establishment of sectarian bases of political power set the stage for the evolution of the sectarian system that has continued to the present day.

4. The authorities' objectives in pursuing sectarianism

The British occupation of Iraq was met by rejection from a united front between the Shia and Sunni populations of Iraq. Both groups were unanimous in refusing the occupation and insistent on the formation of a national government free of foreign control. This unity was further strengthened by the rejection of the two communities of all the projects and programmes advanced by the occupying administration to reconcile them to their condition, culminating in the common positions adopted by them in their support for the 1920 Uprising. However, Britain succeeded in dividing the two communities when it proposed the formation of an Iraqi government that was based on sectarian principles and advantage, and this became the model, which was followed scrupulously by subsequent governments.

The powers that controlled the Iraqi state strove to convince the Sunnis of Iraq that all the emblems and trappings of power, both civil and military, were the lot of their community by right, and that any serious Shia involvement in the government would be at the expense of their controlling share of power. The authorities, both in monarchical and republican Iraq, succeeded therefore in both the weakening of any potential or real inter-sectarian solidarity as well as in marginalizing the role of the Shia. The raising of any specifically Shia demand for redress became the subject of vitriolic accusations of "sectarianism" by the authorities, even though the Shia were the prime victims of the state's sectarianism. Patriotism and national unity became appropriated by the state as a cover for this sectarian reality.

The famous dictum of Iraq's first prime minister, Abd el-Rahman an-Naqib, addressed to the Shia leadership who were advocating the rejection of the Mandate terms: "*I am the owner (governor) of this land, so what do you (the Shia) have to do with it?*" is an accurate gauge of

the political direction that Iraq was to take. The principle of rejecting serious Shia participation in the state became the dominant recurring theme of the governing authorities. Sunnis were to rule by their vigilant control over the main sources of civil, military and social power, while the Shia majority were to be marginalized and isolated. In this way, the Shia's numerical majority in Iraq would be overridden by the deliberate policies of sectarian preference and discrimination, and if need be, oppression.

This has been the basis of Iraq's political life, with the state actively waging war against the Shia's sense of identity, self-confidence and purpose. Violent propaganda campaigns were waged against the Shia and their beliefs, while the state never ceased to remind the Sunnis of the Shia menace and the threat that the Shia posed to their rights and privileges and to their superior social and political status.

The authorities never relented in their discriminatory policies against the Shia. Each new ruler in Iraq found himself confronted with the inchoate anger of the Shia, to which the classic response was to deflect and defuse that threat by a further reduction of the Shia's presence and role. This constant increase in the level and extent of discrimination and state violence against the Shia has made an explosion inevitable.

This relentless increase of sectarian discrimination against the Shia has culminated in the present ruling powers aggressively working towards the elimination of any aspect of Shii public life, within a calculated plan to destroy the institutions of the Shia and thereby weaken and eliminate their communal underpinnings. Shia schools and institutions of higher learning, such as the *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence) College in Najaf and the College of Religious Sciences in Baghdad, were closed as was the cancellation of the Shia-inspired and backed but broadly non-religious University of Kufa. Shia merchants and businessmen were deported in droves, mainly to destroy the economic and commercial vitality of the Shia. The violence perpetrated against the Shia *ulema* and study circles has been unprecedented, driving the Shia specifically, and the country generally, into an extremely dangerous crisis situation.

5. The nature of the Shia opposition

In spite of the fact that the Shia in Iraq subscribe to numerous political and intellectual groupings, it is the Islamist movement that has acted as the main political drive for the Shia at the present moment. The Islamist current has been broadly connected, by political commentators and analysts in the region and internationally, with the aspirations of the Shia as a whole. As such, the Islamist movement has been seen as reflective of the Shia's views and aims, and in certain respects its proxy. To some extent this is an inappropriate attribution as the Islamist parties in Iraq have an explicitly Islamic, rather than sectarian, orientation. Moreover, the condition of the Shia in Iraq is such that they can owe allegiances to a variety of political and cultural currents that are not necessarily Islamic in direction.

The Shia's opposition to the state in Iraq is based on political rather than sectarian considerations and has evolved as a consequence of a prolonged process of continuing sectarian discrimination and cruel oppression by the state.

6. The politics of sectarianism

In spite of the long-standing nature of the policies of sectarian discrimination, Iraq has not witnessed social discrimination in terms of one community, the Sunnis, consciously oppressing another, the Shia. The discrimination with which the Shia have been afflicted is entirely the work of the state. This is a vital point to ponder, as the crises with which Iraq had to contend are a consequence of official rather than communal discrimination. Any programme that hopes to reconstruct the terms of power in Iraq has to start from the point of officially inspired discrimination and not mutual communal hostility.

It is crucial to differentiate between legitimate sectarian differences due to doctrinal and other factors, and a policy of officially sanctioned sectarian advantage and discrimination. Iraq suffers from a sectarian system and not from communal sectarianism per se. There is no overt problem between Iraq's sectarian communities, but rather the opposite is the case, as Iraq has managed to accommodate, at the social level, the differences between its ethnic and sectarian groups. A relatively high degree of harmony has prevailed between the Sunnis and the Shia, in many ways superior to the conditions prevailing in most multi-ethnic and multi-sectarian countries. The struggle for national sovereignty and independence was joined equally by both the Sunnis and the Shia, at the level of their respective leaderships and right down to the

community rank and file. Most of the national parties had a broad base of sectarian representation, and sectarian considerations did not dominate the response to key issues and moments that affected the destiny of the country.

The Shia's main driving forces in their struggle for national independence and the building of the modern Iraqi state, were the rejection of foreign hegemony over Iraq and the insistence on sovereign independence. By acceding to the granting of the crown of Iraq to one of Sharif Hussain's sons, Faysal, the Shia clearly indicated their willingness to transcend purely sectarian considerations when dealing with vital national issues, even though it could have been possible for them to demand a Shia king, given their relative weight in Iraq's social and political landscape at that time. It is quite possible that the kingship of Faysal would not have materialised if the Shia religious and political leadership had vigorously opposed it.

Iraq's political crisis has nothing to do with either social discrimination or a latent Shia sense of inferiority towards the Sunnis, or vice versa. It is entirely due to the conduct of an overtly sectarian authority determined to pursue a policy of discrimination solely for its own interests of control, a policy that has ultimately led to the total absence of political and cultural liberties and the worse forms of dictatorship. It is not possible for Iraq to emerge out of this cul-de-sac without the complete banishment of official sectarianism from any future political construct, and its replacement by a contract premised on a broad and patriotic definition of citizenship that is far removed from sectarian calculations and divisions.

Any policy that calls for the official adoption of the division of powers on the basis of overt sectarian percentages – such as the situation in Lebanon – cannot be workable in the context of Iraq, given its social and historical experience, and will not resolve the current impasse. It is quite probable that such a solution may well result in further problems, dilemmas and crises being laid in store for the country. The only way out of this conundrum is the total rejection of the anti-Shia practices of the state, and the adoption of an inclusive and equitable system of rule that would define the political direction of the future Iraq. This is what the Shia want and not some bogus solution based on the division of the spoils according to demographic formulae, a condition that would very probably result in communal sectarianism becoming a social and political reality rather than a manifestation of an unscrupulous state authority.

The airing in public of the sectarian issues facing Iraq does not subject Iraq's unity to any serious threat. It is intended to confront the problem directly, in order to correctly define its nature and to proffer solutions that would lead to its elimination. Ignoring the problem, or sweeping it under the carpet because of some ill-defined "threat" to national unity only compounds the issue and is an affront to the memory of the untold multitudes that have perished or suffered hardships and indignities because of their sectarian identity and allegiances.

There is the unavoidable reality that there are two sects in Iraq, a fact which it would be foolish to deny or ignore. The imposition of an enforced and artificial homogeneity on this reality only serves to compound the problem and pushes it to the point where an explosion becomes inevitable. The recognition and even celebration of Iraq's sectarian diversity is an important platform in reconstructing the terms of dialogue between the state and the people, and by confirming the civil and religious rights of all the sects and groups in Iraq, the ground is strengthened for enhancing the sense of unity and patriotism in the country.

The sectarian issue in Iraq will not be solved by the imposition of a vengeful Shia sectarianism on the state and society. It can only be tackled by defining its nature and boundaries and formulating a complete national programme for its resolution. At the same time, the imperative of national unity should not be used as a pretext to avoid the necessity of dismantling the sectarian state and its harmful policies.

7. Sectarian differences and sectarian discrimination

The distinction between the existence of sectarian differences and sectarian discrimination as such, must be established clearly. The state has masked its exploitation of the existence of sectarian differences in order to pursue its policy of sectarian discrimination.

The sectarian differences within Islam can be traced to the dawn of the Islamic era. Iraq's Muslim population is divided between Sunnis and Shia and there should be no harm or fear about acknowledging this fact. The sects have co-existed by and large for generations with no serious sectarian crises resulting in consequence. Sectarian differences do not constitute a

social, intellectual or political issue in the Iraqi context, and sectarian affiliations should be a matter of course.

The real issue is official sectarianism rather than sectarian differences. Or in other words, the exploitation of the differences between the sects for the purpose of discriminating between them in order to promote a specific policy of power and control. It is this deliberate policy of enshrining sectarian differences to promote discriminatory and retrograde policies that has been used to strip the Shia of their political and civil rights and to reduce them to the status of second-class citizens. The label of "Shia" has been sufficient cause to remove the ordinary Shii from any consideration of positions of power and authority irrespective of his qualities and competences, and in spite of his political affiliations. To be a Shia in Iraq is to be condemned to a lifetime of powerlessness, fear, anxiety and discrimination.

The absence of any noticeable Shia representation in the upper reaches of state and power is clearly evident and incontrovertible, as is the manifest discrimination employed against them. The reconstruction of Iraq's state and society requires therefore a deep understanding of what the Shia actually want from their state, starting from the abolition of official discrimination and the return to them of their civil and constitutional rights from which they have been deprived for decades.

Civil and political rights must be guaranteed through the development of a body of laws and institutions that guard against sectarian discrimination. These should also aim to remove all traces of sectarian practices in Iraq and would be empowered with the authority to enforce these new policies. Sectarian loyalties that unite peoples who share a common heritage and history are a natural occurrence and each person should be free to declare his sectarian affinities without fear or anxiety. But this should not result in the enshrining of sectarianism as a policy or as a basis for political action.

8. The Shia of Iraq and national unity

The lessons drawn from Iraq's history are clear- the Shia have at no point sought to establish their own state or unique political entity. Rather, whenever the opportunity was afforded to them, they participated enthusiastically in nation-wide political movements and

organisations, ever conscious of the need to maintain national unity and probably more so than other groups inside Iraq. This can be abundantly established by examining the Shia's involvement in the struggle to establish the independent Iraqi state within its current recognised borders. The Shia, both in their Islamist and non-Islamist manifestations, have avoided being dragged into separatist schemes, and have been steadfast in their commitment to the unitary Iraqi state. The vital support that they gave to the claims of the Sharifian candidate to the Iraqi throne, in addition to the general sympathy that was exhibited to the cause of the Sharifs of Mecca after the Great War, was symptomatic of their patriotism.

This historic position of the Shia in favour of the unitary constitutional Iraqi state was not given its due measure, unfortunately, by successive Iraqi governments. In fact, the Shia role in safeguarding the unity of Iraq was constantly belittled and frequently ignored. The earliest political parties and movements in which the Shia were involved, were clear in their platforms and programmes of an absolute commitment to an independent and constitutional state stretching from the Province of Mosul in the north to the Province of Basra in the south. The slogan, "*An Arab Islamic Government*", that was demanded by the Shia leadership in the referendum of 1919 is the incontrovertible evidence of the commitment of the Shia to an Arab/Muslim form of rule for Iraq, and the rejection of any status not commensurate with full political independence for the country.

This position of the Shia remained firm in spite of their oppression and discrimination at the hands of successive governments. The expulsion of Sheikh Mahdi al-Khalisi to Iran by the government of Muhsin as-Saadoun, in blithe disregard of the role that he played in securing popular approval for the demand for national sovereignty and independence, was one of the first manifestations of the policy of official anti-Shiism in action. But the constant harassments and threats that the Shia leadership were subjected to in the early days of independence did not deflect them from their commitment to the Iraqi state.

Even as we are in the midst of the present explosive situation, where state anti-Shiism has reached unprecedented levels of violence, the Shia have not raised the banner of withdrawal from the body politic of Iraq. The insistence on national unity as a clear starting principle has been the common denominator for all the active Iraqi Shia oppositionists, as has been the recognition that the problems arising from the atrocious misgovernment of the multi-ethnic

and multi-sectarian state that is Iraq, could best be resolved in the context of a single Iraqi state.

The Shia of Iraq, in spite of being constantly and maliciously tested as to the depth of their national loyalty, have proven, time and again, their commitment to Iraq even at the expense of their own sectarian interests. Their call for the restitution of their civil and political rights can in no way be seen as a threat to national unity, when they have indisputably proven that they have been its principal protectors in word and in deed.

9. What do the Shia want?

The demands of the Shia can be succinctly summarised as follows:

1. The abolition of dictatorship and its replacement with democracy.

2. The abolition of ethnic discrimination and its replacement with a federal structure for Kurdistan

3. The abolition of the policy of discrimination against the Shia

The *Declaration of the Shia of Iraq* aims to elaborate on a Shia perspective on the political future of Iraq. Its principal points are as follows:

1. Abolition of ethnic and sectarian discrimination, and the elimination of the effects of these erroneous policies.

2. The establishment of a democratic parliamentary constitutional order, that carefully avoids the hegemony of one sect or ethnic group over the others.

3. The consolidation of the principles of a single citizenship for all Iraqis, a common citizenship being the basic guarantor of national unity.

4. Full respect for the national, ethnic, religious, and sectarian identities of all Iraqis, and the inculcation of the ideals of true citizenship amongst all of Iraq's communities.

5. Confirmation of the unitary nature of the Iraqi state and people, within the parameters of diversity and pluralism in Iraq's ethnic, religious and sectarian identities.

6. Reconstruction of, and support for, the main elements of a civil society and its community bases.

7. Adoption of the structures of a federal state that would include a high degree of decentralisation and devolution of powers to elected provincial authorities and assemblies.

8. Full respect for the principles of universal human rights.

9. Protection of the Islamic identity of Iraqi society.

Firstly: Democracy

Dictatorship has been one of the main factors that have buttressed the structures of official sectarian and ethnic discrimination, and constitutional democracy, operating through vital and effective institutions, is the necessary cure for this virulent ailment. The Shia do not want to solve their sectarian problems by creating an analogous one for other groups. Rather, they are seeking redress through a system that would guard the rights of all the constituent elements of Iraq's society, whereby all will be treated on an equal footing.

Secondly: Federalism

One of the key elements of the Iraqi conundrum is the near exclusive concentration of powers in the capital, Baghdad, in a manner that has robbed the outlying regions of any opportunity to address their local concerns, needs and special conditions and particularities. The solution has to be in the devolution of powers and authorities to these areas within a framework of broad administrative decentralisation.

Federalism as a system would be designed to negotiate between the need to have a central authority with effective but not hegemonic powers, and regions that enjoy a high order of decentralised powers, all within a framework of careful delineation of rights and responsibilities as between the centre and the regions. Ideally, a federal system would also legislate for the maintenance of Iraq's unitary nature, but recognises the need to fully accommodate Iraq's diversity.

Iraq's federal structure would not be based on a sectarian division but rather on administrative and demographic criteria. This would avoid the formation of sectarian-based entities that could be the prelude for partition or separation.

The proposed federal system would grant considerable powers to the regions, including legislative, fiscal, judicial and executive powers, thereby removing the possibility of the centre falling under the control of a dominant group which would extend its hegemony over the entire country. Iraq's federalist structures would benefit greatly from the experience of countries that have adopted this system of government successfully.

Thirdly: Abolition of the policies of sectarianism

The *Declaration of the Shia of Iraq* envisages the elimination of official sectarianism through the adoption of specific political and civil rights that would eliminate the disadvantage of the Shia.

A/ Political Rights:

In order to eliminate the accumulation of sectarian policies and codes of conduct employed by the authorities over decades, it would be necessary to examine the administrative structures of the Iraqi state and its civil and military institutions. In particular, the employment and promotion policies that have been pursued in the past must be remedied by policies that stress merit, effectiveness and competence as the basis for all employment. A federal authority with a remit to combat sectarianism would be established, which would examine closely the principles employed for filling all senior governmental posts, and which would be charged also with adjudicating all complaints and cases of sectarianism. The federal

authority's mandate could be extended to include the combat of all forms of sectarianism in official and private institutions.

A fund would be established to compensate all those who have been harmed as a result of sectarian and ethnic discrimination and policies. Such a fund would be administered by a council that would establish the norms and procedures for evaluating the extent of damages and the restitution due.

A set of laws would be introduced to abolish sectarianism and that would criminalize sectarian conduct.

A new nationality law would be introduced that would be based on a notion of citizenship that would emphasise loyalty to Iraq rather than to any sectarian, national or religious affiliation.

B/ Civil Rights:

The key civil rights that have a special resonance for the Shia would include:

1. Their right to practice their own religious rites and rituals and to autonomously administer their own religious shrines and institutions, through legitimate Shia religious authorities.

2. Full freedom to conduct their religious affairs in their own mosques, meeting halls and other institutions.

3. Freedom to teach in their religious universities and institutions with no interference by the central or provincial authorities.

4. Freedom of movement and travel and assembly on the part of the higher Shia religious authorities, *ulema* and speakers, and guarantees afforded to the teaching circles – the *hawzas* – to conduct their affairs in a manner that they see fit.

5. Ensuring that the Shia's religious shrines and cities are entered into UNESCO's World Heritage Sites and are thus protected from arbitrary acts of change and destruction.

6. Full freedoms to publish Shia tracts and books and to establish Shia religious institutions and assemblies.

7. The right to establish independent schools, universities and other teaching establishments and academies, within the framework of a broad and consensual national education policy.

8. Introduction [of] the elements of the *Jafari* creed and rites into the national educational curriculum, in a manner similar to the way in which other schools of Islamic jurisprudence are taught.

9. Revising the elements of the history curriculum to remove all disparagement of the Shia, and the writing of an authentic history that would remove any anti-Shia biases.

10. Freedom to establish Shia mosques, meeting halls and libraries.

11. Respect for the burial grounds of the Shia.

12. Official recognition by the state of the key dates of the Shia calendar.

13. Repatriation of all Iraqis who were forcibly expelled from Iraq, or who felt obliged to leave under duress, and the full restitution of their constitutional and civil rights.

Conclusion

It is essential that all the elements of Iraq's political spectrum, as well as the representatives of Iraq's varied communities, become involved in the process of finding a way out of the terrible situation that Iraq finds itself in now and which threaten its very survival. All these groups must participate in the process of change and the design of a new Iraqi state so that all have a stake in the outcome and could feel themselves true and equal partners in the country.

The Iraqi crisis has to be tackled at all its levels – political, through the elimination of dictatorship; sectarian, through the abolition of sectarian discrimination; and ethnic, through

the elimination of ethnic and national preference. Furthermore, it would be necessary to consider policies and programmes that would provide redress to the many aggrieved groups in the country, and to establish a vision of Iraq's future in which all would share. Any shortfall from this objective by adopting one perspective over another on the grounds of a gradualism that postpones the tackling of these issues to some indeterminate date in the future, is a recipe for further suffering and possibly disaster.

Constitutional guarantees and rights must be afforded to all of Iraq's groups and communities, as well as the means to defend or enforce them. This must be the minimum requirement for rebuilding the Iraqi state on a new basis. The order of priorities in this declaration have [*sic*.] been ranked in a methodical manner, and the sequential adoption of the policies that underpin needed change are based on the principle of their voluntary adoption through information dissemination and persuasion rather than their imposition by force or fiat.

The adoption of the constituent components of Iraq's society of the elements of this declaration is important, not least for the reason that each should feel that they have accepted the main sources of grievance and redress of the other groups, and that they have all participated equally in the fashioning of a new Iraqi order.

Signatures

APPENDIX VI
Full Text of Erbil Agreement[1]

<u>Minutes of the meeting of the committee to follow up on the implementation of the agreements under Mr. Mass^cud Barazani's initiative</u>

The higher committee to follow up on and implement Mr. Mass^cud Barazani's initiative met at seven o'clock in the evening of Tuesday coinciding with 8 February 2011 in the presence of Mr. Hassan al-Sunayd, Dr. Salman al-Jumayli and Mr. Rouj Shawis at the residence of Mr. Rouj Nuri Shawis and arrived at the following results:

1 – The National Council for Higher Policies:

The attached draft has been agreed except the paragraph dealing with voting on the Council's chairman. The National Alliance sees that voting on the chairman should be held in the Council [of Representatives; i.e. the parliament]. However, the opinion of Iraqia and the Kurdistan [Alliance] is that the National Council elects [the chairman] or the President of the Republic nominates the Chairman of the National Council who would be endorsed in the parliament.

2 – Rules of Procedure of the Council of Ministers:

It was agreed to present the draft prepared by the previous Council of Ministers along with the attached views and amendments to the Council of Ministers in order to form a committee of allied ministers to approve the final draft in the Council of Ministers. Mr. Prime Minister, his deputy Rouj Nuri Shaways and Dr. Rafi^ci al-^cIssawi shall be assigned to follow-up on this dossier with the Council of Ministers.

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[1] "Nass Ittifaqiyyat Arbil Kamilah" [The Full Text of the Erbil Agreement], *al-Mada*, Wednesday, May 2, 2012; available at: http://www.almadapaper.com/news.php?action=view&id=64861; accessed on Wednesday, May 2, 2012.

3 – Reforming the Work of the Parliament (Legislative Branch):

It was agreed to refer this file to both the parliament and the Council of Ministers in order to implement the agreed points mentioned in the dossier, each according to its specialty.

4 – Reform of the Executive Branch:

The paper prepared by the negotiating committee shall be referred to the government to implement the agreed commitments and shall be followed up by the Higher Committee.

5 – Accountability and Justice:

A – Some items of the paper have been implemented, including lifting the ban on Dr. Salih al-Mutlaq and Dr. Dhafir al-ᶜAni. Also, the work of the [Accountability and Justice] Commission has been suspended by the government except for routine works.

B - With regard to the formation of the Accountability and Justice Commission in accordance with the current Accountability and Justice Act, this issue was referred to the government for the purpose of forming the Commission and forwarding [the names of] the candidates to the parliament for the purpose of voting on them as soon as possible. The matter shall be followed up by Dr. Salih al-Mutlaq.

C – With regard to reviewing the Accountability and Justice Act, the Accountability and Justice Committee in parliament was tasked with following up on the matter.

6 – Judicial Reform Paper:

The implementation of the paper shall be followed up by the Higher Committee, in collaboration with the Chairperson of the Higher Judiciary Council. A meeting shall be held between both sides in the coming days.

7 – National Balance:

a) Agreeing on preparing the draft of the Balance Commission Act submitted by the Regions' Committee during the former parliamentary term in accordance with Article 105 of the constitution and the political agreement of Mr. Mass^cud Barazani's initiative. The speaker of parliament and his two deputies shall be assigned to follow up on the achievement of this [matter].

b) The former Balance Committee, comprising Mr. Hoshiyar Zibari, Mr. Hadi al-^cAmiri, and Dr. Rafi^ci al-^cIssawi, shall continue with its work on the nomination of deputies [at ministries], ambassadors and special grades personnel. Or, a new committee, agreed by the government, shall be established.

c) Making a recommendation to the Council of Ministers to achieve balance in the nomination of military leaders.

d) With regard to the appointment of Directors-General: the blocs agreed, within the framework of the initiative of Mr. Mass^cud Barazani, on achieving constitutional balance from the grade of Director-General and above at the level of the bureaus of the federal ministries.

e) The implementation of the balance paper shall be followed up by the Higher Committee.

8 – The Security Dossier:

This paper shall be referred to both the government and the [parliamentary] Security and Defense Committee to implement what has been agreed on. The matter shall be followed up by the Higher Committee.

9 – Paper on the Outstanding Issues with the Kurdistan Region:

This paper shall be referred to the government to implement what has been agreed on.

10 – The Committee shall continue to follow up on the abovementioned dossiers and the subsequent outcomes.

Other points that have not been agreed on shall be identified and discussed in a special session for the Higher Committee in order to reach solutions for them. In the case of the non-resolution of any of the remaining topics, it shall be referred to the leadership meeting.

Dr. Salman al-Jumayli
Mr. Hassan al-Sunayd
Mr. Rouj Nouri Shawis

Points agreed under Mr. Massᶜud Barazani's initiative

Point One: The Administrative and Financial Side:

1- Privileges of Members: reconsidering legislations enacted with regard to the privileges of members and their replacement (entitlements, salaries, personal security details, pension and administrative and financial powers).

2- Reforming the Parliamentary Circle: and strengthening its cadres to enable them to perform their responsibilities with regard to preparing draft bills for legislation, following up on the laws of different committees within a specified time ceiling, and not neglecting draft laws submitted in the form of proposed or draft bills to or received by the Council [i.e., parliament].

Point Two: Legislations and Laws:

1- Re-establishment of the Constitutional Review Committee: in a manner that guarantees real participation of all winning blocs in this Committee and the achievement of the agreed amendments.

2- The time ceiling of legislations: setting a time ceiling for the enactment of all laws whose enactment has been authorized by the constitution but have not been enacted. This should be done in coordination between the parliamentary circle, the Legal Committee and other specialized parliamentary committees, on the one hand, and the

Speakership [of parliament] and the political blocs, on the other, and in the following order of precedence and priority:

1. The Federal Court Law
2. The Oil and Gas Law
3. The National Reconciliation Law
4. The Law for Organizing Security Apparatuses
5. The Political Parties' Law
6. The Federation Council Law
7. The Electoral law
8. The Electoral Commission Law
9. The Media Network Law
10. The Integrity Commission Law
11. The Inspectors-General Law
12. The Board of Supreme Audit Law
13. The Balance Commission Law
14. The Federal Revenues Law
15. The Journalistic Work and Journalists' Protection Law

3- The Formation of permanent parliamentary committees: and the distribution of their chairpersons, deputy chairpersons and Rapporteurs in accordance with the electoral entitlements and constitutional balance.

Point Three: The Oversight Role

1- Activating the linkage of independent commissions with the parliament: in accordance with the constitution (the Integrity Commission, the Board of Supreme Audit, the Media Network, the Telecommunications and Media Commission) and in accordance with the decision of the Federal Court.

2- Resolving and addressing the issue of responsibility or official post in acting capacity (acting minister, commission chairman, deputy minister, etc.) within three months from the beginning of the parliament's term while ensuring constitutional balance.

3- Activating the role of the various media outlets as the fourth estate and enacting the Journalistic Work and Journalists' Protection Law.

4- Drawing up a clear and agreed mechanism for summoning and questioning members of the executive branch and not leaving this to the interpretation of the Presidency.

Points agreed under Mr. Mass^cud Barazani's initiative

1- Law of the security apparatuses and their powers:

Enacting the Security Apparatuses Law which identifies the active security apparatuses and specifies the functions [and] powers of each apparatus to achieve a state of integration and avoid overlapping jurisdictions of the security apparatuses.

2- The need to rehabilitate the security apparatuses in a manner that achieves the highest levels of professionalism.

3- Holding the security apparatuses accountable to parliament (in accordance with the constitutional provisions). Enacting the laws necessary to impose the strictest legal penalties on parties proven to be involved in intelligence contacts that serve the interests of foreign entities.

4- Conducting investigations with all security leaders and personnel against whom complaints of human rights violations are received and not giving immunity to any of them under any pretext.

5- Activating the role of the provincial councils in accordance with the constitution as well as the law of the provincial councils to ensure the implementation of the decisions of these councils with regard to the security dossier.

6- Establishing research centers to benefit from [the experience of] retirees.

7- Controlling and tightening the borders using modern technologies in a manner that ensures border control.

8- Dealing strictly with illegal border infiltrators.

9- Establishing a special emergency agency to follow up on the cases of national disasters and to provide the necessary quick solutions and responses to affected areas.

10- Enhancing the role and powers of the National Intelligence Apparatus; building the capacities of its cadres to meet the requirements of Iraq's national security, combat espionage, and monitor security intelligence activities on Iraqi soil; and enacting effective laws in this regard.

Points agreed under Mr. Mass^cud Barazani's initiative

1- Combining the positions of Chairman of the Higher Judiciary Council and the Federal Supreme Court or the Court of Cassation is prohibited.

2- Expediting the enactment of the Federal Court Law and agreeing on the names of its members.

3- Expediting the enactment of the Law of the Judiciary in accordance with the constitution and activating and enhancing the work of the Public Prosecution.

4- Expediting the enactment of the Higher Judiciary Council Law.

5- Prohibiting judges from working outside the formations of the Higher Judiciary Council.

6- Reviewing the Anti-Terrorism Law.

Points agreed under Mr. Mass^cud Barazani's initiative

1- Achieving national balance in:

   A – Deputy Ministers

   B – Ambassadors

   C – Heads of commissions and the Independent [Higher Electoral] Commission

   D – In federal ministries and military and security institutions from the rank of Director-General and above or its equivalent (division commanders in the ministries' secretariat, etc.)

2- The Balance Commission Law shall be enacted within a period not exceeding six months from the date the parliamentary committees commence their work. The Commission shall be established immediately after the entry into force of the law with the agreement of the blocs.

3- The commission shall adopt constitutional balance and guarantee the rights of all regions and governorates in all state institutions, including the military and security institutions, and at all levels.

4- Activating the role of the ministries' councils and independent commissions and granting appropriate powers to deputy ministers and assistant chairpersons of independent commissions to achieve participation.

5- Activating the constitution and the laws related to appointments and recruitment and expediting the establishment of the Federal [Civil] Service Council provided for in Article 107 of the constitution and which was endorsed by the previous parliament in its last term.

Points agreed under Mr. Massᶜud Barazani's initiative

1- Adopting the principle of efficiency, professionalism and achievement of constitutional balance in public posts in accordance with the Public Service Council Law.

2- Restoring constitutional balance [to redress imbalance] resulting from appointments made in the past period and guaranteeing the representation of the provinces constitutionally (not agreed upon).

3- Guaranteeing the genuine participation of the parties allied in the government in decision making (political, security and economic).

4- Enacting agreed-upon rules of procedure that regulate the work of the Council of Ministers and specify the procedures and powers of the Council and its members.

5- Integrating the security institutions that are not provided for in the constitution with the security ministries, each according to its specialty, as conditions allow, and gradually.

6- The educational and agricultural initiatives shall be connected with the specialized ministries and no future initiative shall be adopted except by a decision of the Council of Ministers.

7- Activating the supervisory role of the Council of Ministers over ministerial performance.

8- Activation of addressing the phenomenon of administrative and financial corruption.

9- Conforming to the unity of official government discourse.

10- To prohibit combining legislative and executive positions.

11- Prohibiting the direct interference in the work of ministries through agents, advisors and directors-general in the interest of any party and dealing with the minister in his/her capacity as the supreme head of his/her ministry.

12- The prime minister and all ministers shall comply with the decisions of the Council of Ministers and applicable laws as they represent the State in their ministries and are not

representatives of their components or political blocs. Required measures shall be taken to dismiss anyone who violates thereof.

13- The Inspector-General in the ministry shall belong to a bloc other than that of the minister.

Points agreed under Mr. Mass^cud Barazani's initiative

1- In fateful matters, such as war and peace, strategic agreements, constitutional amendments, [decision] shall be by 100 percent consensus.

2- In strategic and important matters voting shall be by one half plus one [i.e. absolute majority].

3- In daily procedural matters voting shall be by one half plus one.

Points agreed under Mr. Mass^cud Barazani's initiative

1- Suspending the decisions of the present [Accountability and Justice] Commission except for carrying out routine matters.

2- Forming the Accountability and Justice Commission in accordance with the law.

3- Re-considering the Accountability and Justice Act by making the amendments – and these shall be agreed upon – for the purpose of preventing the use of the law with double standards or for political purposes. The dossier shall be addressed in accordance with the law.

Annex on the NCHP and the Exemption of Three Iraqia Leaders from de-Ba^cathification

1. Agreement among the blocs on the formation of the National Council for Higher Policies shall be announced in parliament. The parliament shall enact a law in this regard.

2. Work on the exemption of Messrs Rassim al-ᶜAwwadi, Salih al-Mutlaq, and Dhafir al-ᶜAni from de-Baᶜathification shall be announced after the completion of the necessary legal procedures.

3. Mr. Massᶜud al-Barazani shall state that the National Council for Higher Policies shall discuss national reconciliation issues and take decisions related to them within the agreed procedures of the Council.

Signed by:

Massᶜud Barazani   Ayad Allawi   Nuri al-Maliki

Baghdad, November 11, 2010

APPENDIX VII
Procedures for Lifting the Ban on Some Messrs

1. Submitting the applications for exemption to the Accountability and Justice Commission includes condemning the former regime and its practices in accordance with the formula listed by the Accountability and Justice Commission.

2. The Commission shall refer the applications to the Council of Ministers in accordance with its legal procedures in order for it to make a recommendation in this regard.

3. The political blocs shall contribute to preparing an atmosphere necessary to pass the lifting of the ban to be issued by the Accountability and Justice [Commission] in order to achieve national accord in the sessions of the Council of Ministers and parliament immediately after the blessed Eid al-Adhha holiday.

Signed by:

Dr. Fu'ad Ma^cassum   Mr. Hassan al-Sunayd   Dr. Rafi^ci al-^cIssawi
Dr. Ahmad Chalabi   Mr. Ali al-Adib

November 13, 2010

GLOSSARY

Adhan	Call to prayers
Ahl al-Hadith	'People of *hadith*,' an anti-rationalist Sunni Muslim trend that emerged during the ᶜAbbasid era emphasizing the importance of Prophetic *hadiths* and inclined for a literal interpretation of the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet
Ansar	Literally 'patrons' but used to refer to the inhabitants of Yathrib, later renamed Medina, who welcomed the Prophet and his early followers in their town, accepted Islam and helped the Prophet spread the new religion in the Arabian Peninsula
Balad haddi	Frontier country
Barakah	Blessing
Falaqah	The act of beating someone on the sole of the feet with a stick
Fatwa	Edict
Firqah	Muslim sect or schism
Furqan	The Hoy Qur'an
Hadith(s)	Reported saying(s) or doing(s) of Prophet Muhammad
Imam	Literally 'leader' of community or congregational prayer, but in Shiᶜite Islam the term is used to refer to descendants of Ali who are believed to be infallible, divinely endowed with authority and possessing divine knowledge
Jihadist	Militant *Salafist* Muslims advocating and/or involved in armed activities against those they perceive as enemies of Islam
Khassah	The 'elect,' a term used in some classical Shiᶜite books to refer to the Shiᶜites
Khulafa' Rashidun	Rightly-guided caliphs
Khums	A compulsory Muslim religious tax subject to different interpretations by Sunni and Shiᶜite jurists; whereas in Sunni jurisprudence *khums* is applicable to spoils of war and treasure, in Shiᶜite jurisprudence *khums* is also, and primarily, a tax of one

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	fifth of a believer's annual financial gains normally paid to religious authorities or their agents and representatives
Kutub al-Firaq	'Books dealing with sects' or heresiographies
Kutub al-Hukumah	Government textbooks
Latum	The Shi^cite practice of self-flagellation as an expression of lamentation and grief over the martyrdom of the third Shi^cite Imam, Hussein
Marja^ciyyah	The supreme religious institution qualified to issue legal rulings in Shi^cite Islam
Marji^ci Taqlid	Literally 'source of emulation;' a supreme legal authority in Shi^cite Islam whose legal rulings and edicts are binding on his followers
Qawmiyyah	Nationalism
Rafidhah/Rawafidh	Literally 'rejectionists;' a derogatory term used by bigoted Sunnis, especially Salafists, to describe the Shi^cites collectively or Shi^cism as a sect, underscoring the fact that the Shi^cites do not accept the legitimacy of the caliphate of the first three "rightly-guided caliphs" (*al-khulafa' al-rashidun*)
Salafism	A Sunni trend that advocates following the pious predecessors (*salaf*), i.e. the first three generations of Muslims
Salafist	Follower of *Salafism*
Shu^cubiyyah	A movement that emerged as a reaction by non-Arab Muslims to the privileged status accorded to Arabs under the Umayyads, but the term was used as an anti-Shi^cite and anti-Persian motif by Sunnis and Arab nationalists in modern times
Ta'ifah	Sect
Ta'ifiyyah	Sectarianism
Takfir	Excommunicating other Muslims and declaring them as non-believers
Tarshiq	Trimming down
Tatbir	Shi^cite practice of self-inflicted laceration of the head using a blade or a sword that causes bleeding in grief for the slaying of Imam Hussein

Tawaf	The ritual rite of circumambulating the Ka^cabah during the Muslim hajj pilgrimage
Thawrah	Revolution
Turath	Heritage
Turbah	Literally 'soil,' small tablets made of clay from Shi^cite shrine cities, especially Karbala, used during prayers whereby the worshipper's forehead touches the tablet when he/she prostrates him/herself
Ummah	Muslim community
Wataniyyah	Patriotism
Wilayah	Shi^cite concept of the 'love' and belief in the 'mastership' of Ali bin Abi Talib
Zakat	A compulsory Muslim religious tax subject to different interpretations by Sunni and Shi^cite jurists; while Sunni jurists argue that *zakat* is a one-fortieth taxation of a believer's total assets and financial wealth, their Shi^cite counterparts limit this tax to certain species of grazing livestock, grains, and silver and gold coinage

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