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Iraqi Women's Leadership and State-Building

By Batool Hussain Alwan[1], Sana Kadhim Qati [2], Inass Abdulsada Ali [3]

Abstract

After 2003, Iraq witnessed radical changes in its political system. These changes occurred after many wars, multiple sanctions, and an external occupation during which its infrastructure and institutions were destroyed until it became one of the failed states from which the most serious problems that affect international security and stability emanate. It has also become an environment of conflict and multiple renewed crises, the most important of which is a crisis of leadership and state-building, which has become a necessity to discuss. This research focuses on the topic of the leadership crisis in Iraq and we look to women as a possible leaders in resolving crises and peacemaking in the stage of building the Iraqi state, and on the possibility of applying the relationship between women leadership and nation-building and what this relationship means in the context of continued insecurity and stability. Our research looks at a set of important points: 1- The possibility of exploring the role of women leaders in the process of building the Iraqi state; 2- The political behavior of Iraqi women and their role in the process of state-building; 3- The possibility of women's participation in conflict resolution and reconstruction after a series of internal political conflicts; 4- The possibility of determining the status of Iraqi women as leaders in the context of political transitions and clarifying the roles they have already played in the transitional phase. Are Iraqi women considered essential actors in the processes of achieving peace and building the state?

Keywords: Leadership, Women's Leadership, State-Building, Iraq.

Introduction

The collapse of the political regime within a state is a major source of conflict, as it invokes all aspects of chaos, and divides power into various groups – ethnic, religious, criminal, ideological or some combination thereof. In such a situation state-building become a necessary condition of peace.

Fukuyama (2004, 17) explains why building strong states is a matter of such contemporary importance: 'State-building is a crucial issue for the world community today. Weak or failed states are close to the root of many of the world's most serious problems, from poverty and AIDS to drug trafficking and terrorism' which affect international security and stability.

Before that, the report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) ([1]2001), asserted that 'a cohesive and peaceful international system is far more likely to be achieved through the cooperation of affective states, confident of their place in the world, than in an environment of fragile, collapsed, fragmenting or generally chaotic state entities'.

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In all versions of the Fragile States Index, Iraq occupied an advanced ranking as a failed and fragile state. Iraq witnessed many wars, as well as sanctions and occupations; all these events have destroyed its infrastructure and institutions, in brief, the state has collapsed, and the necessity to rebuild it has become urgent.

During these events, Iraqi women, who make up a large percentage of the society, gained a unique experience, as they worked hard and kept society going; they secured their families and provided them with a decent life. They had a leading role in society in all aspects of life; this situation allowed women to recognize their abilities and would allow them to say, "We are here!" However, what happened was the opposite, even after the change of the political regime. Even though Iraqi people have been discontented with all political parties and politicians, they have preferred to elect men instead of women. The only thing that helped women was the "quota" system that stipulates 25% representation for women (Al-Ali, Al-Dujaili, Al-Enezy & Al-Jeboury, 2012) in executive power.

However, high decision-making positions were not assigned to women. Women's leadership in these positions was weak, if not absent. In this situation, the role of women leaders in the state-building process would not be easy to explore, especially in a society that many not trust in women leadership, or that has a history of doing so. Society links leadership with power, and since women are viewed as weak, they believe they will not make sufficient leaders.

Many studies have written about the role of Iraqi women after 2003; the majority of these studies have linked women with peacebuilding. Moghadam (2005) looks at feminist insights into violence, conflict, peacebuilding, and women's rights, as well as developments in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Palestine, to make the case for the involvement of women and the integration of gender into all phases of conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction and governance.

In (2012), the United States Institute of Peace's report summarized the key challenges, lessons learned, and best practices identified at the Istanbul dialogue in June 2012. The reporters, Kuehnast et al, argued that political empowerment is extremely difficult if female political activists do not first achieve economic independence. Therefore, economic, social, and political empowerment are each crucial and intertwined.

Khodary, (2016) illustrates women's roles and initiatives in peacebuilding in Iraq and provided lessons on how to improve the peacebuilding process while ensuring a bigger and higher quality role for women. In line with the Security Council Resolution 1325, she explored whether or not Iraqi women have been able to take advantage of opportunities opened up through state reconstructions and peacebuilding, such as negotiations over new state structures, peace agreements, and political settlements.

O'Driscoll, (2017) argues that women are largely underrepresented in peace processes as core actors, and when they do participate, their role is limited. She argues that some obstacles to women's participation in the political sphere remain, including, but not limited to, the security situation and cultural barriers. Not only this, but the partisan nature of Iraqi politics often means that the women who get involved are not promoting women's interests, and it is not in their power to raise issues that go against their parties.

Ali et al (2018) discusses how the Iraqi experience after 2003 shows that woman were present in post-war settlements, peacemaking, and state-building. However, this was because many saw her as a trump card in the electoral process through the quota system, which gave the political blocs represented in the parliament guaranteed seats even if the female candidate did not get the elections threshold. The Iraqi political experience in state-building and peacemaking in the post-war era, and through many electoral cycles, proved contradictory with the feminist theory

regarding the demand for women's participation in this stage and its distinguished role because of its own subjective experience based on the female knowledge that has been ignored for decades.

This paper explores what it means for state-building processes to be led by women and applies this idea to women's leadership in Iraq's state-building. We also look into how a society like Iraq's can create, reproduce, and challenge prevailing power relations. According to Nye (2008) the time is ripe to redefine leadership for the 21st century, he argues that leadership involves power, but not all power relationships are instances of leadership. In practice, effective leadership requires a mixture of soft and hard power skills that he calls smart power, and the proportion of each differs depending on the context. Leadership, according to him, is a social relationship with three key components: leaders, followers, and the contexts in which they interact.

Women and Leadership: A Theoretical Introduction

Contemporary studies have focused on women's leadership as one of the administrative leadership forms. The international environment has allowed women to take on their role in light of the democratic transformations that have contributed significantly to encourage the participation of women in political life, which in turn is very important for democratic development and sustainability, (Ballington & Karam, 2005) and consequently make the world more peaceful, as women less tend to force, violence, and war.

Women, as the stereotype goes and as some empirical research suggests, tend to be more collaborative in leadership, more empathetic, and much, much less violent on an individual level than men are. If, as Joe Biden suggests, "foreign policy is a logical extension of personal relationships," and if women are widely acknowledged to able to conduct them, possibly it follows that female leadership in world affairs would produce more empathy and collaboration between countries. Global problems like violence and inequality are failures of empathy, probably global gynecocracy produces a truly different, better world. However, one recent research found that in Europe between the 15th and 20th centuries, queens were more likely to participate in interstate conflicts than kings were. In 20th-century electoral democracies, female leaders have indeed waged war. Indira Gandhi, Golda Meir, Margaret Thatcher, Chandrika Kumaratunga, Benazir Bhutto, and others may well have been personally compassionate, yet led their countries to war. Hillary Clinton, when she was a secretary of state, was a champion of violent intervention in Libya; perhaps she would have continued her approach had she become president of the United States and escalated America's war on ISIS. (Gilsinan, 2016)

Among the prominent works in this regard are Fukuyama's (1998) and Pinker's (2011). Fukuyama (1998) cited experiments from the chimpanzees' world, which showed that females have relationships and males practice realpolitik. As a result, he concludes, that a matriarchal world would be less conflict-prone and more conciliatory and cooperative than the one we live in today. He defends his opinion by seeing that the core of the international politics feminist agenda seems principally valid: the violent and aggressive tendencies of men have to be under control by constraining those impulses through a web of norms, laws, agreements, contracts, and so on. Moreover, more women need to be brought into the domain of international politics as leaders. By participating fully in global politics, women can shift the underlying male agenda.

Pinker (2011) almost shares the same idea. He recognizes that men have dominated armies throughout history, and that traditional war is a men's game; from his point of view tribal women never band together to raid neighboring villages. He argues that throughout history women have been pacifying forces. As mothers, women have evolutionary impulses to preserve peaceful

conditions in which to up bring their offspring and ensure that their genes survive into the next generation.

Besides, some studies drew attention to the important role that women play as leaders, especially in helping end conflict, developing post-conflict reintegration efforts and economic life. (Norville, 2011) The Council on Foreign Relations, the United Nations, academic journals, and military publications did many pieces of research, which demonstrated a relationship between women's participation and stability. A 2015 study by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies found when women participate in peace settlements; agreements are more likely to be more durable and to be forged in the first place. (Vogelstein & Bro, 2019)

Many writers have disproved Fukuyama's and Pinker's claims, especially Fukuyama's (Fukuyama's Follies, 1999), on the empirical, historical, and anthropological basis. Indeed, as Nye (2012) says, women have not made war simply because they have rarely been in power. If they were empowered as leaders, the conditions of an anarchic world would force them to make the same warlike decisions that men do.

Tickner (1999), from her side, argued that Fukuyama's views feed into a conservative agenda which serves not to put women in control, but to keep them out of power positions, as the "realistic" view of international politics demands that "real" men remain in charge. The association of women with peace, idealism, and moral superiority has a long history of keeping women out of power; it served to disempower women and keep them in their place, which is out of the "real world" of international politics.

Fukuyama (1998) continues the discussion by saying that the issue of gender adds much to the robust and interesting debate related to the correlation between democracy and peace. Developed democracies tend to be more feminized than authoritarian states, in terms of expansion of female franchise and participation in political decision-making. Therefore, it should surprise no one that the historically unprecedented shift in the gender basis of politics should lead to a change in international relations. Brown (2014) also linked the development of democracy in the twentieth century and the advent of female suffrage, which had important implications for political leadership.

Apart from the type of regime or gender, Nye's (2008) point of view, links leadership to the context in terms of crises nature and style of power needed. According to him, there are "autocratic" and "democratic" situations, normal and crisis conditions, and routine and novel crises. Therefore, the appropriate style of power, whether it is hard or soft, depends on the good diagnosis of the need for change, or not, which is essential for contextual intelligence. Thus, the key choices about war and peace in our future will depend not on gender, but on how leaders combine hard- and soft-power skills to produce smart strategies. Both men and women will make those decisions.

Here, all forms of experience can serve as evidence of cognitive accumulation; leadership is no longer tied to the most powerful. Modern international relations are focused less on conflict and war; cooperative behaviors have trumped coercive ones.

Women and Leadership: Numbers from around the World

By the beginning of the 21st century, over 95 percent of all countries in the world had granted women the two most fundamental democratic rights: the right to vote and the right to stand for election. (Shvedova, 2005)

In contemporary history, women were not heads of government as leaders until the second half of the 20th century. In 1960, Sirimavo Bandaranaike became the first woman in modern history to take over Ceylon's (now Sri Lanka) prime minister; the Sri Lankan Freedom Party convinced her to become its leader after the assassination of her husband, the party founder. (Brown, 2014) Later, the number of women in political leadership positions increased, but nearly half of them came to power as widows or daughters of a male ruler; less than one percent of twentieth-century rulers were women who gained power on their own. One study of the 1,941 rulers of independent countries during the twentieth century found only 27 women. (Nye, 2012)

Perhaps the twenty-first century has seen some rise in the proportion of women in power. The Pew Research Center noted that the number of female national leaders globally had doubled in the decade since 2005—to an enormous 18, meaning that women headed less than ten percent of UN member states. (Gilsinan, 2016) By 2013, more than eighty women had held the highest elected governmental office in a wide variety of countries. (Brown, 2014) By February 2019, 70 countries (just over a third of all) had had at least one female president or prime minister. A handful had had several. (Uberoi, Bellis, Hicks, & Browning, 2019) As of June 2019, 11 women are serving as Head of State and 12 are serving as Head of Government. (Facts and Figures: Leadership and Political Participation, 2019)

As for ministries level, by 2008, women ministers remain concentrated in social areas (14%) rather than legal (9.4%), economic (4.1%), political (3.4%) and executive (3.9%) areas. (International Women's Democracy Center, 2008) As of January 2019, only 20.7 percent of government ministers were women; the five most commonly held portfolios by women ministers are Social Affairs; followed by Family/Children/Youth/Elderly/Disabled; Environment/Natural Resources/Energy; Employment/ Labour/ Vocational Training; and Trade/Industry. (Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women, 2019).

At the level of legislative power, women appeared to have better chances. Before the Second World War, Austria was the only State to have elected a woman to the presidency of one of the Parliament's Chambers. From 1945 to 1997, only 42 of the 186 States with a legislative institution had selected a woman to preside over Parliament or a House of Parliament: this has occurred 78 times in all. By October 2019, only 60 women presided over one of the Houses of the 192 Parliaments, 79 of which are bicameral. Women, therefore, occupy only 21.6% of the total number of 278 posts of Presiding Officers of Parliament or one of its Houses. (Women Speakers of national parliaments, 2019)

As of February 2019, only three countries have 50 percent or more women in parliament in single or lower houses: Rwanda with 61.3 percent, Cuba with 53.2 percent and Bolivia with 53.1 percent; but a greater number of countries have reached 30 percent or more. As of February 2019, 50 single or lower houses were composed of 30 percent or more women, more than half of these countries have applied some form of quotas—either legislative candidate quotas or reserved seats—opening space for women's political participation in national parliaments. (Facts and Figures: Leadership and Political Participation, 2019)

These numbers raise an important question: Does women leadership made a difference? If so, have they changed management culture when they make it to the top? Kantrowitz, (2005) sees that there is a critical mass of women in leadership positions and believes that that gives us a good opportunity to see how they have changed the workplace as they have moved upward. However, Gilsinan (2016), from her point of view, argues that feminist leadership has not yet had a chance to leave much of a record of accomplishment. There simply have not been enough women leading states in the modern era to yield clear data on this issue. Regarding MPs, Karam and Lovenduski

(2005) believe it is difficult to make generalizations that are universally relevant regarding how women MPs can maximize their impact. In addition, there is relatively little research and information available on what sort of impact women have made.

Apart from stable countries, perhaps we might find empirical evidence when we limit our research on state-building in countries that conflict-torn We have Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and Catherine Samba-Panza of Central African Republic. Both of them have succeeded in rebuilding their countries after long devastating civil wars. In Rwanda, the country that passed a brutal civil war, women have gained a high proportion in the parliament and participated effectively in-country recovery. The list could be longer if we want to do empirical research. For this, we should calculate the number of the states that conflict-torn then classify them as men-ruled states and women-ruled states.

In addition to democratic change, there are many criteria that the research has to depend on-that vary significantly from country to country, and each of them has a significant bearing on the extent to which women can make a difference once elected. These include the economic and political context in which the leaders function, their background, their experience, and the rules of the political process. (Karam and Lovenduski, 2005) Men largely dominate the political arena, largely formulate the rules of the political game, and often define the standards for evaluation. Furthermore, political life is organized according to male norms and values and in some cases even male lifestyles. For instance, politics is often based on the idea of 'winners and losers', competition and confrontation, rather than on systematic collaboration and consensus, especially across party lines. It may often result in women either rejecting politics altogether or rejecting male-style politics. Thus, when women do participate in politics, they tend to do so in small numbers. (Shvedova, 2005)

Iraqi Women Leadership and State-Building

Iraq is a relatively new country, and since its founding in 1921 and after gaining its independence in 1932, it has   existed in a conflict-torn environment and suffered under crises that hinder the process of state-building on the right bases. Over a long history, Iraq has experienced and continues to undergo a series of protracted and renewed crises. Perhaps the leadership crisis and the state-building crisis are the biggest and most severe.

Since then, with regimes' succession, Iraqi women did not have a political leadership role in the state-building process. They did not take top positions in the state, as head of state or government, neither in the monarchy nor in the republic. Not only this, but women in Iraq have not served as foreign ministers. Therefore, we cannot test women's role in Iraq's international relations and execute Iraq's foreign policy according to their feminist point of view. Below we will explore the other areas.

Pre 2003

High decision-making positions were not assigned to women, and they did not become ministers. Women had no ministerial portfolio before 2003. This occurred only once and for a brief period with Naziha Al-Dulaimy who received the portfolio of municipalities in 1959 during the reign of Abdul Karim Qasim. Multi-partyism was not allowed; the ruling Baath Party was the only party that existed, and the percentage of women allowed in was limited to no more than 5%. The

only woman elected as a member of the Baath Party National Command was Huda Saleh Mahdi Ammash.

In the legislature, they had a presence in 1980, but without quota. In the first legislative elections in 1980, all 19 female candidates were elected to the 250-member National Council, which is (7.6%). In the 1984 elections, 46 female candidates competed and 33 won, that is (13.2%) of the parliamentary seats. Sixt-five women competed in the 1989 elections, of which 27 have elected to the National Council (10.8%). The fourth parliamentary elections were held in 1996 and women won 16 seats (6.4%) of the total. In the fifth parliamentary elections held in 2000, 25 women were nominated and 18 were elected, representing (7.2%). (Women in the Council of Representatives, 2013)

Table 1.
Women in National Council during Baath Party Rule

Year	Total MPs	Women MPs	Women percentage
1980	250	19	7.6
1984	250	33	13.2
1989	250	27	10.8
1996	250	16	6.4
2000	250	18	7.2

Women in the Council of Representatives: Lessons Learned and Case Studies Report. 2013. Washington, DC: Iraq Foundation. Washington, DC: Wilson Center.

However, these women, who were part of the ruling party work, did not have freedom, rather it was opportunism and the desire for benefits at the expense of women's issues that fueled these women. Thus, their political representation within the National Council was merely a result of their identity as Baathists. Because of this, there are no determinants of their activity or ability to develop relationships with men in society for greater freedom and autonomy except through the programs of the totalitarian party.

When it comes to the political opposition to the regime of Saddam Hussein, we do not have enough information about women's proportion and their participation. At the pre-war London Conference of 2002, only five of the 300 invited delegates and three of the 65 members of the follow-up committee were women. Shortly after 9 April 2003, women have similarly ignored where meetings were concerned. (Fischer-Tahir, 2010)

Post 2003
After 2003, the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) was established and only three of its 25 members were women. The cabinet of Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) was made up of 25 ministers, only one was a woman. In June 2004, the first Iraqi government (The National Assembly) had formed with 100 members, 20 of them were women (20%). It was an interim government tasked with preparing a new constitution. The assembly formed a committee with 55 members to write the constitution. Ten women participated in the constitution-writing committee, which is equivalent to 18% of the members of the committee, distributed to all six sub-committees that worked on the writing of the various chapters of the Constitution. In successive governments, women's proportions were as follows in the table (2).

Table 2
The Number and Percentage of Women in Post-2003 Iraqi Cabinets

Cabinet	Total Numbers of Ministers	Number of Women Ministers	Percentage of Women Ministers
Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) July 2003	25	1	4%
Interim Government June 2004	26 and 5 Ministries of State	3 and 1 Ministry of State	12.9%
Transition Government 2005	27 and 5 Ministries of State	5 and 1 Ministry of State	19.3%
2006-2010	26	3	11.5%
2010 -2014	28	1	3.6%
2014-2018	27 Became 22 after canceling or merging some ministries	3 Became 2 after canceling of Women Affairs Ministry	11.1% 9%
2018-2022	20	1	5%

The data was collected from many official websites.

The table shows that the representation of women in the government was very modest and fluctuating, declining more than rising. Though women held many ministerial portfolios in important service ministries (Health, Labor and Social Affairs, Municipalities, Public Works, Agriculture, Environment, Science and Technology, Communications, Migration and Displaces, Human Rights, Women's Affairs), and they had a role in the construction process, their performance was poor, and they did not make any notable progress. It is notable that they did not occupy the so-called sovereign ministries such as Foreign Affairs, Defense, Interior, and others.

As for the Legislature, the Iraqi Constitution stipulated not only equal opportunities but also stood by women's sides when the constitution required a minimum of 25% in the parliament. Table (3) below shows the proportions achieved by women according to the quota system in the four electoral sessions from 2006 to 2018.

Table 3
The Number and Percentage of Women in Post-2003 Iraqi Parliaments

Legislative Session	Total Numbers of Members	Number of Women MPs	Percentage of Women MPs
2006-2010	274	72	26.2%
2010-2014	325	82	25.2%
2014-2018	328	83	25%
2018-2022	329	85	25.83%

Iraqi Council of Representatives

Blocs and political parties that doubled their gains, because the status of women MPs and their voices were in the interest of the blocs and political parties, exploited the quota. This reality does not absolve them of responsibility since most of them have fallen into a life of luxury and

affluence without paying attention to the task entrusted to them by the electorate, even if it is few. (Ali, Alwan & Qati, 2018)

In the 2010 elections, women won 21 seats in parliament out of 82, without the need for the quota. Maha al-Douri received (31,949) votes, the highest female vote. In the 2014 parliamentary elections, 22 women reached the new Iraqi parliament without the need for quotas, out of 83 women parliamentarians, who make up 25% of the 328 members of the Iraqi parliament. Three of them won their numbers without the need for electoral list votes. Hanan al-Fatlawi won the highest number of votes (90,781) and ranked sixth in the list of the highest number of votes in Iraq. In the 2018 elections, 14 women reached their numbers without the need for electoral list votes. The Majida AL-Tamimi has got (55,184). Table (4) shows the number of women who have won more than eleven thousand votes in the last three election cycles.

Table 4.
Winner Women in Last Three Sessions with More Than (11000) Voice

Winners Without Quota 2010-2014	Governorate	Voices	Winners Without Quota 2014-2018	Governorate	Voices	Winners Without Quota 2014-2018	Governorate	Voices
Maha Al-Douri	Baghdad	31949	Hanan Al-Fatlawi	Babylon	90781	Majida Al-Tamimi	Baghdad	55184
Vian Dhakheel	Mosul	17275	Huda Sajad	Qadisiyah	39691	Joanne Ihsan	Sulaymaniyah	28157
Jalila Abdel Zahra	Missan	15423	Najia Naguib	Dohuk	29468	Palyisa Abdul Jabbar	Sulaymaniyah	26941
Liqaa Jaafar Murtada	Najaf	15367	Nahida Al-Daini	Diyala	28939	Nahida Al-Daini	Diyala	25474
Manal Hameed Hashem	Karbala	12807	Shereen Abdel Rahman	Dohuk	17574	Hadar Zubair	Erbil	22261
Jawla Haji Omar	Dohuk	12502	Suad Jabar	Najaf	16802	Vian Sabri	Dohuk	21479
Asmaa Tohma	Baghdad	11877	Sarwa Abdel Wahed	Erbil	14229	Ara Azu	Sulaymaniyah	18608
			Suham Musa	Qadisiyah	14011	Wasfia Mohammed	Dohuk	18101
						Dalia Farhad	Dohuk	15203
						Mayada Mohammed	Erbil	14979
						Almas Fadel	Kirkuk	14840
						Dylan Ghafoor	Kirkuk	12509

Haifa Al-Amin	Dhi-Qar	1239 5	
Lamiaa Shaoui	Sbi'ay Qouta Baghdad	1199 6	

The data was collected from many official websites.

Four women won a seat in parliament in the four elections, three of whom even won the election in the transitional government, Table (5). However, from the observation of the two tables, none of these four women won a seat without a quota. Not only this, but the names of women who won the highest number of votes did not repeat in two elections except one MP, Nahida AL-Daini, who has been winning without a quota in the last two elections.

Table 5.
Winner Women in Four Session of Iraqi Parliament

Women PMs	Governorate	Electoral List	Party	Parliament Session
Ala Talabani	Kirkuk	PUK	PUK	1, 2, 3, 4
Alia Nassif	Baghdad	National Accord Movement (Iraqia)		1, 2, 3, 4 (Transition Government)
Hanaa Al-Taie	Baghdad	State of Law Coalition	Independents Bloc	1, 2, 3, 4 (Transition Government)
Mona Al Omairiy	Baghdad	United Iraqi Alliance State of Law Coalition	Bader	1, 2, 3, 4 (Transition Government)

The democratic experience in Iraq and the political consensus that accompanied it did not allow for the competencies, including feminist competencies, to take their role in the process of transformation and change. Therefore, this experience has produced a numerical presence of women in parliament with the loss of competence and creativity. We can see this clearly in the number of women in the Iraqi parliament who have been able to chair parliamentary committees, served as vice-chairman or rapporteur of parliamentary committees. See Table (6)

Table 6.
Chair, Vice-Chair, and Rapporteur Women in Post-2003 Iraqi Parliaments

Position	First Session 2006-2010	Second Session 2010-2014	Third Session 2014-2018	Total Number
Chair	2	5	3	10
Vice-Chair	4	5	6	15
Rapporteur	10	5	7	22

Standing Committees of the House of Representatives, Parliamentary Chamber/Department of Representatives Affairs.

Moreover, women were absent from some of the important committees in the post-conflict nation-building process. Perhaps the most prominent among them was the Reconciliation Committee, as we did not find a single woman in her membership over three parliamentary sessions. This matter also applies to the Security and Defense Committee. The representation of women was weak in the Committee on Foreign Relations and was limited to some names such as Safiya Al-Suhail, who later became the ambassador of Iraq in Jordan and then Italy, and Ala Talabani the leader in the Kurdistan Patriotic Party, which gives the impression that this committee is limited to its membership to specific people.

Women exercised their oversight role in Parliament through the number of interrogations that women MPs have been able to achieve over the past three sessions of the Parliament from 2006 to 2018. Table (7) show the number of interrogations by women MPs in electoral Sessions.

Table 7.
List of Interrogations by Women MPs in Electoral Sessions

Electoral Session	Number of Interrogations	Interrogator	MP Interrogation claim	Parliamentary Bloc	The Number and Date of the Interrogation Session
2006-2010	1	Minister of Electricity	Jenan Al-Obeidi	United National Coalition	(7) On 4/10/2009 (9) On 6/10/2009 (10) on 14/10/2009
2010-2014	1	Chairman and members of the Independent High Electoral Commission	Hanan Al-Fatlawi	State of Law Coalition	(61) on 2/5/2011 (64) on 11/5/2011 (17) on 30/6/2011
2014-2018	7	Minister of Defense	Hanan Al-Fatlawi	State of Law Coalition	(26) on 3/10/2015

Electoral Session	Number of Interrogations	Interrogator	MP Interrogation claim	Parliamentary Bloc	The Number and Date of the Interrogation Session
		Minister of Defense	Aliya Nassif	State of Law Coalition	(8) on 1/8/2016
		Chair of the Media and Communications Authority	Hanan Al-Fatlawi	Irada Movement	(16) on 9/3/2017 And (17) on 11/3/2017
		The President of the Independent High Electoral Commission	Magda Al-Tamimi	Sadrist Movement	(27) on 17/4/2017
		Minister of Commerce	Aliya Nassif	State of Law Coalition	(13) on 15/8/2017
		Minister of Communications	Huda Sajjad	State of Law Coalition	(34) on 27 and 28 November 2017
		Minister of Electricity	Hanan Al-Fatlawi	Irada Movement	(8) on 31/1/2018

Source: Iraqi Parliament.

Conclusion

The transition stages are among the important stages in which we can know the decision maker's behavior and orientations. The paper has sought to locate Iraqi women as leaders in the framework of political transformations and to clarify the roles they have already played in the transition phase.

In our attempt to transcend the descriptive nature of some of the literature concerned with analyzing the political role of women at this stage, it was clear to us that the literature that dealt with the role of women in the democratic transition stages was characterized by the fact that they do not reflect an accurate picture of the political behavior of women and their role in the nation-building process. The representation of women in decision-making positions was studied only as a quantitative topic.

The presence of relatively large numbers in decision-making centers does not constitute an integrated standard for measuring women's participation in political and democratic life in the transition phase, as relying on numbers may only provide misleading facts and figures that do not necessarily reflect the reality of Iraqi women's effectiveness in decision-making positions. The proportion of Iraqi women represented in the executive and legislative branches is only a numerical progression and does not reflect the objective and effective ability of these women in society and the state.

The measurement of the effectiveness of women's leadership and their role in the process of building the state during the transition stages depends not only on their numerical presence in Parliament but on the presence of women leaders in the executive branch so that they can participate in implementation, through which their effectiveness in leadership can be measured. In other words, this can be measured by their actual presence during crises and disturbances that could lead to the collapse of the state-building process.

The last trend we noticed in Iraq was that during the most popular protests, which broke out in October 2019, we did not see any women, whether participants in the political process or outside of it, who presented themselves to leadership or even offered an initiative to solve the crisis. This led to the persistence of gender-related biases, and women had a role in the continuation of these issues, because of their poor performance and their compliance to their blocs or parties. This was clarified in the formation of the Constitutional Amendments Committee, which consisted of 30 members, only three of which were women, and this number or less appeared in the leaks related to the government formation.

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