

Federalism and the Challenges of Ethnic Conflict Regulation in Deeply Divided Society: The Case of Iraq

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ABSTRACT

Bad governance of ethnic diversity exacerbates ethno-sectarian conflicts, and ethnic conflict management is a sensitive and fundamentally needed component of the contemporary world. This study assesses political models for managing ethno-sectarian diversity, focused on the deeply divided society of Iraq in relation to its ethnic conflict and political system, with federalism and partition being potential solutions explored in relation to stakeholders' views, studied qualitatively using focus groups and interviews with procedure and analysis derived from grounded theory.

Due to failed integration, Iraqi society since 2003 has undergone *de facto* territorial division in response to ethno-sectarian violence, creating a map between conflicting groups and identity politics. This thesis criticizes integrationist perspectives supporting a central unitary Iraq, and those proposing hard partition; federal-based soft partition, giving each cultural group control and autonomy in their territory, may achieve stability, whereas secession is impossible. This balances Shia desire for centralism and Kurdish demands for more autonomy or secession. In addition, it is not necessary to impose a single national identity in federal model; dual identity should be accepted to satisfy groups' identity aspirations. The current impasse is due to authoritarian centralism imposing monolithic identity; Iraq should be a democratic multicultural state, avoiding sectarian policy and implementing civic characteristics to enhance Iraqi identity.

This study contributes to existing research, analysing how inappropriate policies of ethnic diversity may escalate into ethnic conflicts. This thesis adds to the field of studies interested in ethnic conflict regulation, particularly Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflict, and provides suggestions for regulating it.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BH	Bosnia-Herzegovina
CPA	Coalitional Provisional Authority
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICP	Iraqi Communist Party
IG	Iraqi Government
IGC	Iraqi Governing Council
IHEC	Independent High Electoral Commission
IPE	International Political Economy
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria; also known as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or Daesh, abbreviation of Arabic *Dawlat al-Islamia fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham*
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
PMUs	Popular Mobilisation Units (also known as Popular Crowd or Arabic: *al-Hashid al-Shaabi*)
RAF	Royal Air Force
SCIRI	Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, later renamed the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI)
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SOMO	State Oil Marketing Organization
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1 INTRODUCTION AND THESIS STRUCTURE

1.1 BACKGROUND

Ethnic conflict is a highly debated issue related to multicultural countries that comprise various ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. It is also connected to the complicated phenomenon of identity in which people of different backgrounds may have different identities. When group loyalty to primordial (i.e. non-national) identities is stronger within states, the loyalty to national identity will be weaker and a society may encounter conflicts. Only 10-15% of countries were considered to be ethnically homogeneous in the world and most countries are becoming increasingly heterogeneous due to increasing immigration in the globalised world (UNESCO, 1995). 82% of all states comprise two or more ethnic groups (Toft, 2002:82).

Thus, the ethnic and cultural diversity management became one of the greatest challenges in the modern world. It has been brought to the fore as a crucial requirement for protecting societies from ethnic conflicts and fragmentation. However, if ethnic conflicts break out, they are immensely difficult to manage, being generally more intractable than conventional (traditional) conflicts between states while inflicting similar magnitude of suffering in terms of human right violations, crimes against humanity, and refugee flows. This would be a threat not only to internal security but also to international peace and security.

In the 19th and 20th centuries there were remarkable efforts through nationalism in Europe to assimilate and integrate different cultural groups into nation states. Historically, nationalism has a strong link with the spread of literacy, the education system and the growth of industrial capitalism, all of which reinforce national

integration (Eriksen, 1991:266). However, the issue of ethnic conflict has been a subject of debate in politics since the beginnings of political analysis in the 1920s, specifically in terms of the questions of minorities in the new states of central and Eastern Europe (Guelke, 2012:4). In the worst cases, recent history has been full of examples of heinous elimination policies, such as the Armenian genocide in 1915, the Holocaust against the Jews in the 1940s and genocide against the Kurds in the late 1980s in Iraq (McGarry and O'Leary, 1994). In modern times, diversity management is not expected to eliminate diversity but rather to create value in the form of peaceful coexistence. Kymlicka (2007a) argues that liberal multiculturalism not only supports a set of common civil, political, and social rights of citizenship but also adopts various group-specific rights or policies intended to recognise the distinctive identities and aspirations of cultural groups.

Ethnic conflict and nationalism reappeared increasingly in the wake of communism's collapse in 1990s as the primary issues in the realignment of Eastern European politics and identity (Calhoun, 1993:213). Many of these countries fragmented and divided due to disempowerment in building a common national identity throughout history. Ethnic and cultural diversity management have thrived once again even in Western Europe due to immigration wages and the implications of globalization.

These events and the new world order have influenced the Middle East countries as well where the emotions of many local identities have seen a revival and ethnic and religious conflicts have erupted. The two events of the Gulf War in 1991 and the US-led invasion[1] in 2003 gave Iraqi ethno-sectarian groups opportunities to express their

[1] A US-led military coalition that included about 250,000 troops crossed the border from Kuwait into Iraq on 19 March 2003, to oust the regime of Saddam Hussein. After several weeks of combat, the regime fell on 9 April 2003. See Katzman and Humud (2016).

identities. In the first event (after 1991), Kurds were able to establish their autonomous government with the support of the international community,[2] and in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion, the Shia community took power from Sunni groups that had controlled Iraq for more than 80 years (the provenance and historical context of these ethnicities are explained in more detail throughout this study, but from the outset it should be noted that the three main ethnic affiliations in Iraq are Arab Shia, Arab Sunni and Kurdish, with small but influential Turkmen, Assyrian and other minorities). However, these events have not led to solve the historical issue of identity in Iraq but ethno-sectarian conflicts have increasingly erupted amongst groups at all social levels.

According to the official site of Iraqi Body Count (2017), about 190,000 civilians have been killed from violent conflicts since 2003, mostly as the result of sectarian- or identity-based animosity (Kirmanj, 2013), and internally displaced persons (IDPs) have become an endemic part of the new landscape of Iraq. For example, since 2014 as the result of escalation of new armed conflict across the central provinces and the constantly changing security situation, four million IDPs have been recorded (UNHCR, 2015). It can be considered that Iraqi efforts to address ethno-sectarian conflicts are going back to square one, whereas the fires of ethno-sectarian conflicts have been exacerbated by terrorist activities. Violent conflicts among groups made the

[2] Following the 1990–91 second Gulf War, and the 1991 uprising of Kurds in the north and Shias in the south against the Ba'athist regime, the Kurdish Peshmerga succeeded in pushing out the main Iraqi forces from the north in which Kurds could capture the majority of the area that claimed its own territory, including the contentious city of Kirkuk. However, Iraqi forces were able to recapture Kirkuk and other towns in the line between Kurds and Arab population, which led to mass emigration of the Kurdish community to the border. The humanitarian disaster of the Kurdish people led to encouragement of a US-led initiative to protect them by establishing a UN 'no-fly zone' north of the 36th parallel to protect Kurds from attacks by Iraqi forces, making the area off-limits to the Iraqi air force. The establishment of the northern no-fly zone left the region with *de facto* autonomy over its finances, military, and internal affairs and Kurds enjoyed *de facto* independence ever since. As a result, the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) was created through the general election in 1992, governing the three main provinces of Suleimaniya, Erbil, Duhok and some big towns which belonged to provinces of Kirkuk, Mosul and Diyala. See Mills (2016:3) and Amnesty International Report (2016).

gaps among groups and between these and the government becoming increasingly intractable disasters.

In this regard, the mismanagement of ethno-sectarian conflicts has been one of the biggest challenges the Iraqi state has faced in recent decades and since its composition. After the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime as a result of invasion by the US-led coalition in 2003, the formation of a new political system accounting for the various ethnic and sectarian components was expected as the new Constitution, which was approved by Iraqis in 2005, recognizing the ethnic and religious diversity of Iraqi society. In addition, the 2005 Constitution adopted a federal system as a model to tackle the question of ethnic and sectarian conflicts and identity issue; nevertheless, clashes have not addressed. Iraq is witnessing a violent, brutal sectarian war among diverse religious and ethnic groups and the possibility of living together seems to have vanished. In order to understand the lack of a present political model and if there is scope for developing a feasible solution, there is the need to study and academic analysis.

1.2 AN OVERVIEW OF ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

1.2.1 Ethnicity, ethnic groups and the issue of national identity

The different dimensions of ethnicity and its effects on conflicts and the degree to which ethnic groups do express religious and linguistic differences as well has been highly debated among scholars. Some scholars have simply distinguished race from ethnicity, in which ethnic groups involve cultural elements rather than physical differentiation of race (Eriksen, 2002). However, the most recent theorists have emphasised that ethnic groups require group identification implies cultural features and common culture to presence ethnic group rather than biological origins (Gilbert,

2008:21). In this sense, Barth (1996) thought that ethnic groups are distinguished from other types of race by the ethnic boundary maintenance that defines the group, not the cultural features they encompass. Social boundaries can be identified in social life though social behaviour and social relations. Although territory is important to maintain ethnic groups, it is not merely criteria to provide persistent elements of groups but the ways in which they are maintained by continual expression and validation. The persistent iteration of ethnic groups (i.e. the continuing manifestation of ethnic identity) relates to group identification and to the structural characteristics of interaction, which allows the expression of cultural differences. The following definitions illustrate the general parameters by which ethnicity is understood:

> 'Ethnic groups are defined by ascriptive differences, whether the indicium is colour, appearance, language, religion, some other indicator of common origin, or some combination thereof. This is an inclusive concept of ethnicity' (Horowitz, 1985:17-18)

> 'Ethnicity is an aspect of social relationships between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinctive from members of other groups with whom they have a minimum of regular interaction' (Eriksen, 2002:12)

The majority of the studies conceptualise ethnicity in terms of ethnic group dimensions reflected in a common name, a common myth of descent (common origin), a shared history, a distinctive shared culture (religion, language), an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity (Smith, 1986; Hutchinson and Smith, 1996; Scherrer, 2002). In this respect, Smith (1986:32) identified ethnic groups as 'named

human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity'.

Lipschutz (1998) identified five theories of ethnicity, including that ethnicity is biological or natural; it is accumulated hatreds among primordial nations; it is cultural and not inherently violent; it is self-defence; and it is instrumental (i.e. the result of projects designed to capture state power and control). According to this study, each of these points individually is insufficient to provide analytical explanation of ethnicity, although each of these provides some elements of the whole. In international relations, Brass (1996) distinguished three criteria to identify ethnicity or ethnic groups:

1. Objective definition – cultural features that clearly distinguish one group from another, including language, religion, territory, race, colour, dress, diet and customs.
2. Subjective definition – ethnic groups can separate from others by some cultural symbols that make them arrive at a subjective self-consciousness.
3. Behavioural definition – which ethnic groups behave in particular ways in relation to and in interaction with others. This is an extension of the objective definition, and it differs in that it only relates to interactions with other groups.

Phinney (1996) attempted to find the link between ethnicity and psychology; he thought at least there are three aspects that ethnicity may account for its psychological importance, including: (a) cultural values, attitudes, and behaviours, (b) the subjective sense of ethnic group membership (identity), and (c) experiences associated with minority status including powerlessness, discrimination and prejudice. Weber (1996:56) defined ethnic groups as those who:

> ‘entertain a subjective belief in their common decent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important for the propagation of group formation; conversely, it does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists’.

Keefe (1992:35) attempted to identify ethnicity in contexts in which ethnic culture refers to:

> ‘the pattern of behaviours and beliefs that sets a group apart from others, ethnic group membership, refers to the network of people with whom an individual is in contact, and the ethnic affiliation of those people and the groups they form, ethnic identity, encompasses the perceptions of and personal affiliation with ethnic groups and cultures’.

Hence, it can be considered that different ethnic groups not only indicate different groups of people, but also indicate distinct heritage and behaviour between groups. Ethnic groups are *a priori* social groupings that engage in conflict only due to incidental factors. They can be considered to be groups of people bound together through a common heritage derived from a natural common root or from a common culture that makes this group feel a common identity. Ethnic differences have appeared in various forms and relations such as common language, race, religion and habits, even in the heritage and background distinctions. For example, in Iraq, the differences between Kurds and Arabs appear not only in different languages and races but also in terms of traditional clothes, foods, building design and architecture, and even geography and the environment. However, the core of ethnic conflicts between them is related to inherent elements rather than heritage and other elements.

On the other hand, cultural groups' features are instrumental in precipitating and antagonising ethnic conflict according to some analyses. Huntington's (1993) notorious *Clash of Civilizations* thesis argues that cultural ideation (including religion) is a more compelling component of ethnicity than biological race, in his division of the world into Western, Orthodox (Slavic), Confucian (Chinese), Hindu (Indian) and Islamic (Middle East and North Africa [MENA]) cultural zones. Religion in particular can be a source of conflict because of its exclusivity – for instance, someone of mixed parentage may be a citizen of two countries or feel some kind of affiliation with two different parental cultures, but it is unusual to feel affiliation for two different religions (e.g. to be half-Catholic and half-Muslim at the same time). This implies that societies with religious diversity are more vulnerable than otherwise ethnically diverse societies. Similarly, Reynal-Querol (2002) has indicated that religious differences are stronger more than language differences in societies as a social cleavage, because of the exclusivity of religion and its wider impacts on people's understanding of the world and social relationships, which are the basis of differences among civilizations. In contrast, Kaufmann (1996) claims that societies with ethnic diversity are more problematic than those with religious diversity, because the former depend on a combination of race, language, culture and religion, which are harder to assimilate for building national identity.

Nonetheless, Brubaker (2011) argued that religion can be considered as an auxiliary support of nationalism rather than playing a direct role in building national identity. According to Wiessbrod (1983), religion plays a prominent role in national identity formation. Despite the high level of secularism in developed countries such as Israel, religion still provides value in delineating national identity (although race and religion are particularly conflated in the case of Judaism). A qualitative study by Storm (2013)

highlighted that despite increasing secularity and general decline in traditional religious belief among people in the Britain, the salience of religion has grown in some aspects of the public domain, and it has encouraged more integration and fostered national identity.

While religion has an influence on national identity, it is but one of numerous elements. Furthermore, extensive studies have analysed the effect of religion on national identity, but they have not indicated the challenges that flow from different religious groups, and their impacts on conflicts. For example, although Shias[3] and Sunnis predominantly hail from the same Arab ethnicity in Iraq (i.e. genetic and linguistic affiliation), there have been severe conflicts between them because of their sectarian differences. Conversely, several studies have concentrated on the role of linguistic diversity and its impacts on identity. This controversial debate stems back not just to recent decades but rather to classical history. The Germany philosopher Fichte (1762–1814) believed that language is an inner frontier and original natural border of nations; populations divided by religions could be united by language (cited in Moore, 2009:24). In the same vein, a political struggle emerged in Bulgaria in the 19th century between those

[3] Arab Shia Muslims comprise about 60 percent of the population of Iraq, while 20 percent are Arab Sunni Muslims. Despite both being Arab and Muslim, there are ancient historical disagreements and conflicts about many aspects of Islamic doctrine that have led to them being two different sects. There are many sub-groups in both sects, with varying degrees of mutual anathema. For instance, Zaidi Shias in Yemen were traditionally indistinguishable from Hanafi Sunni Muslims in terms of creed, while Ithna Ashari Shias who are ascendant in the Islamic Republic of Iran have very different theological beliefs. Western scholars often fail to appreciate the nuances of sectarian differences in the region. For instance, Brancati (2004:9) explained the major differences thus: 'Shias believe in the doctrine of the Imamate whereby leaders of the Muslim community should be descendants of the Prophet Muhammad and, thus, Ali ibn Abi Taleb, the son-in-law of the Prophet, should be the historical leader of the Muslim community. In contrast, Sunnis believe Muslims should choose their leaders based on their own attributes and do not support Abi Taleb. Although many other differences distinguish these two sects of Islam, they are rooted primarily in this basic disagreement'. This embarrassing reduction ignores the fact that Ali ibn Abi Taleb – and indeed Abi Taleb, who died without embracing Islam – are venerated by all Sunni Muslims, and that Sunni Islam does acknowledge the primacy of the Quraish tribe in their right to the Caliphate/ Imamate. Indeed, the main doctrinal difference is that Ithna Ashari Shias attribute to their Imams the ability to issue Sharia (i.e. a theological position), while in Sunni Islam the Caliph is no more than a political leader.

who emphasised religion and those who wanted language to be the national identity marker. However, despite the conflicts between Muslims and Christians in this regard, language became the dominant national identity marker and religion lost its power (Crawford, 1998:516).

Nonetheless, the French philosopher Renan (1823-1892) (1996) in his well-known paper *What is a Nation?* confirmed that language is important to unite people, but it does not force them to unite. Switzerland includes three main linguistic groups (French, German and Italian) but the people unite because of their affiliation with political configurations that supersede their basic linguistic affiliations. In his point of view, the nation is a daily plebiscite. The famous sociologist Weber (1864-1920) (1996) thought that different languages do not necessarily pose an obstacle to a sense of shared nationality. Many modern nation states include several language groups without significant problems. However, the role of a common language uniting people living within a state is certainly significant for promoting national identity.

Recent research has looked at this issue in different perspective, especially in the cases of multicultural societies. Hobsbawn (1996) claimed that all languages have the elements of political self-assertion, which may be exaggerated when there are attempts to use it to complement political independence by linguistic separatism. Languages have been created specifically as symbols of nationalist or regionalist aspirations, generally for separatist or secession purposes. However, Réaume (2000) argued for the importance of protecting different languages, which do not affect social solidarity, as evidenced in the Canadian experience, where the federal government employs a policy of bilingualism that provides citizens with the opportunity to be offered services in French or English. Official bilingualism does not exacerbate ethnic/linguistic

conflict, but rather indirectly promotes national identity by manifesting the belief that the state fairly acts toward all.

It can be considered that each of the above dimensions have explanatory power in uniting people in some cases; Israel, Belgium, Iran and Pakistan were able to integrate and create a nation due to a common religion (Judaism, Catholicism and Islam), and Bulgaria and Germany could integrate because of language. However, the political system and nationalism policy played crucial roles. There are cases in which integration occurred regardless of groups' cultural background within states, such as India and Switzerland, which were integrated through ethnic federations. In the case of Iraq, there is no common religion, ethnicity or language, and the nationalism policy became a tool for exclusive ethnic domination, as O'Leary (2003:8) argued:

> 'Iraq may be contiguously connected on maps, but it has not had a united people, i.e. a people who think of themselves as descended from the same ancestors, who speak the same language, or who profess the same religion – Islam has, after all, divided them as much as it has united them. They neither flow from a common stock, nor are they united by a common immigrant or assimilationist experience. They have not 'by their joint counsels, arms and efforts' just fought a combined war of national liberation'.

Almost all Iraqis are normatively Muslim, but Islam has not traditionally been a meaningful nucleus to foster national identity in Iraq or other countries in the 'Arab World' due to pan-Arab modernist ideologies (e.g. Nasserism and Ba'athism), coercively assimilating minority identities such as Kurds, Assyrians and Turkmen, hindering genuine integration over the long term.

Hence, these studies have not fully addressed the challenges of deeply divided countries and how various groups ignore their ethnic roots to be assimilated into other groups. The way in which citizens identify themselves in ethnically divided societies is important. Smith (1986:152) found that, in complex societies and multi-ethnic states, due to many crosscutting ties and different objects, a kind of 'dual loyalty' is normal and prevalent. In this respect, scholars have debated dual identity (nationally and locally) as an element in federal countries, where people perceive themselves as having a dual identity, both as members of a particular group and as citizens of their particular state. However, some scholars argue that dual identity affects the division of society and leads to creating new divisions and fragmentations (Herther-Spiro, 2007). Nonetheless, dual identity in federalist contexts may not lead to secession if the security of ethnic groups is guaranteed, and if groups find their interests are best served by remaining within states (Adeney, 2007:19). It is necessary to keep balancing between ethnic identity and national identity due to the increased importance of the former reciprocally reflecting and shaping calls for political autonomy and secession; conversely, more developed (or articulated) national identity can precipitate ethno-territorial conflicts (Moreno, 2004:37).

It can be argued that the local identity is not a barrier for national identity, and this aspect needs to be studied in deep. Furthermore, the impact of states' oriented-nationalism on emerging ethnic-sectarian conflicts needs to be addressed. Thus, this study focuses on deeply divided societies in which nationalism policy has historically failed in unifying different groups. Different ethnic conflict regulation models are discussed with primary consideration of federalism. Throughout the study, the concept of 'ethnic conflict' is used to refer to ethnic and sectarian conflicts between groups within states that are in a situation involving violence, regardless of their aims to

control the state, or the secession from the state, or for the autonomy and security of the groups. 'Ethno-sectarian conflicts' (Williams and Simpson, 2008) [4] refers to the conflicts among three main groups (Shias, Sunnis and Kurds) in Iraq.

1.2.2 Ethnic conflict management

The way in which people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds/identities can live together in a functioning state is the fundamental question asked by scholars and policy-makers when dealing with ethnic and cultural diversity. Ethnic diversity *per se* and some forms of conflict are not intrinsically problematic, and a large contingent of evidence proves that it is of remarkable importance for developing societies (Cohen, 1997; UNESCO, 2001; Putnam, 2007; Bowman and Betancur, 2010). However, despite its potential for providing a solution, in some societies, governments have failed to manage cultural diversity, and ethno-sectarian conflicts may have erupted because there was the need for a different governance model that recognised the extent of the existing divided society. In ethnically or deeply divided situations where violent conflicts have polarized societies [5] (Smooha and Hanf, 1992; Guelke, 2012), it is essential to consider regulation models that rely on decentralization and power-sharing to prevent the complete secession of states.

The liberal view of multiculturalism is acknowledging cultural groups' existence rather than denying them, repudiating the old idea of the state as belonging to a dominant group and asserting the need for recognition, accommodation and acknowledgment of cultural groups. When regional groups' demands for recognition are seen as a threat to the state, the policies of liberalism tackle them through

[4] Some scholars used 'ethno-religious conflict' (Wimmer, 2003).
[5] This concept is used to describe the society that, due to ethnic and religious conflicts, has been divided. Some scholars used a different concept for the same meaning, like 'severely divided societies' or 'ethnically divided society' (Horowitz, 1985, 1990).

multination federalism that provides a meaningful form of self-government as well as recognising the group's language as an official state language either within their federal regions or the country as a whole (Kymlicka, 2007a: 66-73). This would be a way to prevent the situation to be exploited by political factions (Tullberg and Tullberg, 1997; Blagojevic, 2009).

Ethnic conflicts could generally be considered as the consequences and implications of governments' inappropriate policies towards ethnic groups. As shown in Figure 1.1, implementing assimilation or even integration policies in ethnically divided societies may lead to conflicts because groups' expectations in these societies are greater and they attempt to be acknowledged institutionally. This would create a 'relative deprivation' as identified by Gurr (1970:23), with tension developing from 'discrepancies between the "ought" and the "is" of collective value satisfaction, and that disposes men to violence'. It is the 'discrepancies between what people want, their value expectations, and what they actually gain… their value accruing capabilities'; the greater this gap, the greater the intensity of the violence and belligerence, particularly when this sense of deprivation is politicized (Saleh, 2013:165-168).

The models of assimilation and/or integration through centralisation could work in the cases of small and spread ethnic diversity, but the models that focus on decentralization such as federalism might be more plausible for deeply divided societies. Ellingsen (2000) carried out a study about relationships between multi-ethnic and internal conflicts from 1946 to 1992, establishing that the type of political regimes and socioeconomic developments have played a significant role in preventing ethnic and sectarian conflicts rather than multi-ethnicity *per se*. Reynal-Querol (2002) discussed a similar result in which alternative political systems can affect the probabilities of emerging ethnic conflicts.

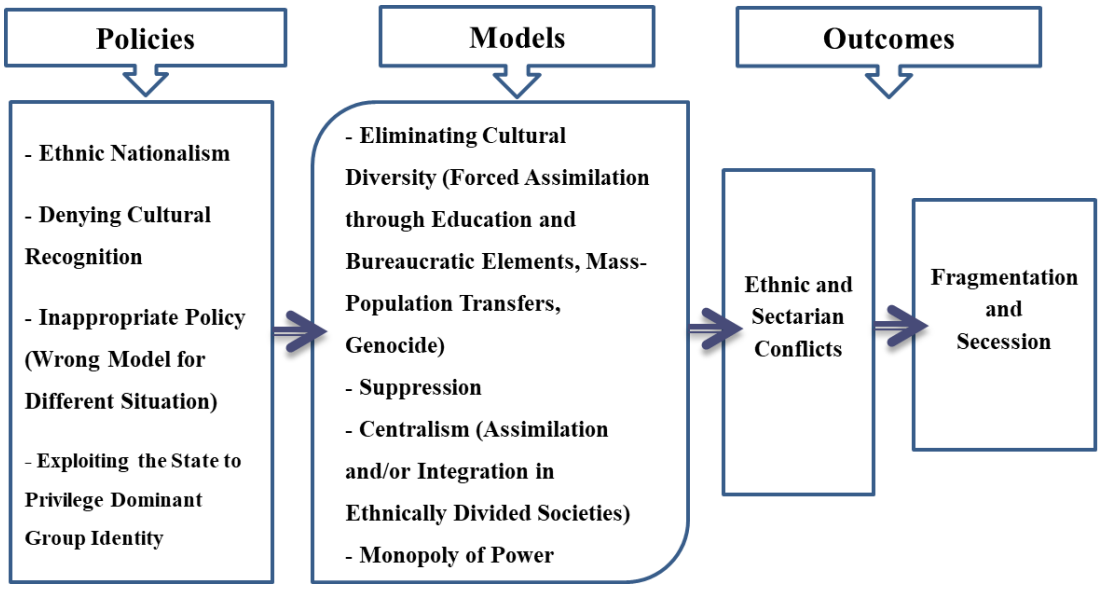


Figure 1.1: Ethnic conflicts and the mismanagement of ethnic diversity

There is no consensus on how ethnic diversity can be managed in the current literature debates. While studies have discussed different models for the management of cultural diversity and the regulation of ethnic conflicts (Nordlinger, 1972; Lijphart, 1977, 2004; Kymlicka, 2007a, 2007b; Wrench, 2007), no framework has been formulated that encompasses all fundamental models with respect to cultural diversity management and ethnic conflict regulation to facilitate living together within states. McGarry and O'Leary (1993; 1994) are among the few authors to have constructed typologies to distinguish ethnic conflict regulation approaches. In their introductory chapter, McGarry and O'Leary (1993) identified eight methods divided into:

- Methods for *eliminating* differences (genocide, forced mass-population transfers, partition and/or secession, and integration and/or assimilation);
- Methods for *managing* differences (hegemonic control, arbitration/third-party intervention, cantonisation and/or federalisation, consociationalism or power-sharing).

McGarry and O'Leary (1993) offered powerful insights in developing and identifying these models, which enable researchers to make sense of different mechanisms and options. However, their studies are not of sufficient scope to address ethnic conflict situations in depth. Moreover, there are some examples, such as in Belgium and Bosnia-Herzegovina (BH) where ethnic conflict was solved by composite approaches through combining two or three methods, such as consociationalism and federalism or partition and federalism, but this approach was not fully considered in their study.

The most common manifestations of ethnic diversity, and to some degree cultural conflicts, are not difficult to address, such as diversity from immigration, which could be addressed by an integration policy (Wrench, 2007). However, the management of ethnic diversity is more difficult when some indigenous ethnic groups are concentrated within specific geographical areas, and they have traditionally sought cultural recognition or self-determination. Cultural groups concentrated in regions of states have relative levels of capability and legitimacy but dispersed groups have a real lack of them (Toft, 2003:133). According to Horowitz (1985), in these societies ethnic conflict is at the centre of politics and it has created challenges for the cohesion of states and sometimes for maintaining peaceful relations between states. Elbadawi (1999) discussed that ethnically polarized societies are more vulnerable to the onset of civil war than ethnically homogenous societies. Hoeffler (2011) mentioned that if ethnic groups are concentrated in their territories, they can claim their right to self-termination readily. Thus, geographic concentration makes communication and coordination easier, which strengthens ethnic groups' capacity to mobilise themselves in non-state formations, including paramilitary or terrorist organisations.

In extreme cases, some scholars have suggested that partition (i.e. to entirely divide states along ethno-cultural lines) is the preferred solution (Kaufmann, 1996; Downes,

2001). Conversely, other scholars have presented soft partition as a model to address ethnic violent conflicts without dividing states, such as the case of BH in 1995 (Joseph and O'Hanlon, 2007). This model requires conflicting parties to make an agreement to officially partitioning the country along ethnic lines. Basically, this model can be considered as the way to admit partition rather than the way to partition, whereas war might already create partition. Lijphart (1969; 1977) identified four features for regulating ethnic conflicts denoted as the notion of 'consociational democracy', as a solely democratic model for deeply divided societies, in which all significant factions of the society should participate in a coalition government. The groups should be represented with a proportionality system and the right of a mutual veto, with ethnic autonomy. These methods became significant foundations of subsequent studies and these types of power-sharing model have been applied in the majority of the ethnic conflict cases where the international community has intervened (Sisk, 2002:59). However, there are gaps in terms of institutional frameworks, and Lijphart (1979) declared that consociationalism can be identified as federalism in the cases of territorially concentrated groups. Nevertheless, despite the variety of governance models for managing ethnic diversity, federalism/ethnofederalism is the preferred model, especially in the case of ethnically divided societies where secession is not possible.

Ethnofederalism is a political model which gives each ethnic groups geographical and institutional platforms for the expression of their interests within states. Although not a historically new model, recently it has become more desirable in many countries (Kymlicka, 2007b). Scholars have discussed its potential (Hale, 2004; Juhász, 2005, 2013; Bakke and Wibbels, 2006), focusing strongly on the effectiveness of ethnofederalism for managing ethnically divided societies. On the other hand, some

studies have argued that side effects of ethnofederalism are be an incentive for further ethnic fragmentation, and it is insufficient to build national identity (Bunce, 2007; Roeder, 2009). Nordlinger (1972) did not include federalism among his six conflict-regulating practices, because it sees as formula for secessionist demands and therefore creating instability in the political system. However, very little work has been produced to assess the limits of ethnofederalism and how it can be addressed, and above all, most studies thus far have dealt with the problem in the short term, without referring to the dimension of sustainability. Consequently, there is still a gap in terms of sustainable solutions of ethnic diversity in deeply divided societies in conflicts. Therefore, this research explores the potentiality to address ethnic conflicts, which depends on partition and ethnofederal models.

In BH, there were three years of violent ethnic and sectarian conflicts between three main groups, but in 1995 the disputing parties by mediation of international community approved the Dayton Peace Accord and violent conflicts were brought to an end (to a great extent) by the approaches of soft partition and ethnofederalism (Oellers-Frahm, 2005). Regardless of the critiques offered by scholars of the weaknesses of the Bosnian model and its consequences (Chandler, 2000; Woodward, 1995; Hayden, 2007; Wolff, 2007), there are lessons to be learnt from it that could be considered to study the violent conflicts in Iraq, which is the case study of this research.

Iraq ostensibly adopted a federal system in the aftermath of the collapse of the Ba'ath regime in 2003. However, despite the country having failed to develop national identity and address ethnic conflicts through centralism, federalism was also ineffective in addressing ethnic issues (Merritt, 2007; Duman, 2013). While a large contingent of scholars highlights that federalism can mitigate the instability raised by ethnic conflict (Bermeo, 2002; Juhász, 2005; 2013; Lijphart, 2007;), this model in Iraq

has not managed to end ethnic conflicts. The reasonable explanation may relate to the lack of separating the conflicting groups, but there are also other challenges that faced federalism and building democratic system, which need to be investigated.

New waves of violent events emerged from 2014, including the Sunni insurgency (in response to the retributive oppression exercised by Shias in their control of Iraq since 2003) epitomised by the fundamentalist group Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which declared the establishment of a new Islamic caliphate in Mosul (the second biggest city in Iraq), and the KRG announced their intention to hold a referendum for Kurdish independence and it was done on 25th of September 2017. More than ever before, the dissolution of Iraq appeared both likely and imminent. Thus, the country still faces the challenge of how to manage ethno-sectarian conflicts and one must consider the current reasons for ethnic conflicts in Iraq, and how the country can achieve a sustainable solution for them.

This is a controversial issue, with discussion on whether the dysfunction of ethnofederalism in Iraq is due to federalism itself as an approach or to the particular weaknesses of the federal governance in Iraq. Sommer-Houdeville (2009:19) holds the latter view, stating that the problem in Iraq does not relate to federalism itself, but to the Iraqi context in which many Iraqis do not agree with federalism as a solution. Cameron (2006) claimed that real federalism has not been created, because with the exception of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), which is essentially a continuation of the former no-fly zone created after the Gulf War, the 2005 Constitution did not produce any other federal regions; federalism needs at least two federal regions. Nonetheless, some studies assume that soft partition and federalism, which gives each group control and autonomy in their territory, may achieve stability (Biden, 2006; Joseph and O'Hanlon, 2007; Merritt, 2007; Brinkerhoff and Johnson, 2010).

Conversely, both scholars and policy makers affirm that the country needs a central and strong government to overcome problems (Makiya, 2005; Dodge, 2007b; Visser, 2007, 2008). New studies argue for the suggestion to divide the country into three confederal or independent states instead of federalism. These arguments are addressed in this study with regards to the people's own perceptions, including arguments against those that recently proposed hard partition in the form of confederalism for Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflicts (Eland, 2009; Khan and Kirmanj, 2015; O'Leary, 2015). The ethnofederal model is still likely to be implemented in Iraq, as it is locally, regionally and internationally more acceptable.

Despite some scholar believe that federalism would lead to further division and disintegration (Roeder 2009), this thesis argues that federalism would not be a problematic if the federal government employed civic instead of ethnic characteristics of nationalism. However, in deeply divided societies, if the clear administrative border of regional governments is not determined, this will be a source of instability and the reoccurrence of violent conflicts. There were some serious works that focused on the issue of identity in Iraq before 2003 (e.g. Lukitz, 1995; Wimmer, 2002; Dawisha, 2009; Fattah and Caso, 2009; Franzen, 2011), but our research has dealt with the 'new' Iraq.

Thus, this thesis hopes to add to the field of studies interested in identity, federalism and other ethnic conflict regulation models. It is particularly a part of the studies that hope to provide suggestions for regulating Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflicts. For that, the research contains theoretical and empirical work based on a variety of methods. It includes analysis and critical evaluation of the relevant research on ethnic diversity, and governance models for ethnic conflict regulations. However, on top of the literature debates about these issues, it focuses on local experiences and people's

perceptions on the ground. Thus, a qualitative method of data collection have been employed as most appropriate for learning about the views and perceptions of Iraqi people. Any solutions must relate to (and serve) the people's social context and their requirements, especially focusing on how the governance model can meet the wishes of the people of Iraq. This work would also be important because it is conducted by the researcher from Iraqi society, familiar with its languages and ethnic discourses.

Although the Bosnian case is highly relevant to this study, this is not a fundamentally comparative work. Nevertheless, the pertinence of BH to the case of Iraq has been noted by many scholars and policy makers (Biden and Gelb, 2006; Joseph and O'Hanlon, 2007; Merritt, 2007; al-Rahim, 2007). Therefore, the research included a review of literature concerning ethnic partition and its consequences in BH, but there are some essential differences between both cases that must be taken into account. BH was already a federal region of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), while Iraq was an independent unitary state. The main differences among 'Bosnian' ethnic groups were religious: the Bosniacs (Muslims), Serbs (Orthodox) and Croats (Catholics) were all derived their identity from primordial religious traditions rooted in imagined pasts of messianic struggles, despite (or rather because of) the anachronistic nature of such identities after decades of Communist secularism. Ethnic identity and religious identity in secularised pre-war Bosnia did not translate into significant differences in the three ethnic groups, given that the lifestyles, language and normative culture of the groups were basically identical (Pupavac, 2006:7). The existence of common symbols and access to resources (i.e. participation in economic life) may facilitate addressing ethnic conflicts and nation building.

Conversely, the Shia, Sunni and Kurdish ethnic identities are permeated with religious, linguistic and cultural differences. The only common links among three main groups

are religion, but sectarianism (i.e. Shia and Sunni sects) has formed the main source of conflict in recent Iraqi history. However, like BH, Iraq faces ethno-sectarian violence and war based-division. Another commonality between the scenarios is that both countries had new political systems (BH in 1995 and Iraq in 2005) under international patronage. In the first model, partial partition of BH was acknowledged but in Iraq it was never seriously entertained. The US-led international coalition withdrew operational forces and direct diplomatic supervision from Iraq after six years, but continued to play a direct role in BH. Thus, BH's model for regulating ethnic conflicts and its implications after two decades can be analysed with respect to the Iraqi case.

1.3 RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS

This research aims to address the challenges that arise from ethnic diversity with a focus on ethnic conflicts in the deeply divided society of Iraq. In this regard, the study analyses and evaluate political models that can be used to manage ethnic conflicts in deeply divided societies especially; Federalism, partition, power sharing and confideralism. The models are those that can be justified in terms of achieving stability and not exceeding the principles of human rights. The study seeks to understand the lack of a present governance model; the perceptions of the own people are employed to explore whether there is scope for developing a feasible model to resolve Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflicts. Academic study is instrumental in showing a clear picture about Iraqi crises and providing an alternative model through analysis and evaluating experiences and lessons from other cases.

This research also attempts to investigate the causal dimensions of lasting ethnic conflicts in Iraq since the 2003 invasion, to determine whether Iraqi society was historically integrated and the 2003 invasion exacerbated ethno-sectarian conflicts and

precipitated fragmentation. Hence, it presents different approaches and perspectives toward ethnic conflicts and identities. This essentially amounts to examining how the central policy of the new government exacerbated latent ethno-sectarian conflicts. The research explores whether federal governance might be implemented as a powerful model for managing ethnic diversity in deeply divided societies such as Iraq, considering its forms and limitations in the case of high-intensity ethnic-sectarian conflicts. The study evaluates the alternative solutions that proposed by those in academic circles toward Iraq especially; primordialist and integrationist perspectives toward best solution. There is further an endeavour to examine the hypothesis that Iraqi ethnic and sectarian conflicts can be resolved by combining its federalism with soft partition (partially divided country along ethno-sectarian lines). In this sense, it argues that an ethnofederal model is viable solution rather than other alternatives of governorate federalism or centralism for Iraq. It also suggests ethnofederalism as a compromise solution between the desire for more centralism and decentralism or confederalism.

In addition, the study aims also to investigate the effects of the recent violent conflict on social cohesion, and to understand level of trust among the groups and the groups' trust towards the present government and its impacts on solutions. It is used to find out to what extent ethno-sectarian policy is a barrier to group loyalty to national identity and why the issue of identity has not addressed after 2005 new political system in Iraq. In this regard, the main research question of this study is:

- Is federalism still a valid solution for the Iraqi predicament? To what extent can ethno-sectarian conflicts be resolved by combining its federalism with soft partition?

To answer this question comprehensively, the following sub-questions were devised:

- What are the root-causes of Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflicts, and what are the impacts of federal government's policies on exacerbating ethno-sectarian conflicts?
- Is it necessary to impose a single national identity in federal state?
- To what extent the ignorance of democratic and power sharing principles affected the federalism to be ineffective?
- What are the impacts of ethno-sectarian violence on division, social cohesion and its effects on resolutions?
- After the last events of violent conflicts in Iraq, to what degree can the Bosnian model of soft partition can be a lesson to be applied in Iraq?

1.4 PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

There is no study without some challenges for the researcher, especially as PhD research takes several years. For me, at the first year of my study in 2014, the ISIS onslaught in Iraq forced me to revise my studies plan and change the orientation of my study to encompass the new dynamic events in the country. Meanwhile it made my data collection process very challenging and risky. I visited some conflicting areas to see the events and access targeted peoples, although I could not visit all places controlled by militias, especially in the middle and south of the country. However, I had confidence to conduct my research and I organised focus groups and interviews. Although ISIS were unsuccessful in attacking the area were run by the KRG, I was always worried about my relatives close and friends (including my brothers and cousins), who were in the front line fighting ISIS.

Furthermore, I encountered another challenge before I started the second year of my research study. In 2012, when I came to the UK to start my study journey, the KRI was booming in all economic sectors. The KRG decided to invest in higher education, and I was a part of the government program. In study years of 2012-2013 and 2013-2014, the KRG paid students' university tuition fees and living costs in advance. The situation subsequently changed dramatically, and the KRG announced that the IG had cut KRI's portion of budget at the end of 2014, which compelled them to stop their funds for us. Since 2015 I received only half a year's payment for undertaking this study over the course of three years.

This was not everything. Despite these challenges, I continued my research study and did not give up what I had started. I improved my ability to manage my research and tasks. I have participated in the majority of necessary short courses that I saw important for my research such as courses about qualitative methods, referencing, computer programmes, data collection techniques and research ethics. These courses gave me the opportunity to improve my skills in managing and classifying my works, as well as enabling me to be more familiar about how to conduct my focus groups and interviews. Within this period of research study, I participated in seven local and international conferences in the UK or Europe and presented papers in four of them, in addition to the articles that I have published in the Iraqi newspapers. I have achieved a remarkable experience through communication with different categories of people such as academics, politicians and refugees, which is very beneficial for my communication techniques for the future.

Currently, a spectrum of ideas has been constructed that has achieved the mission of this research and paved the way for future exploration of different views and angles;

sharing ideas with people, especially who study in the same field or close to it, will be my task in future work.

1.5 THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis is split into seven chapters. The chapter introduction is devoted to describing the background of the study and presenting a conceptual framework of ethnicity and ethnic conflicts. It explains why this study is important and what it is going to present in terms of ethnic conflict regulation models. In addition, aims and research questions with a summary of the research methods and thesis structure are presented.

Chapter two presents a critical review of the literature on identity, ethnic conflict approaches and ethnic conflict management in deeply divided societies. The first part of the chapter is devoted to several crucial concepts for ethnic conflicts. The causes of ethnic conflicts are analysed based on the political, cultural and economic aspects. If a better understanding of the causal dimensions of ethnic conflicts is obtained, we might be able to analyse plausible resolutions. Thus, we must consider the reasons that made ethnic diversity result in ethno-sectarian conflicts and the impacts of these factors on conflict regulation models. Furthermore, at the end of the chapter, models that can be employed for regulating ethnic conflicts are covered with particular focus on ethnofederalism as the model for deeply divided societies.

Chapter three is devoted to presenting debates about ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq. Historical dimensions are analysed to better understand the historical roots of the problems among groups, with focus on the events that occurred in Iraq as the result of 2003 invasion. It answers the question of whether Iraq was already an integrated society or whether the 2003 invasion led to disintegration. The chapter presents how

Iraqi identity was constructed and how the ethnic politics led to the society being disintegrated. It explains the most conflicting issues between components after 2003, with focus on the debate surrounding the appropriate governance for a new Iraq.[6]

In chapter four, the research design and methodological approach employed for the study is presented. The contents of this chapter present a detailed knowledge of qualitative methods of focus groups and individual interviews in this study, divided into five main sections. An explanation of the methods followed in the data analysis process is presented along with the results. In addition, the limitations and positive dimensions of using qualitative data for studying ethnic conflict area are provided.

Following this methodology, chapters five and six are devoted to discussing and analysing the data collected during the study process. According to the themes identified through data analysis, major issues in the research questions are identified and addressed. These chapters initiate investigation of the findings about ethnic conflicts, ethnic conflict regulation and an interpretation of the results is provided and compared with previous studies.

Chapter five is focused on the issues of ethnic conflict casual dimensions and investigated the negative role of political parties and leaders in feeding conflicts. It explores that many of the inappropriate policies of identity have been repeated by the new Iraqi government. It investigates the lack of new Iraqi governance model, and how governments have continued to adhere to centralism instead of federal principles.

[6] 'New Iraq' is used in this study to identify the new political system established in 2005.

Chapter six explores different political models that proposed by scholar and policymakers for Iraq and presented a federal-based soft partition as the way to overcome ethno-sectarian conflicts.

In the final chapter, conclusions of the study are presented, which cover a summary of the key findings and contribution of the study and limitations. It can be seen that all chapters have strong links while each presents a particular aspect of the research and an independent topic.

2 ETHNIC CONFLICTS AND MODELS FOR THEIR REGULATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Ethnic conflicts relate to multicultural countries that comprise various ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. It can be considered that ethnic conflicts are generally the result of the nationalism process of nation building in multicultural societies; correspondingly, the proper management of ethnic diversity is very important to protect societies from ethnic and sectarian conflicts. Government strategy is a factor in the satisfaction of different groups within states; if they feel that the government acts fairly and evenly toward all citizens they will be more content with the state apparatus (and belonging to that nation). However, many additional and interrelated factors lead to the onset of ethnic conflicts beyond governance issues.

This chapter presents a critical assessment of different perspectives on ethnic conflicts, particularly the approaches and models that involve the management of the different degrees of ethnic and cultural diversity societies, with consideration of deeply divided countries. Many studies have partially analysed the causal dimensions of emerging/ lasting ethnic conflicts. This chapter attempts to expand understanding of the ethnicity and the main causes of ethnic-sectarian conflicts, and then the different ethnic regulation approaches are assessed with the profound focus on federal and soft portion models.

It is argued that ethnic conflicts do not escalate because of a sole factor but several reasons may contribute to it. In terms of solution, there are many criteria that need to be considered, such as the levels of ethnic conflicts, sizes, territory and so on. For

ethnically divided societies, federalism is analysed as the best while governments see their territory as indivisible.

The chapter is divided to six main sections. The first section provides an overview of ethnic conflicts and its impacts on societies, and then the next four sections cover the key sources and causes of ethnic conflicts in terms of different theories. The following sections explore various ethnic conflict regulation models.

2.2 THE CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT OF ETHNIC CONFLICT

There are many scholars from different disciplines who have addressed the issue of ethnic conflicts in multicultural societies, including from international political economy (IPE), political sciences, social psychology, anthropology and economics, with differing perspectives. For instance, while economists have focused on economic dimensions such as inequality, growth and GDP, political scientists tend to discuss the political dimensions of ethnic conflicts, such as power inequality, rebellion, nationalism and self-determination.

The IPE theorist Reynal-Querol (2002) defined ethnic conflicts as episodes of violent conflict between governments and ethnic, religious, national groups, or other communal minorities that attempt to major changes in their status. It emerges when a dominant ethnic group exercises prejudicial control over all political and economic opportunities at the expense of other groups (Saleh, 2013:157). According to Horton (1993), ethnic conflicts arose between various groups about values, while their interpretations cannot be absorbed within a particular social structure. He consequently recommended a minimal core of shared values (e.g. education and free speech) to be achieved for all and the acknowledgement of group values in official institutions. However, Posen (1993) perceived ethnic conflict as a struggle between ethnic groups

in the absence of state security or security dilemma. Ethnic conflict can take various forms, Green and Seher (2003) presented three forms of ethnic conflicts, including: (1) intrastate collective action such as demonstrations, protests, strikes, and communal rioting; (2) internal wars such as secessionism and irredentism, civil wars, and coups; and (3) interstate wars, terrorism, annexation, and genocide.

The question of what ethnic conflicts is and where ethnic-religious groups come from is not problematic, especially in terms of the objective definition (above), but it is ponderous why some of them resort to conflicts, and whether ethnic diversity within states is problematic in itself, or whether it is inappropriate management that results in ethnic tension and conflict. The political scientists Fearon and Laitin (2003) argued that ethnicity is not problematic *per se*, but state weakness (marked by poverty, a large population and instability) is always vulnerable to civil war. They were particularly concerned with the increase in ethnic civil war during the 1990s, resulting from a gradual accumulation of conflicts in weak states since WWII, accelerated by the end of the Cold War. In contrast, Cederman, Wimmer and Min (2010) posited that ethnicity should be accounted as an explanatory factor of civil wars in terms of competing state powers.

Hegre and Sambanis (2006) found that ethnic diversity is robustly related to lower-level ethnic conflict, but its relationship to civil war is more difficult to demonstrate. Hoeffler (2011) claimed that ethnicity is mainly used for expediency as a tool of mobilization by opportunists, thus rather than being a cause of war in itself, it is harnessed to the political and economic objectives of rebel leaders motivated by grievance or greed; ‘ethnic groups provide an ideal recruitment pool’.

In terms of intensification of diversity, it has been argued that countries with more ethnic diversity are more prone to ethnic conflicts (Vanhanen 1999; Sambanis, 2001:280), while Wimmer, Cederman and Min (2009) found that highly diverse states are not more likely to ethnic conflicts. Different kinds of ethnic conflicts result from different causal processes. It can be argued that ethnic conflicts could emerge due to different political and socio-economic scenarios and factors related to states' political systems and nationalism policies, potentially causing separatism and the disintegration of states with ethnically divided societies. Ethnic groups generally resort to conflicts when they see their interests/identities are at risk which might ultimately take the form of violent civil war and armed conflicts, when states cannot admit cultural recognition of other groups within the legacy or normative state. However, this may not explain the overall picture of ethnic conflict phenomena, because in some cases groups are seeking political self-determination, not simply cultural recognition, based on archetypal, primordial claims, often predating the existence of modern nation states (Pupavac, 2012:190).

2.3 PRIMORDIALISM APPROACH TO ETHNIC CONFLICTS

There are strong relationships between ethnicity and ethnic conflicts in multicultural societies, and solid links between ethnic conflicts, rebellions or national movements and self-determination. Sisk (2002) identified two main paradigms by which the phenomena of ethnic conflicts are conceptualised: primordialists, who see ethnic conflicts as inherited group behavioural characteristics or even biologically based responses; and instrumentalists, who view ethnic conflicts as a consequence of differential patterns of modernization between groups and competition over economic resources. Ethnicity is usually based on the assumption that ethnic and religious identities are features of primordial societies, while modern societies have moved

beyond the particular anchors of custom, religion, ethnicity and sectarian affiliation (Ahmed, 1995). In primordialism, people identify themselves ethnically as Geertz (1973) described, based on the 'givens'. Thus, in primordial societies, ethnic ties that depend on an extensive shared culture, language and history of groups are strong, and people with such bonds are usually susceptible to engagement in ethnic conflicts, because ethnicity is used to unite ethnic groups against others. However, Fearon and Laitin (1996) carried out a study arguing that peace and cooperation between different groups is more common than conflicts and violence, depending on the institutions and government policies to contain disputes between members of groups. In this respect, there are social motivations for group members to identify themselves along ethnic lines, which is affirmed by modernists – that ethnicity is invoked only in certain situations (Gilbert, 2008:26).

Many scholars have regarded primordialism as an intrinsic cause of ethnic conflicts (Crawford, 1998; Blagojevic, 2009). There is vulnerability in multi-ethnic societies that have not exceeded primordialism, especially after any structural changes that cause peoples from different groups to strengthen their relations with their original community and act in their sectional (ethnic) interests. However, other studies go to a deeper level of ethnicity as fixed characteristics of individuals and groups rooted in inherent biological traits or centuries of past practice. Thus, they see ethnic divisions as natural, and ethnic conflicts as flowing from inherent ethnic differences (Lake and Rothchild, 1996a:6).

Conversely, the modernist approach is more concerned with the phenomenon of uprooted traditional elements of ethnic groups in the formation of modern nations, which causes a reaction motivated by self-preservation (i.e. security concerns) among members of ethnic groups who feel they may be disenfranchised by the new political

system, particularly when it is dominated by a particular ethnic (racial or religious) group at the expense of others, causing people to cluster around their ethnicity as a protection against real or imagined threats. In other words, primordial approach can be considered as a stage in which national identity has not been established but it is imposed by governmental power, and if that power is perceived to be exercised by one ethnicity at the expense of others, ethnic identities will resurge and may replace national identity. The Kurds in Turkey are a good example of this. While the Ottomans were cosmopolitan and did not attempt to assimilate ethnicities (rather they historically tried to enforce difference, in terms of sumptuary laws regulating acceptable clothing styles for numerous different groups in society), the Kemalist project in modern Turkey to subjugate all ethnic groups to Turkish nationalism caused the Kurds to fight the Turkish state for a century (Mazower, 2006).

According to the modernist or instrumentalist approach, the nation is a product of modernity, and the philosopher and social anthropologist Gellner (1983) considered the nation to be a modern phenomenon occasioned by industrialisation and the needs of modern society, which destroy the traditional relations amongst people and cause new kinds of relationships to emerge, engendered by the educational system and industrial and military institutions. Education is a very crucial part of moving societies from traditional (legacy) formations to newer nation forms.

According to the liberal economist Collier (2006:6), education is very important in terms of mitigating the risk of ethnic conflicts. He found that every 10% of young males in secondary school cuts the risk of conflict by around 4%: ‘A country which has 10% points more of its youths in schools - say 55% instead of 45% - cuts its risk of conflict from 14% to around 10%’. Similarly, Ahmed (1995:22) believed that education can play an effective role in discouraging ethnic hatred in the societies.

However, this view cannot explain the failure of Eastern European countries that fragmented on ethnic lines in the 1990s, although they had an advanced education system (Pupavac, 2006), nor the political movements and nationalist efforts of the ethnic groups that struggle to political recognition even in developed countries, such as Scottish nationalist efforts to secede from create an independent state in the UK. Ultimately the issue is one of some groups trying to monopolise power and dominate others in the contemporary world, and socio-economic and cultural factors are ancillary to this underlying dynamic. Even though this modernist view is criticized in the ethno-symbolic approach, it remains the predominant paradigm to explain the modern state, particularly in terms of its failures outside Western Europe.

Smith (1986, 1999, 2005, 2009) in his ethno-symbolism approach argued that the modernist approach lacks historical depth and sophistication in its treatment of the problems of dating and explaining nations. He based his thesis on the concept that modernists cannot explain the pre-modern roots of modern nations. There are deep roots in earlier ethnic groups of modern national identity. He thinks that nations are constructed from inherent cultural resources, including antecedent ethnic symbols, myths, memories and values, and from the sacred traditions which they have inherited from earlier ages and peoples. While the ethno-symbolism understanding of the nation essentially goes far in refuting the Marxist critique of the state as a fabricated instrument of bourgeoisie control, it does not address the reality of multi-ethnic nation states with deep and substantive ethnic differences in terms of multiple cultures, memories, values and symbols, particularly when these ethnic differences cause conflict. Ichijo (2005:89) reported that ethno-symbolism has not seen nations as an epiphenomenon of social development of modernity, but as a '*sui generis* entity'. Nationalism appreciates symbols and meanings of cultural context which are important

for people's everyday experience (Eriksen, 2002:107). Thus, according to this method, states should develop national identity based on common symbols, myths and memories rather than particular ethnic group's myths and symbols, but the problem is how such nationalism policies should be symbolically linked with different groups in multicultural states. This has not been fully explained by ethno-symbolists.

Eriksen (1991) has attempted to join ethnicity with nationalism and treat them as an ideological concept. In his opinion, ethnicity refers to 'the social reproduction of basic classificatory differences between categories of people and to aspects of gain and loss in social interaction. It is fundamentally dual, encompassing aspects of both meaning and politics'. In contrast, Lipschutz (1998:57) thought that ethnicity and identity are not inherently politicized, because these are not in themselves tools by which people struggle for power and resources (i.e. they do not comprise politics, although they influence it). The political scientist Wolff (2006:64) considered that the presence of ethnicities does not necessarily predispose a nation to conflicts. IPE critical theorists Lake and Rothchild (1996a:8) claimed that ethnicity causes conflicts only in tandem with acute social uncertainty, when ethnic groups are apprehensive or fearful about their future (in terms of physical, material and economic safety and cultural integrity and rights), especially in fragile states that depend on coercion rather than legitimate authority. This logical perspective clearly affirms that where formal networks (i.e. states or the international community) have failed, informal or traditional ones take their place, as in BH, Kashmir and Palestine (Ahmed 1995:8).

It seems that transition of ethnicity from primordialism to nationhood is a difficult stage of state formation, especially in ethnically divided societies. The process of uprooting ethnic groups from their local identities to national ones is not possible in the short term, and it is vulnerable to the onset of ethno-sectarian violence. Some

conditions and circumstances are crucial, especially structural changes in political institutions to invoke and reinforce ethnicity. However, in ethnically divided societies, political recognition is crucial to protect the society from ethnic conflicts, which necessitates institutional perspectives.

2.4 POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVES OF ETHNIC CONFLICTS

2.4.1 Institutional approach

Studies in this field focus on government policy, or in other words the political system, in terms of managing multicultural societies. Despite the similarity between many countries in terms of cultural differences among their constituent communities, some of them embody living together harmoniously while others have suffered ethnic conflicts, e.g. Jews in Morocco (peaceful) versus Algeria (expelled). This is an important point to think about the empowerment of political institutions in avoiding and reducing ethnic conflicts. Reynal-Querol (2002) provides evidence on how states with different political regimes have different probabilities of experiencing ethnic civil wars. Whilst proportional systems experience lower probability of conflicts, majoritarian systems, especially in ethnically divided societies, are highly prone to ethnic conflicts in contexts characterized by competition for resources (including political control of economic issues). In this sense, cultural recognition could be regarded one of the essential factors of ethnic conflicts related to denying/admitting cultural differences within states (i.e. the extent to which the dominant group acknowledges other ethnic groups and accords them their rights).

Therefore, the nature of the political system and the extent to which it is able to reflect the size and circumstances of constituent ethnic groups is crucial with regard to

cultural recognition. Hoeffler (2011) discussed group size as a criterion of ethnic conflicts, finding that when ethnic groups are very small they may not be able to mobilise and achieve sufficient support from their own ethnic members, and vice-versa. Government policy should be sufficient regarding the size of minority groups to persuade and satisfy their dreams and aspirations, otherwise its power may appear illegitimate and the results might be rebellion and violence (Eriksen, 1991:274).

However, Ellingsen (2000) concluded that regardless of the size of ethnic groups, the type of political model plays an important role in determining ethnic conflict risk (whereby democratic regimes play a remarkable role in mitigating ethnic conflict). Sambanis (2001) found that the protection of ethnic identity is associated with political rights, and supporting democracy is more likely to avoid the risk of ethnic conflicts. However, Crawford (1998:14) reported that although rapid and crucial construction of democratic institutions and liberal economies is important to ameliorate ethnic and sectarian conflicts, there is evidence to show that a well-established liberal capitalist democracy is not always immune to ethnic violence (e.g. Germany in the 1930s). Similarly, Reynal-Querol (2005:446) stated that there is no explicit evidence to support the relationship between democracy and the probability of civil war. Nonetheless, partly democratic countries are more prone to civil war than either mature democracies or autocracies (Reynal-Querol, 2002:35).

It can be considered that political systems that could not deliberate the extent of ethnic diversity are prone to conflicts. States that comprise two or three different ethnic groups of similar proportion are particularly prone to conflict if one of them controls power at the expense of the other(s). In this sense, it can be considered that democracy is not in itself a cure for problems of ethnic diversity, rather political rights should take into account group sizes and positions to enable the peaceful resolution of latent

conflicts. However, there are different levels of democracy and democratisation (Chandler, 2000). Turkey is a typical example; despite the implementation of a kind of democracy, it has consistently and systematically persecuted some ethnicities (particularly Armenians and Kurds), leading to ethnic conflicts. Similarly, despite implementing of election and democratic constitution, groups' rights have been suppressed in the new Iraq.

On the other hand, in his book *The Geography of Ethnic Violence*, Toft (2003) found that ethnic groups concentrated in particular regions of states are more likely to press for independence than those disseminated more widespread over a country. Ethnic war occurs when ethnic groups demand independence and a state (i.e. central authority) sees its territory as indivisible. Meanwhile, he argues that ethnic groups concentrated in urban areas are less likely to seek ethnic conflicts than those in rural areas. Similarly, McGarry and O'Leary (2007:697) concluded that geographical concentrated minorities like Kurds in Iraq are much more likely to achieve independence rather than any forms of integrationist inclusion in a state that has already suppressed them. According to Horowitz (1985), ethnic affiliations are more powerful, passionate and pervasive in divided societies. Nonetheless, Collier and Hoeffler (2004) found that there is no strong evidence to prove the relationships between ethnic-religious fractionalization and civil war.

Thus, recognition is not only related to the acknowledgement of different ethnic or religious groups within states, but also to how they practice their rights institutionally. Groups concentrated in particular territories are more difficult to assimilate, but in more homogeneous or even heterogeneous societies, assimilation and integration policies may be more successful, if civic nationalism is implemented (e.g. the assimilation model in France, and the integration model in the UK).

In other words, Crawford's (1998) formidable study about the role of culturally politicized identity as a cause of ethnic conflicts mentioned four relevant important sources of identity transformation from cultural identity to political identity and conflicts: colonial strategy, the institution of new states, religious precepts, and the effects of these issues on feeling cultural grievance. Additionally, the role of political entrepreneurs to mobilize efforts is crucial to incite ethnic conflicts. He provides two different examples of management in terms of politicized and non-politicized of cultural identity. The UK and the USA are two strong instances where political competition takes the form of group interests and class conflicts instead of cultural conflicts. Conversely, Malaysia is good example of the politicization of cultural affiliations without necessarily leading to ethnic conflicts.

This implies that political institutions can be structured in numerous ways that avoid cultural identity becoming a cause of conflict. However, ethnically diverse counties are more vulnerable if cultural identities are politicized by political institutions compared to countries whose political institutions promote integration. Furthermore, ethnic conflicts may erupt when cultural identities of groups are politicized and then these groups are prevented from participating in political processes and the system of privilege.

It seems that the form of political models and government policies toward ethnically diverse countries are significant in the management of societies. It should be appropriate regarding to the size and circumstance of ethnic groups. In the case of Iraq, Toft's (2003) study has a substantial explanation of ethnic conflicts: that each ethnic group is located in a particular region, particularly the Kurds, who have a long-standing grievance (including being victims of 'Iraqi' genocide) in their quest to run its region. Although currently there are disputes between main Iraqi groups about

proprietary right over some areas which each sees as its homelands, the litany of grievances lamented by the Kurds makes the complaints of the former and current masters of Iraq – the Arab Sunnis and Shias, respectively – pale in comparison. The historical experience of each ethnicity precipitates intense nationalism among groups who feel excluded from the mainstream political institutions, which in this case is reflected in the intense political activity of Kurdish nationalism (and the more recent development of Sunni Arab death cults and militias like ISIS).

2.4.2 Self-determination and nationalism movements

Movements for self-determination are the most frequent source of violent conflicts. Between 1956 and 2002, 146 ethnic groups in 78 countries demanded greater territorial autonomy or independence from their central governments (Walter 2006:313). This is highly related to the concept of the nation state, which focuses on the creation of independent states for all (or rather, most) nations. The main differences between self-determination and cultural recognition relate to the demands in question. Cultural recognition attempts to elicit acknowledgement of groups' rights within states, but ethnicities struggling for self-determination seek to establish their own state. The right of self-determination was confirmed by the famous 14 points of Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations, and then in the United Nations framework. While many groups around the world have struggled for their rights in self-determination for creating their national states, often as a result of anticolonial efforts, this has often been at the expense of less powerful groups who desire their own self-determination but who find themselves re-colonized by another ethnic entity (e.g. Kurds in Iraq in the 1920s, Palestinians after 1948, South Sudan and Darfur Sudan in the 1950s and Tamils in Sri Lanka in the 1940s).

The issue of recognizing the self-determination of ethnic groups in the international law is quite controversial, and the UN itself (formed by the victorious empires of WWII) does not explain clearly which people (groups) have the right to exercise self-determination. In a wily example of realpolitik, UN General Assembly Resolution 2649 in 1970 provided for recognition by the UN (including the Security Council) of the right to self-determination on a case-by-case, expedient basis in determining the grounds for legitimacy; if the UN views a struggle as legitimate this is a great boon to the movement, as legitimacy recognises 'the struggle of peoples under colonial and alien domination recognized as being entitled to the right of self-determination to restore to themselves that right by any means at their disposal' (UN General Assembly Resolution 2649, 1970). However, this clearly enables national governments (i.e. those not under foreign occupation) to deny legitimacy to otherwise authentic movements for self-determination, giving *carte blanche* to regimes wishing to suppress ethnic struggles and rebellions within states, dubbed by some scholars 'internal colonization' (Wiberg 1996:323).

Indeed, there are many ethnic/religious groups or nationalist movements that struggle to achieve rights of self-determination that do not fit with the theory of colonial boundaries. Thus, the right of self-determination has arguably evolved to encompass the ethnic groups within states (Herther-Spiro 2007:327). For instance, Kashmiris in their homelands in India and Pakistan or the Kurds in their historic homelands in Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria are not recognised as being oppressed by 'colonial and alien domination'. Even in cases of such domination, recognition of the alien entity by the UN can automatically strip the entity struggling for such rights of legitimacy, as in the case of Palestine, while new or dubious 'states' are quickly afforded recognition when it is politically expedient for the 'international community', as in the case of South

Sudan. In fact, the vast majority of conflicts since 1945 have occurred *within* (and not *between*) states (Wiberg, 1996).

There is a robust relationship between self-determination and nationalist movements. Gellner (1983) stated that ethnic groups through their nationalism movements usually require that state boundaries should be identical with ethnic boundaries (i.e. ethnic boundaries should not cut across political lines, rather every ethnic group should have its own state). There are mainly two forms of ethno-nationalist conflicts; conflicts over state power between ethnic groups, and conflicts to create new state ruled by particular ethnic group (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010:92).

Eriksen (1991:265) argued that unsuccessful nationalisms might be transformed to ethnicities seeking cultural recognition within states. However, many of the indigenous peoples who have faced such a fate eventually vanished through extermination, migration and cultural assimilation. After they were ignored by the Anglo-French apportionment of the Middle East in the 1920s, the Kurds at the creation of Iraq in 1920 attempted to establish their own state, but after their demands were not acknowledged by the British authorities, they were generally reduced to seeking their cultural recognition within Iraq. Seeking cultural recognition may be an end in itself, or it may be a precursor for a more sustained struggle for national self-determination. For instance, since the quarantine of the Iraqi government (i.e. state) following the Gulf War and the federal model since 2003, the Kurds have tentatively begun to seriously assert their right to self-determination as the best solution for their survival as an ethnic group.

2.4.3 Elite-manipulation approach: The role of political entrepreneurs

This approach focuses on politicians and elites in motivating and instigating conflicts among groups. It hypothesizes that desperate political leaders use ethnic-sectarian emotions to manipulate a public and create hostility and violence among different ethnic groups so that they can obtain/remain in power (Toft, 2002:84). They seem usually to exploit the ethnic and sectarian questions in states whose political institutions are weakened in terms of bringing solutions to and managing cultural diversity problems. The weakness of state institutions is fertile ground for political entrepreneurs to shift the situation in their interests (Crawford, 1998:531). This is a common interpretation of the former Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, when the Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic was able to use the ethnic card to mobilize his own support (Levy, 2007). While there are evidently ethnic emotions and historical memories of grievances rooted in group psychology in BH, hatred and conflict did not consistently exist over the centuries, but there were political leaders who could evoke emotions of fear and hate among groups to precipitate fighting (Blagojevic, 2009).

A variety of reasons make situations germane to exploitation by political entrepreneurs. The security dilemma is a core tool to explain the emergence of ethnic violent conflicts that would be exploited by the leaders such as in Bosnia and Iraq. Furthermore, in the age of neoliberal consensus, the lack of economic divergence among mainstream political parties causes party political systems (and politicians generally) to fall back on fanning the flames of ethnic divisions to justify their own existence as a pseudo-political class, even in the most developed and democratic countries. As one analyst said of the EU:

> ‘Strasbourg is weak and toothless and the establishment alliance of centre-right and centre-left will continue to dominate it – though success

> for the populist right will certainly encourage the Euro-elites to pander more to xenophobia and bigotry' (Milne, 2014).

However, participating actively in committing acts of violence depends on the leaders' persuasive capacity to mobilize followers, by persuading them that their securities are genuinely threatened (Wolff, 2006:78); thus far in Europe this sentiment does not extend beyond the ballot box or random street violence, but in many developing countries fully-fledged ethnic militias are in place to exploit deteriorating political scenarios. In this sense, political entrepreneurs are mainly related to the political institutions because politicians can use ethnic and religious issues to their advantage only when the political institutions allow them to practice their role in mobilizing different groups. Thus, their success depends on the strength of the political institutions (Blagojevic, 2009:10).

It is notable that sometimes state political institutions consciously or unconsciously lead to politicize ethnic and sectarian identity. For instance, in Yugoslavia and Abkhazia, where ethnic violence was intensive, political institutions encouraged politicization of ethnic and religious cleavages and provided opportunities for political entrepreneurs in their efforts to mobilize ethnic and sectarian conflicts (Crawford, 1998:533). In the contemporary world, communication technologies such as TV channels and the internet facilitate a great sense of ethnic awareness and politicization among ethnic groups. Such programmes provide the opportunity to compare socio-political awareness that exist within and across the borders, which increasingly foster the perception of 'relative deprivation' among ethnic groups that enable them to compare their expectations and capabilities (Saleh, 2013:170). A clear example of this is the business-oriented (i.e. consumer-driven) proliferation of ethnic TV channels across MENA. While traditional state broadcasting heavily laboured the point of

national cohesion based on Arab nationalism, ethnic minority cultures now find expression and reinforcement through their own media, such as Kurds in the Middle East and Berbers in North Africa.

While generally innocuous, such institutions do form a nucleus for a reaffirmation of ethnic identity that could potentially reinforce latent ethnic divisions and conflicts. In this regard, it is important to distinguish between leaders who genuinely attempt to achieve their ethnic rights and those who exploit ethnic situations (and institutions) for their own political interests. Collier and Hoeffler (1999) claimed that the quests for justice and loot are two motivations for rebellion against state authority. Justice-seeking rebellion is induced by grievances arising from fractionalization, political repression and poor economic outcomes, whereas looting rebellion is induced by the presence of 'lootable' resources.

2.5 ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES: FEELING OF GRIEVANCE

A considerable amount of literature has been published on efficacy of economic grievances of ethnic conflicts, which generally comprise unfair and uneven distribution of resources. Alleviation of group grievances is the core instrument to explain ethnic conflicts or rebellion in multicultural societies. Grievances are at the core of ethno-sectarian conflict potential, related to the emotional intensity of groups when they think that their interests in danger (Blagojevic, 2009:3). Four types of objective grievance have been identified by Collier and Hoeffler (1999; 2004): poor economic outcomes, repression in the process of political decision making, political exclusion and hatreds arising from relations between different groups. They argued that ethnic and civil conflicts are greatest when the multiple pressures at different

levels in society interact to increase grievance feeling by the groups, which may make them to act on their grievances, especially in crises of economic distribution.

Collier and Hoeffler (1999:2004), sponsored by the World Bank, found that political and social variables related to grievance have little explanatory power while economic variables provide considerably more, thus, the degree of inequality in income and economic aspects has a strong link with group grievances. Collier (2006:10) made the simple observation that the probability of conflict in impoverished areas is greater, due to structural economic impacts such as poor people having less to lose from joining rebel groups (and less invested in the status quo), thus they are ripe for recruitment by rebel organizations. Similarly, Elbadawi (1999) found that at the microeconomic level, poverty can be considered as a main cause of civil war. Inequalities of ethnic-regional incomes are the key inherent cause risk of a civil war that would be realized readily in the form of movements motivated by ethnic grievances. Uneven economic development and modernization determined along ethnic lines contributes to the mobilization of targeted ethnic groups to fight to implement equality among groups' territories (Wolff, 2006:68).

However, Sambanis (2001:280) concluded that ethnic civil wars are mostly caused by political grievances rather economic factors, observing that ethnic conflicts are unlikely to occur in democratic or politically free societies. Similarly, Reynal-Querol (2002) argued that political and social characteristics are the main causes of ethnic wars rather than economic variables. Kaufmann (1996:138) also believed that ethnic conflicts are disputes between different groups over the power relationship between them, in their more pronounced form pertaining to whether groups want partition or to redefine the existing state.

Østby (2008) directly criticized studies emphasizing the economic dimensions of ethnic conflict causes because they test the conflict potential of *vertical* inequality ('income inequality'). Depending on the results of *horizontal* inequality data in 36 developing countries, she concluded that economic inequality alone cannot be considered as the cause of ethnic conflicts; rather when both economic and political (resources and power) are unequally distributed between groups, ethnic conflict is likely to result. This implies that horizontal inequality does increase ethnic conflict risk more than vertical inequality, because the former may enhance both grievances and group cohesion among the relatively deprived, and thus facilitate mobilization for conflict.

Fearon and Laitin (2003:88) confirmed that some conditions such as state weakness and instability, are better indicators of increased propensity toward civil war than economic inequality. Sambanis (2001:267) also found that the lack of democracy and political rights on an ethnic basis significantly affects ethnic conflicts more than economic development. However, Collier *et al.* (2003:53) in their Word Bank Policy Research Report confirmed that all of these political explanations offered by various political persuasions are not comfortably proven by statistical evidence. The key root cause of conflict according to the statistical perspective is the failure of economic development, as the poorest countries can be demonstrated (empirically) to be the most prone to civil war.

With regard to political institutions, Homer-Dixon (1994:26) argued that feelings of grievance (including economic) among groups are not always likely to cause severe ethnic conflict if the political institutions provide them with an opportunity to express their grievances peacefully. Similarly, Cederman, Wimmer and Min (2010) argued that while studies on grievance hypothesis have helped clarify the general conditions

conducive to ethnic conflicts, they have not been tested with adequate data; rather, they have been tested with highly aggregated proxies that do not provide a direct measure of political inequality along ethnic lines.

While economic grievances and political institutions are clearly instrumental in ethnic tension and conflict, this rudimentary materialism should not be allowed to obscure the other important factors in ethnic conflict. Unfair and uneven distribution of resources is not sufficient in itself to cause ethnic conflicts, and Zartman (2004) identified three instrumental elements that precipitate ethnic conflicts: *need* (unfair distribution of resources), *creed* (mobilization of groups) and *greed* (opportunism for financial, resource or political advantage). Indeed, a familiar pattern generally unfolds along these lines. When an ethnic group is in need, creed is mobilized to compete for resources, both for the resistance movement and for its political entrepreneurs (greed). Clearly a higher order of justice is required to break this cycle and to address conflicts based on each of these elements.

Ellingsen (2000:245) also thought that economic inequality, unequal access to resources and cultural issues are factors rendering people more receptive to ethnic conflicts, but he opined that appeals to promote democracy and economic development could override the appeal of ethnic conflict and provide a long-term solution to the crisis. However, access to and control of resources can be overriding imperatives of some ethnic groups that they view as essential to their survival; in the absence of trust in others, they will view supremacy and achievement of ethnic objectives as the only guarantor of their long-term survival, rather than the intangible protections of democracy and economic development; an obvious example is the control of oil in Middle Eastern countries, which offers immense financial prosperity and

disproportionate regional and international political leverage to its possessors, who as political entrepreneurs use such resources as a tool of control for their own populations.

While many scholars have emphasized economic grievances as the main causes of ethnic civil war, others thought that economic greed/opportunity has an explanatory power in ethnic rebellion rather than economic grievances or objective indicators of grievance (Collier *et al.*, 2003; Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Collier, 2006). Nevertheless, Wimmer, Cederman and Min (2009) rejected the distinction between 'greed' and 'grievance' in analysing casual dimensions of ethnic conflicts because what causal dynamics lead actors with complexly intertwined motives down the path toward conflict.

On the other hand, Collier and Sambanis (2002:11), also sponsored by the World Bank, argued that if conflicts are generated by objective grievances, a sustainable peace is impossible unless the grievances are redressed. In contrast, if greed causes disputes, conflicts motivated by subjective grievances may not be solved by redressing those grievances. Even if one group is successfully accommodated, the niche will be filled by others. Zartman (2004:145) also thought greed-based conflict is more difficult to redress by equal justice, because political entrepreneurs do not want common or equal treatment; rather they want to maximise their own exclusive interests, which may often be enhanced by conflict itself.

In light of the evidences that provided by the above studies, two main debates between scholars related to ethnic grievance and conflicts can be identified; arguments focused on the priority of political variables, and those that focused on the priority of economic grievances or economic opportunities that make ethnic groups act. It seems that both sides have merit, and both can be true according to the particular circumstances of the

ethnic groups involved in certain cases. For instance, Kurds have always been in conflict with Iraqi governments since the formation of Iraq in the 1920s, relating to political and cultural rights, but since 2009 a marked importance has been attached to economic issues (e.g. control of oil exports and revenues).

It can be considered that the extensive research by scholars of the Word Bank has been mainly concerned with underlining the causality of economic development in preventing ethnic conflict. Conversely, other studies are mainly concentrated on political issues such as bad political institutions, ethnic and religious heterogeneity, and lack of democracy as the factors in ethnic civil war.

2.6 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

2.6.1 State weaknesses and security dilemma

Ethnic security dilemma is an overwhelming explanation of ethnic violent conflicts in the situation of the collapse central security in states and the weakening of centralized authority in many cases, particularly in the republics that broke away from the SFRY, Soviet Union, and Iraq. Levy (2007) argued ethnic groups are often secure within stable political systems characterized by a strong centralized state. According to neorealist theory, ethnic groups encounter a security dilemma and react with pre-emptive violence in the context of state collapse, when the central security of the legacy state disappears (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010). The collapse of this state's power leaves groups in a condition lacking protection, fearing for the future, and facing an ethnic security dilemma that precipitates the formation of militias for protection that (counterproductively) can cause conflicts. Kaufmann (1996) claimed that ethnic conflicts that occur due to ethnic security dilemma cannot be addressed

until the security dilemma is reduced by physical separation. Posen (1993) also argued that risks of conflicts are quite high in the security dilemma of groups.

Blagojevic (2009:7-12) discussed that the structural change of political institutions usually brings a sense of chaos and uncertainty. When groups find themselves threatened by other groups, ethnic identities and affiliations are galvanised and intensified as spontaneous forms of mutual self-defence, to preserve the group (i.e. the individuals who compose it) from the real or imaged threats posed by others. In this situation, the consciousness of historically rooted ethnic identities and emotions are employed as vehicles to ethnic conflicts for political purposes. Meanwhile, political entrepreneurs exploit and enhance groups by drawing upon historical memories of grievances and inciting hatred toward each other. However, Crawford (1998:514) reported that in the countries where cultural identity was not previously politicized, the onset of ethnic conflict is less even if the states have collapsed.

The Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF) developed by the Social Development Department of the World Bank in 2005 aims to enhance conflict prevention in states where political instability causes a higher risk of violent conflict. It developed nine main risk-screening indicators, of which political instability (which includes transformation of the state structure and breakdown of law and order) is regarded as the main indicator of conflict risk. This is particularly acute during the first three years following a change of regime; each subsequent year without violence reduces the probability of violent conflict. Transitional periods and democratization processes are usually sensitive in terms of ethnic conflict onset, because the political system and institutions are not strong enough to provide security. Sisk (2002) called this period ‘moments of hope and peril’, which may provide a hope of peace and ethnic conflict regulation or incentive for ethnic tensions.

De Nevers (1993) presented the conditions in which the democratization process is likely to mitigate or exacerbate ethnic conflicts. Acknowledging ethnic differences and the capacity of accommodate the interests of ethnic groups in a way that is perceived to be fair and even-handed are two initial conditions. However, de Nevers identified factors to determine whether democratization mitigates or exacerbates ethnic conflicts:

1. The speed with which ethnic issues are identified
2. The level of ethnic tension
3. The size and power of ethnic groups
4. The ethnic composition of the previous regime and its opposition
5. Leaders' political positions of the main groups
6. The external relations of groups
7. Ethnic composition of the military

In other words, state weaknesses do not begin to exist solely at the time of the collapse of central authorities; rather the use of force to repress groups (e.g. reliance on manifest coercion rather than legitimate authority) exposes latent weaknesses arising from a number of long-term endemic problems faced by regimes. State's repressive attitude toward a certain societal groups would be a threat to state security. When a certain ethno-sectarian identity is threatened, societal insecurity occurs, which is identified as the position whereby a society feels its identity to be targeted and at the risk, so they may react either passively and culturally or coercively in self-defence; in other words, 'when people's identity and their state's ideology do not coincide, people react so as to defend themselves' (Saleh, 2010:240).

Consequently, states that depend on coercive authority may appear strong in some stages, but they are implicitly vulnerable to ethnic violence (Lake and Rothchild,

1996b:43), especially when the state lost its capacity on population due to external or internal factors; the collapse of the Soviet Empire is one example of this. Similarly, ethno-sectarian conflicts have invigorated and manifested in a violent form in Iraq since 2003. As Wimmer (2003) observed, despite functioning as a nation state *in some form* for 83 years, Iraq was quickly divided by political factions according to ethnic and sectarian communal solidarities after the regime change; this phenomenon also occurred in other nations and regions (e.g. SFRY and BH after the collapse of the Communist system, and after decentralization in Sri Lanka and Rwanda), because political institutions were no longer in a position to prevent ethnic conflicts and ensure normative social (national) cohesion (Blagojevic, 2009:3).

2.6.2 External intervention and international institutions

International actors can be considered as the motivation factors of ethnic conflicts whose works may exacerbate ethnic conflicts rather than providing solutions, although their interferences are sometimes known as intermediation or conflict management. Lipschutz (1998) thought that ethno-sectarian conflicts are struggles for state power inspired by the international system and global processes. In his opinion, ethnic conflicts are not solely the result of domestic configurations within countries, but rather the result of global processes and forces impinging on those domestic configurations. 'Ethnicity is ultimately the product of dialectic between international processes and pressures and domestic contexts' (Lipschutz 1998:44). Similarly, Levy (2007) explained that the international system has contributed to the weakness of states and consequently to the incidence of civil war in the contemporary world. In cases where the international community has intervened militarily, its efforts have been particularly criticised as exacerbating the crises in some cases. In *Balkan Tragedy*, Woodward (1995) explained in detail that the international community, especially the

US, bore heavy responsibility in the Balkan tragedy because of their counterproductive role in the ethnic-sectarian war in SFRY in the 1990s, in which they exacerbated humanitarian predicaments.

However, Rothchild and Roeder (2005) discussed that foreign actors have been valuable during and after the negotiation phase as external guarantors in maintaining peace. Lake and Rothchild (2005:131) argued that external actors can facilitate efforts during transition periods and effective decentralization by encouraging groups in the right direction, but stability ultimately depends on how internal actors act to respect the rights and safety of others when peacekeepers leave. In the context of the beginning of the US-led intervention in Iraq, Collier *et al.* (2003:146) reported that non-military interventions had no significant effect, but military intervention was effective. Often ethnic groups can exploit international involvement for advancement of their own agendas, thus exacerbating the root problem in the long term; an obvious example is the Shia community in Iraq, who generally welcomed the US invasion in 2003, as the subsequent regime change gave them the windfall of hegemony in the Iraqi state.

Nevertheless, Fortna (2004) found that after civil wars the international community did indeed make an important contribution to the stability of peace. Despite not guaranteeing lasting peace in every case, and a number of well-publicized peacekeeping fiascos in the early and mid-1990s, peacekeeping is essentially an effective conflict management tool, requiring extensive commitments and efforts from the international community to help war-torn states avoid sliding back into civil war. Furthermore, Doyle and Sambanis (2000) reported that the UN and other peacekeeping forces are positively correlated with democratization processes after civil war, and multilateral enforcement operations are usually successful in ending violence. Hence, Lake and Rothchild (1996b) argued that international intervention may be necessary

and appropriate to protect minorities against their worst fears, but its effectiveness is limited. Regarding group fears and individual ambitions, international intervention is appropriate either to support local leaders in their confidence-building efforts or to enforce new, externally imposed ethnic contracts.

Such clearly politicized studies were intended and successful in supporting Western liberal interventionism in MENA, particularly in Iraq, thus they affirm that in cases of violent ethnic conflict, the involvement of the international community is crucial in protecting human rights and supporting local leaders to build peace agreement. Such arguments are the mainstay of political discourse and are familiar to everyone, *ad nauseam*. A refreshing alternative perspective is offered by the cold calculus of the World Bank: 'External interventions tend to reduce the cost of coordinating a rebellion (or of fighting a rebellion), thereby lengthening the duration of civil wars even in societies that are not ethnically polarized' (Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2000).

Aside from the politicisation of academic theory on external intervention and international institutions in ethnic conflicts, the case of Iraq offers numerous instructive examples interesting in their own right, in addition to their contingent relevance to this study. Under the auspices of the UN, US guarantees of Kurdish inviolability were essential to safeguarding Kurds from the atrocities of the regime following the Gulf War (1990-1991). However, the case of Iraq since 2003 demonstrates how foreign interventions ostensibly in support of ethnic groups can contribute in exacerbating conflicts for external interests (e.g. Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the USA). Indeed, judging long-term policy and action by external powers in Iraq, including the humanitarian mission of the US to promote long-term regional stability, it enabled the worst crimes of the Ba'athists against the Kurds during

the 1980s because of its foreign policy interest in supporting Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1998).

The lacklustre support of the US for the KRG and Sunnis, particularly since the withdrawal of its combat troops from Iraq in 2011, left both communities to the mercy of the Shia-led government. Western interventionism was discredited by the Iraq debacle and while it continues to peddle the same humanitarian ideological riffs as before, it does not enjoy the same kind of mass popular support domestically or international diplomatic support as it did previously, making the potential scope of its operations limited (e.g. the recent token bombing raids on Syria by NATO members, having failed for years to muster an Iraq-style invasion or Libya-style regime change). As for the UN, it can no longer seriously pretend to be an impartial arbiter of global conflict.

2.7 MODELS FOR ETHNIC CONFLICT REGULATION IN DEEPLY DIVIDED SOCIETIES

2.7.1 Assimilation and/or integration

Due to the more intense potential for ethnic conflicts in deeply divided societies, particular management models have been developed for such cases. There are diverse modes of ethnic conflict regulation rather than a limited range of alternatives (Smooha and Hanf, 1992). Some models have been implemented for eliminating ethnic diversity such as genocide, suppression and mass expulsion. Despite these policies being ubiquitously considered immoral outrages, they have been systematically implemented by many societies in order to change and eliminate the nature of territory and national identity. Governments have followed various mechanisms to oblige

particular group movements to change the balance and identity of numbers (Barth, 1996:306).

Assimilation is a traditional model exercised by many modern countries to tackle issues of ethnic diversity. It panders to populist prejudices among the dominant groups in society by seeking to eliminate the cultural differences of minorities (Gilbert 2008:171). Within Europe, France has been most associated with assimilation, due to its historical and political social orientation Britons and Provençals (for instance) became French through the process of assimilation; that they shed their parochial languages and boundary markers and slightly come to identify themselves as French (Erikson, 2002:123). This policy was also extended to France's colonial possessions; consequently, former French possessions in MENA (e.g. Algeria and Tunisia) are much more culturally homogenised (as parts of the francophone cultural sphere) than former British colonies, due to the latter's orientation toward individual liberties and cultural expression.

The French model of assimilation based on equal rights could work in regulating ethnic differences and causing the literal disappearance of minorities (who become subsumed in the prevailing homogeneity), but latent racism and ethnic prejudice remain rife. It has been the most common model adopted in MENA, where forced assimilation was implemented to assimilate different minorities into dominant group cultures, depending on coercion to oblige different ethnicities to accept the cultural features of dominant groups. For instance, minorities such as Kurds, Assyrians and Shia Halevis are not recognised as minorities at all in Turkey, thus they are subjected to forced assimilation (Smooha and Hanf, 1996:328). Despite comprising 18% of the population of the Republic of Turkey, Kurds have been systematically denied their right to exist as an ethnicity (being dubbed 'Mountain Turks'), and the attempted suppression of

their identity and culture has resulted in ethnic conflict by Kurdish partisans and militias against the Turkish state (Robins, 1993; Secor, 2004).

Whereas assimilation policy is regarded as a denial of the cultural expression and recognition of minority/non-dominant groups, integration can be perceived as a way of curtailing cultural expressions and recognition of ethnic groups (Gilbert, 2008:171). Despite Gilbert thinking that the differences between assimilation and integration are in degree, the targeted minorities' responses are quite different. Assimilation policies are usually rejected and resisted, but integration in the majority of Western counties were accepted. In creating identity aspects, integration strategy is attempting to reduce the differences between ethnic groups through providing the same schools for children, socialising them in the same language, housing policies that prevent ethnic separation and equal opportunities in the workplace. It is built on basis equal rights for individuals rather than groups (McGarry and O'Leary, 1993:17).

Wrench (2007:34) highlighted that diversity management in Europe is a way of mainstreaming anti-discrimination activities, and these features are implemented by many contemporary European states as an integration approach for dealing with diversity:

1. Training immigrants/minorities.
2. Making cultural allowances.
3. Challenging racist attitudes.
4. Combating discrimination.
5. Equal opportunities policies with positive action.
6. Diversity management/mainstreaming.

Diversity management in European states accelerated with increasing awareness of the need for anti-discrimination activities, when EU anti-discrimination directives were introduced. Integration or assimilation strategies used as a method to tackle migrants in liberal democratic countries obtained remarkable results to preserve stability. Migrants were willing to adapt their cultures to their new host states and accept new civic identities (McGarry and O'Leary, 1993:18). However, Van Ewijk (2011) noted that the USA has a much more extensive and successful historical experience of absorbing immigrants and cultural differences than Europe, with a value system rooted in equal employment opportunities and anti-discrimination. In their policy toward diversity, there is a strong anti-discrimination legislation, contract compliance and affirmative action and greater financial penalties in cases of transgressions.

Conversely, in the European countries there are no legislation practices of this strength. The European context is one of nation-states, focused on strategies to integrate immigrants into the existing labour market and employment structures. Joppke (1996; 1999) distinguished the differences of diversity management between Germany, Britain and the USA. European multiculturalism is more directly/indirectly related to immigration waves, whilst in the USA multiculturalism is more related to America's historical and unresolved race problem. Multiculturalism in Germany and Britain appears as a more direct challenge to established notions of nationhood. However, citizenship is a common basis for both to address diversity using liberal principles. In the West, even in ethnically divided societies there are generally overarching common national identities which render these societies less prone to conflicts (Horowitz, 1990).

Nevertheless, these features may not fit with the case of Middle Eastern countries, because their diversity has not emerged from immigration. Put simply, modern

multiculturalism in many Western countries is the result of immigration into existing states, whereas multiculturalism in Middle Eastern states is the result of states being established *over* existing populations (following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire from the 1900s onwards). In these societies ethnic groups have encountered imposed assimilation and suppression. Meanwhile ethnic groups have sought more than civic equality or equal opportunity and insist on self-government. Targeted groups' responses to assimilation policies were mostly pessimistic, leading to cultural revivals and frequently provoking separatist movements such as in Iraq, Burma and Sudan (Horowitz, 1985:567). Assimilation and even integration strategy are not expected to succeed, especially if the ethnic communities are living in their ancestral regions (McGarry and O'Leary, 1993:19).

In the Middle East countries, minorities are seen as a threat and they have encountered suppression policies rather than the accommodation of minority nationalisms. Thereby, a sort of compulsory assimilation and denying of cultural expression is common in the nation-building process, which depends on assimilating group identities into dominant group identity. Iraq was one of the countries that in the monarchy period promoted assimilation strategy through pan-Arabism against others, but others (e.g. Kurds) always resisted this strategy and aspired to autonomous government. Ethnic nationalism that builds on objective entities consists of some inherent elements such as race, language, custom, culture, history and religion has been implemented in the majority of modern countries that emerged after colonialism (Geertz, 1973; Smith, 1998). In its process of nation building and unification, Iraq always attempted to remove differences through ethnic cleansing and compulsory assimilation policies, especially under the Ba'ath Party, which from the 1960s spearheaded nationalist strategies to enforce Arab identity on others within Iraq and

throughout MENA. Non-Arab minorities were obliged to adopt Arab names and to declare themselves as Arabs in official government documents and national censuses (Brancati, 2004:10), which exacerbated numerous civil and international conflicts in the Iraqi context during the previous century (Marr, 2012:25).

In these countries, ethnic characteristics of nationalism have generally been applied in the process of uniting people and reduce cultural differences, whereas in the developed countries civic characteristics of equality and accepting different cultural groups are broadly accepted. Ethnic nationalism depends on primordial characteristics such as race, language, history, custom and religion, labelled 'primordial attachment' by Geertz (1996), while civic or modern nationalism depends on concepts of citizenship and equality (Smith, 1998; Wimmer, 2002). In the first type, the attachment of individuals to collective entity is symbolic and socioemotional rather than pragmatic. This is likely to entail discrimination and therefore ethnic conflicts. Conversely, in other types of nationalism, the attachment of individuals to the social order is primarily utilitarian and the community is based on common interests, not on symbolic identification (Breton, 1996). This sort of nationalism is not only implemented by governments but also ethnic groups that may follow the same features as defensive nationalism. The last century of the Middle East experience proved that this approach in nation-building policy has not succeeded, particularly in ethnically diverse countries, and has often led to violent conflict between the dominant ethnic group and minorities.

It seems that assimilation or even integration policies may be appropriate for dealing with small populations or individual migrants to gradually change their identity or accept new civic identity. However, it is impossible to be implemented in ethnically divided societies in which ethnic communities have been living in their original

territories for generations. Although integration on a civic characteristic basis may play a role over the long term to enhance national identity and coexistence, other methods of self-rule should be acknowledged to consider ethnic group's nationalism aspiration.

2.7.2 Ethnofederalism

Federal governance is a model for addressing ethnic conflict/identity within states. The states are generally used one or several of strategies in their dealing with ethnic groups; assimilation and/or integration to create a single national identity and federalism to accept multiculturalism and dual identity. There are two types of federalism that should be taken into consideration: federalism structured on the basis of ethnicity (ethnofederalism) such as India, Canada, Spain and Belgium; and federalism on a non-ethnic basis such as the USA, Australia, Germany and Brazil. In this study, ethnofederalism is more debated because it is more relevant with the issue of ethnic conflicts.

It is regarded as a political arrangement for regulating ethnic conflicts in ethnically divided societies, which provides each disputed groups geographical and institutional platform for the expression of their interests (Bunce 2007). Ethno or multinational federalism has recently come to be seen as a desirable model in culturally divided Western societies. Such countries have embraced this model because of democratic value and human rights. It responds to competing nationalisms within states and optimistic viewing that minorities will be allies, not enemies. The model has offered territorial autonomy for minorities, official language status for the minority's language, and a high degree of institutional completeness (Kymlicka 2007b). It became confidence-building tools that safeguard the place of minorities in the larger society (Lake and Rothchild 1996b).

However, in cases where central governments revoked previous commitments toward local governments, for example in the Sudan toward southern Sudan in 1972 and Serbia toward Kosovo in 1989, the situation led to new violence and secessions (Mueller, 2012:300). Scholars have argued that ethnofederalism leads to segmenting nations, corruption, kindling distrust and escalating tensions. Federalism enhances the conflict between groups, as it provides them an organizational foundation for launching insurgency, and then probably leads to fragmentation (Martinez-Herrera 2008:5). Meanwhile, it tends to generate unstable regimes that mostly fail to produce positive outcomes over time. There is significant evidence of the failure of ethnofederation in the cases of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the 1990s (Bunce 2007). It is notable that these states were ruled either by explicit dictatorships or inchoate regimes led by a nondemocratic party:

> ‘In fact, almost all of those federations (e.g. Canada and Switzerland) that were reasonably successful in ensuring self-rule and shared-rule in a peaceful and democratic manner have been liberal democracies. In contrast, almost all of the collapsed federations (e.g. Soviet Union and SFRY) operated under authoritarian systems’ (Adeghe 2009:49).

There is academic evidence that the failure of ethnofederalism is connected to Bolshevik notions on integration and national identity (Juhász, 2013). Indeed, there is no case of the success of a violent separatist movement in federal systems implementing democratic foundations. For instance, Canada, India, Spain, Belgium and Tanzania have exercised ethnofederalism relatively successfully (Bermeo, 2002).

Bakke and Wibbels (2006) discussed the conditions in which ethnofederalism mitigates ethnic violence that depends on the interaction between federal institutions

and regional inequality. The interaction of higher interregional inequality increases the tendency of ethnic conflicts; conversely, increased fiscal transfers by central government to decentralized governments serve to reduce the likelihood of ethnic conflicts. Juhász (2005) discussed ethnofederalism as a preferred resolution for states wherein ethnic groups are territorially concentrated. The failure of ethnofederalism in Eastern Europe does not mean that it is unviable elsewhere, because many of the factors were not part of federalism itself. Conversely, Roeder (2009) rejected studies that advocated ethnofederalism because these typically suffer from numerous conceptual weaknesses, including their focus on the short-term problem of finding a compromise to satisfy the demands of groups, with less consideration of long-term implementation and sustainability.

On the other hand, Hale (2004) discussed the extent of ethnofederalism as a viable solution by distinguishing between its implementation with and without core ethnic groups. Ethnofederal states with core ethnic groups are more vulnerable, and the majority of them collapsed, but ethnofederal states are more likely to avoid fragmentation when no group explicitly dominates, or the dominant ethnic group is institutionally divided.

In light of the above literature debate on ethnofederalism, scholars presented different logical evidence about the strengths and weaknesses of this model. However, very little work has been produced to evaluate the limits of ethnofederalism in new federal experience. Therefore, the present study attempts to investigate the limitations of Iraqi ethnofederal experience and how its limitations can be addressed in combination with other models in deeply divided societies.

2.7.3 Consociational democracy or power-sharing

Consociation democracy or power sharing [7] are concepts greatly developed by the theorist Lijphart (1969, 1977, 1979, 1999, 2007) as the democratic model for divided societies which depends on four basic characteristics:

1. Grand coalition (participation of all/majority groups in executive institutions).
2. Proportionality (enhancement of the participation in the whole public sector).
3. Cultural autonomy (protection of group identity/regions within their own regions).
4. Mutual veto (right of veto, especially for issues that minorities consider important).

Similarly, Nordlinger (1972:20) suggested six models for regulating ethnic conflict: stable governing coalition, proportionality, mutual veto, purposive depoliticization, compromise and concessions.

Consociational configuration is seen as the inevitable democratic forum for deeply divided societies (Bogaards, 2006). It designed to provide a stable and democratic political system through elite cooperation for grand coalition and segmental autonomy for major groups (Lijphart, 1999). These two fundamental traits are always seen by Lijphart as the most crucial, but other (proportionality and minority veto) occupy a somewhat lower position (Lijphart, 1979, 2004, 2007). However, different forms of grand coalition, autonomy, minority veto, and proportionality can be implemented,

[7] Lijphart has explained that 'power sharing' democracy is used as synonym of cosociational democracy. The main reason is that consociationalism worked well enough in scholarly writing, but it is found 'to be an obstacle in communicating with policymakers who found it too esoteric, polysyllabic, and difficult to pronounce. Using "power sharing" instead has greatly facilitated the process of communication beyond the confines of academic political science'. 'Consensus democracy' has latterly been used by Lijphart to defer formal institutional devise of power sharing, which adds some new characteristics such as to his model. See Lijphart (2007:6-12).

and Lijphart (2007:4-5) studied the consociational political systems of the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria, Switzerland, Lebanon, Nigeria, Colombia, and Uruguay, Malaysia, Cyprus, Suriname, the Netherlands Antilles, Burundi, Northern Ireland, Czechoslovakia, South Africa, Fiji, BH, Macedonia, Kosovo and Afghanistan; and the semi-consociational systems of Canada and Israel.

Consociationalism was emphasised by Reynal-Querol (2002) as a political alternative that would significantly reduce ethnic civil war, especially when it reduces the probability of ethnic war emergent from religious polarizations. There are evidences proving that societies with both low and high levels of polarization were able to overcome ethnic conflicts by implementing proportional systems. In relation to this, power sharing was the main instrument of consociationalism in the majority of cases in which the international community intervened during the 1990s in response to violent civil conflicts (Sisk, 2002). International actors thus instinctively supported power sharing in Iraq, although its intervention precipitated (and was not in response to) civil conflict.

Consociational arrangements maximize the role of group elites who share an interest in playing by the rules of the game. This process is represented by proportional electoral systems with low vote thresholds which usually produce multiparty parliaments (Norris, 2005:4). In his book *Ethnic Groups in Conflict,* although Horowitz (1985) departed from many mechanisms concomitant with the nature of the ethnic conflicts, such as partition, international integration and federalism, focusing on the role of electoral system as tools of ethnic conflict management. Horowitz argued that consociationalist studies on the electoral proportional system are inappropriate, and suggested electoral mechanisms to induce moderation and conflict reduction,

‘primarily the use of the Alternative Vote, a majoritarian preferential electoral system’ (Wolff, 2007:365).

Nevertheless, in deeply divided societies, a majoritarian democracy is not supported to be a solution to ethnic conflicts; rather it results in further polarization, such as occurred in the case of BH before the civil war (Blagojevic, 2009:17). Thus, despite consociationalists claiming that consociationalism can be applied even in a majoritarian system, they emphasised that in deeply divided societies, a proportional electoral system is inevitably required (Lijphart, 2007; McGarry and O’Leary, 2007).

However, Dixon (2011), who studied the Northern Ireland and Iraq, pointed out that consociational democracy has become increasingly vague, ambiguous and even contradictory as it seeks to make itself relevant to conflicts in these cases. Younis (2011) concluded that this approach has failed in Iraq due to the national struggle to establish an effective government and create disagreement among political parties toward a grand coalition.

2.7.4 Soft partition

Before examining the theme of soft partition within states, it will be beneficial to focus generally on partition. There is a strong link between partition as a model and heterogeneity, because in homogeneous states, partition is not an issue. However, it is seen as the most problematic that other alternative conflict-regulation for heterogeneous or deeply divided societies (Smooha and Hanf, 1992:31).

In the relevant literature, scholars have examined how partition mean secession or self-determination, in which an ethnic group can achieve complete independence by territorial concession or de facto, such as the historical cases of Bangladesh and Cyprus (McGarry and O’Leary, 1994), and the more recent instances of Kosovan

independence from Serbia in 2008 (Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl, 2009) and independence South Sudan from Sudan in 2011. Partition can be either hard or soft. In hard partition, both *de jure* and *de facto* secession creates new states, while soft partition allows the possibility of the continuation of the original state with the implementation of ethnofederalism or power sharing.

Violent war is costly for all communal actors; aside from the immediate human costs, widespread destruction of infrastructure and economic resources creates long-term problems. Lake and Rothchild (1996b:43) argued that:

> 'there must exist in principle some potential bargain short of violence that leaves sides in a dispute better off than settling their disagreements through the use of force; at the very least, the same ex post agreement could be reached without the use of force, and the resources that would have been expended in violence divided somehow between the parties ex ante'.

The former Czechoslovakia is good example to avoid the costs of war; two ethnic groups were able to develop a mutually agreeable separation to avoid a potentially violent confrontation in 1992. There is a plausible question that should be considered by all parties in disputes escalating to ethnic conflicts: whether violent conflict is more costly for them and their areas than peaceful separation.

Downes (2001), one of the strongest advocates of partition, believes that power-sharing after ethnic war may not solve conflicts because the mistrust and failure of negotiation among groups sets the scene for renewed violent conflict. Therefore, partition is regarded as a viable solution by which separate disputed groups can create a new state (i.e. more borders lead to less conflict). Similarly, Horowitz (1985:588),

although a supporter of integration, stated that if it is impossible for various factions to live together within the state, it is probably better for them to live apart in multiple homogeneous countries instead of a single heterogeneous one.

However, scholars have observed that partition cannot resolve the original conflicts, and tends to create weak institutions, transforming internal ethnic war into international war between states; the most obvious example is the Partition of India (1947), which created the intractable international tension between India and Pakistan (Kumar, 1997; Etzioni, 2009; Forsberg, 2013). Partition is a difficult choice because successor states often struggle to survive as sovereign entities. Sambanis (2000) carried out an empirical study which found that partition does not significantly help to prevent recurrence of ethnic conflicts, because separating disputed groups does not address the underlying issue of violent ethnic antagonism. Thus, according to this view, the risks of partition include the escalation of civil ethnic conflicts into international ethnic conflicts; rather than tinkering with state formulation, ethnic conflict may be resolved by other tools such as promoting economic growth and international intervention.

In contrast, Johnson (2008) re-examined partition's empirical record as outlined by Sambanis (2000) and concluded that no country experienced a return to war in cases of complete partition, and there was no occurrence of low-level violence for at least five years after the end of the ethnic civil war by partition. Chapman and Roeder (2007) found that there are differences between *de jure* and *de facto* partition. According to the empirical evidence, *de jure* partitions have a strong peaceful impact, but *de facto* partitions are less effective in preventing the recurrence of ethnic violence. *De jure* partition allows negotiation and agreement upon regional interests, cooperation and voluntary population exchange (Smooha and Hanf, 1996). However, Sambanis and

Schulhofer-Wohl (2009) rebutted these arguments, asserting that partition is not a viable solution and it does not work in general for every case, but it can be effective with the necessary prerequisite conditions.

These studies reach conflicting conclusions but they do not reject partition entirely as a model for addressing intensive ethnic conflicts. This research seeks to investigate the potentiality of soft partition as an alternative model for addressing ethnic conflicts within states. Soft partition aims to resolve ethnic and sectarian conflicts by separating conflicting groups without dividing the sovereignty of states. A recent case of soft partition was implemented in BH in 1995. Joseph and O'Hanlon (2007) investigated that soft partition in BH is a good model for resolve ethnic conflicts, and it should be followed in Iraq. According to them soft partition is the only hope for stabilizing Iraq by partially dividing it into three main territorial groups, each of which would assume primary responsibility for its own security and governance, as manifest in the case of the KRI.

In many cases, evidence from numerous indicators suggests that violence among groups has steadily eroded national unity. Even elections have not transcended ethnicity and sectarianism, because voters vote according to their own sectional interests rather than the individual self-interests of traditional democracy. Consequently, when ethnic conflicts have crossed a threshold of mutual mistrust and ethnic war, a sustainable peace can be achieved only by partition. In the first free election in the former Yugoslavia, the electorate was partitioned on ethno-nationalism lines: Slovenia for Slovenes, Croatia for Croats and Serbia for Serbs. Within BH, where was no single majority population defined itself as a Bosnian nation, separate nationalist parties mobilized the Muslims (Bosniacs), Orthodox (Serbs) and Catholics (Croats) against each other (Hayden, 2007:106). Similarly, the 2005 Iraqi elections

clearly divided the electorate along ethnic lines as Shias, Sunnis and Kurds. In both cases, political parties who espoused a national vision of a civil society of equal citizens lost everywhere. This implies that ethno-sectarian groups are more amenable to partition than integration.

Biden (2006) described soft partition as a blueprint to address the ethnic-sectarian conflicts in Iraq. Inspired by BH, the proposed solution was to maintain a unified Iraq by decentralizing it and giving Kurds, Shias and Sunnis their own regions, as in BH, with self-government for Bosniacs, Croats, and Serbs. The central government would be left in charge of common interests, such as border security and the distribution of oil revenues. Biden (2006) noted practical stipulations that would be necessary for a sustainable soft partition, including a guarantee of oil revenues for Arab Sunnis. In a parallel effort, Merritt (2007) argued that the partition experience in BH is a preferred model for addressing the ethno-sectarian conflict in Iraq because of several similarities between the scenarios. However, Shanker (2007) cited important conditions in the Bosnian case that do not exist in Iraq: Bosnia had already been divided, and war created a sustainable map on the ground, whereas the geographical boundaries between groups in Iraq are not quite clear. In Bosnia, the outside powers had participated in the Dayton Accord, whereas in Iraq there is little will among outside powers to participate (except insofar as it is to further their own interests in Iraq).

Discussing the implications of the case of BH as a recent example of the solution of ethnic and sectarian conflicts by soft partition sustained by federal features, Perry (2009) thought that the situation in BH is that of a frozen conflict due to the failure to actively address the essential underlying problems. The immediate violence stopped, but the underlying interests of the formerly warring parties have not abated. In the same vein, Bojkov (2003) argued that albeit a democracy-building process ensued,

underpinned by the oversight of an international administration; the tendency of groups is likely to support complete sovereignty.

These studies are interesting and offer some good ideas to be considered in analysing the implications of addressing ethno-sectarian conflict by soft partition. However, they mainly focused on the role of the international community, which is much more complex in the Iraqi case. Through its model in BH, the international community addressed ethnicity by seeking to impose bureaucratic solution, putting in place 'a similar system of ethnic representation and affirmative action, without analysing the failings of Yugoslavia's sophisticated system of ethnic rights' (Pupavac, 2006:8). The essential problem is that real power rested not with the Bosnian national and local governments but international officials, while international supervision was initially for one year under the 1995 Dayton Accord, but self-government of the state has been indefinitely postponed (ibid), with the expectation that the Bosnian authorities undertake more self-efficacy: 'By allowing more independent decision-making power for Bosnian institutions at both state and entity level, there would be less dependency on the international community and less concern over international withdrawal' (Chandler 2000:196).

On the other hand, the anthropologist Hayden (2007:108) argued that international actors have spent efforts to create a BH in their own image rather than accept that the indigenous peoples overwhelmingly view their world and their fate far differently. Their enterprise may be seen as an 'attempt to create a single society in a setting in which a large portion of the natives successfully fought a war to prevent just that result', which is a method that 'seems most similar to that of the communist regimes of the former SFRY, a coincidence that may bode ill for the future of Bosnia' (Hayden 1998:47). The BH political system mandated by the international community suffers

the same structural flaws that were used to make the former Yugoslav federation and the Socialist Republic of BH unworkable (Hayden, 2005). The new political system in BH can be considered as a miniature version of former SFRY in the sense that it combines multiple levels of governance in a polity composed of different ethnic and religious groups (Bojkov 2003:42). As the former SFRY was not be able to unify different ethnic groups and build a nation, BH may not succeed in forming a national identity, despite the efforts of international community, because the differences between what the state is supposed to be (as envisioned by the international community) and what local people are willing to accept. However, in these cases that experienced violent civil war, the withdrawal of international community may lead to the reoccurrence of violent conflicts due to the invigoration of ethno-nationalism.

Hence, although the differences between BH and Iraq must be acknowledged, they do not preclude the possibility of using BH's case as a model for ethnic conflict resolution. Furthermore, in light of the studies mentioned above, it can be analysed that soft partition will be an initial step for admitting and implementing ethnofederalsm. As Nordlinger (1972:31) reported, concessions to the Catholic cantons in Switzerland were a product of extensive federal arrangements. Meaningful agreement among regional groups in Iraq would be conducive to implementing a federal arrangement.

Overall, despite the abundance of both sceptical and positive literature about different models of ethnic conflict management, there is no blueprint for addressing ethnic conflicts (Smooha and Hanf, 1996). However, most situations can be theoretically be addressed by combining multiple models (e.g. federalism, soft partition and consensual democracy). Wolff (2007) declared that no single mechanism can address ethnic conflicts, but a range of mechanisms are necessary to support mediation for

sustainable peace and democracy. Moreover, no ethnic conflict seems to be handled for long by a single model without supplementary tools and dynamic calibration to social requirements (i.e. flexibility to change in response to local facts on the ground).

2.8 CONCLUSIONS

This literature review shows that the management of ethnic diversity is essential to prevent societies degenerating into ethnic conflicts. The concern of the issue has risen due to management policy not being appropriate for the nature and degree of ethnic diversity, which leads to ethnic conflicts. In fact, the vast majority of conflicts since 1945 have occurred within states, as the result of disregarded minorities and non-dominant ethnic groups' identity rights (Wiberg, 1996:323).

In light of the debates presented in the above sections, there are different causes of erupting ethnic conflicts. Each approach may explain some occurrence of ethnic conflicts, and none of them alone can provide adequate basis of the problem (Toft, 2003:10). Based on the circumstances of the states' policies and ethnic groups' positions, different reasons contribute to escalating ethnic conflicts. Therefore, ethnic conflicts must be understood in terms of their contextual circumstances. A variety of causes may participate in the causation of ethnic conflicts based on the circumstances of groups and states. For example, control of oil reserves is an important consideration escalating ethnic conflict in Nigeria, whereas the struggles of the Albanian, Palestinian and Kurdish peoples in Serbia, Israel-Palestine and Iraq (respectively) are chiefly motivated by the desire to achieve self-determination (Wolff, 2006). International institutions often fail to take a comprehensive overview of ethnic conflicts and they are preoccupied with their own area of concern; for instance, Word Bank analyses, while offering valuable insights, are heavily focused on identifying the links between

economic variables and civil war, and they only comprehend the stability of political institutions in light of economic development related to per capita income (Collier *et al.*, 2003). Conversely, scholars from political sciences and IPE are more focused on political variables. Local political entrepreneurs and ethnic people themselves are primarily concerned with cultural (i.e. ethnic), economistic and legal issues. Although all of these causal dimensions are of significance to explain ethnic conflicts, none of them can explain the causes of every ethnic war individually, and each perspective must be considered in order to understand ethnic conflicts. Some factors can be considered as key source of emerging ethnic conflicts while others may play a role as motivating factors in enhancing and igniting pre-existing (latent) ethnic conflicts.

It can be said ethnic conflicts do not arise from a single factor (i.e. economic/material imperatives), but rather from a combination of factors and conditions that converge to precipitate ethnic conflicts. The elements of historical memories of inter-ethnic grievances as well as hate toward the 'other' derived from primordial theory have played a role in causing and exacerbating ethnic conflicts. Additionally, political institutions, political entrepreneurs and group competition for resources contribute to ethnic conflicts (Blagojevic, 2009). Structural changes of political institutions are crucial in violent ethnic conflicts in multicultural societies, because the decline of central security is generally a green light for non-state military forces to give vent to the violent expression of their own ethnic-religious identity. Although each ethnic and sectarian conflict has its unique features, all of them have common denominators. In the case of Iraq, a variety of factors may also contribute to cause ethno-sectarian conflict, but the most fundamental was the collapse of the former central security as the result of 2003 invasion.

Previous studies have demonstrated numerous important factors that lead to ethno-sectarian conflicts in multicultural states. This chapter complements existing research by considering how inappropriate government policies of ethnic diversity management lead to ethnic conflicts. Meanwhile, the objective of this work is to increase the capacity of academic researchers and policymakers to identify the reasons behind the emergence and exacerbation of ethnic conflicts.

In terms of ethnic diversity management and ethnic conflicts, presenting whole types and degrees of ethnic conflict regulation approaches is significant because previous works in this field are inadequate, especially in terms of transposing their findings from developed/European-model states to very different countries and societies that have emerged from a different process of historical development and which fundamentally differ from Europe and North America; for instance, in the latter, multiculturalism is chiefly a feature of immigration, whereas multiculturalism in the Middle Eastern countries arises from the inclusion of multiple ethnicities and sects within states arbitrarily devised under postcolonial supervision during the 20th century. However, many questions must be asked regarding appropriate models of ethnic conflict regulations. They fundamentally depend on conflicting groups' positions. It should be determined whether groups are concentrated in specific territories or rather spread across the country, and it should be understood whether conflicts arise from some type of disagreement or violence among cultural groups. In addition, the degree of diversity needs to be established and whether there are small minorities and majority groups or whether groups are roughly equal in size.

Based on the literature review conducted, this chapter concludes that assimilation is not regarded as an appropriate policy in deeply divided society, but separation and federal configuration is required to reach the groups nationalist demands for self-rule.

Imposing assimilation policies in attempts to reduce ethnic differences in the process of nation-building in the Middle East have failed, exacerbating instability and violations of human rights. Ethnofederalism is preferred as the resolution model for cases wherein ethnic groups are territorially concentrated. It is argued that the failure of some cases of ethnofederal states were not related to the lack of this model but the federal government's policy toward the regional groups. In addition, ending violent conflicts requires the separation of conflicting groups and its success depends on pre-agreement among conflicting groups.

3 THE CASE OF IRAQ: DEBATES ON IDENTITY AND POST-INVASION IRAQI GOVERNANCE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the debates on ethnic conflict regulation models and the issue of national identity in Iraq, focusing on the controversial solutions proposed for the country after 2003. Iraq was chosen to be studied because it is a deeply divided society that suffering with the lack of appropriate governance model. In 2005 the Iraqi people approved a new Constitution that advocated multiculturalism through federal governance, but non-dominant communities (e.g. Arab Sunnis, Kurds and other minorities) were subsequently unsatisfied with the outcomes.

Iraq has four main ethnicities, five religions and four languages. Arabs and Kurds are the largest ethnic groups and the Sunni and Shia sects of Islam are the main religious affiliations. Due to the on-going conflict and privation in Iraq, there are no reliable official statistics concerning the Iraqi population, but according to the World Factbook, the country's population in 2016 was estimated to be 38,146,025 (CIA, 2017). Around 75% of Iraq's total population are Arabs, while Kurds comprise 17%, Turkmen, Assyrians and others constitute 3%, 2% and 3% of the national population respectively. Islam is the major religion of the country, followed by 97% of the population, while the remaining 3% are Christians and others. An estimated 60% of the population are Shias, while 37% are Sunnis. Kurds are the second-largest ethnic group in Iraq, concentrated in the KRI in the north of Iraq. Most Kurds are Sunni Muslims, although some subscribe to the Yazidi and Kaka'i religions (Brancati, 2004:8).

While it is very important to note the myriad and overlapping ethnic composition of Iraq, the main ethnic identities of concern in the analysis of Iraqi society are Arab Shias, Arab Sunnis and Kurds, and the composition of Iraqi society is generally understood in these terms, especially with the emergence of violent conflicts between these communities since 2003, and the broadening gaps between them socially, psychologically and physically. Violent conflicts among groups erode trust over the long term, including faith in political institutions.

It is evident that Iraqis have not come to an agreement on living together within their country since 2003, but the international community (especially the USA) compelled them to accept the new Constitution in 2005. However, its acceptance was very challengeable between the advocators of integrationists and/or centralists and federalists. These perspectives are still the main conflicting issue among academics and policymakers. This is related to the issue of identity in Iraq, which some believe is a primordial society whose groups are essentially unable to unite, mandating the sectional division of country, while others maintain that Iraqi communities can be unified through a powerful central system. This chapter also attempts to find out whether the Iraqi society was historically integrated (i.e. *status quo ante bellum*) or whether the 2003 invasion caused ethno-sectarian conflicts and fragmentation. National identity is highly significant in this discussion because it is the ultimate umbrella beneath which communities could potentially be unified.

It is argued that Iraqi nationalism policy under previous regimes and in the new Iraq could not succeed in nation building and integration processes. Therefore, primordial approaches that focus on partition seem to be more plausible to address ethno-sectarian rather than integrationist views.

These debates and the main disagreement points are presented in three main sections in this chapter. Section 3.2 presents the debate on ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq. Section 3.3 explore debates surrounding national identity and the efforts of integration. It employs historical dimensions to find out whether Iraqi society was already an integrated society or whether the 2003 invasion led to disintegration. Section 3.4 develops the arguments suggested by scholars and policy-makers toward the governance models for Iraq. The disputed points that played role in exacerbating the conflicts and limitations of federal structure in Iraq are discussed, before concluding in the final section.

3.2 CONTENDING DEBATE ON IRAQI ETHNO-SECTARIAN CONFLICTS

In 2003, the 35-year rule of Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime was ended by the US-led coalition, resulting in the collapse of central control over the country and population. This resulted in a reversion to primordial ethnic identities (e.g. tribal or sectarian) as people sought protection and security in the violent and uncertain vacuum left by the collapse of the former authoritarian regime, which paved the way for the emergence of ethno-sectarian conflicts. The underlying political tensions between Iraqi ethnic groups were existent, as explained in Figure 3.1, but they lay dormant; following the Gulf War the Iraqi regime was impotent to continue its persecution of the Kurds, while the majority of Arab Sunni and Shia civilians did not primarily experience their identities in sectarian terms.

In the majority of cities, people of different ethnic and sectarian ideations lived together in peace, without operational tensions. Under previous Iraqi regimes, conflicts occurred in the form of intrastate conflicts between the state and other groups. For example, during the 1920s the metropolitan Hashemite monarchy made efforts to bring

Bedouin tribes under its control, while the Ba'athist ideology was premised on pan-Arabism, superseding sectarian ideologies and religion itself.

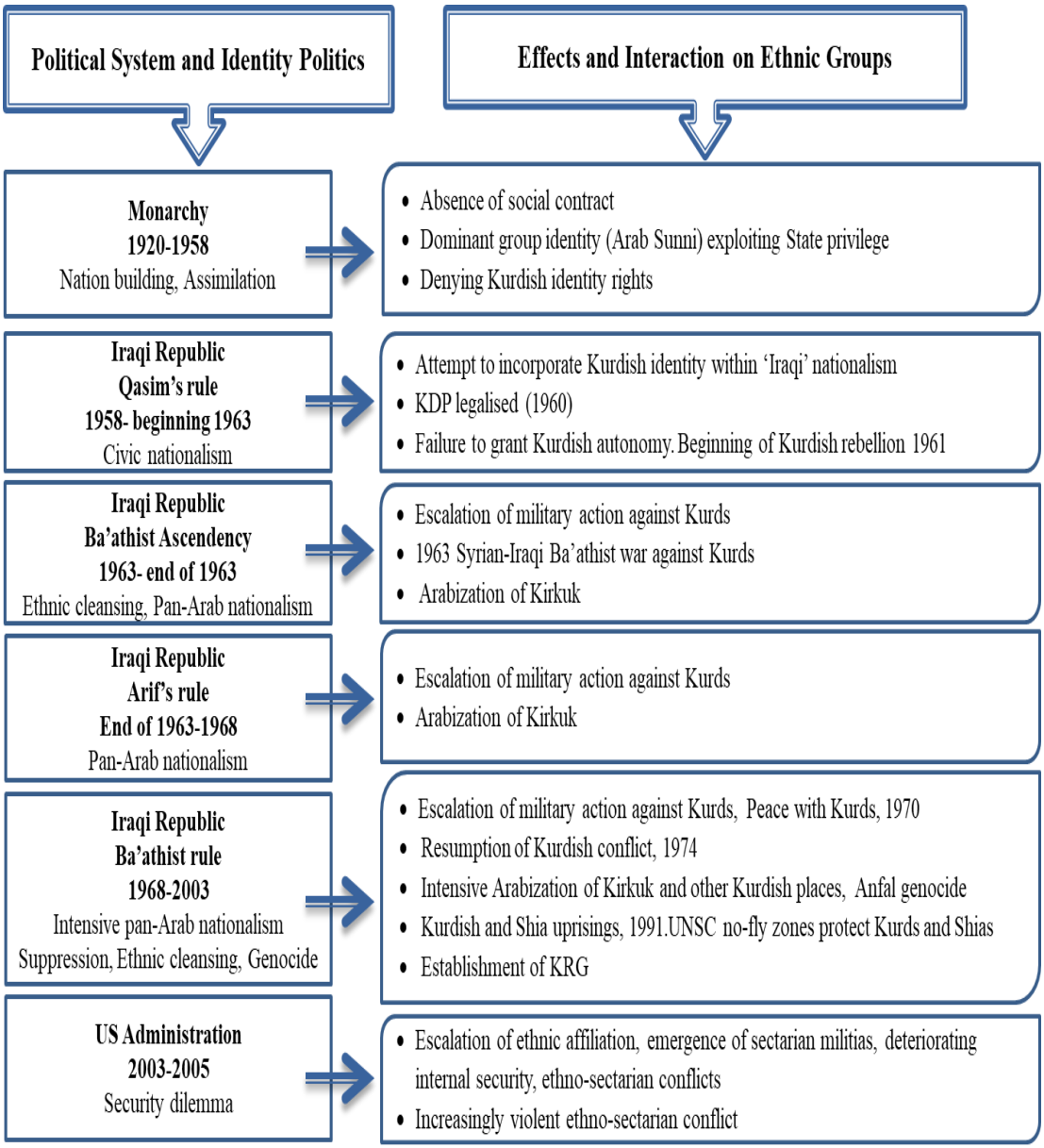


Figure 3.1: Political and ethnic overview of modern Iraqi history

While covert prejudice existed, under Saddam Hussein's regime the Iraqi government as ostentatious in its promotion of a unified Iraqi identity (partly due to the expediency of avoiding Iraqi Shias becoming agents of Iranian hegemony). The Anfal Genocide (1980s) was predicated on identifying the Kurds as traitors to Iraq, blaming them for the poor performance of the Iraq armed forces during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988),

and it was not conceived to be an inter-ethnic conflict (i.e. between Arabs and Kurds) but a punitive action by a trans-ethnic state against an aberrant ethnic insurgency.

If the historical repression of the Kurds and others in Iraq is perceived of as state action rather than ethnic conflict *per se*, the question arises of how the recognisably inter-ethnic conflicts of the post-2003 scenario arose, particularly the extent to which they are effected by historical divisions and the policies implemented in the new Iraq by the US-led Coalitional Provisional Authority (CPA) and the Iraqi Government (IG).

Kirmanj (2013) attempted to connect the Iraqi problems with the historical dimension and the disintegration of an artificial coagulation of Iraqi communities that had never been genuinely united. Iraq was one of the post-colonial states that experienced ethnic conflicts as a consequence of the failure of integration policy. The Middle Eastern states created by the colonial powers were fashioned in colonial interests, regardless of interests, heterogeneity and disagreement within indigenous societies. Iraq was created under British mandate in the 1920s from three Ottoman provinces (*vilayets*): Basra, Baghdad and Mosul (Lukitz, 1995). As shown in Figure 3.2, Basra in the south had a majority of Arab Shias; Baghdad in the middle had a majority of Arab Sunnis, while Mosul in the north (which includes the KRI) was dominated by Kurds (most of whom are Sunni).

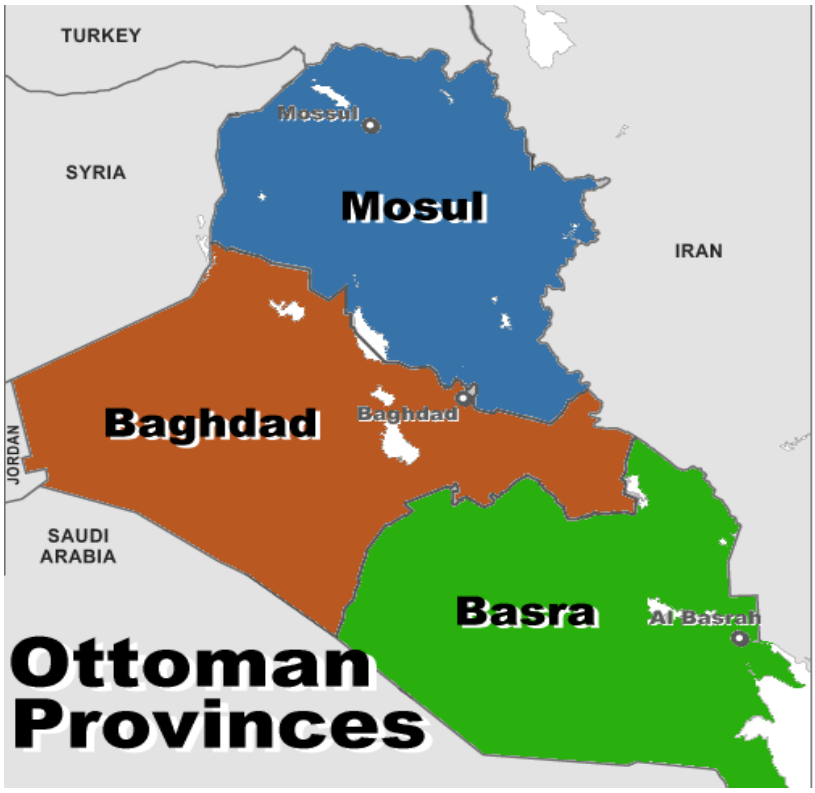


Figure 3.2: Three Ottoman provinces before creation of Iraq

Source: Smith (2003)

The British mandate during the 1920s sought to make Iraq a secure buffer to protect its interests in India (as a strategic extension of its entrepôt around the Arabian Peninsula) and an intrinsic resource to control oil supplies from the Persian Gulf. Britain had occupied Iraq from the First World War, and its mandate was confirmed by the League of Nations San Remo Conference in 1920 for Basra and Baghdad. Mosul was later added legally in 1925 (Lukitz, 1995:13; Fattah and Caso, 2009). At this juncture, religion *per se* was not an effective political tool among the new post-Ottoman territories; the political elites of early Arab nationalist movements (e.g. Al-Fatat) were from diverse sectarian backgrounds, and Christians played a disproportionate role (relative to their numbers) in Levantine politics (e.g. in Syria and Lebanon). Following the collapse of the traditional multicultural Ottoman Empire, the only viable ideological paradigm for the new nation states of the Balkans and MENA

was rampant ethnic nationalism (e.g. Turkish supremacy in Turkey, and Arabism in the Arab World), which enabled the precipitation of national existence by exclusive definition *from* others (Mazower, 2006). The ethnic nationalism of late-Ottoman and post-colonial regimes was associated with the worst atrocities against minorities, particularly the Kurds in Turkey, Syria and Iraq.

However, as Bengio (2008:61) noted, the heterogeneity of the new nation states was not in itself a source of conflict, rather it was the way in which emerging regimes engaged with different ethnicities that catalysed hostility and conflict. Successive regimes in Iraq disregarded the needs, characteristics and composition of the local population, which caused on-going insecurity and the permanent implicit threat of violent conflict. Similarly, Dodge (2014) in his article 'Can Iraq Be Saved?' confirmed that the sustainability of the state is not dependent on their indigenous or exogenous creation, but on their ability to fulfil three functions: the state's capacity to wield coercion and control the activities of its subjects, its infrastructural situation, and its ideological power for binding the population together and to itself.

The Iraqi state was obviously unable to foment a sense of solidarity between communities and efforts to create an Iraqi nation by the armed dominance of Arabism failed. In this context, ruling elites in Iraq reiterated their primordial identity (i.e. as Arabs, adopting sectarian flavours where expedient) to entrench their domination of ostensibly pluralist states; thus, by oppressing the Kurds in the name of a transcendent Iraqi identity and state, the dominant Arabs were actually antagonising ethnic conflict. This primordialist characterisation of Iraqi society supports the case for partition on ethno-sectarian lines (Galbraith, 2006; Joseph and O'Hanlon, 2007; Kirmanj, 2013).

Conversely, others see the main cause of ethnic conflict since 2003 as the existential security dilemma, rather than *a priori* primordialism. The collapse of state capacity and the absence of sufficient US troops to impose order helped former Ba'ath loyalists and other groups to mobilise and fight (Diamond, 2005:14). A preliminary study by the Rand Corporation, a right-wing and militarist US think-tank, the US-led coalition needed 480,000 troops to provide adequate security but in 2003 they had less than half that number (some 180,000 Americans and 20,000 British), and the Pentagon reduced the scope of its engagement even further in the subsequent years in a controlled handover the Iraqi forces (Bremer, 2016).

Weak states are inevitably more vulnerable to the development and effects of ethnic conflicts (Fearon and Laitin, 2003). Dodge (2006, 2007a, 2007b) argued that in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion, the Iraqi central authorities lost the capacity to control, thus a profound security vacuum enabled the development of violent conflicts in Iraq and the subsequent flourishing of myriad armed groups devoted to different political aims. This supports Posen's (1993) claim that the sudden absence of central security capacity leads to a security dilemma in which ethnic groups resort to violence to protect their own security, and the fear of others leads to the escalation of conflicts between groups. Kaufmann (1996) also argued that the security dilemma that emerges during from ethnic conflicts significantly influences violence. When central security collapses, the members of ethno-sectarian groups encounter threats (real or imagined) from others, thus they affiliate to their groups to protect themselves, which becomes the platform for conflicts between groups. In such circumstances, ethnic and sectarian identities can easily be exploited by political entrepreneurs to orchestrate and manage conflict over power and resources (Al-Qarawee, 2013). Ethnic-sectarian emotions are generally high in collectivist societies, and such identities become more emotive in

crisis situations, which can be exploited by political entrepreneurs to bind support, and to control power and resources.

On the other hand, Cederman, Wimmer and Min (2010:95) argued that leaders of groups will be most likely to resort to violence if they have recently experienced a loss of relative power. From the 1980s onwards Arab Sunnis (as opposes to 'Arabs' in general) had hegemony in Iraqi politics, but after 2003 they lost their power to the Arab Shias. Consequently, remnants of the Ba'athist regime harnessed the general sense among Arab Sunnis that they had been usurped, first in what they considered a patriotic insurgency against the US occupying forces, and then in attacks against the Shia community (Kaufmann, 2006). Former Sunni officers and high-level functionaries joined Sunni clerics, tribal leaders from the Sunni triangle, and foreign jihadists in a fragile alliance to fight the new power holders from the Shia (Wimmer, Cederman and Min, 2009). This was also in response to the manifest threat posed to the Sunnis by vengeful Shias eager to compensate for their historical grievances by ensuring their domination over the former. The de-Ba'athification law in particular gave the Shias permission to attack the Sunni community and made them highly vulnerable due to the lack of protection from a normative state (which was co-opted by Shia sectarianism) and to the implicitly coercive appeal of Sunni protection militias(Pfiffner, 2010: Al-Qarawee, 2014).

In actual fact most Sunni Arabs did not benefit substantially from the decades of warfare and repression seen in Iraq under Saddam Hussein, while some Shias did (the Ba'athist regime was always scrupulous in advertising its pan-Arab credentials, such as appointing many Shias to key military positions) (Dixon, 2011:317). Nevertheless, the political milieu after 2003 reduced the complex recent history of Iraq to a pantomime vision where Sunni Arabs as a whole were responsible for the crimes of

the Ba'athists, and it was time for the Shias to exact their just revenge. This populism was manifest in the discriminatory policies enacted by the government of Nouri al-Maliki (2006-2014), such as efforts to target Sunni leaders with accusations of terrorism and mass arrests of Sunni citizens, while Shia ex-Baathists who shifted their loyalty to al-Maliki were waived such recriminations (Al-Qarawee, 2014:9). De-Ba'athification was exploited to damage democratic coalitions seeking to mobilise the electorate on the basis of secular and nationalist manifestos. In the 2010 election, the De-Ba'athification Commission issued edicts that sought to ban 511 individual candidates and 14 party lists from the elections (Dodge and Wasser, 2014:29).

The US authorities apparently contributed to these problems. Soon after the invasion in 2003, the US diplomat Paul Bremer, head of the CPA who ran Iraq for 14 months, issued two edicts that disbanded the Ba'ath Party and dissolved the Iraqi security forces, which led to the unemployment of millions of Iraqi people, the majority of whom were Arab Sunnis. Bremer ordered that all senior party members would be banned from serving in the government and the top three layers of officials of all government ministries were removed, including up to 85,000 people, as well as 720,000 in the armed forces, police, and presidential security units, in addition to those who had served in the armed forces (Pfiffner, 2010). These policies were the most severe in Sunni majority areas; for instance, in the city of Tikrit (Saddam Hussein's hometown), due to former membership of the Ba'ath party or work in the security services, around 70% of the workforce was banned from state employment, in addition to those who had served in the army (Abu Ltaif, 2015:13). This campaign of exclusion was not realistically intended to effect the necessary post-war conciliation, but to punish Arab Sunnis for their supposed complicity in the former regime:

> ‘The US government’s disbanding of Iraq’s armed forces represented an attempt to end the military’s influence on the country’s politics. This radical approach to exogenous political and social engineering unsurprisingly played a major role in fuelling the insurgency’ (Dodge, 2013:255).

Bremer justified his de-Ba’athification law as the right decision, due to Hussein having supposedly modelled the Ba’ath Party on Hitler’s Nazi Party; clearly this justification was intended to pander to domestic (US) prejudices and not the needs of the new Iraq. Furthermore, Bremer claimed that the US de-Ba’athification initiative was much narrower than the similar de-Nazification program enacted in Germany in 1945, and it affected only the top 1% of party members, forbidding them from holding government positions. However, he thought the mistake was giving Iraqi politicians responsibility to implement this program and they greatly expanded its scope to settle political quarrels (Bremer, 2016).

Indeed, the de-Ba’athification process was a collective punishment of the Arab Sunni community, exerting massive socio-economic effects far beyond the senior party members and security forces, wreaking havoc on universities, transportation, hospitals, communications and electricity; for example, 40,000 schoolteachers were made unemployed by Bremer’s decisions, which were also controversial among the US administrators themselves (Pfiffner, 2010:79). Consequently, the de-Ba’athification Commission placed the Sunni community at risk in economic and security terms, which would obviously predispose them to seek protection and succour in their primordial ethnic identities. Thus, many former Iraqi officers with military training, experience and caches of weapons joined the insurgency, which has been particularly active in Baghdad, Diyala, Salah ad-Ding and Anbar.

The initial wave of the Sunni insurgency was an escalation of attacks against US-led coalition forces (c. 2003-2005), then the confrontation shifted to a Sunni-Shia standoff (with the latter movement being spearheaded by the Mehdi Army, with covert assistance from the Iraqi authorities) in an area stretching from Basra to Sadr City in Baghdad, with some activity noted in Diyala and Kirkuk (UNHCR, 2005). The sectarian (i.e. religious) nature of this ethnic conflict was catalysed by the bombing of the Shia holy site, the al-Askari Golden Mosque, in the predominantly Sunni city of Samara in February 2006. According to the statistical reports of the Iraq Body Count (2017), which collates data reported in the media (and which is therefore a guideline estimate), the rate of killing civilians per day due to sectarian conflicts doubled in 2006, and abated thereafter.

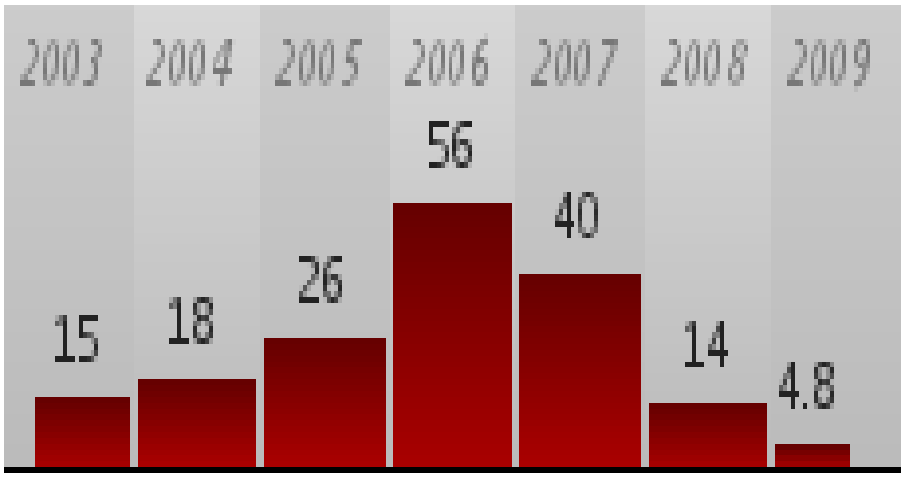


Figure 3.3: Escalation of civilian killings in 2006

Source: Iraq Body Count (2017)

However, this event can be regarded as only the most visible symbol of clashes that began in 2003 and steadily grew forward but became a major civil conflict since 2006 (Cordesman, 2007:3). Indeed, the conflicts that began in 2003 have evidently not been addressed, and although there are periods of relative calm in Iraq, interspersed with intermittent flare-ups, clearly the cycle of conflicts persists. Shia hegemony (and

vendetta) in Iraq has usually caused Kurds to continue pursuing their own autonomy and Sunni Arabs to resort to joining militias and terrorist gangs to ensure their basic protection. The future will only be a continuing spiral of conflict, unless Iraqi politicians stop politicising ethnicity and exacerbating ethnic tensions and genuinely engage with each other to run the country.

3.3 NATIONAL IDENTITY CRISIS IN RELATION TO CURRENT IRAQI ETHNIC CONFLICTS

3.3.1 Imposing a single group identity on others

The regime change in 2003 was an epochal moment, whereby Dodge (2007b) thought that 'Iraq' ceased to exist in any meaningful form had to be reconstituted. Dodge (2006) compared the British experience in the 1920s with American control of Iraq in 2003, both of which failed to achieve a durable collective civic identity linked to the state. The exclusion policy implemented against Shias and Kurds by Sunnis (Wimmer, 2003) was inverted to a Shia-led exclusion policy against Sunnis and Kurds. As noted previously, pan-Arabism was intrinsically beneficial for Arab Shias c. 1920-1980, until the encroaching sectarianism of the later era of the Ba'athist regime in Iraq (particularly following the Iran-Iraq War), with Kurds being the most notable victims. Shia sectarianism after 2003 was much more vociferous in its clampdown on Sunnis, partly because of the retroactive attributions applied to the Ba'athist regime (i.e. characterising the secular pan-Arab Ba'athist regime as a Sunni sectarian movement; the Shia-dominated Ba'athist Syria had been an accomplice of Sunni-dominated Iraqi warfare waged on the Kurds).

At any rate, there has been a marked increase in sectarian affiliation in Iraqi politics since 2003, which partly reflects the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the new

Iraq, whose appeal is necessarily based on sectarianism and not Arabism, entrenching the systematic exclusion of Kurds and Sunnis from political power. Therefore, ethno-sectarian conflicts became endemic in the political landscape, preventing steps for real integration and stability. Conflicts were exacerbated by armed antagonism and group demands for cultural recognition.

Basically, the modern nation-state is a political phenomenon that developed in Europe over time and it has reached to Africa and the Middle East only in the post-colonial era. In the twentieth century, Arabic and Kurdish nationalism became a powerful force in response to Western colonialism (Eland, 2009:5; Marr, 2012:17). The new independent states brought the difficulties to build nations and integrate inherently mixed populations (Herther-Spiro, 2007:325). In the nation-state model, states are implicitly or explicitly seen as the possession of a dominant group which use the state to privilege its identity, language, culture, history, myths and religion (Kymlicka, 2007a:61). Despite Iraq being a modern state, the modern principles of citizenship and popular sovereignty that allowed for the inclusion of different factions of the population were not considered in its construction (Wimmer, 2002).

Britain imported King Faisal as an Arab Sunni monarch[8] presiding over a predominantly Arab Sunni administration, including former Ottoman officials (Visser, 2007, 2008; Marr, 2012:15). This pattern of Arab Sunni hegemony, to the detriment of Arab Shias and Kurds, continued in Iraq for 83 years (Fattah and Caso, 2009). For

[8] King Faisal, the second son of Hussein bin Ali, the Sharif of Mecca, from the Hashemite Family in the Hijaz (Saudi Arabia), was King of Syria before being expelled by the French in 1921 (France had a League of Nations mandate over Syria and Lebanon). This family had already cooperated and fought alongside British forces against the Ottomans on the promise of an independent Arab Kingdom. Faisal was not welcomed in Iraq by the majority of Shias and Kurds. While the Shia community comprised the majority of the new country's population, they were marginalized in political positions. When the British authorities attempted to confer legitimacy of Faisal by election, the Shias offered their own candidate (Sayyd Talib Al-Naqib), and the two Kurdish provinces of Kirkuk and Suleimanya voted against Faisal (Dawisha, 2009; Fattah and Caso, 2009; Kirmanj, 2013).

example, from 1921-1958, only four of 23 primer ministers were Arab Shias, and only two of 61 officers were not Arab Sunnis (Wimmer, 2003:7).

Conversely, Kurds as the second-largest ethnic group were the most harmed in Iraq, of which they did not want to be a part from the outset. Like the Arabs, the Kurds had wanted an independent state. There were significant motivations for ethnic groups seeking their rights to self-determination, as reflected in President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points,[9] and the Treaty of Sevres,[10] which explicitly indicated the creation of an entity for the Kurds (Marr, 2012:28). In the post-WWI settlement, it was not expedient for Britain to support a Kurdish entity in the Mosul Vilayet (Romano, 2006:183), partly based on claims that there was no effective Kurdish leader who could overcome tribal interests for the sake of the greater purpose of Kurdish nationhood (Yildiz, 2007:10); however, this concern was waived in parachuting King Faisal into Iraq itself (Wimmer, 2003:7).

Prior to 1922 Britain and the other Allied Powers had no specific decision to attach the Mosul Vilayet to Iraq, and as late as 1925 British policymakers were considering a

[9] After WWI, the US President Woodrow Wilson presented Fourteen Points in 1918 to the American Congress, which were later instrumental in the Versailles negotiations. Point 12 of the declaration explicitly indicated that 'the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development'. For more information see Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points. (1918).

[10] The Treaty of Sevres between Allied Forces and Ottoman Empire on 10 August 1920, Part 3, section 3, article 62 exactly related to Kurdish question. The Treaty mentioned that Britain, France and Italy would create a Commission which within six months would enter into force to draft a scheme of local autonomy for the mainly Kurdish areas lying 'east of the Euphrates, south of the southern boundary of Armenia as it may be hereafter determined, and north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia'.
Article 63 committed Turkey to accept and implement the decision of the commission within 3 months. Article 64 stipulated that within one year of the Treaty the Kurds in areas specified in article 62 would address themselves to the Council of the League of Nations which shows that the majority of them desired independence from Turkey, and if the 'Council then considers that these peoples are capable of such independence and recommends that it should be granted to them'.
However, relating to Mosul Vilayet, it cited that if and when this concession would take place 'no objection will be raised by the Principal Allied Powers to the voluntary adhesion to such an independent Kurdish State', thus the Kurds of Mosul Vilayet could join the new Kurdish state (The Peace Treaty of Sevres, 1920).

'more southern' Kurdistan for the Kurdish area in Iraq (Kirmanj, 2013:40). However, the British High Commissioner in Iraq, Sir Percy Cox,[11] had previously promised King Faisal that the Mosul Vilayet would be included in Iraq (Romano, 2006:183). Faisal's interest in Mosul (i.e. northern Iraq) – in addition to wishing to extend his territorial boundaries – was to increase the Sunni population of Iraq by incorporating the Kurds, thus guaranteeing a Sunni majority in democratic institutions (Slugeet, 2007:79). However, Cox did support some degree of local autonomy for the Mosul Vilayet within Iraq (Yildiz, 2007:11).

In this framework, the British returned the Kurdish leader, Sheikh Mahmoud Hafid,[12] from his exile in India and appointed him as a governor of Suleimanya at the end of 1922, seeing him as a buffer against potential Turkish aggression in the area (Slugeet, 2007:80). However, he declared himself King of Kurdistan and established a government cabinet. This upstart movement was repressed by RAF bombing, and the Kurdish question was established as an internal Iraqi problem (Marr, 2012:29). It can be said that both objective and subjective factors converged to defeat the Kurdish dream for creation their own nation-state:

1. The Sunni community and King Faisal himself feared being a minority, and they needed to offset the Shia majority by bringing the Sunni Kurds into the

[11] Sir Percy Cox had extensive autonomy in external and internal security to protect British interests (Farouk-Slugleet, 2001:11).

[12] Sheikh Mahmoud had previously attempted to persuade Britain to give an autonomy entity for Kurdish people under his leadership in 1918. When British forces reached Kurdish areas in Kirkuk, Mahmoud sent them a letter to support him for establishing a Kurdish entity under a mandate. Thus, when British forces were able to recapture Kirkuk in October 1918, correspondence started between them, thereby, Mahmoud was designated as the Governor of Suleimanya. However, when they felt his influences thrive over the other Kurdish areas they started to motivate other tribes to stand against him. Mahmoud and Kurdish nationalists around him were forced to burst out a rebellion and expelled the British representative in Suleimanya in April 1919, which led the British forces to defeat Sheikh Mahmoud's rebellion and capture him on 9 Jun 1919 and sent him away to India (Kirmanj, 2013:28-30).

Iraqi state, so as to reinforce the status of the Sunni Arab rulers (Bengio, 2008:60).

2. Despite British anticipation that the Kurds would not be a part of Iraqi nation, they needed the Kurdish area for economic stability due to the oil resources of Kirkuk and other places in Mosul Vilayet (Dawisha 2009:26), which the British wanted to secure, having promised the French a 25% stake (Mills, 2016:2).
3. The Kurds were a buffer against the Turkish threat to Iraq.
4. Kurdish self-rule would encourage the Arab Shias of Basra to follow suit (Kelly, 2008).
5. The absence of a charismatic political leader among the Kurds to advocate their cause prevented the creation of a nation-state.
6. Kurdish society was based on a clan structure, being traditionally rural and nomadic with very small urban populations, low literacy and no formal education. Ideas of nationalism reached them very late due to their landlocked status (Romano, 2006; Yildiz, 2007).

However, despite the sectarian interest of King Faisal, the Arab Sunnis did not deal with Kurds as equal partners, although the ethnic cleansing in later years was not a phenomenon of the Hashemite Kingdom, which generally emancipated ethnic minorities including Jews and others, and tried to protect them from bouts of populist persecution (e.g. popular attacks on Jews during the 1940s). While in no way perfect, modern analysts should avoid conflating the egregious atrocities of the Ba'athist regime with the previous modern history of Iraq. Direct, brutal persecution of Kurdish civilians, particularly genocide, is a feature of the Ba'athist regime, and even Arab Sunnis were relatively privileged prior to the 1980s. For instance, whereas the Iraqi central government implemented a policy of forced displacement of Kurds and other

minorities in the important areas, Arab Shias (mostly) alongside Sunnis were given land and encouraged to settle them instead (ICG, 2006:2). Therefore, racial ethnicity was historically considered more important than sectarianism or religion in general.

Basically, there was no marked inter-religious struggle between Shias and Sunnis until the 1980s, when the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) polarised the Sunni Arab coalition of Iraq against the (Shia) Islamic Republic of Iran. Prior to this, Arabism was the glue unifying the groups of Iraq and indeed postcolonial political ideations in general across the Middle East (Bengio, 2008:70). Increasing suppression during and after the Iran-Iraq War led to Shia uprisings during the 1990s. The Iraqi army retaliated, killing thousands of Shias who rebelled against the regime. The government subsequently moved away from its secular foundation and attempted to nationalize religion, even establishing Sunni Islamic radio stations in Iraq and executing prominent Shia clerics who opposed the regime (Brancati, 2004:10). During the long term of Sunni hegemony in Iraq, the reason why a 20% minority could maintain power was essentially due to Western backing. For example, the RAF was critical in suppressing Kurdish risings in 1919, 1923, 1932 and 1945 and Shia movements in 1935 and 1936 (Wimmer, 2003:10; Dawisha, 2009:39).

Education was one of the important tools of nationalism employed in the process of unifying the people and creating the nation of Iraq. As explained previously, Iraq's map was shaped by the foreign powers for the sake of colonial interests, combining three heterogeneous groups and numerous sub-groups. Thus, the country faced challenges to its territorial integrity, the creation of national identity and the achievement of internal cohesion (Bengio, 2008:59). The rulers practiced a policy of compulsory assimilation of different minorities into Arab nationhood; this policy was particularly acute in the education system, which entrenched the supremacy of Arabic

language and history, and explicitly excluded minority languages such as Kurdish from the 1970s onwards (Wimmer, 2003).

The education system in Iraq was basically drafted by Sati' al-Husri,[13] inspired by French and Germany theoretical methods of nationalism tinged with the romantic opinions of Fichte and Herder (Lukitz, 1995:100). Al-Husri thought that the value of modern nationalism required its promotion of common language and value to uproot young people from their local alliances to the wider world of the nation (ibid). For this purpose, young nationalist intellectuals from Palestine and Syria were imported and employed in secondary schools as teachers in order to teach Iraqi students language, history and social studies, permeated with a strong dose of glorified Arabic history (Dawisha, 2009:85). This ideological enterprise was quickly recognised as a threat by Arab Shias and Kurds, who saw the implicit threat to their identities (Lukitz, 1995).

There was therefore a formidable discrepancy between the reality of Iraq and government ideologies from its formation. While the fledgling country comprised different ethnic groups, instead of common symbols to enhance solidarity, the education system aggressively projected Arab symbols, attempting to graft pan-Arabism to the alien trunk of multicultural Iraq. Therefore, its consequences could not obtain a homogeneous society, and even King Faisal acknowledged the failure to create a national identity in a memorandum he wrote in 1932 on the eve of the end of the British mandate:

> 'In my opinion, and I say this with sorrow, an Iraqi people does not yet exist. Rather, there are throngs of human beings lacking

[13] When Faisal was King of Syria, Sati' al-Husri was his Minister of Education; he later came to Iraq with the King and became the country's Director General of Education. He was a Christian Arab nationalist (Dawisha 2009:79).

> any national consciousness or sense of unity' (cited in Bengio, 2008:60).

Thus, the political generations that grew up within the Iraqi modern education system were educated with Arabism rather than Iraqiness, which facilitated totalitarianism and embroiled Iraq in the nebulous and costly problems and wars of the wider Arab World. Thus, the product of al-Husri's education curriculum was Arab nationalists who thought that only the Arab nation could prevail over Iraq's profound internal divisions by military strength (Franzén, 2011:224). Therefore, any attempts at cultural recognition by other groups was identified as betrayal of Arab nation. Such attitudes remain entrenched in the Iraqi psyche, as discussed in the following chapters.

As the result, the historical facts showed that military tools became the first alternative to deal with the ethno-sectarian questions from both governments and oppositions. Hence, Iraqi political landscapes experienced a series of military coups and instability. However, the pan-Arabic nationalism took priority over all movements that occurred in Iraq. In other words, except some short and small efforts that mentioned in the following sections, there was no serious endeavour to build an Iraqi identity through an inclusive policy, rather each sectional interest claimed to be the universal champion of a true Arab nation. All efforts were focused on either Arab nation or Arab homeland, not the Iraqi nation (Franzén, 2011:220). Others, particularly Kurds, felt threatened that their identity would be eroded in the great pan-Arab expanse, thus Kurdish nationalism was heightened among Kurds themselves (Bengio, 2008).

Arabization became a direct practical issue from the 1950s onwards, with the majority of institutions becoming Arabized and Arab Sunnis dominating important positions in Iraq. For instance, the rate of Kurdish participation in the administration decreased

from 15% during the monarchy period to 2% of higher positions and 25% to 13% of lower positions in the republican period. Arab Shias comprised 52% of the Central Command of the Ba'ath Party in 1952-1963, but they were reduced to 6% by 1963-1970 (Wimmer, 2003:7).

The domination of Arab Sunnis was intensified under the Arab nationalist Ba'ath regime, with notable impacts on education. The process of Arabism (i.e. the imposition of Arabic language, culture and history) was entrenched in the school system and bureaucracy in order to exclude and efface minority identifies such as Kurdish nationhood (Marr, 2012). The Ba'athist plan was to Arabize Iraq's ancient civilizations belonging to other communities (e.g. the Akkadians and Babylonians) through academic research in order to appropriate them for political purposes in attempting to bring about a new Iraqi Man carrying the pride of history on his shoulders (Franzén, 2011:228).

3.3.2 Historical efforts to create Iraqi national identity

Inappropriate policies of successive governments, in contrast to integration and building the nation, led each community to keep its primordial identity. Governments in their policy to build national identity always yielded to ethnic rather than civil nationalism. There is a remarkable difference between both methods; while ethnic nationalism mostly depends on ethnic symbols, memory, and non-civilization, civic nationalism concentrates on common interests, common will, equality and civil rights, regardless of people's backgrounds. Although Iraq attempted to utilize a modern version of nation building by its education system and other modern instruments, due to its nationalism depending on ethnic (Arab Sunni) rather than common symbols, national identity was not established or very weak (Lukitz, 1995: Franzén, 2011).

However, there was some extent of Iraqi nationalism among intellectuals and politicians. In 1936, for the first time, Iraqi nationalism was noted in the Bakr Sidqi and Hikmat Suleiman's efforts focused on implementing economic and social reform rather than intensive efforts to give preference to Arabism (Lukitz, 1995:143), but their rule was overthrown less than a year later (Bengio, 2008:64). Also in this period some trans-ethnic political parties emerged, most notably the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP), which included members from all main ethnic groups. It was relatively successful in transcending ethnic and sectarian allegiance, but it faced cleavage when the Kurdish section separated and established the Kurdish Rizgary Party, which joined the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in 1946 (Gunter, 2008). Once again in 1957 the Kurdish wing, due to pan-Arabism, separated from the ICP[14] and also joined the KDP (Wimmer, 2003:8). Following the end of WWII, more Iraqi political parties were formed. Some of them such as the National Democratic Party (al-Hizb al-Watani al-Dimuqrati) claimed to build Iraqi identity rather than Arab identity. Its programme cited that the Iraqi homeland was a field for free cooperation on the basis of common interest between Arabs, Kurds and others (Franzén, 2011:225). 'Most, however, were pan-Arab in orientation' (Marr, 2012:83).

Nonetheless, among the movements that interested to Iraqi national identity, Qasim's ideology should be taken into account. Qasim[15] came to power in a military coup in July 1958 that overthrew the monarchy. He promoted civic Iraqi nationalism that admitted to complete recognition of the national rights of the Kurds and other minorities within the framework of national unity. There were attempts to implement

[14] In 1993 the Kurdish section of ICP had entirely separated and formed its own Kurdistan Communist Party.

[15] Brigadier General Abd al-Karim Qasim lead the group of officers which was known as 'Free Officers' in order to ending the monarchy system. Through the military coup in 14th of July 1958, they seized power in Baghdad and resulted executed the royal family and all high ranking officials (Marr, 2012).

an inclusive policy to integrate Shias and Kurds in the political process as well as enhancement of Iraqi instead of Arab identity. Thus, some nationalist symbols were changed to patriotic symbols. The new regime attempted to establish an Iraqi identity through the use of pre-Islamic and pre-Arab symbols, such as the Akkadian Sun, which became the emblem of the new republic (Davis, 2005:111). As shown in Figure 3.4, some common symbols were applied to the Iraqi flag and emblem to acknowledge equal partnership between Arabs and Kurds and others in Iraq, such as the inclusion of a yellow sun representing Kurds and red stars representing Assyrians, with Kurdish and Arab swords inside the emblem.

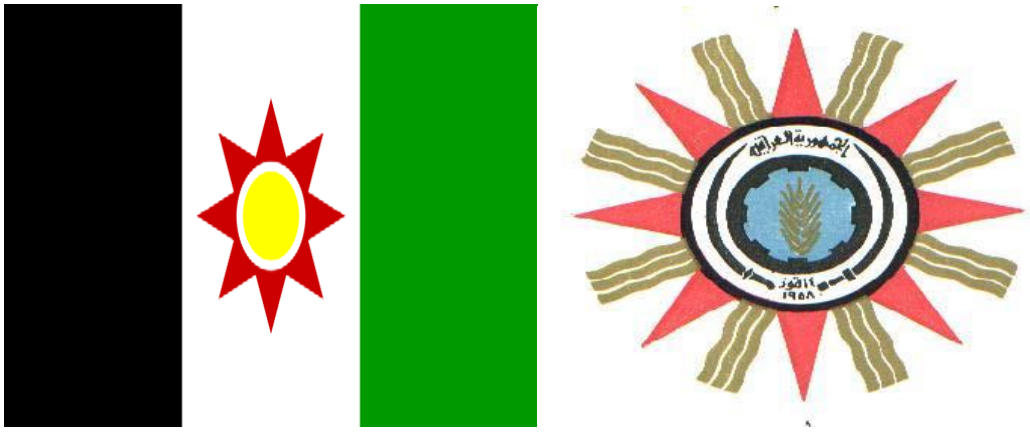


Figure 3.4: Iraqi flag and emblem during Qasim's era

Sources : http://maps.presscom.co.uk/Iraq7/text/Iraq_p144.html [12-10-2015]
https://flagspot.net/images/i/iq-1959.gif [12-10-2015]

However, Qasim's efforts encountered the challenges from Arab nationalists inside his government, especially his deputy Abd al-Salam al-Arif, which ultimately frustrated the principles that Qasim wanted to implement in creating a national identity. The conflict between the government and Kurds was subsequently resumed because of the method of identifying Iraqi identity in the constitution. Arabs asserted that the identity of Iraq embedded an Arab identity and Iraq was part of the 'Arab homeland', while the Kurds (represented by the KDP) expressed that they were Kurdish and their area

of Iraq could not be separated from Greater Kurdistan. As the result, the era of armed conflict erupted between the Kurds and the government in 1961 (Kirmanj, 2013:116).

Qasim's rule collapsed due to a more authoritarian coup by Ba'athist party that ended after nine months (Yildiz, 2007:17). A palace coup brought Abd al-Salam Arif to power in November 1963 and then his brother, Abd al-Rahman in 1966. The Ba'ath party era restarted in 1968 through another military coup (Marr, 2012:82). The end of Qasim's rule can be regarded as the beginning of the Arab nationalist rulers and the darkest period for cultural coexistence in Iraq.

It seems the efforts to establish Iraqi identity are very small comparing with Arab nationalist and pan-Arabism endeavours to impose Arab identity over the society. In the best cases, elites attempted to enhance both Iraqi and pan-Arabism ties simultaneously, but generally national politics marginalised other groups and excluded them from the political process, with rebellions being crushed by military suppression (Dawisha, 2009). Consequently, Kurdish aspirations for autonomy and nationhood have been intensified due to increasing persecution since the 1960s (Bengio, 2008:66). The apogee of persecution of the Kurds was the Anfal Genocide (1986-1989), part of a sustained campaign of persecution and chemical weapons attacks that was continuous during the 1980s that led to killing hundreds of thousands of Kurds (Brancati, 2004:10; Kelly, 2008; Amnesty International Report, 2016). Similarly, thousands of Shias were killed during punitive expeditions against Shia insurgency in the south of Iraq during the early 1990s.

The Ba'athist period was the crucible of the current deep divisions between Sunnis, Shias and Kurds. However, Kirmanj (2013) argued that Iraq was never a unified or stable nation neither before the Ba'ath's seizure of power, as the country from its

creation lacked the essential ingredients for nation-formation and integration policy. Similarly, Stansfield (2004:140) claimed that there were inherent weaknesses and a distinct ethnic or sectarian identity among the three main groups that were merely given a fillip by Ba'athist policies.

The issues of intrastate conflicts were embedded of Iraq from its creation, with an Arab Sunni elite obtaining power privilege over the other groups. However, the Ba'ath regime period led by Saddam Hussein was unquestionably the most difficult period in terms of ethnic persecution, although since 2003 the Sunni Arab population has borne the brunt of Iraq's ethnic tensions. Shia clampdowns on Sunni 'terrorism' have resulted in most Sunni areas being dominated by Shia militias and subjected to persecution (including the destruction of infrastructure) and displacement. At any rate, the situation since 2003 is certainly worse than it was when King Faisal acknowledged the failure to create an Iraqi nation during the 1930s, and decades of pan-Arabism have merely intensified the return to primordial identities.

3.4 DISPUTED ISSUES TOWARD A NEW IRAQI POLITICAL SYSTEM

3.4.1 Governance of federalism

Discussion of the heterogeneity and the weaknesses of national identity attained immediacy following 2003 when it was necessary to select an appropriate political model for ethnic conflict regulation in Iraq. Academics, international policy maker and political elites focussed on the possibilities and the chances of centralism and different forms of federal configuration. Despite the Iraqi people approving a new Constitution in 2005, which acknowledged the creation of a federal system, the fire of ethno-sectarian conflicts continued and terrorist activities became more endemic, escalating to a civil war by 2014, when ISIS seized Mosul from the fleeing Iraqi Army.

Consequently, since 2014 there has been a renewed interest in the Iraqi model and whether decentralism in federal form, confederalism or centralism would be an effective solution for the Iraqi crises.

The origins of the federalism option for Iraq can be traced to 1992, when the Kurdistan Parliament voted to organise its future with Iraqi state on a federal basis. A few months later, the opposition forces of the Iraqi National Congress (INC) adopted this policy in its conference held in Kurdistan. Later, the INC reaffirmed this model at its 1998 conference in New York. All of these developments were Kurdish political initiatives under US patronage, with no parallel development among the moribund Arab politics of the Iraqi state:

> 'These votes were the first of their kind in the modern history of Iraq. Taken together they broke the mold of Iraqi and Arab politics. There is no literature in Arabic on this word, just as there is no Arab experience of federalism' (Makiya, 2003:6).

Consequently, the emerging *de facto* federal autonomy of the KRI after 2003 (bolstered by the 2005 Constitution) was a novel and unwelcome intrusion for the political metropole in Baghdad, antagonising the Shia hegemony and international stakeholders. The debates have mostly divided between advocators of integration/centralism that reject primordialism and division on ethno-sectarian lines. Some advocate territorial federalism (i.e. 18 federal regions based upon the existing 18 provinces), which would be a less meaningful federal configuration (equivalent to US states). Others support ethnofederalism (the creation of three federal regions based upon the three main ethno-sectarian lines), labelled by its critics as a primordialist solution (McGarry, 2007) and this has recently extended to include confederalism.

Supporters of this view focused on the reality that Iraqi communities have evidently not integrated, and the current impasse is such that the partial partition of Iraq in a federal or confederal context is an expedient solution to prevent further escalation of violence (Brancati, 2004; Galbraith, 2006; Eland, 2009; Joseph and O'Hanlon, 2007; O'Leary, 2015).

In contrast, integrationists call for a centralised, strong and ethnically impartial Iraqi state (McGarry, 2007). Arab Sunnis previously brought a strong desire to re-establish a centralized government and a unitary nation state of the conventional type; however, this perspective is mainly ethnocentric (i.e. Arab) in nature and based on nostalgia for the historical Iraq that was controlled by them since its creation (McGarry and O'Leary, 2007:672). Furthermore, they saw federalism as a method to divide Iraq and isolate them economically and politically (Al-Qarawee, 2010:37). Thus, although they accepted the KRI as a manifest reality, they totally rejected the possibility that this arrangement would also apply to the Shia area and indeed to themselves (Bengio, 2008:72).

Meanwhile, some of the Shia political forces were also supporting integrationist view of centralism (Kaufmann, 2006; Alkadiri, 2010). From an integrationist point of view, the commonalities Iraqis share are inherently conducive to nation-building (McGarry and O'Leary, 2007:672). However, even though territorial integrity and centralism desire was more common within Sunnis, their perceptions changed when they perceived that the federal government had become a tool of Shia (and in the regional context, Iranian) hegemony (Al-Qarawee, 2013). As a consequence of the disappointments of the Shia-led government since 2011, ethnofederalism began to be favoured by Sunnis, while ethnocentralism has become a passionate cause for the

Shias, particularly those who benefit from the incumbent national government regime (Duman, 2013; Romano, 2014:551).

Dodge (2007b) argued that a centralised government with strong capacity can work in nation-building tasks and defeat insurgency, holding the country's regions together. In addition to being inherently reasonable, this view also wins general political and public support. Similarly, Williams and Simpson (2008) argued that the Iraqi situation requires a broad federal structure with 18 regions, because the primordial division of Iraq into three regions would not reduce violence and could even exacerbate ethnic conflict. Visser (2007, 2008) criticized the perspectives that support the division of Iraq on ethno-sectarian lines and argued that ethnicities and sectarian groups are non-existent or irrelevant in Iraq and sectarian is simply not desired by the most Iraqis. Similarly, Wimmer (2003) and Makiya (2005) also preferred a sort of non-ethnofederalism.

Nonetheless, Brancati (2004) argued that the establishment of federal system that gives regional governments extensive political and financial powers with borders drawn along ethnic and religious lines is the only viable possibility for preventing ethnic conflict and secessionism in Iraq, partly by the potential for this model to curtail Shia hegemony. Indeed, the majority of scholars and also international policy–makers thought ethno-sectarian conflicts would not be addressed without dividing the country to three ethno-sectarian entities (Biden and Gelb, 2006; Galbraith 2006; Kaufmann, 2006; Joseph and O'Hanlon, 2007; Kirmanj, 2013). On the other hand, aside from the advocators of three ethnofederal regions, there are viewpoints that see development of a federal model with five regions as a more practical solution; according to this solution, alongside the KRI, a Sunni region and the Baghdad region, the Shia-

dominated provinces would be apportioned in two regions (Basra and Kufa), creating a balance in population (Anderson and Stansfield, 2005; Al-Rubaie, 2008).

Ethnofederalism was mostly supported by both Kurdish leaders a former Iraqi president (Jalal Talabani) and the Kurdistan president (Massoud Barzani), but it was rejected by many Shia and Sunni leaders (Williams and Simpson, 2008:202). While the vast majority of Sunnis and two Shia political entities (the Dawa Party lead by the former PM Nouri al-Maliki, and the Sadr movement lead by Muqtada al-Sadr [16]) have sought to preserve central authority in Baghdad, Kurds and the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) [17] sought an extensive devolution of power, and ultimately the creation of ethnofederalism (Alkadiri, 2010:1318). SCIRI asserted the necessity to create three more regions (one in the south for Shias, including nine provinces, one in the centre for Sunnis, and Baghdad) alongside the KRI (Cordesman, 2007:15; Marr, 2007:47). Perhaps SCIRI supported ethnofederalism as an insurance policy in case the elected government failed to democratically control Baghdad because of Shia fears of a Sunni resurgence (Romano, 2014:550). Nonetheless, the Kurds have favoured a version of ethnofederalism consisting of one Kurdish unit and one Arab unit with a weak central government, in which the Kurds would also participate (Gunter, 2008:25).

[16] A radical Shia cleric who draws his popularity largely from his late father, Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Sadiq Al-Sadr, who was assassinated along with two of his sons by presumed agents of the former regime on 19 February 1999. He supervised both political force of Sadr movement and Mahdi Army (UNHCR, 2005).

[17] SCIRI was originally formed in the early 1980s in Iran by Iraqi Shia exiles. The group developed a military branch called Badr Bridge or Badr Corps (which left SCIRI in 2012). In 2007, the group changed its name to the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), in part to distance itself from Iran. Its current leader is Ammar al-Hakim, who succeeded his father Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim upon his death in 2009. The Hakims descend from the revered late Grand Ayatollah Mohsen Al Hakim. In 2014, when ISIS conquered Mosul, ISCI reacted by forming its own militias such as Saraya Ashura (Ashura Companies). For more information see Smyth (2016).

At the beginning of the creation the new Iraqi political system, the US administration supported governorate federalism (Baghdad's power) (McGarry and O'Leary, 2007:673). However, Alkadiri (2010:1318) thought that the US ambassador in Baghdad had implicitly sought to create decentralism in form of ethnofederalism. Despite the escalation of ethno-sectarian conflicts after 2005, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, explicitly presented a plan to divide Iraq into three federal regions on ethno-sectarian lines, but this was rejected by the US administration (Rubin, 2007). Under Presidents Bush and Obama, realpolitik favoured a strong central government in Iraq. Despite warnings about the sectarian agenda of al-Maliki and encroaching authoritarianism, the US continued to back al-Maliki and a centralized state based on their belief that this was more likely to promote some form of stability (O'Driscoll, 2016). Despite (or perhaps because of) its massive military, diplomatic and economic interests in Iraq, the USA has been flexible in its policies toward Iraq, essentially trying to extricate itself from military engagement and create a sense of closure from its embarrassing debacle by seeking to hand over authority to Iraqi elites without an ensuring bloodbath. As Romano (2014) argued, American support for centralism reflects its commitment to Iraq's territorial integrity, because in dissolving Iraq the US could hardly claim to have saved it. However, it did attempt to promote some form of power sharing from the outset, when the CPA appointed the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) in June 2003 (McGarry, 2007:170).

The Kurds entirely rejected federalism based upon the existing eighteen provinces, which they perceived as a threat to the KRI and their identity. The KRG President (Massoud Barzani) recently reaffirmed that they have fought and fight the idea of provincial federalism (Rudaw, 2017a), whereas this idea has recently tended to be more preferable among Shia political forces. It can be said that if the KRI had not

already existed as a *de facto* entity, the federal system would not be on the table at all in Iraq. Federalism was approved because of Kurdish warnings that rescinding their hard-won autonomous rights would lead to their total rejection of the new Iraq, and numerous political machinations were at work pertaining to the provision for federalism in the 2005 Constitution (Bengio, 2008:72). Indeed, in the new Iraq Kurds have mainly seen ethnofederalism not as a sustainable solution but a potential bridge to move forward toward independence. Kurds are forced to stay in Iraq because of the economic and political requirements of other Iraqi groups and their international supporters. After 2003, about 95% of the KRI's income was derived from the Iraq, in contrast to the early aid periods, when the budget for the Kurdistan region was based on humanitarian aid and illegal customs revenues (Natali, 2007:1124). These prosaic considerations induced Kurdish leaders to profess their loyalty to a united new Iraq, but this could not discourage Kurdish nationalism from their aspiration of statehood, although the US-led coalition was not in favour of division.

However, there was discrepancy between the public desire for independence and the professed positions of leaders in official negotiations. According to an informal poll organized by the Kurdistan Referendum Movement, building upon an earlier signature-gathering exercise indicating that approximately two-thirds of the Kurdistan Region supported independence during 2004, the ‘vote’ for Kurdish independence, held alongside the Iraqi national elections in January 2005, indicated that 98.8% would vote for independence (Stansfield, 2013:270). Kurdish leadership was more moderate and willing to compromise than the Kurdish public because it understood the many constraints it faced, and the damage which provocative proclamations and extreme demands might cause (Bengio, 2008:76). Nevertheless, this discrepancy would not allow Kurds to feel solidarity and act as federal region, with their display of Iraqi

patriotism and loyalty to the state; rather, the Kurds continued to develop a separate Kurdish national identity in the Kurdish region, based on independent state institutions (ibid). Therefore, alongside the Iraqi government, Kurds were not committed to constitutional responsibility and exploited the disempowerment of Baghdad to strengthen their region economically and politically, whereas if the Kurds accepted governorate federalism which was desired by majority of Sunnis and Shiites, Iraq might achieve stability.

Thus, federal system was not accepted as the desirable solution by all components, while many of Iraqi elites have not supported it, particularly Sunnis. Some see the constitutional process as the negotiation between Kurds, Shias and the US, excluding Sunnis from genuine engagement (Bartu, 2010). One interviewee in this study who participated in the 2005 constitutional process explained the situation:

> ‘I was an MP in the Representative Council, I participated in voting against federalism; except the Kurds, no groups believe in federalism, and the approval of federalism was very hard because the vast majority of Sunnis were against this system and the majority of Shias did not agree with it. We spent hard efforts to persuade some MPs to support this system, and the project was passed by one or two votes. If all MPs who did not support federalism attended that session, federalism would not have been approved’. IR11

It can be considered that this structure of federalism that was approved consists of a kind of compromise between advocators of decentralism and/or ethnofederalism and centralism and/or non-ethnofederalism (governorate federalism). It admitted Kurdistan as the single federal region for Kurds and give the right to each governorate

(except Baghdad and Kirkuk) solely or with other governorates to organize into a region (Article 119 of 2005 Constitution).[18] Nonetheless, a consociational arrangement was accepted to satisfy the groups' concerns, although the Constitution never selected a certain ethno-sectarian identity for the president, prime minister and speaker of parliament, or other important posts (Romano, 2014:549), although such considerations have been politically applied since 2005.

The resulting situation gave a fillip to Shia hegemony within Iraq, and 'helped launch a broad Shia revival that will upset the sectarian balance in Iraq and the Middle East' (Nasr, 2006:58). Through co-operation with Shia forces in one hand and de-Ba'athification against Sunnis on the other, Shias were empowered to control the state rather than 'the promotion of liberation of the Iraqi people as a nation' (Merritt, 2007:50). For instance, in the IGC appointed by the US-led CPA, Shias accounted for 60 percent of the Iraqi population, and were allotted 13 seats of the available 25, with the remaining 12 seats divided among other ethno-sectarian groups: Sunnis (n=5), Kurds (n=5), Assyrians (n=1) and Turkmen (n=1), although there was no reliable statistics to determine the appropriate representation of each group. In other words, it can be said that while Britain's policy promoted Arab Sunni hegemony over the country in 1920s, American policy entrenched Arab Shia hegemony in the 2000s.

However, next to these arguments, there are other writers that argued division as the inevitable solution. They think that violent conflicts and repression has made it difficult for Iraqi factions to live together, as Downes (2006:58) argued:

[18] Article 119 mentioned 'One or more governorates shall have the right to organize into a region based on a request to be voted on in a referendum submitted in one of the following two methods:
First: A request by one-third of the council members of each governorate intending to form a region.
Second: A request by one-tenth of the voters in each of the governorates intending to form a region'.
For information about Baghdad and Kirkuk see articles 124 and 140 of the 2005 Constitution.

> ‘Despite international attempts to encourage power-sharing and federalism as a means to preserve a united Iraq, a partition of the country into three states; a Kurdish state in the northeast, a Shia state in the south, and a Sunni state in the northwest—is probably unavoidable for the same reasons it is unavoidable in Kosovo’.

In the same vein, Eland (2009) argued that America should use its influence to persuade Iraqi elites to accept the partition of the country into a confederation or independent states. The debates over the division of Iraq into three or more regions on ethno-sectarian lines, either on a federal or confederal structure, were given a new lease of life after the manifest failure of the Iraqi state to curtail the rise of ISIS in 2014 (Khalilzad and Pollack, 2014; Stansfield, 2014: Khan and Kirmanj, 2015; O’Leary, 2015). The prevailing discourse favours confederalism as a political alternative while maintaining economic union – this would certainly be favourable to external powers and interests who benefit from the current Iraqi state but who view ethnic conflict with disapprobation.

The international dimension is deeply interlinked with the internal dimensions of Iraqi politics. The US obviously has a massive geostrategic and historical interest in Iraq, while neighbouring states such as Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Turkey all have immense security and economic interests at stake in the Iraqi internal situation. The three neighbouring states of Turkey, Iran and Syria are unhappy with any type of decentralization that would give the Kurds an opportunity to develop their own genuinely independent region due to its impacts on their own Kurdish situations (Alaaldin, 2015). Turkey has been engaged in intermittent warfare with ‘its’ Kurds for the best part of a century, although it has massive economic investment in the KRI in Iraq (Cordesman, 2007:108). Indeed, the Turkish interest in an independent oil policy

for the KRI is one of the main sources of contention in relations between the KRG and the IG (Stansfield, 2013), but Turkey would nevertheless prefer an integrated Iraq for security reasons (Rudaw, 2017c). While Syria has been a spent force in Iraq due to its own conflict since 2011, it is essentially a part of the Shia Crescent and conducive to the Iranian interest. Both Iran and Saudi Arabia have been the greatest enemies of 'Iraq' (during the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988 and the Gulf War in 1991), but both now seek to exert their economic interests by presenting themselves as sectarian champions of Arab Shias and Arab Sunnis (respectively). While such machinations are partly in the self-interest of those countries for security (as well as economic) reasons, they are wholly detrimental to the cooling of ethnic conflicts within Iraq (ICG, 2015).

In conclude, it can be argued that centralist and integrationist solutions for a unitary Iraq to protect stability are not supported by experience. After the events of 2014 this option seems to be very weak because the country has been divided on the ground. Therefore, any type of political arrangement may not solve the problems unless there is a separation of conflicting groups. While centralism or governorate-based federalism cannot separate the groups within the same provinces, the conflicts may not be overcome.

3.4.2 Federalism and territorial disputes among components

As explained previously, only the KRI has some form of federalism, but even here the process has been beset with challenges, including difficulty in defining the border of the region. The long and bitter struggle of Kurdish nationalism has an uncompromising claim on all areas considered to be historically part of Iraqi Kurdistan (to say nothing of Greater Kurdistan), but decades of ethnic cleansing and Arabization have introduced complex and dynamic elements, particularly concerning the contentious (oil-rich)

region of Kirkuk (Yildiz, 2007). Kirkuk [19] is considered the spiritual heart of Kurdish nationhood by Kurds (Gunter, 2008). However, despite general affirmation of the KRI in the 2005 Constitution, the delineation of borders was to be addressed by referendum no later than 2007, as specified in article 140 of the 2005 Constitution [20] (Bartu, 2010), however there has been no progress in realising this aspiration, and the issue of Kirkuk itself is a potential trigger for violent conflict (Alkadiri, 2010:1318; O'Driscoll,

[19] Kirkuk is not solely having a territorial dimension but also economic dimension which is one of Iraq's largest oil fields, holds around 12% of Iraq's proven oil reserves, containing 13.5 billion barrels. See ICG report 2006.

[20] Article 140 of 2005 Constitution:

First: The executive authority shall undertake the necessary steps to complete the implementation of the requirements of all subparagraphs of Article 58 of the Transitional Administrative Law*.

Second: The responsibility placed upon the executive branch of the Iraqi Transitional Government stipulated in Article 58 of the Transitional Administrative Law shall extend and continue to the executive authority elected in accordance with this Constitution, provided that it 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.

* Article 58 of the Transitional Administrative Law that signed in 8 March 2004:

(A) The Iraqi Transitional Government, and especially the Iraqi Property Claims Commission and other relevant bodies, shall act expeditiously to take measures to remedy the injustice caused by the previous regime's practices in altering the demographic character of certain regions, including Kirkuk, by deporting and expelling individuals from their places of residence, forcing migration in and out of the region, settling individuals alien to the region, depriving the inhabitants of work, and correcting nationality. To remedy this injustice, the Iraqi Transitional Government shall take the following steps:

1- With regard to residents who were deported, expelled, or who emigrated; it shall, in accordance with the statute of the Iraqi Property Claims Commission and other measures within the law, within a reasonable period of time, restore the residents to their homes and property, or, where this is unfeasible, shall provide just compensation.

2- With regard to the individuals newly introduced to specific regions and territories, it shall act in accordance with Article 10 of the Iraqi Property Claims Commission statute to ensure that such individuals may be resettled, may receive compensation from the state, may receive new land from the state near their residence in the governorate from which they came, or may receive compensation for the cost of moving to such areas.

3- With regard to persons deprived of employment or other means of support in order to force migration out of their regions and territories, it shall promote new employment opportunities in the regions and territories.

4- With regard to nationality correction, it shall repeal all relevant decrees and shall permit affected persons the right to determine their own national identity and ethnic affiliation free from coercion and duress.

(B) The previous regime also manipulated and changed administrative boundaries for political ends. The Presidency Council of the Iraqi Transitional Government shall make recommendations to the National Assembly on remedying these unjust changes in the permanent constitution. In the event the Presidency Council is unable to agree unanimously on a set of recommendations, it shall unanimously appoint a neutral arbitrator to examine the issue and make recommendations. In the event the Presidency Council is unable to agree on an arbitrator, it shall request the Secretary General of the United Nations to appoint a distinguished international person to be the arbitrator.

(C) The permanent resolution of disputed territories, including Kirkuk, shall be deferred until after these measures are completed, a fair and transparent census has been conducted and the permanent constitution has been ratified. This resolution shall be consistent with the principle of justice, taking into account the will of the people of those territories. (Iraqi Transitional Administrative Law, 2004).

2014:3). As shown in Figure 3.5, the disputed areas are large and complex. Although some steps of normalization have been implemented, the process has been painfully slow and indeed is now moribund, long after the constitutional deadline (Bartu, 2010).

It seems Baghdad has purposely restricted the implementation of article 140 and referendum[21] for two reasons: it covets the oil of Kirkuk and general domination of the whole country of Iraq, whose integrity would be compromised by the secession of the Kurds (ICG, 2011; O'Driscoll, 2015). Neighbouring states, particularly Turkey, have also disagreed with the inclusion of Kirkuk in the KRI, and it demanded the delay of the referendum in Kirkuk for at least for five years; although the US ostensibly rejected this demand, the referendum was not in fact conducted (Cordesman, 2007:107). However, Kurds themselves were in no position to implement article 140 in any case due to internal in-fighting between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK),[22] related to their areas of influence and power balance (Bartu, 2010). The lack of domestic unity has always been the most fundamental limitation of the Kurdish national project. There are historical disputes between both parties that affects all domains of Kurdish society, including the military, economy and geopolitics. Although new political developments since 2003 led both

[21] A Shia MP, Hanan al-Fatlawi who was from al-Maliki's list and was a member of Article 140 implementation committee, in her interview with Nabil Jasim in Dijlah TV on 23 June 2014, explicitly and proudly vowed that she would not allow the implementation of article 140 and the return of Kirkuk to the KRI. To see her interview visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9UJaG7zDQAw [17/8/2015].

[22] KDP headed by Masoud Barzani, president of KRG since 2005, and PUK headed by Jalal Talabani former president of Iraq 2005- 2014. Both parties have historical conflicts related to the split of the Talabani wing from KDP in 1960s, which led to fighting between both sides, and then Talabani created his PUK party. Their disagreements and conflict persisted for many years, with intermittent peace agreements. Violent civil war emerged between both parties in the 1990s and killed about 2000 people. The division of the KRI into two areas of factional hegemony was later mediated by the Washington Peace Agreement signed between both sides in 1998. However, the political influences of Turkey and Iran have continued to underwrite both parties to date, with Iran supporting the PUK and Turkey supporting the KDP. While the intra-Kurdish conflict is on-going in Iraq, both Turkey and Iran continue to oppress Kurds in their own countries. Furthermore, they both assisted the Iraqi government to defeat the Kurdish independence referendum on Sept. 25, 2017, and exclude Kurdish forces from Kirkuk and other disputed areas.

sides to cooperate and create a power sharing agreement to run the KRI, their disagreement with power and their areas of influence have remained and domestic unity has not been built.

It should be noted that without extensive efforts by the USA and the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to reduce tensions, war could have erupted several times between the IG and KRG concerning the disputed areas (ICG, 2011). Since the US withdrawal in 2011, the disputed areas have been witness to occasional violent confrontations between both sides (Thornton, 2015:869). The IG made the outrageous demand that the KRG relinquish operational control of the Peshmerga to the federal government, and relations were further strained by the formation of a new command centre – Dijla (Tigris) Operations Command in 2012 - for Iraqi forces to operate in a disputed areas over which both sides claimed jurisdiction (Mills, 2016:3; Stansfield, 2013:263). Such provocations led Kurds to intensify their forces in these areas. Despite the Dijla force being demolished as a consequence of ISIS attacks, the tensions between IG and Kurds over territorial disputes always carry the potential for war.

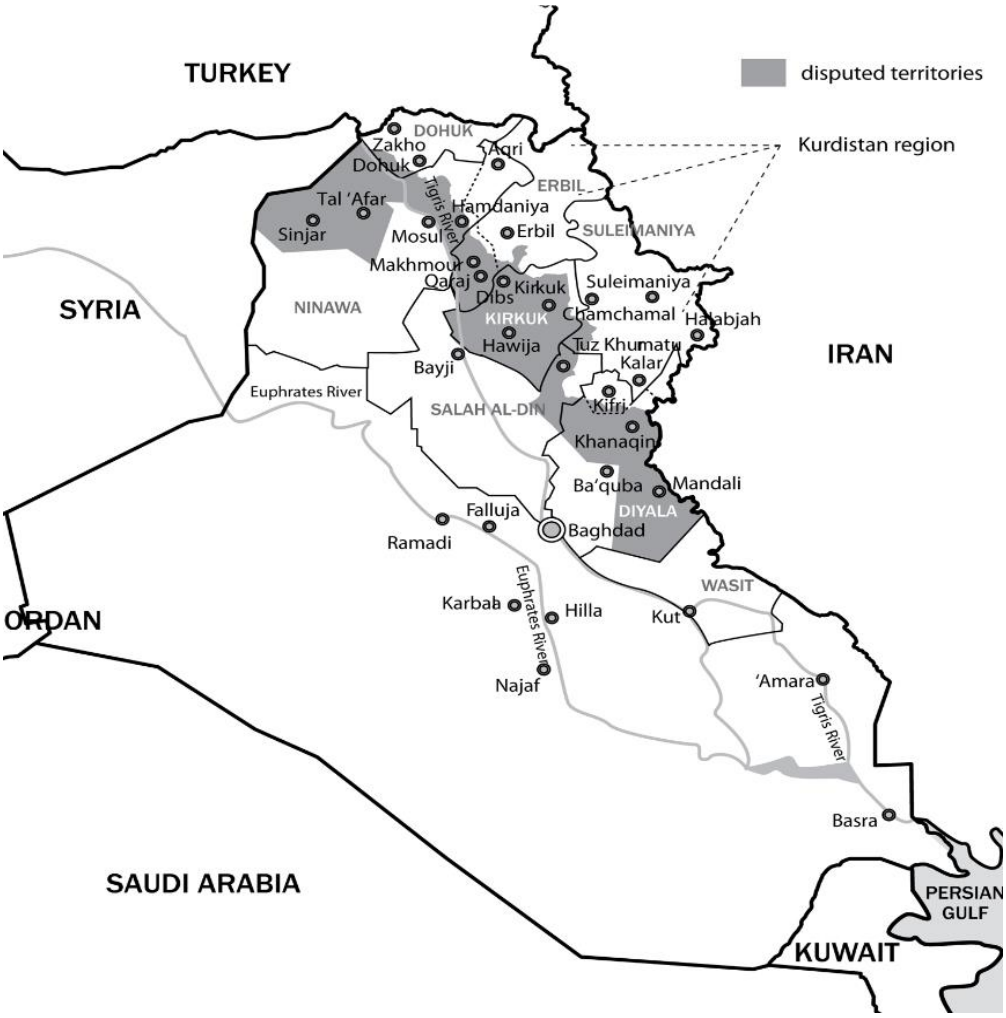


Figure 3.5: Disputed territories between KRG and Iraq defined as article 140 in 2005 Constitution

Source: ICG Report (2011)

Historically, 'disputed areas' were subjected to ethnic cleansing in order to change their identity from Kurd into Arab. Demographic changes of these areas were implemented through three ways: (1) Arabizing the names of cities, towns, villages and streets; (2) exclude Kurds and other minorities from their places and settling Arabs in them; and (3) reducing the Kurdish population via administrative procedures such as re-assigning Kurdish towns and villages from Kirkuk to other provinces (e.g. Kifri and Twzkhormatu districts were detached from Kirkuk and allocated to Salah ad-Din province; Kalar and Chamchamal districts were also transferred from Kirkuk to Suleimaniya in 1976) (Bartu, 2010:1335).

Successive Iraqi governments have followed different methods, some gentle and some brutal; the monarchy (1921-1958) had the gentlest approach, initiating the Haweeja Project, an irrigation and land development project in Kirkuk, which served to change the ethnic balance of the Kirkuk province in favour of the Arabs (Astarjian, 2007:14). The republic regimes (1958-2003) implemented brutal methods to change the identity of cities. The 1960s saw severe demographic changes in Kurdish-dominated areas through the pan-Arab policy of Ba'athist regime. Around a hundred Kurdish villages were systematically destroyed, and Kurds were forced to move away from oil pipelines in Kirkuk and Arabs were moved in, in addition to razing many Kurdish neighbourhoods in the city and changing the names of streets and buildings to Arabic (Talabany, 2007; Heacock, 2010). Through the strategic agenda, ethnic cleansing against the Kurdish population in the oil-rich areas of Kirkuk and Khanaqin was implemented after the 1975 Algiers Agreement,[23] destroying about 600 Kurdish villages and displacing 200,000 Kurds to other parts of the country (Kelly, 2008:19). Even the name of 'Kirkuk' was changed to the Arabic name 'al-Tamim' (Gunter 2008:47). The 1957 Census recorded the Kurdish population of Kirkuk Province as 55%, which had decreased to 37.53% in 1977, parallel to an increase in the Arab population from 30.8% to 44.41% (Ibid). Mosul, which was mainly Kurdish in the 1920s with one-eighth of its population being Christian, became mostly Arab under Saddam Hussein (Kelly, 2008:6).

Ethnic cleansing and Arabization notably intensified under the Ba'athist era, including repressive measures such as preventing non-Arabs from publicly speaking in their own

[23] An agreement between Iraq and Iran in order to figure out long-standing border crisis between both countries. According to this agreement, 518 square kilometres of oil-rich territory adjacent to the Shatt al-Arab was ceded to Iran in exchange for Iran's agreement to stop supporting Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq (Kelly 2008:20).

languages or being schooled in them, and by pressuring them to adopt Arab names and to declare themselves as Arabs in official government documents, including identification papers and national censuses. The government specifically conducted a policy to undermine the Kurds' strength by expelling them from important regions and, in the process, razed thousands of Kurdish villages and killed hundreds of thousands of Kurds (Brancati, 2004:10). Although effectively stopped after 1991 due to the US guarantee of Kurdish security following the Gulf War, Arabization remained Ba'athist policy until the collapse of the regime in 2003. Between 1963 and 2003, up to 400,000 Kurds were forced to flee from the Kirkuk region, with the destruction of more than 779 Kurdish villages, 493 primary schools, 598 mosques and 40 medical clinics (Talabany, 2007).

While more intense in Kirkuk, this was part of a much broader strategy by which the Ba'athists systematically destroyed Kurdish civilization and deported and resettled an estimated 800,000 people in newly built 'collective towns' outside the Kurdish areas, killing up to 200,000 civilians. Arab families were settled in the fertile valleys and plains of Kurdistan, especially in the oil-rich region of Kirkuk (Wimmer, 2003:119). A total of 45,000 out of 75,000 square kilometres of Kurdish territory was thus cleansed of Kurds (Romano, 2006).

Consequently, through these policies, Iraqi regimes could obtain its aim in changing the demographic identity of many Kurdish cities such as Kirkuk and towns such as Zumar, Mandali, Sa'adia, Jalawla, Khanaqin, Sinjar (Shngal), Badra, Haweeja and Makhmur. Although, some of these places such as Kirkuk, Khanaqin, Shngal, and Makhmur were dominated and governed by them since 2003, none of these places are officially admitted to be part of the KRI by the IG.

The political map of KRI changed drastically since ISIS seized vast swathes of Iraq, and Kurds were able to recapture many areas accounted as their own. Kurdish forces are currently in full control of Kirkuk, Makhmur, Sinjar and Jalawla, which had previously been under the direct control of IG or joint forces. However, some historically Kurdish disputed towns such as Haweeja, Badra, and Sa'adia have been relinquished by Kurds due to being completely Arabized. As shown in Figure 3.6, the undisputed KRI region officially comprises the dark grey area, but other areas of light purple colour are controlled by Kurdish forces.

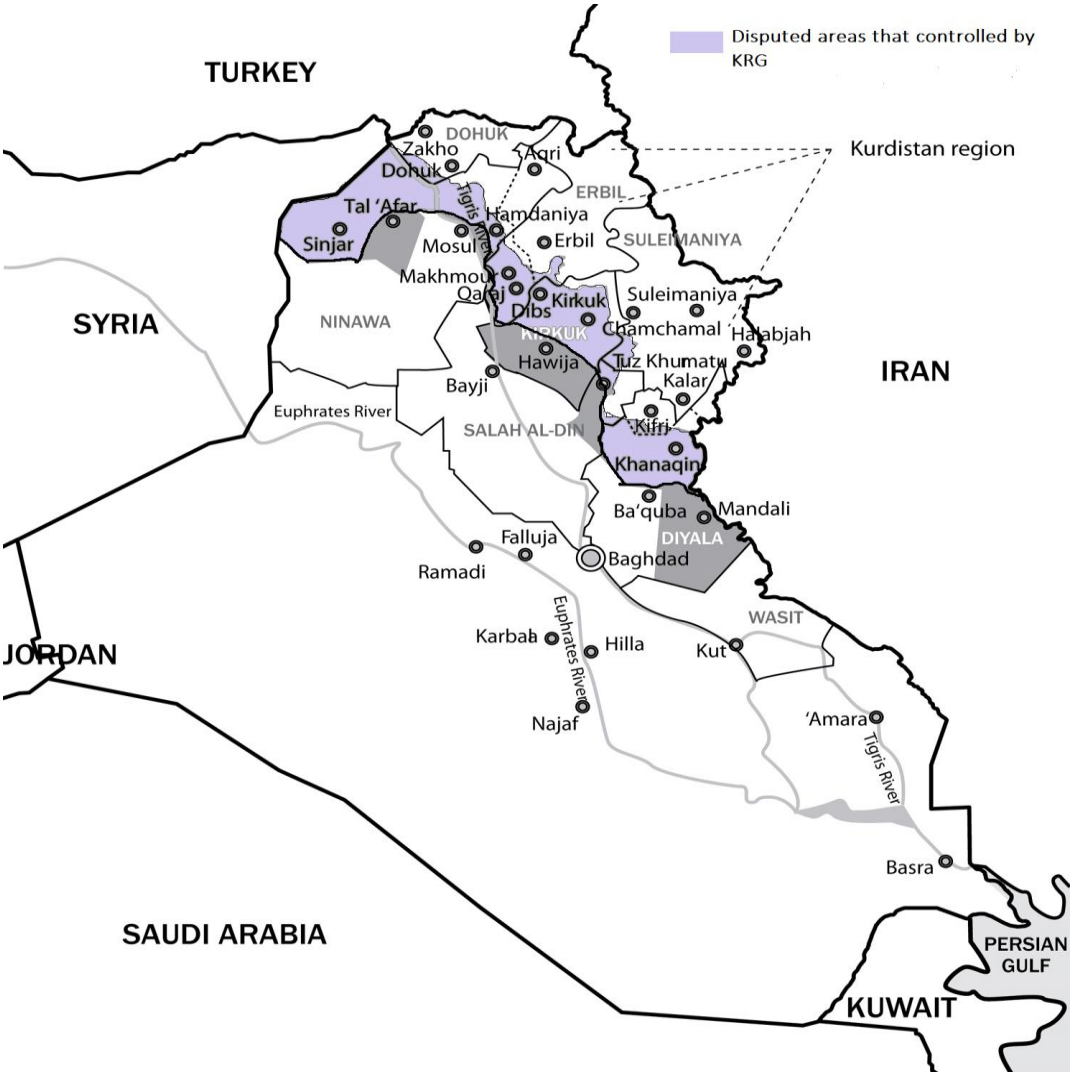


Figure 3.6: Map of KRI and disputed territories controlled by Kurds

Adapted from ICG Report (2011)

Many of the displaced Arab people are being prevented from returning by the Kurdish Peshmerga in an attempt to consolidate their control over territories which have long been disputed. Some of the displaced families fled their homes when ISIS fighters captured their villages in the second half of 2014. Others only fled when fighting broke out between ISIS and Peshmerga forces, as the latter drove ISIS fighters out from the areas in late 2014 and in 2015. Some families were expelled from their homes by Peshmerga forces after these had taken control of the areas (Amnesty International Report, 2016). It can be argued that the disputed places are very vulnerable to the escalation of tensions and even war between Shia-led government and Kurds in the aftermath of the ISIS war, unless official solutions are effective in determining the destiny of these areas.

3.4.3 Federalism and division of fiscal power

The division of power on the issue of oil resources is unclear; nearly 95% of the Iraqi budget is derived from oil revenues, but the question of how these should be managed and disbursed remains an unsolved and contentious issue (Sommer-Houdeville, 2009), aggravating political disputes between the IG and KRG in particular. The federal government was reluctant to accept the Oil and Gas Law in 2007, which was drafted by representatives of Iraqi groups under mediation by Washington because of its apparent support for decentralization. Furthermore, the Shia-dominated government amended the law in favour of themselves and then the KRG opposed an amended draft (Alkadiri, 2010). After that, the Kurdistan Parliament issued its own Natural Resource Law and started to sign contracts with many international companies such as Exxon Mobile in Oct 2011 followed by Chevron in Jul 2012, French oil giant Total, Gazprom Neft in Aug 2012 bypassing the approval of the IG (Stansfield, 2013:273). Although the federal government attempted to cancel these contracts, the KRG has continued in

their oil investment with external companies (Bishop and Shah, 2008:10). While an immensely important economic issue, oil resources management is a major cipher of power and identity in Iraqi politics. For the IG, autonomous Kurdish control over oil resources in the KRI is a direct threat to its power, and a negation of the importance of the Iraqi state itself (O'Driscoll, 2015:9). According to the ICG (2012), the Kurds' strategy is to free themselves from federal government by creating an economic policy, whereby economic development depends on their own territory. Additionally, they would like to protect themselves with the oil policy from potential attack by the centre. Conversely, the Arabs wish to establish strong central government by controlling economic resources.

Indeed, the vast majority of political analysts agree that the 2005 Constitution gives KRG the right to explore and manage their own hydrocarbons (Herther-Spiro, 2007; Romano, 2014), and Kurds assert their desire to control oil resources in their own region as a constitutional right. However, clearly the implications of an independent Kurdish energy policy are much more momentous and profound that this would suggest. Conversely, the federal government continues to claim that it has sole rights and authority over oil resources (Alkadiri, 2010:1319). Nevertheless, Kurds began exporting oil directly to the Turkish port of Ceyhan in early 2014, and began marketing that oil on their own, bypassing Iraqi federal control and Baghdad's State Oil Marketing Organization (SOMO) (Khalilzad and Pollack, 2014). Furthermore, the KRG since 2012 has broken its previous commitments to the agreements to sell the amounts of barrels per day (bpd) nominated by the Iraqi Parliament (100,000 in 2012, 150,000 in 2013 and 250,000 in 2014) through SOMO in order to be eligible for its portion of the Iraqi national budget. Consequently, the federal government punished

the KRG by cutting their portion of 17% of the annual national budget [24] entirely since 2014, while KRG has always claimed that its oil revenue is insufficient to meet its needs.

The 2005 Constitution seems to deal with oil resources in general manner. Article 111 indicates that oil and gas resources owned by all people, but it does not explain who is responsible in managing these resources and who should have power to make contracts and otherwise control revenues. Many scholars believe that the Iraqi Constitution accorded power for present oil fields to the federal government, while leaving future field management open; in addition, they claim that the Constitution supports decentralization in oil control (Cameron, 2006; Herther-Spiro, 2007; McGarry and O'Leary, 2007; Bishop and Shah, 2008). Even Herther-Spiro (2007:362) reported that the Constitution has given regions the explicit right to manage all new oil and gas exploration, and Cameron (2006:157) claims that it gives more power to regional governments to run oil resources, limiting the capacity of the central government. These arguments depend on article 112, which states that it concerns the management of oil and gas extracted from present fields[25] without clear specification of future fields, but it implicitly authorises regions to explore and manage new oil fields in their

[24] Traditionally 17% of Iraqi budget was awarded to the KRI from 2005, but the KRG has always claimed that it has not received its due revenue.

[25] Article 112:
First: The federal government, with the producing governorates and regional governments, shall undertake the management of oil and gas extracted from present fields, provided that it distributes its revenues in a fair manner in proportion to the population distribution in all parts of the country, specifying an allotment for a specified period for the damaged regions which were unjustly deprived of them by the former regime, and the regions that were damaged afterwards in a way that ensures balanced development in different areas of the country, and this shall be regulated by a law.
Second: The federal government, with the producing regional and governorate governments, shall together formulate the necessary strategic policies to develop the oil and gas wealth in a way that achieves the highest benefit to the Iraqi people using the most advanced techniques of the market principles and encouraging investment.

areas. Due to the oil fields discovered in the KRG being new, this therefore gives the KRG the right to manage hydrocarbons (O'Driscoll, 2015:9).

On the other hand, many advocates of centralism advocate that the Constitution deliberately seeks to punish the Sunni community and privilege Shias and Kurds in its treatment of oil, as most oil-producing areas are located in Shia and Kurdish areas (McGarry and O'Leary, 2007:681). Due to their hegemony in Iraq after 2005, Shia factions affirmed centralism and control over Iraq, and strongly disagreed with admitting regional rights of oil management. Without absolute control over oil revenues, control of the central government is something of a poisoned chalice; by holding the purse strings of oil revenues as well as political authority, the central government can subjugate regions and provinces (Alkadiri, 2010:1320).

There were efforts between both sides to come to an agreement and solve the conflicts concerning fiscal power. According to the Iraqi Budget Law for the year 2017, the KRG is mandated to export of 300,000 bpd from Kirkuk fields and a minimum of 250,000 bpd from fields within KRI, instead of returning the KRG's 17% share (Article 1 and 8 of the 2017 Iraqi Federal Budget Law) after deductions of sovereign expenses. The KRG is reluctant to accept this, claiming that they would get more if they continued to export oil independently; consequently, the KRG will continue independent exports (Al-Mawlawi, 2016).

It seems that it is difficult to solve the economic disputes, and the problem between the federal and regional governments remains as a predicament, intertwined with ethnic groups' aspirations within the Iraqi political system. If Iraqi sides come to a common understanding of the Iraqi political system and the extent of decentralization, oil and other economic issues could be solved beneficially for all parties. It has been

argued that the Iraqi Constitution decentralizes hydrocarbon resources, but oil revenues can be distributed for all parts of the country to obtain fair portions. Thus, both the KRG and the IG can explore, produce and sell own oil independently but they should develop an agreeable formula for disbursing the revenues to mutually improve the security of all stakeholders (Khalilzad and Pollack, 2014).

In conclude, the new Iraqi political structure is problematic *per se* and it is inherently conditioned by parties' views on the appropriate power accrued by the central government. The advocates of ethnofederalism seek more decentralism while others support more centralism. Thus, the ambiguity of understanding and different interpretations of powers have always fomented disagreement among these groups. Iraqi parties have never been able to reach a common understanding of the division of power between the central and regional governments and other governorate administrations or how extensive decentralization should be (Alkadiri, 2010:1317). The Iraqi political system was not conveniently accepted by Iraqis, but the international community and the USA pushed the group leaders to accept the new constitution. Therefore, the crisis of national identity has not been addressed, and the various primordial ethnic identities in Iraq continue to seek their own survival through competing for power and resources.

3.5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presented the academic debates concerning ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq and viewpoints on the reasons behind emerging conflicts. The security dilemma as a product of the 2003 invasion is regarded as the key element of ethno-sectarian conflicts, while the US-led coalition did not supply sufficient troops to keep order, although Iraqi society was basically not an integrated society. Meantime, the wrong

policy of US-led CPA toward Sunnis and their support for Shias fomented the consequent Sunni insurgency and the escalation of violent sectarianism.

The chapter explored debates among integrationists and primordialists in analysing ethnic conflict management in Iraq. Despite integrationists claimed that ethnofederalism would lead the country to fragmentation, this chapter illustrated that Iraq was never an integrated and homogeneous society. State efforts to enhance solidarity among different groups failed to deploy an appropriate policy to unify the communities. Despite governments attempting to inspire modernist approaches to build national identity, due to applied ethnic nationalism, whole efforts failed to provide justice and inspire confidence for groups. The rise of civil conflict since 2003 and the policies in the new Iraq have evidently heightened ethno-sectarian primordial identities and their role in public life, at the expense of any potential national identity.

Therefore, the creation of an Iraqi identity continues to elude all stakeholders. The methods of centralism could not succeed to make these communities give up their primordial identities. Thus, decentralism is required to be implemented to give each community its own government rather than forcing communities to integrate with each other.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter provides an overview of the research process. It describes and discusses the methods employed to carry out the research on basis of appropriateness and requirements. In grounded theory, qualitative focus groups and individual interviews are employed as the main techniques for data collection strategy (Glaser and Strauss, 2012). For that, on top of the literature debates about the issues of ethnic-sectarian conflicts, it is important to focus on local experiences and perceptions on the ground. Thus, the people's perspectives from different categories and cultural backgrounds in the case study field are crucial; any solutions must relate to (and serve) people's social context and their requirements.

Overall, through both methods of data collection, a total of 112 people engaged in focus groups and interviews, 94 of whom attended 12 focus groups, and 18 of them participated as interviewees; six people participated in both methods. Participants discussed questions/ objectives related to ethnic conflicts, identity, and ethnic conflict regulation models. Grounded theory techniques were used for data analysis, along with Nvivo 10 computer program for facilitation and organisation of data.

The contents of this chapter are divided to five main sections. In the section 4.2, the research design and methodology are presented. The subsequent two sections (4.3, 4.4) are devoted to data collection methods. Detailed knowledge of using focus groups and individual interviews in this study is presented. The background and the importance of using both methods are discussed through reviewing the literature of this field. Furthermore, detailed information of the process and procedure that followed for

conducting focus groups as well interviews are demonstrated in detail. Section 4.5 are devoted to ethics, limitations of data collection process. Sections 4.6 explains the methods and process of data analysis.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The risk of ethnic conflicts in multicultural society is a big challenge that effects every domain of the society. The management of ethnic conflicts in general and ethnically divided societies in particular is significant to avoid fragmentation and secession. Thus, the purpose of this study is to uncover the challenges that faced Iraqi federal governance and how ethno-sectarian conflicts in deeply divided Iraqi society can be regulated. For that, despite the lessons/experiences from different literature is considered importance, the opinions/ideas of different groups and experts from the own case study are crucial, and any solutions should come from stakeholders' requirements. As Niemann (1999) argued, the best method to understand how people socially construct their ethnic group identities is directly asking them what it means to them to be members of a given ethnic group and what the members of a population say about their ethnic groups.

The methodology used over the three years of study was qualitative. There are many qualitative approaches that can be depended in social science research, such as ethnography, grounded theory, interpretative phenomenological analysis, and discourse analysis (Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge, 2009:10). However, grounded theory is mainly employed in this study because of its flexibility and appropriateness with research focus. Thus, alongside literature reviews on the historical nationalism area and ethnic-sectarian conflicts studies, qualitative focus group interviews and individual interviews were employed to collect vital data from the field of the research.

Merriam (2002) argued that there are three major methods for data collection in qualitative study: interviews, documents and observations. According to the nature and the questions of present study, interviews were determined to be the best method to yield necessary data to answer the research questions.

The rationale behind choosing qualitative focus groups and one-to-one interviews is that people's perspectives, understandings, experiences, knowledge and interactions are meaningful properties of the social reality which our research questions are designed to explore (Mason, 2002).

Focus group interviews are organised to engage a large number of targeted people and obtain the most relevant information. Furthermore, one-to-one interviews are also employed as a data collection component for further qualitative data with the people who specifically related the issue of the study (i.e. politicians and experts). Due to the study depending on grounded theory, an iterative process, during three stages over a year and a half, the process of data collection and saturation was accomplished. Grounded theory is a method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductive understanding about a phenomenon. It is not a method to apply once one has collected data; it is a dynamic and iterative process whereby one constantly collects data and refines theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Charmaz, 2002). As shown in Figure 4.1, at the beginning of the process, seven focus groups were organised, then based on the results of focus group analysis, five new focus groups were conducted. Depending on the focus group analysis, the questionnaire was developed to be conducted through one-to-one interview.

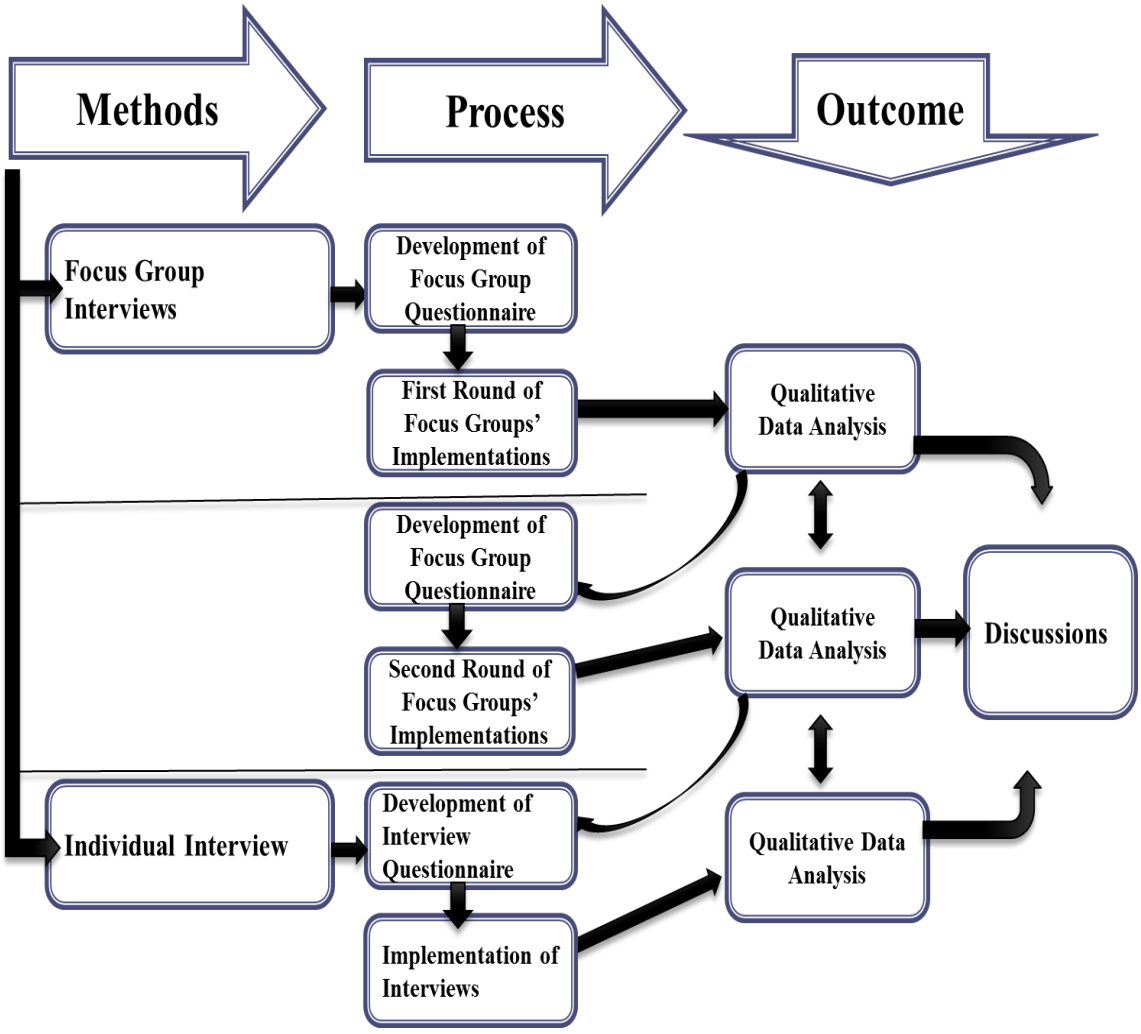


Figure 4.1: Research methods and design

Despite both data collection techniques being considered significant for this study, focus group approach may take priority due to the nature of this method, which enables researchers to acquire detailed knowledge about issues and provides additional understanding related to the interactions of focus groups. Litosseliti (2007) stated that focus groups present a more natural environment than one-to-one interviews because participants in the former are 'influencing and influenced', interacting with others as they do in real life. Moreover, focus groups provide multiple views and attitudes while individual interviews concentrate on individual attitudes and beliefs.

Rabiee (2004) identified that one of the distinct traits of focus group interviews is its group dynamics, and the type and range of data generated through the social interaction of the group are often deeper and richer than those obtained from one-to-one interviews. This method will be able to provide data about a set of ideas and feelings that participants have about certain issues, while illuminating the different perspectives between individuals. In contemporary studies, the use of focus groups within social sciences study is increasingly widespread to deal with many issues (Litosseliti, 2007), although it could entail more costs than individual interviews (Halcomb *et al.*, 2007). However, the results of both approaches are combined during the discussion of the outcomes of the whole study.

4.3 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS AS DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE

4.3.1 The rationale behind focus groups

Focus groups are considered a remarkable method to be employed for data collection and presenting vital opinions from targeted populations. Megoran (2007) reported that focus groups are highly appropriate to obtain in-depth opinions about particular situations and to explore how ideas, story-telling and self-presentation operate within a given cultural context, and it is highly appropriate for methodologically sensitive issues.

Thus, the aims of using focus groups in this study were to generate vital data from targeted people's discussions, recruited from different categories of residents, refugees, experts, politicians and students, as well from different cultural backgrounds to investigate their viewpoints about the risks of ethno-sectarian conflicts. These diversities are significant to obtain reliable results to response the research's original questions/objectives.

Scholars have confirmed that focus groups are a significant method for social sciences studies to obtain different perspectives about particular situations. Originally developed in anthropology, media, cultural studies and health research, focus group methods are now widely applied in all fields of social science (Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999). It has been previously employed in marketing research and sometimes in political campaigning as part of public policy and communications research. More recently it has been conducted in the research fields of education, health, feminist studies, racism and social movements (Litosseliti, 2007).

Morgan (1996) identified three main benefits of focus group method: it is devoted to data collection; it locates the interaction as the source of data; and it allows the researcher's role to be active in creating group discussion for collecting data. McLafferty (2004) stated that the advantage of focus group interviews is the purposeful use of interaction, which leads to distinguishing them from other types of group interviews. Kitzinger and Barbour (1999) identified focus groups as group discussions exploring a particular set of issues simply distinguished from group interviews by the explicit use of group interaction to generate data. In addition, its dynamics would encourage participants to talk without duplication about the same information to another member of the group; when one participant presents something, this may spark ideas among other participants.

Nonetheless, in some focus groups of this study, a more inclusive approach was used. Focus groups may benefit from combination with other types of group interview. According to Morgan (1996), scholars who use inclusive approach treat most forms of group interviews as variants of focus groups. Many scholars have attempted to locate focus groups as one among several categories of group interviews and they described

ways to conduct focus groups with more or less directive interviewing styles and more or less structured question formats, depending on the purposes of the particular project.

However, in terms of previous study of using focus groups, there is a lack of literature on the use of focus groups, particularly in the field of ethnic conflicts. Analysing conversational process and structures involved in focus groups is also under-researched (Smithson, 2000). Therefore, the current study joins a limited body of work using focus groups to investigate issues of ethnic conflicts in multicultural societies.

Megoran (2007) used focus group method to research ethnicity and ethnic conflicts, to present a critique of alarmist discussions of the danger of ethnic conflict in Kyrgyzstan. The real concern of this study was to assess commentators' warnings about the impact of border disputes in the Ferghana Valley region on enhancing ethnic conflict in Sothern Kyrgyzstan. Despite confirmation that focus groups are 'epistemologically well attuned to capturing utterances as specific to particular situations' (Megoran, 2007:273), the study stated that ethnic conflict is not an inevitable feature of Kyrgyzstan.

Niemann *et al.* (1999) carried out a study about understanding the impact of ethnic identity by examining people's social construction. Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the USA took part in a focus group to explore the importance of ethnic identity among them. The study reported that focus group was the best method to achieve the results about ethnic group identities by directly asking participants 'what it means to them to be members of a given ethnic group' (Niemann *et al.*, 1999:49). It concluded that examining people's social construction of their ethnic identities, in their own words, is critical for understanding their social realities.

Verkuyten (2003) in a study about ethnicity in the Netherlands using focus groups argued that ethnic essentialism is not explicitly aggressive and can have progressive aspects. When essentialism is used by minorities to challenge assimilationist ideas and to indicate the group's uniqueness, it is not opposite to the agreement about rights of cultural recognition.

On the other hand, in terms of the quality of governance models as factors of ethnic conflicts, Secor (2004) also used a method of focus groups to develop an analysis of citizenship in Istanbul through narrative produced in focus group discussions with the Kurdish minority. The assimilation/elimination policy implemented in Turkey against Kurds was found to label them as strangers in Istanbul, which led to conflicts. Even though this study was carried out on a local level, it can be extrapolated to the national level to discuss the negative reaction of inappropriate policies toward minorities, such as occurred in Turkey.

MacLean (2004) combined focus group with other methods to study the factors that made ethnic-regional conflict challenge the national unity of Cote d'Ivoire and not Ghana by examining politics at the grassroots. She found that an ethnically homogeneous society encourages the development of democratic values and practices at the local level that mitigate the potential for ethnic conflict. Conversely, ethnically heterogeneous associations do not necessarily promote democratic values.

In terms of solutions, very few studies have used focus groups to explore stakeholder perceptions on ethnic conflict resolutions, which reflects the endemic failure of governments and international institutions to engage with this fundamentally important dimension of conflict. Cuhadar (2011) conducted a study about inter-group conflict resolution, which analysed 'Track Two Diplomacy' as a model to mitigate the

tendency of ethnic conflicts. However, the model is very complex and needs a particular circumstance which is very difficult to operationalise. Our study concentrated on the set of issues related to ethnic conflicts in a deeply divided society at the national level.

In light of the evidences mentioned above, using focus groups is considered a rich qualitative method for the study of ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq at a national level. Therefore, the study utilized previous literature and its criteria were followed in conducting focus groups.

4.3.2 Aim and objectives of focus groups

Focus groups are generally used in this study for two main purposes: (1) to collect data relating to attitudes and viewpoints of different peoples from different levels/backgrounds about ethnic conflicts in Iraq; and (2) to develop a further questionnaire to be implemented in next round of focus groups and interviews.

The focus groups agendas were clearly drafted for obtaining the research objectives, albeit specific agendas per each focus group were developed to tackle particular objectives (see appendix 1). The main objectives of the focus groups are:

1. To understand the people's perspectives about causal dimensions of ethnic conflicts in Iraq.
2. To understand the impact of ethnic conflicts on people's thinking toward living together and national identity in Iraq.
3. To explore the extent of relationships and trust among ethnic groups.
4. To know ethnic group's evaluation toward alternative models and investigating the limitations of the Iraqi federal system.

4.3.3 Focus groups research design

- *Categories*

Purposive sampling was used in order to recruit participants germane to the research interests. Focus group categories were chosen relative to recruitment of participants with connections to the issues of ethnic conflicts. Thus, the way these people influence and are influenced by ethno-sectarian conflicts are conceptualised under the five targeted categories: Kurds, Arab Shias, Arab Sunnis, Turkmen, Assyrian and other minorities of Yazidi, Kakayi and Shabak. This approach seeks to clarify the different perspectives between ethnic and sectarian groups about the issues, and to compare different viewpoints of focus group participants (e.g. differences between Kurds and Shias). However, investigation of sharing points between them is also important to be considered.

1- **Kurds.** They are the second-largest racial group in Iraq. The majority of them reside in the KRI and the disputed places in the north of the country. Kurds have had an historical struggle to create their own state, and although in 2005 they agreed to remain within Iraq, they are now unhappy with the Iraqi government's policy, and so they seek to separate from Iraq.
2- **Arab Shias.** They comprise about 60% of the Iraqi population. Although they were suppressed prior to 2003, they have controlled the IG since then.
3- **Arab Sunnis.** Formerly the dominant ethnicity in Iraq, they comprise about 20% of the population and they are the most disadvantaged group in the new Iraq. As the result of ISIS attacks and war, the majority of Sunni areas encountered IDPs, looting, burning and destruction.
4- **Assyrians.** Assyrians are a Christian community. Although some of them identify themselves as Chaldean or use Chaldo-Assyrian to identify

themselves, these identities are subsumed under ‘Assyrian’ identity for the purposes of this study. According to Assyrian politicians who participated in this study, since 2003 more than half of the Christian population of an estimated 1,250,000 has left Iraq. Additionally, in the aftermath of the recent armed conflicts and ISIS attacks, the vast majority of the remaining people have fled to the KRI, whereas before that the majority of them located in Nineveh Plain and Baghdad. Assyrians, as a religious minority, can present their demands as citizens about what would they like to be done to achieve a peaceful environment to live together.

5- **Turkmen.** They comprise another ethnic minority in Iraq. The majority of them are concentrated in Kirkuk, Talafar and Erbil.

6- **Yazidi, Kakayi and Shabak.** These are different religious minorities. Although in race and ethnic aspects they are essentially Kurds, but some of them identify themselves as independent ethnic groups (especially Shabak) although their clothing and languages are Kurdish. The majority of them are concentrated in Nineveh Plain and Sinjar (Shingal).

Aside from the different cultural backgrounds considered, the organising of focus groups was built on the basis of recruiting people from different categories; of residents, refugees (IDPs), politicians and students:

1. **Residents.** Local residents encompassed civilian people who have not engaged in ethnic and sectarian conflicts.
2. **Refugees (IDPs).** These are the internal displaced persons who left their areas due to armed conflicts and threats of the terrorist groups (particularly ISIS), and who consequently had to settle in camps. Recruiting refugees provides vital

data about the impact of ethnic conflicts on ordinary people and the extent to which ethnic conflicts lead to decreased trust and relationships among people.

3. **Experts and academics.** This category of peoples consists of those who have worked on the cases of Iraq, selected from the Iraqi universities and other academic fields. They have had detailed information about the Iraqi issues, which is important to participate in focus groups to get insights on the potential governance model for Iraq.
4. **Politicians.** People working in one of the political parties and formal institutions of Iraq. Politicians are especially relevant to achieve perspectives on the reasons behind ethnic conflicts.
5. **Students.** Students are considered a major intelligent faction in Iraqi society. The participation of youth and conscious people is significant for this study because they will be future leaders of the country. Furthermore, because of the current war and violent conflicts, implementation of focus groups in the majority of Iraqi cities was not secure for researcher or participants in many cases. Consequently, it was expedient and advantageous to recruit Iraqi students in exile and studying in the UK, particularly those who came to study through the IG and KRG humanitarian development programmes and who would then return to Iraq. Therefore, the decision was made to conduct three focus groups in Nottingham which were very helpful to bridge the gaps may happen due to lack of backgrounds. Furthermore, these students have been familiar with other cultures of coexisting and governance, which offered important insights in our focus groups. The UK is regarded as one of the successful countries of cultural diversity management, and it is beneficial to know its effects on Iraqi students' perspectives.

Additionally, diversity in terms of age and gender were also taken into account for heterogeneity and representativeness.

- *Group sizes*

In terms of the number of persons who participate in a particular focus group, there are different views and little consensus about what is most appropriate. Rabiee (2004) specified that between six to ten participants is generally manageable, while McLafferty (2004) gave the broader range of four to twenty. However, Morgan (1996) refused to select a particular number as standard of focus group participants, but he implicitly preferred a smaller group in which participants are highly involved and it is easier for the moderator to manage active discussions. Kitzinger and Barbour (1999) also preferred smaller groups in the field of sociological studies. Although they reported that the ideal number for focus groups' participants in the market research is between eight and twelve, this number is considered too large for many social sciences studies and five or six is the commonly preferred size.

Despite the majority of scholars asserting the necessity for homogeneity within focus groups in order to capitalise on people's shared experiences, Kitzinger (1995) reported the benefits of diverse groups to maximize exploration of different perspectives. In light of the above arguments, the focus groups' sizes were selected between six to nine participants; the majority of them consisted of nine.

- *Selection of location*

Erbil and Kirkuk in Iraq and Nottingham in the UK were purposely selected to hold the focus groups. They are described below.

Erbil. The capital of the KRI, Erbil is considered a relatively stable and secure place compared to other Iraqi cities. It is a diverse city with large Kurdish, Turkmen,

Assyrian and Arab communities. The deteriorating security situation after 2003 caused an influx of Arabs fleeing to the city for safety, and there are many refugee camps settled around the city.

The facilitations of suitable places for accommodation and communication with experts were more readily available in Erbil than in the other cities. Many experts, including politicians and academics, live in Erbil because it is the centre for the majority of public and private universities, institutions and centres. In addition, the researcher is familiar with the cultural background and social attitude of its people.

Kirkuk. Kirkuk was chosen for conducting some of focus groups because it is the most ethnically diverse city in Iraq. It is known as 'Little Iraq' because it is an ethnic microcosm of Iraq as a whole. However, it is a highly disputed area between Iraq's ethnic groups because it is an oil-rich region. The majority of Iraqi political parties have official offices there, which facilitates access to politicians. Despite (or rather because of) this, the city is relatively insecure and bomb explosions are expected at any time, which affected the logistics of focus groups.

Nottingham. The UK city of Nottingham was chosen to conduct three of the focus groups for two major reasons: (1) there are many Iraqi students from different backgrounds who currently studying in the both University of Nottingham and Trent University; (2) because the researcher has been studying in the UoN for four years, facilitation and accessibility for recruiting Iraqi students was more convenient than in other places.

Although efforts were made to organise some focus groups in Baghdad and other cities, it was not possible to conduct fieldwork within Iraq (outside the KRI and Kirkuk) due to security issues and researcher safety.

❖ *Recruitment strategy*

Recruitment of focus group participant was undertaken in different ways. Contemporary facilitation of social media and internet accessibility were very helpful to make contact with people directly in the study areas, or to contact friends to help the project. The following strategies were implemented to recruit participants based on categories.

Recruiting local residents. The focus groups of local residents were recruited in Kirkuk and Erbil; they were approached directly in their offices or houses. This was facilitated by local colleagues (gatekeepers) previously contacted to help the project. They guided the researcher to access the necessary places/houses, and sometimes they played an important role in introducing the project, which was very helpful to build confidence and rapport among participants, especially in Kirkuk.

Recruiting refugees/IDPs. The researcher asked Barzani Charity Foundation to support the study in recruiting refugees. This organization is one of the main supervisory bodies of refugee camps in the KRI. Fortunately, they offered every support to enable the study and two refugee camps in Erbil were consequently visited. Refugees/IDPs were directly approached and asked to participate in their tents.

Recruiting experts and academics. There were three strategies followed for recruiting experts and academics: (1) Nowadays, the majority of experts/ academics use internet facilitation of email and Facebook, which were good methods to contact them directly to explain the project. Thus, experts were recruited through their email/ Facebooks and then their phone numbers. (2) Some of them were already known to the researcher as colleagues studying Iraq, thus they were directly contacted by phone. (3) Snowball sampling was used when initial participants were recruited by visiting

them directly in their institutions; they subsequently introduced the researcher to other experts in this field.

As literature advises offering some form of incentive, they were offered invitation to have enjoyable dinner after discussions at a restaurant.

Recruiting politicians. Politicians were recruited in two ways: (1) their official phone numbers were obtained from the KDP's National Relations Bureau in Erbil, thus they were contacted directly and the project was explained to them and they were invited to participate or refer colleagues who might be interested to join the study. (2) Others were contacted directly through their email and then they were visited to explain the project. Recruiting politicians was the most difficult experience because they frequently changed their minds about participating.

Recruiting students. For recruiting students, three strategies were implemented to contact and recruit Iraqi students in both Iraq and the UK: (1) some of them were already known to the researcher, especially Kurdish students in both UoN and Trent University were directly contacted to participate. (2) The majority of Iraqi students are members of the Kurdistan and Iraqi Societies in the University of Nottingham. Through these societies, student emails were obtained and they were contacted by the researcher to explain the project and recruit them. The researcher was a President of the Kurdistan Society, which made the recruitment process easier, thus at the first time nine Kurdish students were recruited. (3) Snowballing strategy was employed to find and recruit some students, especially some Arab-Iraqi students recruited through Kurdish friends in different departments. Snowballing was used to recruit other Turkmen and Assyrian students in both Kirkuk and Erbil.

❖ *Moderator*

The majority of focus groups were implemented by a team consisting of a moderator (researcher) and an assistant moderator (a colleague trained in postgraduate research in UoN). The moderator facilitated the contact and running the discussions. The assistant moderator took notes and ran the procedures related to recording, signing consent form etc. As both are from Iraq, they are familiar with the participants' cultural backgrounds, which facilitated rapport and motivation of focus group discussions.

Focus group discussions were held in Kurdish and Arabic, the native languages of participants, which maintained discussion dynamics and interactions. Fortunately, the moderator is fluent in Kurdish, Arabic and English, which helped meaningful facilitation for running the focus groups discussions and influencing the group dynamics (Chiu and Knight, 1999). This allowed participants to speak in their language, which led them to more comfortably discuss the questions. However, using more than one language in focus group discussions may affect the process of discussions while all participants did not understand the different language. For instance, Kurdish or Turkmen language might not be understandable for all Arabic participants.

4.3.4 Structuring focus groups' agendas

First round of focus groups, as shown in Figure 4.2, were structured into four phases according to their agendas. This allowed the researcher to dynamically include and adapt subsequent focus groups according to data emergent from the initial ones. At this round of data collection process, seven focus groups have been conducted in Iraq with four different categories. Diversity and heterogeneous of participants in terms of cultural background was taken into account. It was very important to identify participants' interaction and their different perspectives toward ethnic-sectarian

conflicts. Meanwhile, we attempted to find out the similarity between them about some points which is also important to know the common points to be considered in the study. The phases were structured in the way whereby the links among them were kept and tied by some sharing questions. Therefore, the questions were divided into general and specific questions, and the following points were presented for all focus groups to understand its variety and distinction between different peoples toward the same issues:

1. The main causes of ethnic conflicts
2. National identity
3. Potential solution of ethnic conflicts

Nevertheless, each focus group has its own aims related to each group specialization, which represents the core of the research interest.

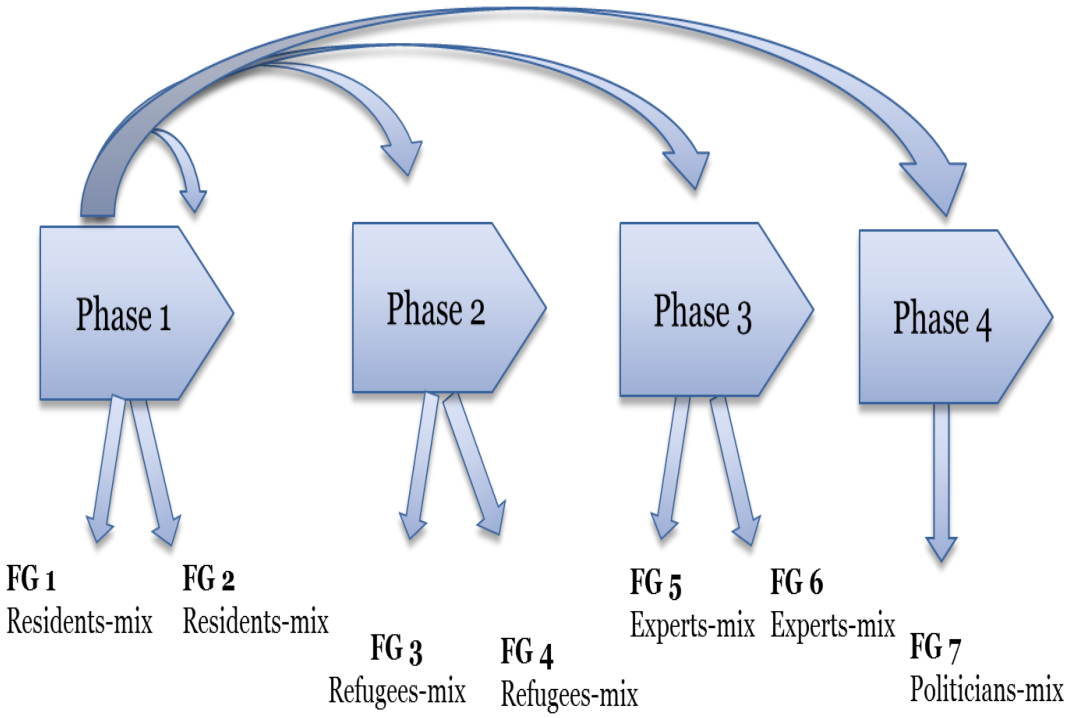


Figure 4.2: Focus groups phases

Focus groups' agenda in phase 1. In the first phase, two focus groups of local residents were held in Kirkuk and Erbil. The focus groups' agenda basically aimed to find out the residents' perspectives toward ethnicity and how confidence and trust can be rebuilt to peacefully live together. It is interesting to note how participants discuss a certain issue and why this issue concerns them more than other points. This relates to the original questions of the research (What are the root-causes of Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflicts? what are the impacts of government's policies on exacerbating ethno-sectarian conflicts? What are the impacts of ethno-sectarian violence on division, social cohesion and its effects on resolutions?).

Focus groups' agenda in phase 2. Two focus groups of refugees were organised in Erbil in the second phase. The focus groups' agenda for phase two was organised for targeted peoples of refugees who were forced to flee their area due to ethnic conflicts. The main aim of the focus groups agendas for refugees was to identify the direct consequences and implications of ethnic conflicts on peoples' lives in general, and on their loyalty to national identity in particular. Furthermore, it attempted to uncover impacts on exacerbating problems and potential solutions rather than to discuss refugee issues *per se*. This relates to the original questions of the research (After the last events of violent conflicts in Iraq, to what degree Bosnia's model of partition can be applied as a lesson for Iraq? Is it necessary to impose a single national identity in federal state?).

Focus groups' agenda in phase 3. The next two focus groups of the third phase were conducted with experts and academics in Erbil. The main purpose of these focus groups' agenda was to identify and understand the core of Iraqi ethnic and sectarian conflicts, and to explore experts' perceptions about the impacts of different political models on managing ethnic conflicts. In addition, it discusses the limitations of Iraqi

federalism. This relates to the original research questions (What are the impacts of federal government's policies on exacerbating ethno-sectarian conflicts and dysfunction of federalism? To what extent the ignorance of democratic and power sharing principles affected the federalism to be ineffective? What are the limitations of a present federal governance model in Iraq? Can the limitations of the Iraqi federal model be solved by combining its federalism with soft partition?)

Focus group's agenda in phase 4. Focus groups' agenda for phase four is organised for politicians in Kirkuk. This focus group was administrated to discuss the points/results which concerned previous focus groups discussions, although discussing the original points of the focus group which covered the reasons behind ethnic conflicts and potential solutions. The basic aim of this focus group agenda is to observe different groups' perspectives toward the situation and solution of ethnic-sectarian conflicts. This relates to the original research questions (What are the limitations of a present federal governance model in Iraq? Can the limitations of the Iraqi federal model be solved by combining its federalism with soft partition?).

After this round of focus groups have been completed, based on the analysis of the first round of focus groups' data, some important points needed to be explored in the second round. Gaps become apparent when the codes were raised and it was found that some categories did not have sufficient evidence. Further data to fill these gaps were needed to make the categories more precise, explanatory and productive (Charmaz 2002:689). In grounded theory, the process of sampling and data collection continues until theoretical saturation would be achieved. This implies that the process of data collection and coding should be continuous until no new categories can be identified (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Willig, 2013).

Furthermore, in the first round of conducting focus groups it was evident that some participants hesitated to express their real opinions, particularly about ethnically sensitive issues (e.g. accusing others or wrongdoing and revealing how they think about their own communities and their position in the Iraqi crisis). In the previous focus groups, participants probably could not express their honest opinions because they would not like to trigger the conflicts with the participants from other communities. Meanwhile, participants might self-censor answers to avoid any risk of revenge, or to project a positive image of themselves as inclusive and tolerant (social desirability bias). Therefore, homogeneous focus groups may lead to achievement of more detail and more genuine perspectives.

Consequently, after developing the questionnaire, the second round of focus groups were organised, which encompassed five focus groups with the postgraduate students from the different cultural backgrounds. As shown in Figure 4.3, focus groups were structured into three phases based on the focus groups' agendas. Two of them (with Turkmen and Assyrian students) were held in Erbil and Kirkuk, while the other three with Kurdish, Arab Shia and Arab Sunni students organised in the UK, which were very beneficial. Despite participants discussing their situation as Iraqis, they enriched their discussions by comparing Iraqi model of cultural diversity management with the UK.

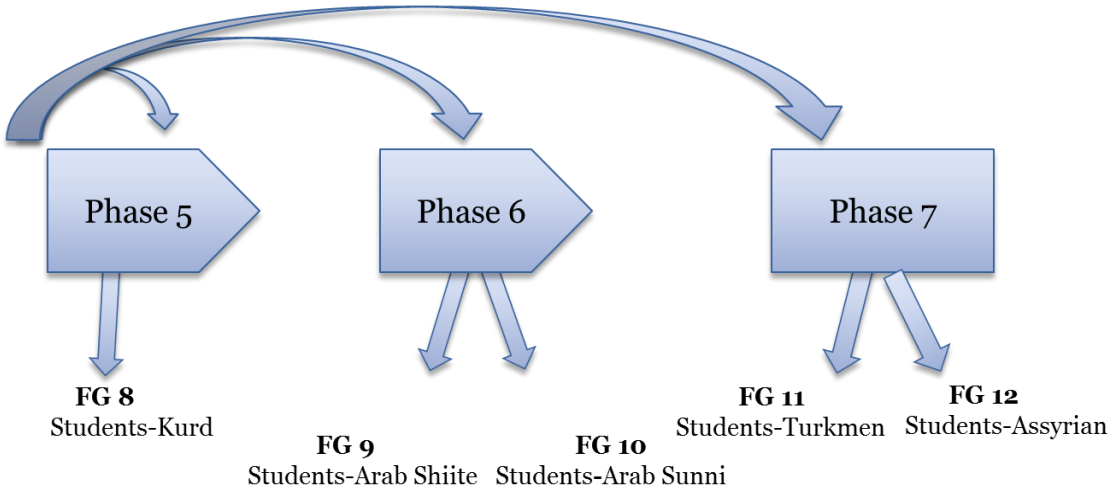


Figure 4.3: The phases of second round of focus groups

Focus groups' agenda in phase 5. The focus group's agenda for phase five was structured for Kurdish students in Nottingham. The main purpose of this was to obtain Kurdish perspectives toward Iraqi ethnic-sectarian conflicts and understanding of their specific demands to be verified in the country. In addition, it attempted to investigate the main problems between two levels of governments. This relates to the original question of the research (What are the limitations of a present federal governance model in Iraq? Can the limitations of the Iraqi federal model be solved by combining its federalism with soft partition?). Meanwhile, further data are collected about the categories were incomplete to extend and check them.

Focus groups' agenda in phase 6. The focus groups' agendas of this phase are structured for Arabic students from both Shia and Sunni in Nottingham. The basic aim of these focus groups' agendas was to explore the Arab Shia and Sunnis viewpoints toward ethnic-sectarian conflicts and the impacts of education system on that. As well as, the perspectives of both factions toward current governments are discovered. This relates to the question (What are the root-causes of Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflicts, and what are the impacts of ethno-sectarian violence on division, social cohesion and its

effects on solutions? After the last events of violent conflicts in Iraq, to what degree Bosnia's model of partition can be applied as a lesson for Iraq?).

Focus groups' agenda in phase 7. The focus groups' agendas for the seventh phase were organized for Turkmen and Assyrian students in Kirkuk and Erbil aimed to find out their perceptions toward current Iraqi governance model. It attempted to understand these communities' demands and their issues as minority. This relates to the questions (What are the impacts of federal government's policies on exacerbating ethno-sectarian conflicts and dysfunction of federalism? To what extent the ignorance of democratic and power sharing principles affected the federalism to be ineffective? Is it necessary to impose a single national identity in federal state?). It is also to extend the categories that found they have lack in adequate evidence.

Table 4.1: Focus groups design

Focus groups	Categories	Locations	When	Number M/ F
FG1	Local Residents - Mix	Kirkuk	21-02-2015	6/ 2
FG2	Local Residents - Mix	Erbil	23-02-2015	6/ 2
FG3	Refugees - Mix	Erbil	24-02-2015	8/ 1
FG4	Refugees - Mix	Erbil	25-02-2015	4/ 5
FG5	Experts - Mix	Erbil	26-02-2015	5/ 1
FG6	Experts - Mix	Erbil	27-02-2015	9/ 0
FG7	Politicians - Mix	Kirkuk	03-03-2015	7/ 0
FG8	Students - Kurds	Nottingham	03-02-2016	8/1
FG9	Students - Arab Shiite	Nottingham	10-02-2016	7/0
FG10	Students - Arab Sunni	Nottingham	12-02-2016	7/0
FG11	Students - Turkmen	Erbil	20-02-2016	3/3
FG12	Students - Assyrian	Kirkuk	26-02-2016	7/2

As in this Table 4.1 explains, in both rounds 12 focus groups were organised as the data collection process to be analysed as the main part of the study. The sample

comprised 94 people from different ethnic/religious backgrounds, aged 18-65 years; 77 of them were male and 17 of them were female. Even though there was a long period between both rounds of focus groups' implementations, this is acceptable to allow relevant data and analytical directions to emerge (Charmaz 2002:690).

The questioning route for each focus groups' agenda was structured to obtain the targeted objectives. The organisation of focus groups agenda in whole focus groups was generally structured as in Figure 4.4.

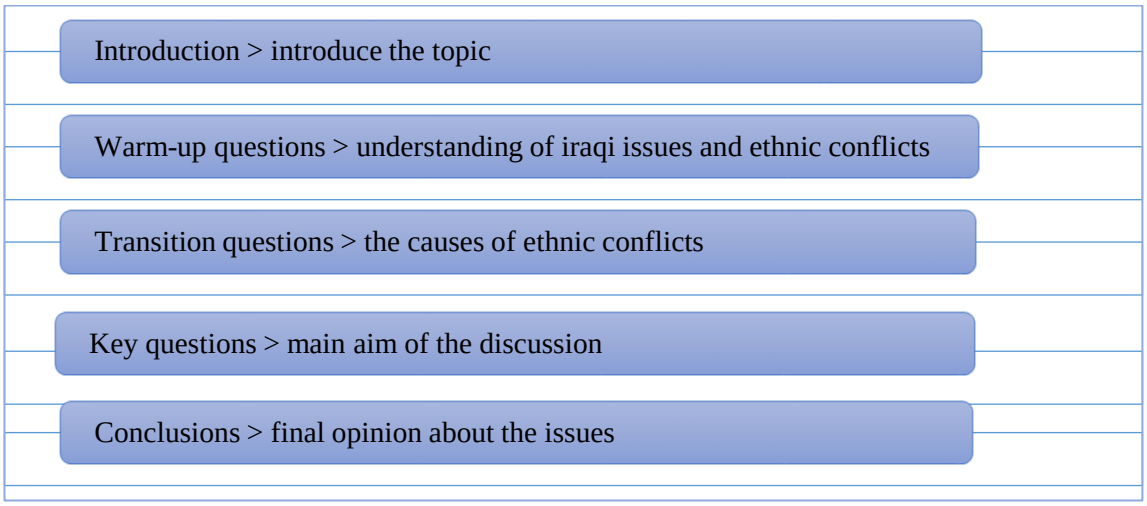


Figure 4.4: Focus group questions route

1. Focus groups starts with an introduction (10-15 min), to present general information and the aim of the study to participants.
2. The warm-up questions (15-20 min) focused on accessing the basic level of understanding multiculturalism and ethno-sectarian conflicts.
3. Transition questions (20-25 min) investigated participants' perceptions of the causes of ethnic conflicts in Iraq and role of the current government.
4. Thematic questions (40-50 min) aimed to building up the idea about some key questions of each focus group agenda. For instance, in focus groups of local residents, trust and relationships between groups are of central concern, but in

the focus groups of experts were more oriented toward different political models.

5. In the conclusion (10-15 min), discussions were intensified to obtain the final agreement about the points.

4.4 INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS AS THE SECOND DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE

4.4.1 The rationale behind individual interviews

To obtain more data and information about the issues raised and explored in focus group interviews, qualitative in-depth interview has been employed to develop coding frames in response to new information, until the point where new focus group or interview data do not provide any new themes relevant to the research focus, at which point theoretical saturation has been reached (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:188; Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge, 2009:27). Interview is the last tool that used to obtain data for developing categories, after which no new relevant data emerge.

The great advantage of interview is that people can directly present their viewpoints on issues related to ethnic conflicts in multicultural society. Interviewees may have a convenient time and climate to deliberate their opinions without hesitation, while in focus group interviews participants may not express their real opinions due to other participants.

Generally, there are three types of interview; structured interviews (close-ended questions) force interviewees to choose between fixed responses (Esterberg, 2002). Structured questions were presented as a package to be answered by the interviewees in order to know the viewpoints of different group's representatives and illustrate their opinions about the same issue. It is likely to uncover how interviewees answer the

same set of questions differently as a function of their social characteristics. Unstructured interviews are used to explore a topic area but neither questions nor order are determined (Merriam, 2002). Semi-structured interviews are the most common in qualitative research, whereby the interview is guided by a list of questions, allowing for emergent areas and issues of interest to be explored. This type of interview is essentially conversational with interviewees while remaining under the guidance of the questions, avoiding digression.

Scholars have used this sort of interview to study cultural identity and ethnic conflicts. Phinney, Jacoby and Silva (2007) carried out a study about ethnic identity and intergroup attitudes toward other. As part of the study, they employed semi-structured interview and found that a secure ethnic identity is associated with positive intergroup attitudes. Moss (2014) conducted a study about *the single recategorization model* in Rwanda for post-conflict reconciliation, using semi-structured interviews to determine that this model is considered appropriate by politicians, although it has been criticized for leading to increased intergroup conflicts due to social identity threats.

Habtu (2004) also used interviews as part of data collection of his study about the challenges facing ethnic-based federalism in Ethiopia. It showed that ethnofederalism in the country is a fragile and perilous experiment. Through the method of interview, Marr (2007) conducted study about the Iraqi identity aftermath of 2003 invasion in which 60 politicians have been involved, finding that most Iraqis do not want the breakdown or breakup if the country into separate territorial entities.

The interview process in this research is also concentrated on semi-structured interviews, which is regarded as an appropriate method of data collection in social sciences research. Nonetheless, some interviews were conducted online using Skype

and Viper due to the logistical barriers to conducting fieldwork (Willig, 2013:36). However, in some cases structured interviews were applied in some interviews because interviewees preferred to receive questions and send responses via email. The interviews lasted between 30-45 mins, and were recorded in digital format, except those conducted through email.

Politicians and experts from different cultural backgrounds were particularly selected to be recruited for the process of interviews. In focus group discussions we found that the vast majority of the participants accused politicians of causing Iraqi ethnic-sectarian conflicts. Analysis of the focus groups' data also proved the reality that the majority of Iraqi predicaments were implicitly or explicitly connected to the politicians. Thus, based on the focus groups' data analysis, a qualitative questionnaire was developed to be implemented through individual interviews. However, some of the questions that were already scheduled for the focus groups discussions were presented once again in the interviews. In this regard, we arranged 18 interviews with politicians and experts to cover the questions (see appendix 2).

4.4.2 Aims and objectives of individual interviews

The main aim of the interviews was to obtain a better understanding of ethnic-sectarian conflicts in Iraq and uncover the extent to which groups accept the current governance model in Iraq and the perceptions of politicians/experts on potential solutions. Meanwhile, this data was used to find out to what extent ethnic-sectarian identity is a barrier to group loyalty to national identity. In addition, interviews were focused on issues related to identities and government policies toward national identity, either under former regimes or in Iraq currently. Particularly, interview method was applied to obtain the answer of the two original questions of the research which are related to

ethnic conflict regulations and national identity in ethnically divided society. In addition, views were investigated:

1. To explore official opinion from the Iraqi representatives toward IG and their perceptions for addressing ethnic conflicts.
2. To identify groups' specific perceptions toward the current government policies in Iraq and its demands that they want to be considered. Despite the general issues relates to Iraqi residents, there is something relates to each group *per se*. This is likely to uncover each group's own question/interests that they have been struggled to be addressed.
3. To investigate the extent of ethnic-sectarian conflict's influences on the political institutions.
4. To uncover the issues related to national identity.

4.4.3 Interviews research design

- *Participants*

Politicians. Politicians include Iraqi MPs and political parties' leaders from different ethnic and religious groups. Parliament is significant because the political system in Iraq is parliamentary system and whole decisions should go through this institution, in addition of whole factions are represented in the parliament. Therefore, the majority of politicians who participated in the study were lawmakers.

Experts. These encompassed Iraqi academics and experts from both inside and outside the country. These people have already published material about the ethnic-sectarian conflicts in Iraq, and some of them have written PhD theses on the country.

- *Recruitment strategy*

There were different strategies that have been followed to recruit the interviewees:

1. Some participants from both politicians and experts have recruited within the focus groups' participations. During focus group discussions, it was noted that some participants had detailed information about the topics and needed to be met them individually. In this regard, at the end of the focus groups, they were asked whether they would be interested in taking part in individual interviews. When positive responses were received, their contact methods were noted and they were subsequently contacted by email to provide some high-level information, thus an easily accessible venue was organized and then confirmation letters were sent with all the relevant details.
2. Social media and internet accessibility were useful to make contact with people directly and recruit them for interviews. The researcher utilized social media, especially Facebook, to contact some of participants directly.
3. The researcher's friends were also contacted in the Iraqi Parliament to help the study in accessing MPs from different backgrounds and political entities. This was immensely helpful in recruiting MPs from different groups.

4.5 ETHICS AND LIMITATIONS

4.5.1 Ethics

In conflict study, ethical considerations are very important while designing and implementing of data gathering. Even though in the study of ethnic conflicts sensitive questions are expected, it was attempted to avoid psychologically distressing questions to reduce the risk of harm (i.e. distress) to respondents. Furthermore, the questions were presented in general terms without necessarily asking about specific groups. Fortunately, there was no risk of harm or conflict during processes of implementing focus groups.

To maintain confidentiality and autonomy, before starting the interviews the information sheet was re-explained and the informed consent form was given to participants (see appendix 3); it was emphasized from the outset that participation was entirely voluntary and participants could stop and withdraw from the study at any time without giving an explanation. Meanwhile, participants' permission was obtained to record conversations and takes some pictures. Confidentiality were assured to each participant that their names would not be reported unless their permissions and the information gathered would only be used for research purposes, kept strictly confidential.

4.5.2 Limitations

Implementing focus group interviews has its own limitations in areas of armed conflict. The insecure environment causes intrinsic challenges to accessing people, which may lead to implicit bias in unequal recruitment of groups. For instance, while the majority of the Iraqi population are Shias, few of them participated in the first round of focus groups because of the logistical difficulty of accessing them.

Lack of trust can be regarded as a manifest issue in focus groups in Iraq. Participants might not be able to deliberate their opinion honestly as they do not want to argue with others (including within their own ethnic affiliation); there may be intense pressure to give the 'right' answer according to political and ethnic affiliation. Participants may self-censor answers to avoid any risk of revenge (Brück *et al.*, 2013). Although every attempt was made to build confidence and rapport among participants, different strategies have been followed to tackle this. For instance, despite heterogeneous focus groups, each cultural background has engaged in the focus groups alone, and individual interviews were conducted to create an environment conducive to free deliberation by participants.

In this area, people are sensitive to discuss their situation and they do not like to mention their groups' perceived shortcomings, nor do they accept negative characterisations by others against their groups. Therefore, moderators play a particularly important role in managing such discussions. In this sense, moderators can ask new questions to change participants' sense to another direction. It is preferable to create a friendly climate for the sessions by providing some jokes and introducing participants to each other.

Refugees were forced to leave their ordinary lives and flee to live in camps; it is thus particularly problematic to involve them in the focus group discussion. They are affected by their psychological and sociological circumstances which might hinder them from expressing their ideas. Despite some refugees not lending themselves to focus group discussions, they often become very emotional and sometimes they could not speak properly. However, it is important point to assess the impact of the ethnic conflicts on people's lives and its indirect effects on the country.

Focus group interviews are progressively more appealing in engaging people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Halcomb *et al.*, 2007). Participants may speak and converse in different linguistics which can hinder the effectiveness of understanding and dynamics. Thus, language can be considered as important challenges of focus groups in Iraq because there are four main languages (Arabic, Kurdish, Turkmen and Assyrian). Although the majority of people speak Arabic, their Arabic language is often insufficient to express their opinions properly. Therefore, in some discussions three languages were used and in the majority of focus groups, both Arabic and Kurdish languages were employed to discuss the questions.

Language has the potential to express viewing or acknowledge experience of participants and it is crucial for interpretation of experiences accurately of members of minorities groups (Chiu and Knight, 1999). The moderator was compelled to communicate with participants in Arabic and Kurdish, and participants expressed their perspectives in Kurdish, Arabic and even Turkmen. Sometimes participants did not understand each other; in particular, when participants spoke Kurdish or Turkmen, we noted that Arabic participants did not understand. Thus, in some focus group discussions, a third person was needed to interpret. Using of more than one language in focus group discussions also undermines the dynamism of discussion. Moreover, in the transcript stage, translating several languages to some extent may change the meaning of speaking in addition to normal difficulties encountered in transcription and translation of three different languages.

Furthermore, every society has its own cultural style that affects focus groups procedure. In Iraq, cultural challenges prevented recruitment of a sufficient number of females to participate in the focus groups. Although perspectives by gender are not a primary concern of this research, this issue needs to be considered. There were also problems of tardiness and absenteeism; in the recruitment stage, moderators should recruit more people than the actual size required for focus groups to mitigate this, but it is difficult to anticipate such factors and ultimately achieve the optimum size of group for data gathering. As Rabiee (2004) recommended, over-recruitment by 10–25% may work to address this problem.

Interviews with politicians are very difficult to conduct; researchers must be patient and follow special techniques, because such professionals are busy or might not want to engage themselves with sensitive issues that might affect their position. The recruitment of politicians was one of the most difficult stages of data collection. They

were very hesitant, and never agreed to participate upon the first contact; they usually said ‘let me think’, and although the information sheets have sent them, they asked for more information. Politicians in general and Iraqi politicians in particular would usually like to speak to journalist in order to appear on TV and other media channels. In Iraqi culture, politicians or any people shown in the media are seen as intelligent by the public. Therefore, politicians may pay journalists to conduct interviews with them, but they do not like to spend their time with academic researchers. In one of the focus groups in which some journalists participated, they mentioned that politicians gave them different incentives for conducting interviews with them.

Sometimes interviewees cancelled interviews an hour before the scheduled appointment because of importance meetings or illness. In the interviews, politicians were usually speaking in an indirect way, using political language in order to avoid insensitive or controversial statements, and they attempted to present their opinions in truncated and neutral sentences, thus the researcher had to be ready with follow-up questions to adequately probe the areas of interest.

Conducting interviews with experts was more convenient because they understand data collection as a requirement of academic research. It is generally easier to persuade them, but researchers should expect that the recruitment of experts may need a longer time because they are usually busy. Thus, researchers should devote a long period to recruit experts. Therefore, conducting focus groups in conflicting areas should be regarded as sensitive task which need particular preparation. The limitation of focus group’s implementation in such areas is not only related to insecurity and recruiting people but also affect the discussion and transcription stages. Researchers should pay attention to avoid the questions that may trigger a specific group and create a problem in focus group discussions.

4.6 THE PROCEDURE OF DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative analysis is applied with the aim to generate insights which constitute answers to research questions. Group differences in perceptions toward the issue of ethno-sectarian conflicts and their differences toward solutions are considered significant to obtain answers of the research questions. In terms of analysing focus groups' data, Kitzinger (1995) argued that it is basically the same as analysing any other qualitative data; the researcher draws together and compares discussions of similar themes and examines how these relate to the variables. Despite confirming the same idea of analysing focus group data, Sim (1998) indicated some specific problems that arise in analysing focus groups. Indeed, the majority of scholars have reported that analysing focus groups involves essentially the same process followed in any other qualitative data analysis (Kitzinger and Barbour 1999).

However, there is a small difference relating to the nature of group interaction rather than individual context. Thus, a key challenge in undertaking focus groups is catching the group interactions and dynamics between participants which considered a very important point to facilitate data management (Halcomb *et al.* 2007). In this sense, Krueger and Casey (2002) created a practical framework for managing focus group data analysis which provides seven criteria to be considered in analysing focus groups data: words; context; internal consistency; frequency and extensiveness of comments; specificity of comments; intensity of comments; and big ideas. In analysing data, the analyst should consider many different aspects of the focus groups and its participants' responses, including the above criteria. For instance, participants' reactions toward key points have to be considered.

Thus, data analysis process in this study also relies on grounded theory. It is a qualitative research method through systematic techniques and procedures of analysis which enables researcher to develop a substantive theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990:31). In this respect, grounded theory techniques are mainly applied to analyse the data that obtained from the focus group and one-by one interviews. However, seeking to identify major themes in the data might lead the process to be very close with the thematic analysis techniques, although both are significant in analysing qualitative data and considered a significant methodological approach for social sciences research. Braun and Clarke (2006:8) reported that grounded theory is very much akin to thematic analysis as a set of procedures of coding data. Even Willig (2013) thought thematic analysis underpins grounded theory of data analysis.

Thematic analysis is a process of segmentation and categorization of the data (Matthews and Ross, 2010), systematically working through qualitative data in order to identify common thread of meaning, grouping these together into categories of meaning and to then clustering these into higher-order themes (Willig, 2013:58).

Kellehear (1993) suggested that thematic analysis is grounded theory, and Boyatzis (1998) considered it as a part of other methods such as ground theory but each method have something to offer qualitative data analysis. Similarly, Ryan and Bernard (2000) considered thematic analysis as analytic traditions such as grounded theory, rather than a specific approach in its own right. However, Braun and Clarke (2006) confirmed it as a method in its own right, but it does not appear to exist as a named analysis comparable to other specialty methods such as grounded theory, despite being widely used. In a more recent work, they argued that ‘it has only recently started to achieve the “brand recognition” held by methodologies such as grounded theory’ (Clarke and Braun 2013).

Indeed, regarding analysis stages, both methods are very close, because both depend on categorizing strategy for qualitative data. However, grounded theory is more broaden and its process needs a longer time, whereas, thematic analysis is a method that used after data collection to interrogate the material that have found. In addition, whilst grounded theory is based around developing theory that explains the findings within the data, thematic analysis seeks to summarise the data, but not necessarily with the aim of developing a theory.

Nevertheless, the procedure of data analysis has been started with transcribing of focus groups and interviews' tapes. They were transcribed firstly in the language spoked by participants, who mostly spoke Arabic and Kurdish, then all tapes were translated into English. However, a selective transcript is used to avoid the data from the irrelevant talking from the participants. In Iraqi culture people commonly use proverbs, poems, verses of the Qur'an and Prophetic hadith as well as repetitive words to emphasise their beliefs. Despite transcription being expected to be a difficult stage, the researcher was able to bring language experience into play here.

Transcription is particularly important in that it provides researchers with an opportunity to immerse themselves in the data, by which some ideas are developed about the nature of the date and its relevance in relation to the research question (Willig, 2013:61). Furthermore, due to the focus groups being moderated by the researcher, this enabled extra familiarisation. Nonetheless, the researcher was concerned to avoid personal bias, considering the objectivity of the research and not necessarily imposing preconceived understandings.

Scholars argued that instead of manual management, software programs can be used to help manage data (Krueger and Casey 2000; Halperin and Heath, 2012). The

software programs Word and Nvivo 10 were employed to manage and facilitate analyses.

Thus, the procedure of data analysis started through entering the transcripts into the Nvivo 10 program. Reading interviews line-by-line identified the most important, meaningful and interesting parts of data. As explained in Table 4.2, based on the questions' key points, all interview transcripts were segmented to separate groups of data into similar groupings and form preliminary categories of information by putting each respondent's words alongside related contributions, making data more manageable (Halperin and Heath 2012).

Qualitative data should be fragmented and coded using initial or open coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Daengbuppha *et al.*, 2006); the process of breaking down, categorizing, conceptualizing, comparing, examining data (Strauss and Corbin 1990:61). Thus, coding constitutes the most fundamental process in the steps of data analysis. By critically reading each group of data line-by-line, the codes of each successive batch of data were identified. For coding process, an inductive approach was employed that used data from participants to construct and validate the emergent theories. Themes or patterns within data can be identified in one of two primary ways: inductive ('bottom up') or deductive ('top down') (Braun and Clarke, 2006:12). An inductive approach implies the themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves, whereas a deductive approach considers data with regard to pre-existing coding frames (Willig 2013:61). In this regard thematic analysis and grounded theory are similar (Braun and Clarke, 2006:12). Within grounded theory an inductive approach has been employed for the coding process and three stages of coding and categorizing were implemented.

Table 4.2: An example of coding process of FG1's data

Key question: *From diversity to ethnic conflicts*		
Groups of Data	*Codes/Key Points*	*Subthemes*
- We as civilian people don't have any problem, we live together, but the issue is different in politics - there are some areas where these components live together without problems - We as civil people don't have any problem - multiculturalism is the source of power, but if it is politicized it will be a source of problems -when ISIS occupied the city, Muslim neighbours attacked Christian houses and looted everything; they seized their houses until now. -Kurdistan is different; our relations are amazing, we do not have any problem, we live together. -political entrepreneurs encourage fragmentation; they have played a vital role in reviving conflict. -the Ba'athist regime made people hate others -external interventions have shattered Iraqi society -external countries don't allow the problems to be solved	Civilian people are tolerant Politicized sects In war time people will not live together Kurdistan is different Political entrepreneurs Hatred External interventions	Government policies Source of ethnic conflicts The effects of political entrepreneur Foreign interference
Key question: *Best solution*		
Groups of Data	*Codes/Key Points*	*Subthemes*
-federalism might be a solution; they ask to create their own federal region. -consociational democracy was implemented in Iraq' -It is portionalism, not consociationalism -the division of Iraq will not be a solution' -dividing Iraq into three regions through federalism is appropriate -best solution is confederalism,..confederalism is made between states	Federalism solution Partition undesirable Consociationalism Confederalism	Federalism Partition Power sharing
Key question: *The level of trust*		
Groups of Data	*Codes/Key Points*	*Subthemes*
- I have friends from all ethnic groups - I have many friends, and I have trust in them - before 2003 the level of trust among Iraqi people was stronger - We had already got married between different ethnic or religious couples - After 2003 I knew Shias, Sunnis, Kurds, politicians taught us these things - All these problems lead to distrust among people, today there is never trust between Shias and Sunnis or Kurds and Shias -We can say trust is gone among people now. - Unfortunately, the level of trust is weaker among Iraqi components now, more than before the events.	There were relationships before 2003 Trust was stronger There were marriages Trust is gone after the last conflicts Distrust is increased	The level of Social cleavage Trust and relationships Possibility of Living together

At the first stage, a list of codes was illustrated using 'in vivo coding' (Miles *et al.* 2014:74), in which words and short phrases from the interview's own language were used as codes. As Willig (2013:61) argued, within inductive approach the code could be withdrawn from the respondent's account itself, the codes and key points are

derived from the participant's talking. To some extent the criteria of Krueger and Casey (2002) were taken into account regarding the coding process. This stage is very important and it allowed the researcher to identify a list of categories and gain a deeper understanding of the data whereby participants' views were discerned rather than assumed, particularly by reading the data several times (Charmaz, 2002:684).

Thus, in the next stage, the close codes were combined and regrouped to create a number of categories/subthemes. This is likely to reduce and make connections between codes that have relationships together in order to create a list of subthemes which are basically related to the research question. Furthermore, this stage involved gathering together those portions of texts/responses belonging to a specific subtheme. This stage can be considered as the stage which is named 'axial coding' process from the study of Strauss and Corbin (1990), to make a connection between categories and between them and subcategories. This is the process to identify the significant categories (subthemes) that each should represent a specific phenomenon. Here, researcher is sensitized to particular way in which categories may be linked with another, as well sensitize to those aspects of the data that are regarded to be crucial to understand social phenomena (Willig 2013:77).

This procedure was repeated to encompass all focus group interviews' data. Meanwhile, the results were applied to the data obtained in the second round of focus groups. In grounded theory, sampling and collecting data continually proceeds with different aims; in axial coding stage, the aim is to relate more specifically the categories which were illustrated during open coding and to uncover further instances of events (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:185). During the process of coding and categorizing each focus group's data, a number of new subthemes emerge that need to be compared with the previous one.

In terms of sampling, during this stage, one-to-one interviews have been conducted to fill the categories that needed further data and further development. Like the analysis of the focus groups, same process was applied to analyse the data that obtained from individual interviews. As shown in Figure 4.5, there are four main steps implemented in coding and analysing process to illustrate the themes.

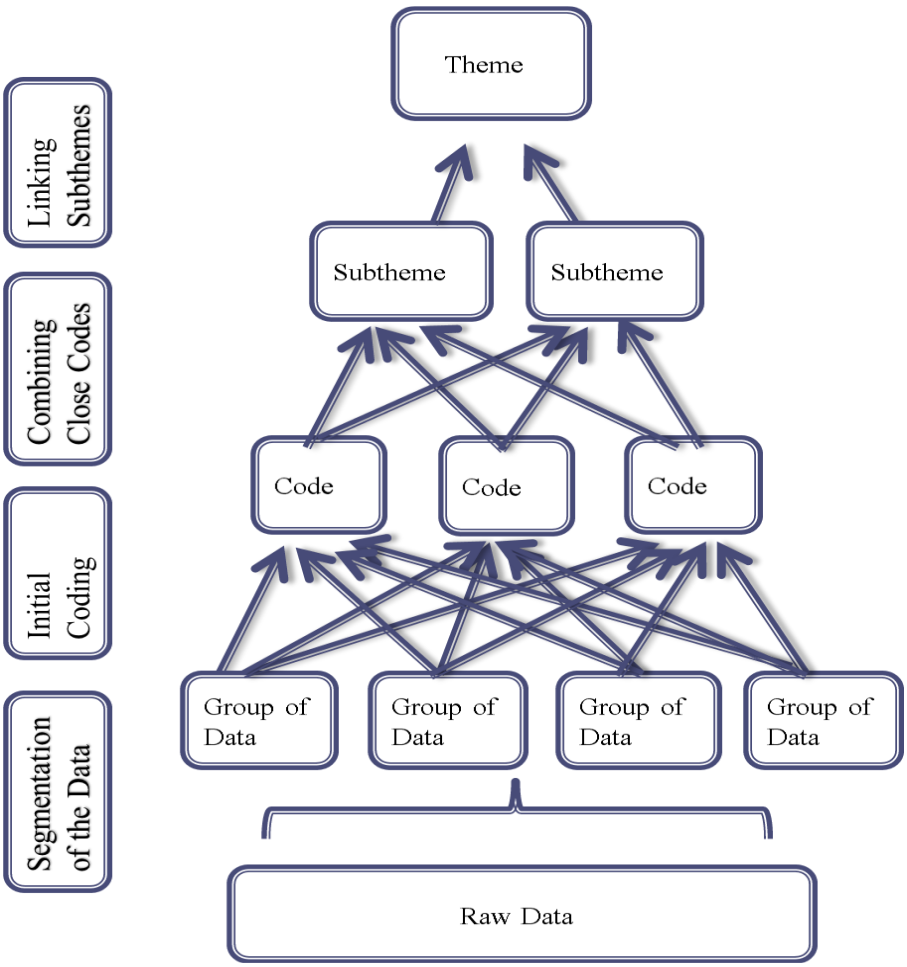


Figure 4.5: The steps of finding the themes

The final step of analysis involves a review of the subthemes that have already been identified (Willig, 2013:62). It is likely to check which subthemes could be further integrated into higher-order themes and which are not relevant to research questions and making further connections between themes. After combining the related codes together, more than 29 subthemes were initially constructed from the data, then it was

realized that some of the subthemes might not sufficiently explain the issues, and some appeared repetitive. Therefore, some of them were destroyed into other subthemes. As the results of the data analysis process of the first round of focus groups' data, 18 subthemes were tentatively grouped:

1. Ethno-sectarian violence creates territorial divisions
2. The possibility of living together
3. Primordial identity versus Iraqi identity
4. The effects of political parties and elections on disintegration
5. Foreign interventions
6. Economic grievances
7. Historical hatred among components
8. Identity politics
9. Military division
10. Monopoly of power
11. Separation versus integration model
12. Social cleavage and fragmentation
13. Limitations of federalism
14. Political entrepreneurs
15. Partition
16. Confederalism
17. Federalism
18. Centralism

Meanwhile, after analysing of the second round of focus groups encompassing five focus groups, although the previous subthemes were improved, four new subthemes

were identified: (19) majoritarian government, (20) the effects of media, (21) corruption, and (22) power sharing.

Additionally, through the process of analysing interview data, the majority of the results of focus groups data were underscored, and the results that emerged from the focus groups data were generally corroborated by the results of interviews. For instance, both politicians and experts confirmed that political parties and their leaders have been instrumental in exacerbating ethno-sectarian conflicts. This point was already emphasized in focus groups with different categories. Furthermore, they reported the profound divisions in Iraqi society due to constant ethnic conflicts. The common points that were emphasized concerned inappropriate policies being implemented by governments depending on ethnic rather than civil nationalism. However, three new subthemes have illustrated, including: (23) enhancing militia and terrorist groups, (24) imposed sectarian identity, and (25) violence on democratic principles.

After collecting and analysing data, the researcher paid attention to potential patterns across the subthemes and reflects on the underlying meaning to find out the core categories/themes. As shown in Figure 4.6, the subthemes with relationships were combined and regrouped in order to create a number of overarching themes, mostly presented in an interpretive fashion.

Within the method of grounded theory, this stage can be considered as the ‘selective coding’ process for the study of Strauss and Corbin (1990). It is the process to identify core category which systematically relating it to other categories, (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:116). In other words, it is the central issue or focus around which all other categories are integrated (Bryman, 2004) to build a theoretical framework. This stage

is considered as the one of the difficult and complicated task in which sometimes researcher get confusion about the priority of the categories while everything seems important or more than one phenomenon seems salient (Strauss and Corbin 1990:118).

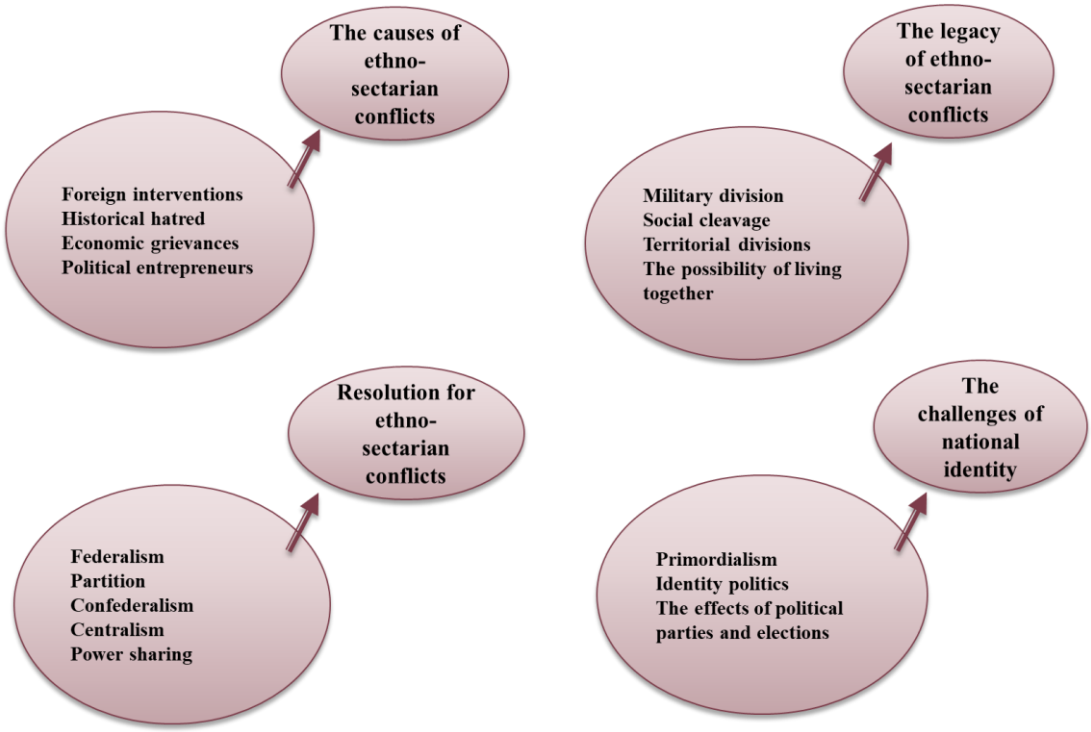


Figure 4.6: An example of regrouping subthemes and identifying themes

Through this process, six overarching themes were identified. Some of the themes may already be known based on the questionnaires that were presented in focus groups, but this procedure is essential to confirm these and find out new and unexpected themes. Against this background, these themes illustrated:

- Resolution for Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflicts
- Forms of government in a deeply divided society
- New Iraqi governance and government policy toward ethnic diversity
- The legacy of bad government policy and ethno-sectarian conflicts
- The challenges of national identity
- The sources and causes of ethno-sectarian conflicts

Hence, the outcome of the procedure is clearly shaped, as explained in the Figure 4.7. All focus groups and interviews' quotes are adopted within the themes and subthemes in order to start interpretive stage that presents in following chapter five and six.

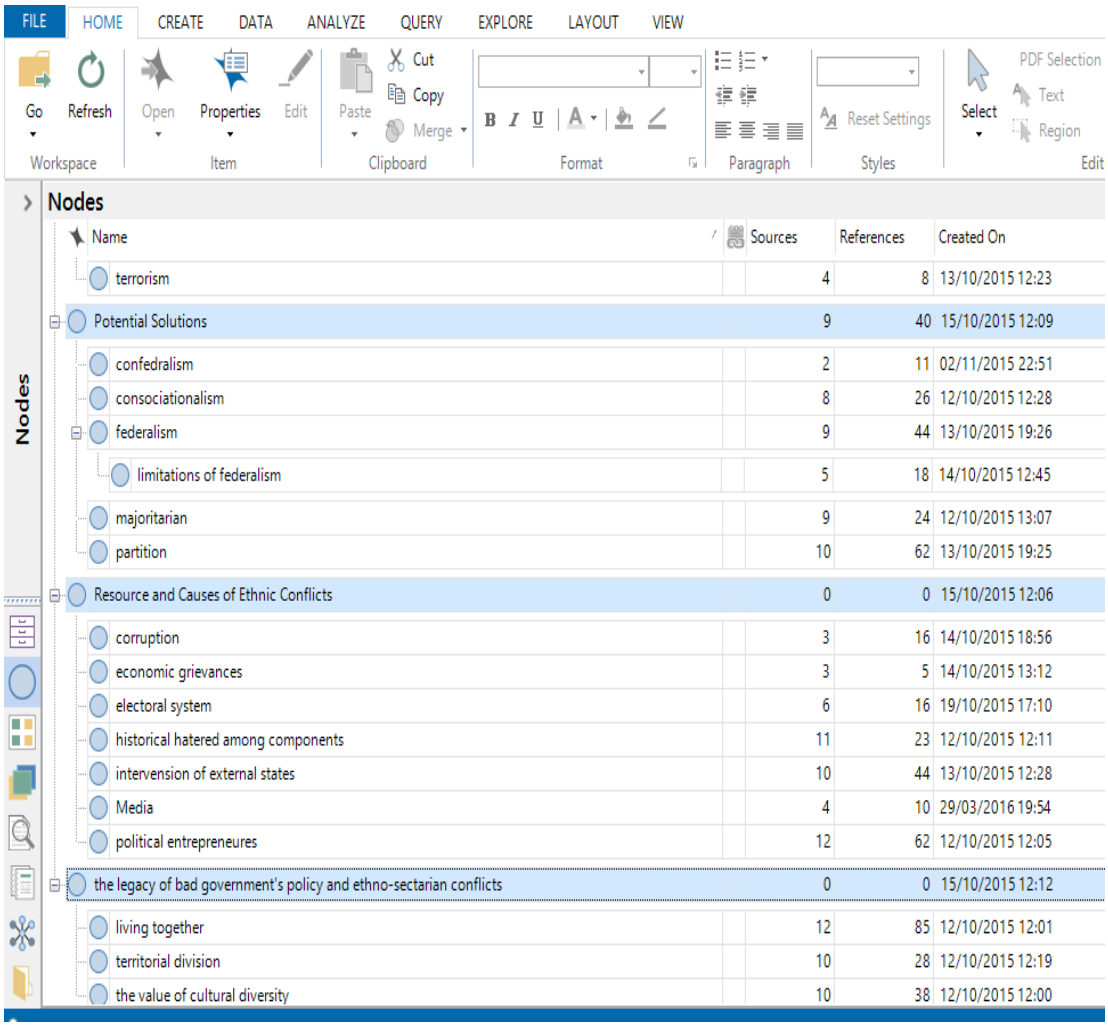


Figure 4.7: A picture of the data analysis process with Nvivo 10 program

By clicking any of the nodes (themes) in the NVivo 10 program, the entire related contents appear, which facilitates the discussion process. It is important to mention that the data analysis process is not terminated by the identification of generated themes; the transcripts and the notes are constantly revisited for further analysis and interpretation.

4.7 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presented the methods applied to carry out this study. Through grounded theory approach, both data collection techniques of focus groups and interviews are employed as appropriate qualitative method to collect data about participants' perspectives toward ethno-sectarian conflicts and the challenges of resolutions in deeply divided society. Overall, it seems that participants reacted well to the agendas of focus groups and interviews process. These techniques would serve to generate a reach investigation related to the research questions and objectives.

The methodological approach of grounded theory that employed for data analysis procedure, which can be considered appropriate to illustrate theory from the data. The way these data were translated analytically manner is an important part of the methodology of the study. Through inductive coding process, four steps were taken to illustrate the themes and subthemes, basically depending on integrating categories. This is likely to produce a systematic representation of the participant's experience and understanding of the phenomenon. In doing this, the research questions were taken into consideration and how best they would be answered. The results obtained within this procedure are discussed and compared with previous findings in the following chapters.

However, the methodology used in this study is by no means definitive, and many alternative approaches could have been used, and may be more appropriate in new circumstances. Qualitative data collection has its own difficulties and limitations in areas subject to ethnic conflict, which needs to be practically considered. For instance, the difficulties of recruiting participants for focus group interviews could result in unbalancing participants' cultural backgrounds, thus we used individual interviews to

avoid this problem. Furthermore, in order to obtain reliable information, both homogeneity and heterogeneity of participants in terms of cultural background should be considered in conducting focus groups. Heterogeneous focus groups are significant to identify interactions and obtain a clear picture about the problem, while homogeneous focus groups are important to provide a convenient environment for full and frank disclosures of rich data.

5 IDENTITY AND THE CHALLENGES OF ETHNIC CONFLICT REGULATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Analysis and discussion of the data forms the main part of the current research. This chapter and the next are devoted to presenting and discussing the findings. This chapter presents the themes related to identity and ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq. Some contributions are made to knowledge, and a number of findings made could be considered significant towards understanding the causes of ethnic conflicts, and the impact of long-lasting ethno-sectarian conflicts on societies. In a deeply divided society, the political system should answer the groups' aspirations for cultural recognition. This chapter discusses how government violation of federalism and power sharing principles contributed to increasing groups' concern about the new Iraqi political system. The policies of nation-building derived from ethno-sectarian characteristics motivate the invigoration of the primordial identities of ethnic groups rather than national integration.

It is found that violent conflicts resulted in creating a map in the ground between groups even in societies wherein groups were not inherently concentrated in their own territories traditionally. In a deeply divided society such as Iraq, this presents a conspicuous understanding of the issue that could be taken into account toward ethnic conflict regulation. Thus, the cessation of current ethno-sectarian violence does not remove the potentiality of conflict reoccurrence unless there is a formal settlement of territorial disputes.

According to the themes identified in the data analysis procedure, themes were arranged into subthemes under which major issues in the research questions were identified and addressed. In this chapter, except explanation to the way of presenting and analysing of data, five of the major themes are discussed. Thus, sections 5.3-5.7 explore each theme: The sources and causes of ethno-sectarian conflicts; the challenges of national identity and impacts on disintegration; new Iraqi governance government's policies toward ethnic diversity; forms of government in a deeply divided society; and the legacy of bad government policy and ethno-sectarian conflicts.

5.2 THE WAY TO PRESENT THE RESULTS AND PARTICIPANTS' CHARACTERISTICS

Collecting vital data from people in Iraq as a case study is significant to understand what different people's perceptions are about the problems and how they think in terms of reasons and solutions. Analysis is based on qualitative data from focus groups and one-to-one interviews with 112 participants.

A total of 94 participants from different cultural backgrounds took part in the twelve focus groups with different categories. The first seven focus groups were mixed groups but the second five were devoted to each specific cultural group of concern. Except for the focus groups of politicians, two focus groups each were held for local residents, IPDs and experts, and five for students.

As shown in Table 5.1, the focus groups' participants comprised 77 male and 17 female, aged 18 to 46 years and over. The ethnic composition was as follows (by ethnic-religious identity): 28 Kurds, 30 Arabs, 18 Assyrians, 16 Turkmens and 2 Shabaks; 48 Sunnis, 20 Shias, 18 Christians and 8 other religious minorities such as Yazidis and Kakayis.

Table 5.1: Focus groups participants by cultural background (n=94)

Characteristics	Participants												Total
	FG1	FG2	FG3	FG4	FG5	FG6	FG7	FG 8	FG 9	FG10	FG11	FG 12	
Ethnic													
Kurdish	3	2	3	2	3	4	2	9					**28**
Arabic	3	2	2	3	1	3	2		7	7			**30**
Turkmen	1	2	2	2	1	1	1				6		**16**
Assyrian	1	2	1	1	1	1	2					9	**18**
Shabak			1	1									**2**
Religion													
Shia Muslim	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	7		1		**20**
Sunni Muslim	4	4	4	4	4	5	3	8		7	5		**48**
Christian	1	2	1	1	1	1	2					9	**18**
Others	1	1	2	2		1	1						**8**
Gender													
Male	6	6	8	4	5	9	7	8	7	7	3	7	**77**
Female	2	2	1	5	1			1			3	2	**17**
Age													
18-25	1	2	3	2				2	2	1	3	3	**19**
26-35	2	4	1	4	2	2	2	6	4	4	2	5	**38**
36-45	2	2	1	2	3	4	2	1	1	2	1	1	**22**
46-over	3		4	1	1	3	3						**15**

As explained in Table 5.2, five categories participated, including local residents (n=16), IDPs (n=18), experts (n=15), politicians (n=7) and students (n=38). This is likely to participate different people and obtain reliable data in the way the shares of the same categories, and differences between them, enable the reliability of the overall results.

Table 5.2: Focus group participants by category (n=94)

Categories	Participants												Total
	FG1	FG2	FG3	FG4	FG5	FG6	FG7	FG 8	FG 9	FG10	FG11	FG 12	
Local residents	8	8											**16**
IDPs			9	9									**18**
Experts					6	9							**15**
Politicians							7						**7**
Students								9	7	7	6	9	**38**

Conversely, 18 interviews were conducted with 18 Iraqi politicians and experts. As presented in the Table 5.3, in recruiting interviewees, diversity also in terms of cultural

backgrounds and different political parties was taken into account. 7 of the interviewees are Arabs, 5 are Kurds, 2 are Turkmens, and 4 are Assyrians. Of these, 3 are Shias, 9 are Sunnis, 4 are Christians and 2 are of other religions such as Kakayi.

Table 5.3: cultural backgrounds of interviewees

Characteristics	Interviewees																	Total
	IR1	IR2	IR3	IR4	IR5	IR6	IR7	IR8	IR9	IR10	IR11	IR12	IR13	IR14	IR15	IR16	IR17	IR18	
Ethnic																			
Kurdish	*						*				*	*		*					5
Arabic		*	*			*				*					*		*	*	7
Turkmen				*				*											2
Assyrian					*				*				*			*			4
Religion																			
Shias						*				*								*	3
Sunnis		*	*	*				*			*	*		*	*		*		9
Christian					*				*				*			*			4
Others	*						*												2
Category																			
Politicians		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*			*		*	13
Experts	*									*				*	*		*		5

In terms of categories, 13 interviews were held with politicians, 7 of whom are MPs in the Iraq or Kurdistan parliaments, 2 of whom were former Iraqi ministers, 2 of whom are working in their political parties, 1 of them is the president of political party, and 1 is Chancellor in the Kurdistan Presidency. Meanwhile, 5 interviews were held with Iraqi experts specialised in the case of Iraq (see appendix 4).

As presented in chapter four (section 4.6), through the framework of grounded theory, the inductive approach was employed to identify main themes and subthemes, to uncover the important categories that emerged from participant discussions to obtain the results to response the original research questions. Thus, based on the results of the data analysis procedure, six overarching themes have been identifying including the 25 subthemes classified, which served to identify the challenges that deeply divided

society encountered and the way to address them, as presented in Table 5.4. These are employed in the following sections in this chapter and chapter six, starting with a theme and using subthemes to analyse and discuss the findings with necessary quotations from the data to support arguments.

For that, focus groups and participants are represented by codes with numbers applied to identify focus group categories, while letters conceal respondents' identity for the purpose of confidentiality. For instance, the code (FG1A) means participant (A) in the focus group of mixed-local residents. In the same vein, interviews and interviewees are represented with letter-number codes, such as IR1, IR2 (see appendix 4).

Table 5.4: Final shaped themes and subthemes

N	Themes	Subthemes
1	**The sources and causes of ethno-sectarian conflicts**	Foreign interventions Historical hatred among components Economic grievances Political entrepreneurs Corruption
2	**The challenges of national identity**	Primordial identity versus Iraqi identity Identity politics The effects of political parties and elections on disintegration The effects of media
3	**New Iraqi governance and government's policy toward ethnic diversity**	Enhancing militia and terrorist groups Violent on democratic principles Monopoly of power Imposed sectarian identity
4	**The legacy of bad government policy and ethno-sectarian conflicts**	Military division Social cleavage and fragmentation Ethno-sectarian violence creates territorial divisions The possibility of living together
5	**Forms of government in a deeply divided society**	Power sharing Majoritarian government
6	**Resolution for Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflicts**	Separation versus integration model Federalism Partition Confederalism Centralism

5.3 THE SOURCES AND CAUSES OF ETHNO-SECTARIAN CONFLICTS

The results of the study show that there is a remarkable acceptance among Iraqi people of the concept of ethnic diversity, which they do not view as intrinsically problematic, however they unanimously affirm that cultural diversity in Iraq has not been fostered in a way that develops society; rather it has led to ethno-sectarian conflicts. Government policies and politicisation rather than individual people or ethnic groups are consciously blamed for escalating conflicts. As FG1A mentioned, 'cultural diversity positively reflects on society if it is invested properly and reflected in

governance systems'. Nevertheless, the government's policy toward cultural groups remains the most severe challenge facing Iraqi society.

In this sense, the different forms of political system and governance model are significant for managing ethnic diversity and protecting society from ethno-sectarian conflicts. In a deeply divided society, political systems should answer the groups' aspirations for cultural recognition. More inclusive political systems (e.g. genuine proportional representation) can help avoid ethnic conflicts more than exclusive governance frameworks (Reynal-Querol, 2005:446). However, since its formation in the 1920s Iraq has never been able to accommodate an inclusive political system that satisfied all components (with Kurds being particularly marginalised), and stability has not been accomplished. Although a system with nominal power sharing was effected in 2005 under the auspices of the US, it has not overcome the problems because it did not create a genuinely fair system of representation and governance among different communities, rather the Shia community accrued the whip hand in the Iraqi state while the Kurds began moving tentatively towards regional autonomy, while the Sunnis were left with little political incentive in the system (Abu Ltaif, 2015).

Clearly numerous complex factors have entrenched ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq, of which political representation is just one. Even though participants discussed historical hatred among components, the role of political entrepreneurs, the effects of foreign interventions, media, primordialism, and poverty, political influence was singled out as the root cause directly correlated with most other aspects of the problems facing Iraq. Our results show that economic grievances and inequality are not considered as the root causes of ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq, unlike previous studies (Collier and Hoeffler, 1999; Elbadawi, 1999; Collier *et al.*, 2003); Iraqi ethnic conflicts are mostly related to political variables such as state weaknesses, the security

dilemma and political entrepreneurs, thus the results are likely to support the advocators of political variables as casual dimensions of conflicts (Sambanis, 2001; Dodge, 2007b; Østby, 2008).

Furthermore, our results differ from studies that connected current ethno-sectarian conflicts to historical dimensions (Bengio, 2008; Kirmanj, 2013; Hashim, 2016). National risks of countries that have had ethnic civil war are much greater than risks faced by nations with non-historical conflicts (Collier, 2006:6). Despite latent conflicts in terms of ethnic group versus government, there was no violent conflict experienced among groups and components were living together in many Iraqi cities in peaceful coexistence prior to the 2003 invasion. This might be related to the suppression policy of the Ba'athist regime; highly repressive societies often fail to trigger civil war (Collier *et al.*, 2003:89). In other words, repression based on imbalance of power between deprived ethno-sectarian groups and the oppressive state survived Ba'athist regime for over three decades (Saleh, 2013:168). Even though sectarianism is not a modern phenomenon and the Sunni-Shia schism has a long pedigree in the broader Middle East region as well as Iraq itself, intense conflict of the kind seen since 2003 has not existed (Hashim, 2016). Apologists for the post-2003 chaos have claimed that latent sectarian conflicts before 2003 were only restrained by the rigid and violent Ba'athist rule (Bengio, 2008). This perspective was adopted by some expert respondents, but the historical dimension as ancient hatreds was not considered a major motivator of ethno-sectarian conflicts by the majority, who cited that there were good relations and intermarriages between communities.

Regardless of the latent potential for sectarian conflict in Iraq prior to 2003, the US-led intervention was indisputably the catalyst for the wave of interethnic-sectarian conflicts since the overthrow of the Ba'athist regime. Although, international

community have intervened in many contemporary cases of civil war to stop violent and supporting democratic governments (Sisk, 2002:87), intervention *per se* being a gate to escalate civil war in Iraq. The climate of chaos and insecurity that emerged due to the invasion and collapse of regime led to conflicts rather than coalition forces pushing conflicts *per se*. Having demolished the Iraqi security forces during the invasion, the US-administered occupation did not have sufficient troops to control the situation, thus chaos and insecurity developed (Dodge, 2005:5; Diamond, 2005:14). Sudden structural changes in political systems commonly lead to ethnic conflicts in multicultural societies (Kaufmann, 1996; Lake and Rothchild, 1996a, 1996b; Blagojevic, 2009), and participants seemed conscious and apprehensive about this possibility.

The collapse of the political regime and its central security apparatus gave occasion for each community to revert to primordial identities in their interactions, in order to seek personal and material security from their informal (ethnic) networks (Ahmed, 1995:8; Dodge, 2007b:26). As well as being the inherent motivators for this process, political entrepreneurs are ready and willing to evoke emotions of fear and hate among groups to bolster their own political support, based on historically rooted ethnic identities and perceived grievances, whereby emotions are employed as vehicles of ethnic conflicts for political (opportunistic) purposes (Blagojevic, 2009:7). The result was the solidification of ethno-sectarian division and conflicts, most egregiously between Shia and Sunni Arabs, with Kurds remaining confined to the KRI. Consequently, fragmentation has progressively increased in society along ethno-sectarian lines.

In this regard, it can be considered that the security dilemma has a strong explanatory power for the onset of ethnic conflict rather than historical hatred among components.

Although there are ancient doctrinal disputes between Shia and Sunni Muslims, and relatively recent conflicts between Arabs and Kurds, there was no sectarian civil war among the communities in the recent history of Iraq.

> ‘There were historical problems between communities, the conflicting perspectives between Shia and Sunni have existed in our books but these problems have not come to social levels to street’. FG10G

However, the role of sectarian political parties and their leaders manifestly evoked emotions of hate and fear among all groups to bolster their own political power, creating a self-fulfilling prophesy that security was to be found only in primordial identity, while state institutions were too weak to contain the politicisation of public life and the mobilization of different groups. The core aspect of ethnic conflicts as confirmed by participants is the role of opportunistic political leaders and their political parties’ negative role, which is largely ignored in mainstream analyses of Iraqi ethnic conflict. Most respondents emphasized that political parties and their leaders occupied the biggest portion of feeding ethnic conflict rather than other factors such as historical grievances or uneven distribution of resources.

The new democratic environment facilitated political parties and their leaders to employ ethnic and sectarian grievances to influence people rather than national political socialization, mainly due to expediency; in the post-2003 grab for power and resources, hastily formed or revamped political parties had nothing in their ideological arsenal except a base appeal by sectarian rhetoric, whipping up people’s passions and historical grievances that they encountered because of other groups in power. People who refused to be swept along by this jingoism were labelled as traitors to their ethnic belonging. These demagogues sought to wield political power for its own sake and for

material benefits associated with widespread embezzlement and corruption, which was also a motivation for supporters of such parties (e.g. career appointments are understood to be affected by political affiliation).

> ‘Politicians came to Iraq, they did not have partisans in society, they employed sectarian tools to mobilize people and make them follow their rhetoric’. FG9B

> ‘I was a member of one of Islamic party, they have played a vital role in reviving conflict, they are working to exploit individual from children stages to learn these problems and hate each other’. FG5B

Nonetheless, despite widespread public professions that political parties and politicians are divisive, they remain very effective in steering ‘their’ communities. Despite the complaints presented by participants against political parties, the majority of them did not deny that people from all communities followed ethno-sectarian agendas designated by political parties and their leaders. While most participants reported that people are exploited by politicians, they did not denied that they themselves voted on the basis of their group/political (ethnic) party interests. The partial explanation for this may be that every domain in the society and most economic resources and employment are controlled by them, as FG3A reported: ‘if you do not join one of the political parties you cannot live’; however, this can be read as an expression of the people’s will to support their ethnic groups and consequently the division of Iraqi society, albeit under a form of economic compulsion.

Indeed, the source of political manipulation is connected to the weaknesses of Iraqi institutions which support strengthened ethno-sectarian leaders over institutions. IG is not seen as the national institution for all. Except Shias, the vast majority of

respondents believe IG is not playing its role in protecting minorities' rights, but rather it incites sedition among groups. Whereas the government should work for all equally, it is perceived that its policies serve the dominant (Arab Shia) group.

> 'Because governments have established on the basis of sectarianism, they try to collect people by sectarian symbols rather than national symbols'. FG7C

Crawford (1998) identified the weakness of state institutions as fertile ground for political entrepreneurs to obtain their aims. Although 14 years of new Iraqi rule have passed, national institutions have not developed to provide its basic functions. Corruption, exponential growth in insecurity and the weakness of state institutions create a breeding ground for political entrepreneurs to obtain their illegal interests, constantly fuelling tensions and chaos, and a growing body of evidence directly links insecurity with corruption (Le Billon, 2003; Ewetan and Ese, 2014). Therefore, the issue of ethno-sectarian conflicts has been exacerbated by corruption and small group interests create a web of corrupters.[26] Experience has shown the reality that Iraqi elites do not favour long-term institutional arrangements and are more comfortable with personal politics, patronage and nepotism (Al-Qarawee, 2014:20). The most senior government figures and politicians are generally acknowledged to engage in corruption (Dodge and Wasser, 2014:22). According to an Iraqi lawmaker, Adel Nouri, during the period of Nouri al-Maliki's rule (2006-2014),[27] almost $360 billion of Iraqi budgetary resources went 'missing', and the majority of this amount was taken

[26] A Sunni MP, Misha'an al-Juburi, declared in a TV interview that all Iraqi politicians are thieves. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1Zr4HtGSFA [17/12/2016].
[27] Nouri al-Maliki was the first Prime Minister to be elected under the Iraqi Constitution ratified in the autumn of 2005. He got power in 2006 and then re-elected as Prime Minister in 2010-2014.

out of the country (Rudaw, 2016). The implication is that nearly half of the Iraqi budget during this period was embezzled.

> ‘There are people who patronize the permanence of these conflicts, and perhaps they are beneficiaries of that… fuelling ethno-sectarian conflicts is the best way to guarantee they can continue their corruption’. IR17

> ‘Shia political parties serve their political parties’ interests rather than Shia people; they work for their pockets’. FG7E

> ‘Our Kurdish leaders have engaged in corruption, they stole the majority of the Kurdistan budget’. FG8G

Indeed, Iraq is known as one of the most corrupt places in the world, being the fifth-worst country in this regard after Somalia, North Korea, Sudan, Afghanistan and South Sudan in 2014, although it fell to eleventh by 2016 (Transparency International, 2014, 2016).

Studies have found that there is a positive relationship between ethnic/religious fractionalization or polarization and corruption (Mauro, 1995; Dincer, 2008), therefore there is an implicit link between ethno-sectarian conflicts and corruption in Iraq, as confirmed by previous studies (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Collier, 2006). Sectarianism and nationalism are employed by political parties to gather supporters, and greed (self-interest) has partially contributed to current ethnic conflicts in Iraq, which is considered difficult to be redressed in normal ways such as implementing justice (Collier and Sambanis, 2002; Zartman, 2004). The fundamental problem is that political leaders personally benefit from ethnic conflict and they do not stand to benefit from peace.

However, ethnic conflict in Iraq is not wholly indigenous, and numerous regional and international interests have a hand in the situation, directly giving diplomatic and material support to ethnic political parties in many cases. Participants articulated the widely held belief that Iraq is essentially prevented from developing due to the competing interests of the USA, Israel, Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, who attempt to divide the Iraqi people and control them (and Iraq's resources). In the previous political systems, political parties and any form of political groups were excluded. Thus, the political parties and their leaders were forced to be active outside, and the majority of them basically were emerged in exile; returning to Iraq after 2003, they were dispatched and indebted to their former host countries (Marr, 2007:44). Many participants did not blame local politicians themselves, but the foreign powers and interests who support them:

> 'The majority of political parties' personnel now come from Syria, Iran and Europe, they are governing Iraq now. This generation was not from Iraq… even in electoral process these political parties were supported by outside in order to control the decision makers in Iraq'. IR4

> 'Politicians from political parties have destroyed Iraq. They came from abroad, they came to steal our oil and fruits, because Iraq is a rich country'. FG3D

> 'Political parties have followed a foreign agenda rather than caring about Iraq, this is why they are doing their best to incite conflict'. IR10

The external intervention has been escalated after last events of ISIS phenomenon to the extent many new militia groups emerged that directly support by neighbouring

states (ICG, 2015). There is no regional and/or international consensus, then external divided interventions would translate into proxy wars exploiting Iraqi divisions.

> ‘Currently, Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia run Iraq, not the Iraqi government’. FG12I

Nonetheless, based on the preceding discussion, the main negative role is that of local political leaders, followed by their foreign patrons, which is the opposite of results obtained from a survey conducted by several news agencies (ABC News, USA Today, BBC and ARD) in 2007, which found that the majority of respondents reported that external factors (e.g. US/coalition forces, the US administration and Iran) were responsible for about 43% of violence in Iraq, with local political leaders being viewed as responsible for only 13% of violence (Cordesman, 2007:26).

Therefore, it is not reliable to determine a single factor to explain the reason behind ethno-sectarian conflicts in the specific state, but times and stages should be considered. For instance, it is reasonable to consider the security dilemma as a principal factor in the erupting ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq in the immediate years following the 2003 intervention, but the same factor may not explain the phenomenon in 2014. Thus, it can be said that several reasons contribute to ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq, with varying degrees of influence at different stages, which can explain some of the problems. However, the main constant factor considered to foment and prolong ethnic conflict is manipulation by political entrepreneurs.

5.4 THE CHALLENGES OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND IMPACTS ON DISINTEGRATION

5.4.1 Primordial identity versus Iraqi identity

The formation of national identity is important to unify people and create an inclusive society. Although people may have different cultural identities, their national identity is considered an umbrella for all. Respondents explained that in Iraq there are no principles of citizenship and sovereignty of law, and society is divided according to sectarianism and ethnicity, with sectarianism becoming more conspicuous. Participants described that the primordial features such as ethnic symbols, ethnic history and the myths of specific groups play an essential role. In this regard, it can be said that historical government's policy of centralism for nation building could not exceed primordialism in Iraqi society, and could not uproot Iraqis from their primordial identities. Wimmer (2003) stated that despite existing for 83 years prior to 2003, the invasion and consequent security dilemma made political groups quickly divide according to communal solidarities due to (1) absence of strong networks of civil society organizations, and (2) and the weakness of state to enforce equality before the law, democratic participation, protection of violence, and access to services for all the citizens.

The presence of primordialism in multicultural societies is vulnerable to ethnic conflicts (Crawford, 1998) due to ethno-sectarian affiliations having the potential to be expressed in conflict. Fearon and Laitin (1996:716) observed that ethnic factions generally prefer to fight to address their disputes, particularly when the state is perceived to be weak, while nation states generally wish to avoid armed conflict. However, primordial approach explains that ethnic identities are natural and unchangeable aspects of 'human nature' which exert a powerful influence on action

(Dixon, 2011:311). Primordial approach suggests that Iraqi society inherently comprises three communities, with a weak sense of national identity, and because these communities have no willingness to integrate, division can be a solution (Biden and Gelb 2006; Galbraith 2006; Joseph and O'Hanlon, 2007; Kirmanj, 2013).

Nonetheless, Visser (2008) rejected this notion of inherent and historical ethno-sectarian divisions in Iraq, and Dodge (2007b:24-26) thought that primordial approach is not sufficient to explain the problem. The state capacity to interact with and control its population is crucial to prevent the emergence of sectarian identity, thus the collapse of state's institutional capacity in 2003 led to loss of national authority but also of the central focus for identity formation.

It can be argued that primordalism itself does not automatically lead to ethno-sectarian conflicts if there is a viable developed national identity or a form of dual identity (e.g. British-Scottish). Ethnically divided societies of the West have generally avoided conflicts due to the overarching appeal of national identity. For example, despite ethnic differences in Switzerland, including different linguistic groups, a survey showed that about half of all respondents identified themselves as primarily 'Swiss', and in France only twenty-five percent of French Basques called themselves 'Basques' as opposed to 'French' (Horowitz, 1990). The problem in Iraq is that ethno-sectarian identity is stronger than national identity, with people identifying themselves primarily as (Arab) Sunni, (Arab) Shia, Kurds, Assyrians and Turkmen, or as Iraqi-Kurd and Iraqi-Turkmen, and not as 'Iraqi' *per se*.

Many scholars have argued national identity failed to congeal from its formation in the 1920s (Lukitz, 1995; Bengio, 2008; Hashim, 2016), but the results show that people of all Iraqi backgrounds have some concept of national identity. Respondents,

especially Arabs and Christians, emotionally professed their loyalty to Iraq as a state, while Kurds had the least loyalty to Iraq as a country.

> ‘I have loyalty to Iraq in terms of emotion, history and blood relations, but Iraqi leaders have failed to inspire confidence for us as civilians’. FG5A

Kurdish respondents reported that the country had never encouraged them to feel solidarity, and they had encountered repression and genocide just because they are not Arab. They described the long campaign of assimilation conducted against them in order to suppress their cultural identity and accept an Arab one (e.g. the forced adoption of Arabic language and culture in educational curriculums). Conversely, among others there were a widely held belief in the desirability of Iraq remaining as a state, and this belief is perhaps the most common feeling of an Iraqi identity, although Kurds would prefer greater autonomy within such a framework. Regardless of the severity of the on-going conflicts between them, both Arab Shias and Sunnis commonly attempted to accuse external powers of creating and exacerbating conflicts rather than accepting any blame for their own communities.

On the other hand, when asked ‘do you have loyalty to Iraqi identity?’ the majority of respondents (except Kurds) replied positively, but obviously this does not extend beyond a hypothetical position, as no groups are prepared to materially disavow their ethnic interests for the sake of national interests. This was noted when respondents presented their opinions on the way in which they serve their communities; Shias focused on majoritarian and centralism issues due to this giving them control over state power, while Kurds seek more decentralisation because it gives them a chance for independence.

As Franzén (2011) concluded, during the long and arduous history of Iraqi nationalisms and different attempts by different regimes, a tenuous Iraqi identity was formed, although continuously undermined and challenged by political actors with different agendas. Due to the nationalising efforts depending on Arabism, national identity developed among Arabs more than others (Stansfield, 2004; Visser, 2007). This was also confirmed by our data, which revealed that both Arab Shias and Sunnis have a sense of identifying themselves as 'Iraqi' while Kurds are more likely to identify themselves in terms of being 'Kurdish' and 'Kurdistan'. However, while the sense of Iraqi identity was stronger among Shias in the past (Bengio, 2008:66), an additional caveat is that Shias have a simultaneous affiliation with Iran. Conversely, Arabism were more common among Arab Sunnis, who have witnessed a sort of 'Sunnification' in the aftermath of Sunni uprisings during the period 2012-2013, when they began to vocally proclaim their sectarian community and symbols; while this is obviously contemporaneous and associated with the rise of ISIS, the upsurge of Sunni ethnic sentiment and the egregious terrorism and militias associated with it are not interchangeable (Al-Qawaree, 2013; O'Driscoll, 2016).

It can be concluded that an abstract Iraqi identity exists, but it is divorced from the behaviour of the Iraqis themselves, who are – by choice or compulsion – conditioned to be motivated by sectarian interests, as expressed in political affiliations. The lack of a practical national identity bolstered by the existence of viable, representative state institutions, means that ethnic factions are prone to violent conflict. A comparative example is illustrative in this regard. During the 2011 Arab Spring manifestation in Egypt, which led to a brief but significant change in Egypt's political system, there was no ethno-sectarian component due to the fanatical nationalism of Egyptians, while

in Iraq people remain anchored to their primordial group identities, which have been continually strengthened since 2003.

5.4.2 Identity politics

The new Iraqi governance that was expected to address the issue of national identity made the communities to revert to pure primordial identities. With the 2005 Constitution there was a significant opportunity for IG to implement a foundation for genuine national citizenship and building national identity rather than ethnicity, but they did not. There are lessons from countries such as Germany and Canada that gave up ethnic nationalism and implemented civic characteristics (Breton, 1996), but in Iraq, even though the political regimes had changed, the policy of ethnic nationalism persisted. The new Iraq was supposed to implement a liberal policy of multiculturalism, which rejects a possession of single group of state (Kymlicka, 2007a), but efforts have made to entrench Shia interests in the Iraqi state apparatus.

> ‘Loyalty is built based on some principles such as equality, justice, citizenship, participation in political process, and feeling membership in society but these principles are still absent in Iraq’. FG5E

According to the majority of scholars of nationalism, all countries eventually attempted to create a nation. States follow different strategies to unify peoples, but Iraqi policy failed in this process (Hashim, 2016:44). In its attempts to build a nation, instead of civil characteristics, Iraq came to depend on ethnic nationalism, in which the ethnic characteristics of a particular Arabism were forced on people (Wimmer, 2003; Bengio, 2008; Fattah and Caso, 2009; Kirmanj, 2013). The process of imposed primordial attachment of a dominated group is seen as a risk by others to lose their autonomy (Geertz, 1996:41). Nonetheless, through historical investigation, except for

some token efforts, it cannot be found that 'Iraqi' nationalism aimed building an Iraqi nation was always based on the ethnic characteristics of Arabism. Conversely, when other groups realised that government imposed specific ethnic characteristics on them, they would be more committed to their primordial identity as a reaction, thus one can clearly distinguish between the two ethnic nationalisms of Arabic and Kurdish primordialism in Iraqi history.

> 'Iraqi governments attempted to control the society and assimilate group identities into Arab identity; Kurds fight Iraqi policy and through nationalist movements attempted to invigorate Kurdish identity'. IR7

Furthermore, respondents confirmed that new Iraq in its policy of nation-building has implemented irrational methods depending on forced assimilation and ethnic cleansing rather than integration and accepting cultural differences. While integration policy has the more modest object of creating a common civic, national or patriotic identity, assimilation policy attempts to create a common ethnic identity through the merging of differences either into one already established identity, such as French identity, or into a new one, as occurred in the former Soviet Union (McGarry and O'Leary, 1993:17). Generally, assimilation depends on eliminating and denying differences, while integration attempts to reduce differences through civic characteristics (Gilbert, 2008:171). Equal opportunities and antidiscrimination policies are two essential characteristics of national integration and solidarity (Wrench, 2007).

However, assimilation policy may work in some cases if the dominant identity could provide civil features and peaceful methods, such as education process and equality, as applied in France, but in Iraq it depended on force. A policy of discrimination has always been implemented against Kurds and other minorities in all political and

economic levels, and there has always been a dominant group that controlled power and forced its identity on other communities in Iraq. In this regard, the regime change in 2003 simply replaced the Sunni Arab elite with a Shia Arab elite, with no tangible benefit for the Kurds and other minorities, and exclusive policies with the imposition of ethno-sectarian identity persist. In this impasse, assimilation could not solve the issue of identity in a deeply divided society because other communities would realise that their identities were at risk and act to defend them accordingly. As McGarry and O'Leary (1993:19) state, 'Assimilation in contested homelands, however high-minded, cannot work'. If we accept Smith's (1986; 1998; 2009) ethno-symbolism approach for identity, modern mechanism cannot uproot ethnic groups from their origin, histories, shared ancestry myths, and sense of solidarity.

The process of integration is not possible without the incentive of civic characteristics. The results confirm that identity politics still operate along sectarian lines, with the Shia 'national' government privileging itself, with a corresponding reaction of more primordialism on the part of non-Shia groups. Sunni and Kurdish respondents confirmed that a sort of cultural ethnic cleansing has been implemented in the new Iraq, particularly in terms of the suppression of Arab Sunni under Shia rule.

> 'Shia powers have selected some Sunni areas as strategic areas to do ethnic cleansing. They attempted to change the demography of the Sunni cities that are close to the Iranian border such as Diyala. Baghdad is already surrounded by Sunnis, but currently Shias attempt to secure Baghdad by changing the demography from a Sunni to Shia population, and they want to extend the Shia population to reach to Samara in order to tie the holy Shia Al-Askary Mosque with Baghdad'. IR14

> ‘Shias in order to guarantee their rules implemented the policy of changing demography of the mixed cities even Sunni cites. The demographic changes in four Sunni cities (Diyala, Salah ad-Din, Anbar and Babil) are evidence of the reality that government is pursuing the elimination of Sunnis [in those cities]’. IR3

In this regard, millions of Arab Sunnis fled from Baghdad and other cities in southern Iraq to settle in the KRI, or they migrated outside. Evidence from international organisations amply demonstrates that Sunni residents in these cities have been abused by militias allied with the Iraqi security forces. Shia militias have used brutal attacks such as killing, kidnapping and arson to force them to leave their homes (Human Rights Watch, 2015, 2016; Amnesty International, 2017). It seems that Shia militias have attempted to exploit the situation to extend their hegemony over Sunni areas and change the demography of traditionally Sunni territories.

As mentioned previously, assimilation and demographic changes were applied against Kurds and other ethnic minorities but not against Shias as a sect under the Ba’ath regime.[28] Indeed, throughout Iraqi history, sectarian affiliation was not a major concern among Iraqi people, and people of all minorities could easily find representation in government (Visser, 2007:821). As discussed in chapter three, the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) strengthened hatred between the Shia and Sunni communities, but the Kurds were the main internal victims (and the ‘enemy within’) for the regime. Before that (from the 1920s to the 1980s) the Arabs were the privileged national ethnicity (like Turks in Turkey), and whether they were Sunni or Shia was

[28] This may reflect the predominantly secular and pan-Arab orientation of the Ba’athist Party (the neighbouring Ba’athist regime in Syria is dominated by people who happen to be Alawites, Shias and to a lesser extent Druz and Christians, but sectarianism has not been a noted feature of the Ba’ath movement).

basically irrelevant due to the limited role of religion in governance; it was the Kurds who were oppressed because of their ethnicity. The Iran-Iraq War politicised sectarianism to a great extent, thus Sunnism became an important element of Iraqi Ba'athism.

However, there is a universal understanding in the new Iraq that the Shia dominates the politics of the central state, with Iranian support. Whereas Arab Sunnis as well as minorities such as Assyrians are at the mercy of the Shia government throughout Iraq unless they can find refuge under the auspices of the KRG, the Turkmen and Kurdish Shias are encouraged to enhance Shia doctrine. There is abundant video evidence of Shia militias characterising all Arab Sunnis as terrorists and calling for them to be killed.[29] It seems that the government has a strategic policy to weaken Sunni influence in Iraq demographically by cleansing Sunnis, and excluding them from the political process. Kurdish participants expressed concern that if the current Iraqi status quo continues, they will inevitably face similar discriminatory policies targeted against Kurds: 'if Shia would get a strong power, they will do the same thing against Kurds' IR1. These feelings of 'societal insecurity' are consistently contributing to on-going conflicts. When both Sunnis and Kurds felt their identities were targeted and threatened by the dominant Shia group, they acted to find different mechanisms to defend their identities. While most insecurity in all societies is due to the uneven distribution of wealth, this can often be manifest in a lack of societal cohesion along ethnic lines, which in the worst cases can take the form of suppression or civil war (Saleh, 2010).

[29] Hundreds video records can find online and in the Arabic TV channels that show the brutal violence conducted against Sunni people by Shia militias. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3d-XYz0EVi0 [20/12/2016].

Results show that military options have been employed in the new Iraq to thwart the legitimate demands of some groups, especially Sunnis. FG11F cited that 'in the al-Maliki period, the army was used to threaten other communities'. Additionally, many paramilitary militia groups were created to deal with Iraqi communities outside the official institutions, with rival Shia and Sunni militias supported by Iran and Saudi Arabia (among others), respectively (Dodge, 2013).

The hegemony of one group on the power in the multicultural societies is a problem even in federal systems (Hale, 2004), predisposing states to conflicts and fragmentation. The problem is not solely related to hegemony of one group but their policies to force their cultural identity and eliminate those of others. Ethno-sectarian policies are problematic and undermine possibilities of integration and the development of national identity. There are logical evidences that identity politics built on ascriptive criteria like ethnicity and religion are more likely to precipitate ethnic conflict (Crawford, 1998:5). Iraq in itself is an exemplar of this, where integration seems impossible and groups' affiliation to their primordial identities has resurged in the 21st century.

Therefore, in order to enhance integration, the country identity politics should give up ascriptive characteristics pertaining to specific groups and depend on institutional symbols such as federalism, constitutionalism, equality and anti-discrimination. Meanwhile, dual identity can be regarded as an inevitable solution whereby each group accepts its own sphere of influence and territorially (federalism) under a national umbrella (Iraq).

Although the assimilation policy in terms of education and bureaucracy is not explicit, in Sunni areas controlled by Shia military interests they were forced to change their

identities. Results confirm that Shia-led governments (including local governments) have specifically favoured Shia people in access to public sector employment. While under previous regimes there were a standard education system that enforced Arabic language and culture over other communities, in the new Iraq the education system does not even profess to attempt assimilating component groups into a central nationalist vision; Kurds and other community has its own schools in KRF and other disputed places that focus on their own languages and cultural features.

Indeed, it is difficult to evaluate which forms of education system could be regarded the best to deal with multiculturalism. Whereas, in former Iraqi case that a single identity has forced in education curriculum, disadvantage is found in terms of reaction and disintegration. However, in the former SFRY's education system, cultural diversity in the school curriculum was reinforced, rather than repressed in which it was praised internationally as one of the advanced models for multi-ethnic tolerance (Pupavac, 2006:11), yet the country disintegrated and collapsed. In post-conflict ethnofederal countries, each region can have its schools and education curriculum with the proviso that it enhances tolerance; however, in mixed cities integrated schools are advised. There is a lesson in Brčko in BH, where children go to integrated schools, and integration is manifest in many ways; consequently, the city more moderate than the rest of the country (Perry, 2009:43).

Basically, the issue of linguistic and cultural arguments in schools cannot be isolated from the opposing political interests. In places such as BH language is asserted by Bosniacs towards supporting a more centralised state, while language differences continue to be asserted by Serbs and Croats, supporting a decentralised state (Pupavac, 2012:190). In the same vein, in the KRI, Kurdish cultural and political rights are emphasised in schools, while Iraqiness and Arabic cultural and history are developed

in non-Kurdish/Iraqi schools. While under normal circumstances this might be celebrated in a multicultural society, with a shared educational system encouraging tolerance and recognising other communities, at the current juncture in Iraq this serves to prevent coexistence.

5.4.3 The effects of political parties and elections on disintegration

The absence of national political parties and coalitions is seen as a one of the core barriers to integration, motivating people to identify themselves with their ethnic, religious, clan and tribal groups. Respondents provide that there is no national political party in Iraq, and each works to serve a specific ethnic or sectarian community. Thus, one cannot find a political party that comprises members from all cultural communities. One characteristic of ethnic groups in Iraq is that they are politically relevant; each political party explicitly or implicitly claims that they represent a specific ethnic/sectarian group's cultural and material interests (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010:99), and there are very few efforts by political parties to even claim to represent a national interest that encompasses members from all Iraqi components. The problems here is not just related to locality of political parties but also their activities/rhetoric are profoundly supporting ethno-sectarian interests rather than national one. For instance, political parties' media channels were latterly being effective weapons that employed to instigate ethnic-sectarian tensions and localism.

> 'Media have distorted national identity, they make the Iraqi society divided on ethno-sectarian lines, through manipulating their audience, they motivated ethnic tensions'. IR15

Communication facilities such as TV channels and the internet have been deployed to politicise ethnic groups and to mobilise ethnic activities both in peaceful and violent

forms (Saleh, 2013:168). An interesting feature of Middle Eastern countries is that each political party has its TV channel and other media; while this would be considered embarrassing in most contexts for political parties in Europe, the ownership of newspapers and TV stations by political parties is normal in the Middle East. Media and its domains play a crucial role in strengthening and reproducing ethno-sectarian nationalist sentiment (Eriksen, 2002:105). They depict events subjectively, in a way that serves the groups' rhetoric. In addition, many of them were able to embrace military wings that fought as ethno-sectarian nationalist liberation movements against previous Iraqi previous regimes or sometimes in intra-group civil wars (e.g. the Kurdish civil war between the KDP and PUK in 1994-1998).

In other words, the political parties in Iraq are not established on the basis of different socio-economic and political ideologies, rather they represent *ad hoc* ethnic formations aiming to grab what they can according to primordial identities. Thus, people are not collected and mobilised on a common class and ideological basis, making integration and democracy intractably difficult (Horowitz, 1993:20). While there have been some efforts to create trans-ethnic parties, and the people are consciously aware of the desirability of such parties (as expressed unanimously by participants), they failed to subvert the primordial appeal of ethnic parties (i.e. the people could not transcend the jingoistic appeal and their material interest in remaining with their ethnic parties). Therefore, one of the most effective mechanisms that can contribute in unifying people and integration is absent.

> 'There are no political parties working for national identity in Iraq. All attempts to get power are to serve their [ethnic] groups'. IR9

> ‘There is no national political party and until this institution emerges, the common identity and integration will not occur in Iraq, simply because people cannot integrate through sectarian parties’. IR14

In addition to political parties, parliamentary blocks and coalitions are also partitioned on ethno-sectarian lines. For instance, there were coalitions of Shia forces and coalitions of Kurdish forces, but these rarely included other groups, thus such coalitions simply intensified the polarization of society at large. An independent Shia politician emphasised:

> ‘To address the Iraqi crisis and establish a citizenship-state, we need to cancel these coalitions and create new coalitions on a national basis, in which each coalition should include political forces from Shias, Kurds and Sunnis. If this happens, the forms of conflicts may change from ethno-sectarian to political competitions’. IR18

Elections and the electoral system could play a role in shaping the forms of ethno-sectarian parties. Scholars argued that different electoral systems could be tools of ethnic conflict management (Horowitz, 1985; Reilly, 2002; Caspersen, 2004). However, the electoral system in Iraq is seemingly not in favour of integration, while it has facilitated bold ethno-sectarian parties.

While the electoral process should motivate democracy and political contests, in primordial or divided societies it may lead to incentive ethno-sectarian affiliations and division without an appropriate electoral system. In such societies, politicians often have strong incentives to ‘play the ethnic card’ at election time, using communal appeals to mobilize voters (Reilly, 2002:156).

This was manifest in the escalation of ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq after the free elections conducted in January and December 2005 (UNHCR, 2005:14), which made it clear that the democratic process was sharpening communal identities, illustrating how voters had become polarized around ethno-sectarian identity (Marr, 2007). These elections signalled the partition of the electorate and Iraqi society into Shia, Sunni and Kurd, therefore elections in Iraq are regarded as a contributing factor in the intensification of ethnic conflict (O'Driscoll, 2014). Results underlined that in Iraqi elections people vote on the basis of ethnic instead of national interests, to preserve their group survival. Voters are afraid that if they do not support 'their' candidates, their in-groups will suffer from marginalization and decreased control of and access to resources.

In the first election 30 January 2005, Shias political parties created the Shia list 'Unified Iraqi Coalition', a list of candidates approved by the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, making it a religious obligation for Shias to vote for the identified candidates. By means of this device the Iranian-backed faction was able to take the majority of seats in Shias provinces of southern Iraq, with 140 seats. Kurdish major political parties created an analogous Kurdish list 'Kurdistan Alliance List' by which they secured 75 and Islamic Group of Kurdistan obtained 2 seats, with the majority of Kurdish voters (Dodge, 2007a:95). Although the majority of Sunnis did not vote, choosing to boycott the elections, Ayad Allawi created a conciliatory 'Iraqi List'[30] and won the majority of Sunni seats (40) and former Iraq president Ghazi al-Yawer through 'The Iraqis' list got 5 seats (Anderson and Stansfield, 2005) but the secular parties

[30] The efforts of former Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and his 'Iraqi List' are regarded as Iraqi nationalism that attempted to contain different cultural groups. However, they could achieve less than 14% of the vote and 40 seats in the first election, the majority of whom were Sunnis. In the 2010 election they got a majority of 91 seats, but were not allowed to form a government due to the obstruction of a Shia coalition ruled to have a majority by the Federal Court.

received a major fail (UNHCR, 2005:7). A more overtly Sunni identity politics was evident in the second public election, reflecting the reduction of Sunnis to minority status and retaliatory attacks on them (Marr, 2007:43), resulting in the desperate Sunni demands of 2011-2014.[31]

The electorate was increasingly divided according to ethnic policies in the elections of 2005, 2010 and 2014,[32] and none of the ethnic lists attempted or received substantial votes from other communities, and there was no national political party that could obtain votes from all communities, reflecting the deeply fragmented nature of Iraqi society, which was intensified as a result of such elections (Kirmanj, 2013:216; O'Driscoll 2014). Elections had a similar result in many of new democratised cases. For instance, the Bosnian election of 1990, from a total of 240 seats the ethnic Muslim party of Democratic Action (SDA) won 87 seats (33.8%), the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) won 71 seats (29.6%), and the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) obtained 44 seats (18.3%); whereas prior to the elections, BH had been recognised internationally as a model of multicultural co-existence (Chandler, 2000:14). Subsequently, in the Dayton free general election held in 1996, voters made choices driven by fear, stoked up by nationalist parties' campaigning, thus they voted on ethno-sectarian lines (Perry, 2009:40).

Therefore, holding free elections at all in divided societies is controversial; democracy is often viewed as a panacea for problematic states, but as seen in Iraq and BH it can actually exacerbate ethnic division and make genuine democratic development more

[31] In protests in 2013, the representatives of all Sunnis in the majority of Sunni cities came to an agreement on the 12 Points Letter, a list of Sunni demands in Iraq, which they presented to Parliament. In this letter, they required including the word 'Sunni' in the statistics in order to investigate whether Sunnis or Shias are the real majority in Iraq.

[32] For instance, in the December 2005 election, the Shia list was able to guarantee a Shia majority of 128 seats, while Sunnis received the majority of Sunni votes with 80 seats, and Kurds could achieve a majority of seats in Kurdish cities with 58.

impossible. The ethical dilemma therefore arises of whether democracy (i.e. free elections) should be delayed in such societies in order to avoid ethno-sectarian division and conflicts, or whether electoral systems should be calibrated to be more appropriate for deeply divided societies.

Some scholars confirmed that the process of democratization (elections) in war-shattered states should be delayed until passions have cooled, promoting citizen associations, excluding extremists from active politics and controlling the promulgation of inflammatory propaganda (Paris, 1997). Holding elections in post-regime change contexts is likely to exacerbate tensions, and rushed elections set back the prospects for democracy in difficult cases such as Angola in 1992, BH in 1996 and Liberia in 1997 (Lyons, 2002). Similar problems were faced in elections in Rwanda, Sudan, Ethiopia and Sri Lanka, which diminished the prospects for stable peace (Paris, 1997:75). As Lakhdar Brahimi (2007:10), the UN Special Envoy to Iraq during the period 2004-2005, stated:

> 'The rush to equate democracy with elections risks confusing the goal and process with the mechanism, and often leads to a relapse into conflict. Remember Rwanda and remember Angola. In contexts where institutions are not stable, criminal groups control areas of the state apparatus and mature political parties do not exist, it is not at all certain that elections will necessarily advance the goal of enfranchising citizens, particularly if elections are held in a hurried fashion, without sufficient preparation'.

In contrast, advocators of early elections thought that early elections can provide legitimacy to the governments and build the democratic process, such as Larry

Diamond, senior advisor to the CPA in Iraq from January to April 2004: 'If one takes these cautions too literally and inflexibly, however, it can mean deferring national elections for a decade or more, and the dilemma then becomes how to constitute authority that will have any degree of legitimacy in the interim' (Diamond, 2006:19). Although there was a general preference to defer elections, Brancati and Snyder (2013) thought that international actors could stabilize early elections by reducing the costs to powerful actors of losing the election. Thus, international pressure in favour of early elections can strengthen peace when they provide robust peacekeeping, by backing power sharing deals, facilitate the demobilization of armed forces and help build robust political institutions. However, Lyons (2002) argued that the timing of post-settlement election depends on the goal of the elections; democratization requires time and deferral of elections entails demobilisation, repatriation of displaced persons and rebuilding the basics of a functioning state, but war termination may require a more rapid election to obtain the consent of the warning parties, although it is a likely triumph of nondemocratic leaders, such as happened in BH and Liberia.

The perspective of deferred public elections can be noted when there were attempts to defer elections and defer transferring authority by the US authorities in Iraq, but this was not accepted by Iraqis. The US welcomed the mediation of the UN special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi to persuade the most revered Shia religious leader, Ayatollah Sistani, to defer elections, because it was not reasonably possible to be organized on 30 June 2004, and Brahimi managed to work out a compromise: an appointed interim government would take office and then elections for a transitional government would be held no later than 31st January 2005 (Diamond, 2005:12).

Wimmer (2003:125-126) thought that holding elections should be delayed and enough time should be given for the formation of civil society organisations and political

parties not associated with the existing ethno-religious programmes. Citizens also need time to adjust their behaviour to the new circumstances and develop their own visions of a political future. Nonetheless, Diamond (2005:18) thought that deferring elections would create dilemmas about legitimacy of power in the interim. He thought the failure to establish early on a date for national elections to choose a constitutional assembly would be a major bone of contention between the US-led coalition and the most revered religious leader in Iraq, Ayatollah Sistani. Holding local elections first is favourable and national elections could be deferred to find the suitable political conditions (Diamond, 2006).

Brancati and Snyder (2011) found that certain conditions such as decisive victories, demobilisations, genuine elections, UN peacekeeping and power sharing particularly reduce the likelihood of conflict onset in early elections, reducing the probability of negative reactions toward the results. However, in the Iraqi case this is not supported, due to Iraqi politicians already accepting the principle of power sharing, but the climate of sectarian, nationalist and radical appeals encouraging cleavage before the election results. Political elites exploited people through ethno-sectarian rhetoric, persuading them that they would be at risk if they did not vote for them, as happened in BH (Chandler, 2000:29). There are no elections in which every Bosnian citizen votes for the same candidate and votes outside of their group (Perry, 2009:49).

On the other hand, other scholars noted that the impacts of different electoral systems on ethnic conflict management can play a powerful role in promoting both democracy and successful conflict management (Horowitz, 1985; Reilly, 2002; Salloukh, 2006). Thus, building democracy in divided societies necessitates an electoral system to promote interethnic accommodation and multi-ethnic political parties, in which politicians are forced to reciprocally dependent on votes from different groups other

than their own (Reilly, 2002:156). The majority electoral system as well as presidential system is two mechanisms can motivate integration through encouraging multi-ethnic parties rather than proportional and parliamentary systems (Horowitz, 1985:635, 1990). Thus, the electoral system is preferential by Horowitz as it makes candidates depend on attracting votes from outside their ethnic groups, which gives ethnic parties incentives to moderate their position and engage in cross-ethnic appeal (Caspersen, 2004:571).

The majoritarian electoral system implemented in developed societies such as the US and the UK may have less tendency toward fragmentation, while proportional electoral systems facilitate disintegration. The reason is that under majoritarian rules, political parties must appeal to multiple diverse interests and cultural groups in order to obtain the majority of votes necessary to win office (Norris, 2004). Furthermore, majoritarian systems generally tend to produce two political parties in competition, vying for majority government, while the proportional system fosters multiple fissiparous groups with divergent interests, impeding actual policy formation and governance (Sisk, 2002:59). Nevertheless, the majoritarian electoral system is not accepted in divided societies, as it is an intrinsic challenge to existing minority factions (Lijphart, 1985, 2004; Reynal-Querol, 2002; Sisk, 2002).

It seems that electoral systems affect divided societies by leading to more social cleavage and fragmentation among groups, exploited by political leaders to encourage people to divide on ethnic-sectarian lines. The risk of ethnic conflict onset is not solely related to the results of elections which may not be accepted by some groups but at the period of electoral campaigns, ethnic and sectarian rhetoric become much stronger than national rhetoric, which motivate peoples to be ready to fight. Fear about the future make the voters think that if the candidates of their communities do not win,

they will be marginalized by others and they will lose their influence as a group. Thereby, losing an election is a matter of not normally losing office but of losing the means for protecting the survival of the groups (Sisk, 2002:31). This makes people more aligned with their primordial identity.

> 'we feel threatened and we want to be the winner to protect our groups interests because I know the equality is absent if the candidates of other groups win they will marginalize us'. FG6H

In these societies, fear of losing elections also motivates illegal action against others. For instance, one of the reasons for the arrest of Sunni popular politicians was seen as PM al-Maliki's broader attempts at securing victory in the provincial elections of 2013 (Dodge, 2013:242).

Party patronage may also play a role in inducing group members to affiliate with their ethnic political parties (Ennser-Jedenastik, 2014). People would be encouraged if the candidates of their groups/clans win, and have greater opportunities to get jobs and high positions. State exploitation by political parties is one of the common challenges for new democracies. Party patronage is one of the ways through which political parties try to exploit state resources for the purposes of party building and party organisational survival (Kopecký, 2011). Leaders discriminate between individuals and groups and establish patron-client relationships, particularly in weak states and in the absence of civil society organisations. They will give preference to members of their own ethnic group, and votes will thus be secured along ethno-religious channels (Wimmer, 2003:113). Therefore, if people are convinced that equality and anti-discrimination will be implemented, this problem will be mitigated.

Additionally, the forms of electoral system and its designs may nudge society toward more integration/fragmentation. Despite the electoral system, electoral engineering, which depends on adopting multi-districts (multi-constituencies), would lead to further fragmentation, whereas a one-district (the adoption of a single national constituency)[33] system may encourage integration due to requiring a national campaign. Russia, Indonesia and Nigeria are examples for having such cross-regional voting laws that have prevented identity-based parties from forming. Adopting this kind of electoral law would accomplish integration by requiring parties to compete in a certain number of regions and to win a certain percentage of the vote in these regions to be elected to the federal government (Brancati, 2004:16).

Iraqi electoral law is particularly averse to integration. Despite acknowledging proportional representation and a multi-district system (each of eighteen provinces is one district) that facilitates more social cleavages, it indicates the 'political entities' that can participate in electoral processes. This expression motivated many small groups such as tribes and clans to participate in elections as political entities. Based on their experience, respondents reported that the current electoral system make the political parties interested on a local basis rather than a national one, whereas one-district system might encourage integration. Therefore, it is important to amend electoral law in Iraq, specifically to change electoral engineering from a multi- to a single-district system, which would encourage the emergence of trans-ethnic political parties. Nevertheless, this sort of electoral system is unlikely without Shias as they

[33] There are two methods: either the country is divided into several constituencies (based on the number of seats and populations, e.g. Iraq is divided to 18 electoral areas) wherein voters choose candidate/s; or the country is considered as one national constituency (wherein all votes would divide on seats to get a national number for each seat). In the first type, votes/turnout in each constituency do not affect others, but in the second one, because votes everywhere affect the result, parties try to secure votes from all cultural backgrounds and try to avoid ethno-sectarian rhetoric. Consequently, political parties attempt to include members from all backgrounds, which leads to the creation of trans-ethnic parties.

stand to lose from any erosion of their current hegemony, which they have heavily based on sectarian jingoism.

As explained in Table 5.5, according to the Iraqi Electoral Law, the Iraqi Council of Representatives consists of 328 seats, of which 320 general seats are distributed in 18 governorates (electoral districts), with another 8 seats allocated to the minorities quota. Because Shias have hegemony in 9-11 provinces, the current electoral system can guarantee the majority of seats for them regardless of the rate of turnouts and due to the votes of minorities in their governorates supporting them. If the law was changed to consider Iraq as one electoral district, they would lose a part of their seats to other groups.

Rather than manifesting and encouraging the development of democracy, in deeply divided societies elections can entrench ethno-sectarian cleavages, which have happened in Iraq and BH. As far as ethnic conflict is concerned, the current electoral system is counter-productive, but serious reform to prevent fragmentation is likely. A proportional system per se is not as problematic as the electoral engineering of the multi-district system, which would discourage establishment of trans-ethnic political parties.

Table 5.5: Distribution of seats on the 18 governorates (electoral districts)

N	Provinces	Seats	Dominant Group	Quota for Minorities
1	Basra	25	Shia	
2	Maysan	10	Shia	
3	Diqar	19	Shia	
4	Muthanna	7	Shia	
5	Qadisiya	11	Shia	
6	Najaf	12	Shia	
7	Karbala	11	Shia	
8	Wasit	11	Shia	
9	Babil	17	Shia	
10	Baghdad	69	Mixed, Shia majority	2 (Christian, Sabi'a)
11	Diyala	14	Mixed (historical Sunni majority, now probably Shia majority)	
12	Anbar	15	Sunni	
13	Salah ad-Din	12	Sunni	
14	Mosul	31	Mixed, Sunni Majority	3 (Christian, Yazidi, Shabak)
15	Dohuk	11	Kurdish	1 (Christian)
16	Erbil	15	Kurdish	1 (Christian)
17	Sulaimaniya	18	Kurdish	
18	Kirkuk	12	Mixed, Kurdish majority	1 (Christian)
Total		**320**		**8**

In conclude, Iraqi politics were historically inappropriate to unify people and build a nation, and the country suffers from a lack of civic characteristics. Since 2003, the issue of identity has been exacerbated by people as individuals not feeling equality and fairness in their encounter with the 'state', and ethnic groups feeling that their identities are at risk of ethnic cleansing possibilities and realities.

Eroded national identity leads to heightened ethnic conflict, which renders lower potentiality of integration. Thus, in light of the evidence above, the process of developing a cohesive national identity is a major challenge in the context of Iraq, which needs a long-term solution through fostering citizenship. Communities are

currently reverting to their primordial identities, and the majority of respondents from different backgrounds confirmed that they voted (and will vote) for their in-group's candidates, regardless of their qualifications. Arab Shias look to Iran as their patron, while Sunnis have mainly reverted to tribal confederations, and Kurds are committed to their nationalist movement. Therefore, to salvage something from Iraq, the government should act to enhance aspects that have national dimensions regardless of sectarian perspectives, such as an inclusive national army and security rather than sectarian forces. Through implementation of the correct political system, Iraq's fragmented parts may work together in the long term and identify with the state as Iraqi, rather than being forced to interact with its institutions along religious or ethnic lines. While this would take years, a serious undertaking to reverse the sectarian rhetoric and identification stoked by exclusionary policies under Saddam Hussein and al-Maliki (Dodge and Wasser, 2014:33).

Thus, in multicultural countries, even in federal and new democratic countries, if the federal governments works in favour of a dominant group and enforces its identity on others, who thus resort to conflict to protect their identity and survival.

5.5 NEW IRAQI GOVERNANCE AND GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TOWARD ETHNIC DIVERSITY

Respondents confirmed that the IG discriminates against minorities, and has practiced suppression against other communities. Except Shias, the majority of participants from different backgrounds reported their rights were suppressed and they feel disappointed because they are treated as second-class people. Despite the political system changing, it seems that in the reality aspects the country is relatively run on the track practiced by the previous regime.

Although regime was changed as a result of external military intervention not as a result of civil war (Diamond, 2005) or people's requirement of democracy, the regime was not desirable by Iraqis. The US authorities committed themselves to support democratisation and minority groups' rights but they faced innumerable difficulties and were not welcomed by domestic actors, who saw them as unwelcome interlopers, with the exception of the Kurds, whose safety they guaranteed (Wimmer, 2003:111). After a while the reaction in terms of the insurgency against American troops emerged, and many small autonomous fighting groups were created with the aim of ridding the country from US forces (Dodge, 2007b:32).

The political system of the country before 2003 depended on centralism ruled by the dictatorship of the Ba'ath regime. The regime change after 2003 resulted in the emergence of pluralist decentralism in 2005. However, this gave way to sectarian domination, particularly after the withdrawal of US authority in 2011, whereupon the al-Maliki government (2006-2014) accelerated sectarian ambitions and centralism. Cultural groups still feel that their identities are at risk. While in the previous regimes components were suffering with the absence of cultural recognition, in the new Iraq, both groups and individuals are disappointed.

It can be argued that aside from the political system changing, the policy of government and the elite's attitude toward democracy and group's rights is still significant. Generally, in the Middle East, due to the weakness of institutions, personal understanding or the interests of elites play an essential role. This may relate to the absence of a democratic culture that make the elites see themselves greater than political institutions. In opposition to the nature of democracy and a federal state, government has seemed to implement suppression policies toward cultural groups. It is acknowledged that the government played an active role in the political exclusion

that resulted in exacerbating ethno-sectarian conflicts rather than finding a solution. Albeit infinitely preferable to past Iraqi regimes, attempting to assimilate minority groups into Arab nationalism, and sometimes implementing elimination policies (e.g. genocide and mass-population transfers), current government policies are also inappropriate for enhancing cultural diversity. Ironically, many of the previous non-humanitarian policies of the Ba'athist regime have been repeated in new Iraq.

Some scholars argued that in nondemocratic cultural environments which political culture has not naturally evolved from the grass roots, foreign forces cannot impose democracy (Kaplan 2006; Eland, 2009). This view to some extent is accepted by respondents:

> 'Our cultural background is familiar with dictatorship; we have a tendency to seek hegemony over others. When any group comes to power, they just support their group, while they should act on the basis of law for all people equally… now Shias are in power, they support the Shia group alone'. FG1E

Wimmer (2003) previously argued the difficulties that would face American plan to make Iraq a democratically governed and 'free' country because major political forces would not want Western-style democracy because currently dominant political forces those within the Shia political landscape are for historical reasons not inclined towards a secularised political system with a clear division of power, even if most Iraqis wanted democracy, it may not work because the political conflicts unleashed by democratisation exceed the conflict absorption capacities. In the first free 2005 election: 'the crushing failure of the secular parties proves that holding elections, despite the backing of the United States and its allies, is no guarantee that the values

of liberalism and democracy have in fact been internalized and absorbed by society' (Bengio, 2008:70). Hence, democracy (elections) may counterproductively increase the power of nondemocratic actors (Lyons, 2002:217), while in democracy-building experience, the role of elites has been emphasised (Barma, 2006). From the last decade, the country has been ruled by the Islamist groups and most elites that ruled Iraq were coming from the Islamist groups, whilst Shia Islamic parties were able to obtain power despite not believing in democracy.

This is particularly found to be the case when a direct relationship between ethnic conflict and nondemocratic development has been found. Examples of this are found in deeply divided societies such as Slovakia, Bulgaria, and the former SFRY, where democracy has progressed very slowly or not at all, while it has progressed in societies that experienced minimal ethnic conflicts, such as Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic (Horowitz, 1993:19). However, Chandler (2000:14) argues that the stability of the democratic process and liberal democratic institutions in these countries either with homogenous or large ethnic groups has been achieved despite the economic and social challenges but these cannot be assessed as west democracy due to the level of their democratic culture.

In many cases, such as Belarus, Cambodia, Croatia, Russia, electoral regimes have emerged but other democratic criteria violated. External democratizing pressures were more intense and sustained in regions of Central Europe and the Americas than in the former Soviet Union and sub-Saharan Africa (Levitsky and Way, 2005). Particularly, in the BH case, the failure of regulative and cultural frameworks are seen as the factor of political fragmentation and war. Thus, the mismatch between Bosnian ethnic culture and liberal democracy was the result of Bosnian conflicts, whereas the wrong leaders were elected by people and then they used their control of the institutions to create

collective paranoia (Woodward, 1995:228). However, after 1995 Dayton agreement, own international actors are accused that undermined self-government that restricted its democratisation process to be developed.

Thus, 'the claims made for the democratisation process are not as compelling as they would appear from mainstream academic and journalistic assessments of the Dayton process... international consensus behind the current democratisation strategy in BH cannot be explained by analysis of its impact on the ground in BH itself' (Chandler, 2000:193). In the same venue, Bojkov (2003) concluded that controlled democracy is undermining its own justification in the sense that sustainable peace and cohesion will hardly ever be achieved if not owned by the Bosnian people themselves. Hayden (2007:108) thought that the method selected by the international community (High Representative in BH) to promote democracy is to create a 'dictatorship of virtue'. This is because 'they have tried to impose their own view of community on peoples who reject it'. The international community is committed to building a state in BH that is rejected by substantial portions of its citizens (Hayden, 1998:47). After two decades of Dayton, the democratisation process and ethnic conflict resolution has not sufficiently developed to build local institutions.

Hence, because cultural democracy has not already existed in Iraq, American efforts could not restrict the politician from their hegemonic tendencies, while a democratic government is important to achieve the success of federalism (Adeghe, 2009; Eland, 2009:61). It seems that elites growing in dictatorial environments could not accept other and they want to control all power under their hand regardless of the nature of the state that comprises different cultural groups. The absence of democracy in Iraq from its composition until 2003 created a class of political elite who were used to imposing their will by force rather than bargaining and compromising. Therefore, after

the establishment of a democratic political system in 2003 the elite struggled to bargain and accommodate (Abu Ltaif, 2015:12). The last decade's experience shows that there were clear attempts to return the country to authoritarian centralism. During al-Maliki rule, the federal government mostly acted to monopolise power, implement exclusionary polices, and cultivate sectarian identity (Dodge, 2013; Dodge and Wasser, 2014).

It can be considered that external democratizing pressures would be encountered problem when their supports ended. Scholars from international politics believe that international actors can promote democracy and address the challenges faced democratization in failed and post conflict states through address the vacuum of order, build political institutions, elections (Diamond, 2006; Brancati and Snyder, 2013). The international community could assist Iraq to build governing institutions, security forces, bureaucratic and also reduction of the scope for corruption and patronage (Dodge, 2007b). However, the withdrawal of the US troops in 2011 seemed to give the Shia-led government an opportunity to violate democracy and implement a sectarian agenda. According to the ICG report (2011:31), Baghdad's pre-intention to restrict the Kurds capacity in Iraq with the premise that they had 'taken more than they deserve', had waited until the US troop's withdrawal before implementation. Following this period, the government intensified the suppression of policies toward Sunnis, Kurds and other minorities in order to strengthen Shia power (Hashim, 2016:45). Thereby, the democratic foundations and independent institutions that are set up by the American administration are systematically curtailed by al-Maliki (Dodge, 2013).

Here, the USA foreign policy changes can be noted from constructivism, which asserted to implement norms and democratisation to realism that focused on security.

The challenges of on-going conflict seem to have influenced the American policy to back central government to establish strong security, while al-Maliki's centralist tendency was itself a major source of problems. Al-Maliki exploited the US centralization mandate as a tool to monopolise power at the expense of others, and this policy has been accelerated since the withdrawal of American troops (O'Driscoll, 2016:35).

Therefore, it can be argued that the timing of the American withdrawal was not appropriate, insofar as the democratic process and political institutions of Iraq were not sufficiently developed and ethno-sectarian conflicts had not been addressed. The international community should continue for supporting and monitoring during the years to come, in order to make Iraqi democracy sustainable (Wimmer, 2003). However, unsuccessful military interventions usually end after a change in the intervening country's government (Dodge, 2007a). Changing the American government from Republicans to Democrat ascendancy escalated the withdrawal of US troops (under the Obama administration), meanwhile the Iraqi situation has not stabilized.

In this sense, it can be argued that Chandler's (2000) assertion that empowering domestic institutions provides democratic development is not supported, and the role of the international community is important to restrict domestic actors' violations of democratic principles. In societies that experienced violent war and in which the environment of ethno-nationalism is powerful, the international community's role seems to be significant, but in terms of monitoring and motivations rather than direct administrative responsibility.

Diamond (2015:144) explored 25 breakdowns of democracy in the world since 2000, noting that dictatorship arises 'not only through blatant military or executive coups, but also through subtle and incremental degradations of democratic rights and procedures that finally push a democratic system over the threshold into 'competitive authoritarianism',[34] which requires international engagement to help the democracies that have emerged during the third wave. Instability alongside tendency of monopoly of powers are major challenges faced democratisation. Indeed, democratisation has suffered many setbacks in the world, but it is currently under greater threat than at any point in recent decades (Puddington, 2015). Related to Middle East, except Tunisia, in the majority of countries such as Iraq, Turkey, Egypt, Lebanon, Libya and Bahrain democracy in terms of political rights and civil liberties has declined (ibid: 126, 127, 132).

On the other hand, there are viewpoints arguing that neighbouring states should be blamed for the destruction of the democratic experience in Iraq (O'Driscoll, 2015:3). Insurgencies and coup attempts are often aided by Iraq's neighbours and jihadists are offered safe passage both into and out of Iraq (Cordesman, 2007). These groups were not happy with or supportive of democracy being established in Iraq, fearing it would affect their rules and privileges, therefore, they encouraged instability. Both sides of Arabic countries and Iran might encourage extremist groups to escalate instability in order to defeat US plans. One of the terrorist group of al-Qaeda aims in Iraq was to sow sectarian strife and provoke civil war as a way to undermine US policy.

[34] Levitsky and Way (2002:53) conceptualised 'competitive authoritarianism' to describe the regimes that violated democratic criteria, although elections are conducted: 'Although elections are regularly held and are generally free of massive fraud, incumbents routinely abuse state resources, deny the opposition adequate media coverage, harass opposition candidates and their supporters, and in some cases manipulate electoral results. Journalists, opposition politicians, and other government critics may be spied on, threatened, harassed, or arrested. Members of the opposition may be jailed, exiled, or—less frequently—even assaulted or murdered. Regimes characterized by such abuses cannot be called democratic'.

Conversely, Shia militias (e.g. Badr Brigade, the armed wing of SCIRI which is very close to Iran)[35] were blamed for the deaths of Sunni clerics and raids on Sunni mosques, accusing them of fuelling sectarian violence (UNHCR, 2005:15). The Iranian-backed group has claimed responsibility for over 6,000 attacks against US forces in Iraq since 2006 (Wyer, 2012). Iran has a close relationship with Shia forces and following the US troop withdrawal, Iranian influences on Baghdad had been increasingly noted (ICG, 2014). It seems that Shias are psychologically motivated by two factors; first, how to change the historical ownership of Sunni on Iraq and second, how to change the Iraqi situation in the way that Sunnis will never be able to threaten Shia rule. For that, they are doing their best to assert hegemonic power on the country and have managed to defeat the Sunnis. This might force Shias to unite strongly with Iran in all military, political and ideological aspects.

This is especially the case after Sunnis, through ISIS, were able to threaten Shia rule, when their attacks arrived at the edges of Baghdad. [36] The Iranian interventions in Iraq play a direct role (Hiltermann, 2015). If you are visiting Iraq, you may feel you are in Iran because you are faced with Iranian pictures of Khomeini and Ali Khamenei everywhere, either in the official institutions or streets (Figure 5.1).

[35] After 2009, Badr Brigade left SCIRI and turned into an independent political force of itself that headed by Hadi al-Amiri.

[36] When the ISIS could seize the majority of Sunni cities include the biggest Sunni's city of Mosul, they did not announce Mosul as their state capital as they hoped to control Baghdad and return ownership to Sunnis in Iraq.



Figure 5.1: Former and current Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ruholla Khomeini and Ali Khamenei in Tikrit Provincial Council

Conversely, Turkey has engaged in deepening the crisis between Baghdad and Kurdistan, through developing a trade relationship with the KRG and signing oil export deals which bypassed Baghdad's will (O'Driscoll, 2015:2). Indeed, the conflicts between Shia and Sunni acquire a new dimension from internal sectarian conflicts to international tensions between Iran as a supporter of Shia world and Saudi Arabia and to some extent Turkey as a supporter of the Sunni World. This makes the Iraqi situation to be very difficult. Iraq has become caught up in a spiral of conflict, intervention and decline which means that its institutions weaken and they become more dependent on external support, but that external support is increasingly in conflict e.g. Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia and US, which accelerate Iraqi conflict and division.

Nonetheless, the majority of studies with an interest in the Iraqi field agreed that Iraqi elites, especially the former prime minister al-Maliki, has a major responsibility for weakening democracy and federalism (Dodge, 2013, 2014; Dodge and Wasser, 2014; O'Driscoll, 2014, 2015, 2016; Romano, 2014). The respondents confirmed that the

government and political elites played a negative role in exacerbating ethno-sectarian conflicts. While the new Iraqi government was supposed to be national, it was not an ethnically neutral institution, which resulted in the violent reaction and creation of a political atmosphere, intensifying terrorist activities. A Shia MP said;

> ‘The previous government of Maliki was very bad toward cultural diversity; it was a failure in all aspects’. IR6

It is illustrated, Iraqi political elites have steadily regretted the decentralised principles and have acted to centralise power in Baghdad. This may be related to the basic viewpoint of prime minister al-Maliki and his Dawa party toward federalism, as explained in chapter four, they have preferred centralism for the country since 2005. Thus, in contrast to the constitution’s decentralised provisions and power-sharing, the Shia-led government has implemented centralised power. But further still, al-Maliki pushed Iraq towards a de facto dictatorship, especially in the second round of his government 2010-2014, isolated the Sunnis and the Kurds from power and eliminated political opponents through non-political means such as accusations and arrests (O’Driscoll, 2016). This not only leads to the total alienation of Sunnis and Kurds, but also some Shia political groups who disagree with al-Maliki working to concentrate power in his own hands (Romano, 2014:548).

> ‘In recent decades, autocrats had favoured more ‘modern,’ nuanced methods that aimed to protect de facto monopolies on power while maintaining a veneer of democratic pluralism and avoiding practices associated with twentieth-century totalitarian regimes and military dictatorships’ (Puddington, 2015:128).

Judiciary and security forces were deployed to break any political opposition to his long running attempts to centralize power in his own hands and those of his allies. Thus, the majority of institutions that American authority set up have seen their autonomy and role in protecting democracy have systematically broken. The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), the central bank, and the judiciary itself have all seen their independence put at risk by the actions of the Prime Minister (Dodge, 2013:242-244). It seems the Shia-led government in their attempts to centralise power focused on the following strategies:

- *Controlling Baghdad as the historical capital of Iraqi power*

So that Sunnis can never again be a threat to them. For this, Baghdad's centre and periphery have undergone demographic changes to reduce Sunnis and maximise the Shia population.

- *Control of ISF and other intelligence institutions*

The majority of high ranking of security and national army positions have been filled by Shias. Sunni Awakening forces have been disbanded and the Kurdish Peshmerga has been scaled back in budgets and equipment. Iraq never sent Kurdistan its due portion of military budget and equipment, although based on annual budgetary law and the Constitution it is Iraq's responsibility to supply them as part of the Iraqi defence system. The attempts by Iraq to neutralise and co-opt the Peshmerga backfired when the Iraqi Army was humiliated by ISIS in 2014 and the Peshmerga was left to do the majority of heavy conflict with the insurgency, as part of which it received extensive support from the US and other countries.

❖ *Attempting to control Iraqi economic performance through oil revenues*

Linked to the above (i.e. funding for the Peshmerga), Baghdad hold the purse strings for the national oil budget, which it wields as leverage against the KRG. The existence of the KRI is a major barrier to the government's tendency of centralism, therefore several policies have been made to tie Kurdistan more strongly to the centre. Economically, Iraq attempted to restrict Kurdistan from developing its oil fields and to keep it shacked to Baghdad (ICG, 2012).

Despite widespread expectations of some progress after al-Maliki was replaced by Haider al-Abadi [37] in 2014, major changes have not been realised in terms of democracy and government policy regarding ethnic groups. Except among Shia respondents, there was a clear consensus among participants that Abadi's government continues antagonistic policies against ethnic groups and multicultural harmony. The centralisation process that was followed by al-Maliki, which led to the political side-lining of Sunnis and Kurds, has not been rectified. In contrast, Shia hegemony in Iraq, demographic changes of Sunni areas, and Kurdish concerns have persisted. Additionally, the operation against Sunni civilians has escalated in Sunni areas as counter attacks of ISIS. Indeed, the Shia desire to create a unitary and centralist state is clearly realised, but they have to accept the reality that it is impossible to maintain normative centralism if they wish to have a peaceful and harmonious Iraq.

Al-Abadi's solution for the Iraqi crisis leans toward provincial federalism, and he asserted his intention to deploy power from the centre to the provinces, but never talked about regions. Nevertheless, such a strategy could help move Iraq beyond an ethno-sectarian division, although it is not perfect for the current situation in Iraq due to the

[37] Haider al-Abadi belongs to the same al-Maliki Dawa Party

de facto sectarian division on the ground. Moreover, the KRG would continue to hinder such a solution, as they did in 2005.

It may be considered that each of these key elements have partially contributed to Iraqi predicaments, but it does not change the reality that, consequently, the Iraqi federal government with constitutional responsibility has failed to provide a secure environment for living together and building confidence among ethnic groups. Pupavac (2006:22), who studied BH, argued that 'as long as people continue to feel insecure and see security lying in their ethnic ties or outside the country then they will continue to be defensive over their separate cultural identities'. If Sunnis were the main victims since 2005 (of the new Iraqi governance), Kurds are currently in a similar position as they are dissatisfied as a result of the Shia-led government policy. Aside from ethnic and federal related policy in itself, the KRI has been economically starved as well as diplomatically harassed by the IG, yet it was not protected by the Iraqi Army from ISIS and had to shoulder the majority of the burden of defeating ISIS and supporting the Yazidi and Christian IDPs itself.

It seems that the changing of the regime does not always bring democracy and provide minorities' rights, unless there is elite commitment to the constitution and law. In contrast, new politicians, due to a lack of democratic experience, may be subjected to implement many of the old regime's policies. Looking closer at the new Iraq, similar politics can be identified that have been implemented by former authoritarian regimes, which on the most rudimentary level replace the Ba'athist Arab oppression with a narrower Shia Arab oppression of minorities.

- *The new Iraq could not be a state for all due to the exclusion and repression policies implemented against others*

While Arab identity was the main focus of the Ba'athist regime, the more concentrated Shia identity is the priority of the new IG. The government is disqualified from orchestrating a federal arrangement based on common agreement to build confidence and integration among ethnicities because it is an aggressive protagonist of ethnic discrimination and oppression. Given the acrimonious struggle of the Kurds for nationhood over many decades, their general tendency to preserve the unity of Iraq and to practically participate in power indicates great magnanimity (Bengio, 2008:76), but their participation was not appreciated. Kurds complained that IG did not deal with the KRI as a part of the country, whereas Kurds were one of the groups who deeply cooperated with Shias in the formation of the new Iraq.

In particular, the Kurds supported al-Maliki to be a PM in both the 2006 and 2010 election following an agreement to implement Article 140 and other pending issues such as oil and the budget, but the Kurds were betrayed on both occasions (Bartu, 2010:1333; O'Driscoll, 2015:6). The authoritarian tendency of the government and their conflicts reached the stage of the Iraqi Army and the Peshmerga being on the brink of war since late 2012 (O'Driscoll, 2014:3). Economic interests are considered as the essential mechanism that makes the federal state secure and does not push the region to separate from the state. However, in Iraq, the government is not only restricting the KRI but also dealing with them as a foreign state. Kurds complained that since 2006 the IG has not given the KRG its 17% allocation of the central budget; the machinations of the Shia-dominated Iraqi Parliament have attempted to reduce this to 11% (O'Driscoll, 2015:9). Since 2014 the disbursal has been completely terminated.

Additionally, discriminatory policies have fomented the rise of Sunni militias and thus the general escalation of violent conflict epitomised by ISIS. Many prominent Sunni politicians who participated in government since 2003 have been excluded or imprisoned. Sunni elites such as Minister of Finance Rafi al-Issawi, Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al-Mutlag and Vice-President Tariq al-Hashmi have been accused of backing terrorism (on trumped-up charges whereby Sunni identity is cast as synonymous with terrorism) and thus have been excluded from politics (Dodge and Wasser, 2014; HRW, 2015). The IG has purposely challenged Sunni politicians to prevent them from participating in the political process and has accused them of being terrorists. Institutionalised repression can encourage ethnic minority groups to find extreme extra-institutional means to express discontents and to attempt to effect their own security (Cohen, 1997:628) – such as capitulating to the control of Sunni militias due to the complicity of the state forces in sectarian oppression by Shia militias, and indeed the Iraqi Army itself.

Repression is a mechanism that both controls low levels of disenchantment with state policies and fuels the mobilization of armed opposition to the state (Regan and Norton, 2005). Hence, the arrests of these people and general policy against the Sunnis triggered a series of mass demonstrations across the Sunni dominated cities in 2012 (Dodge, 2013; Dodge and Wasser, 2014). However, while Sunnis staged peaceful demonstrations against discriminatory policies, the Shia-led government intensified the army operation against Sunni areas and arrested many Sunni leaders on terrorism charges, such as the protest leader and MP Ahmed al-Alwani, causing many deaths (Dodge and Wasser, 2014:30; ICG, 2014; O'Driscoll 2016:35). Article 38 of the Constitution[38] guarantees the right to peaceful demonstration, but the government has

[38] Article 38: The State shall guarantee in a way that does not violate public order and morality:

continuously used suppression and military attacks against Sunni civilians (O'Driscoll, 2014:5).

Indeed, many Shia militia groups endorsed and often funded and armed by the government exist for the basic function of attacking the Sunni community. Intense mass hostility usually produces terrorism, alongside face-to-face ethnic riots and mass killings (Horowitz, 1990). Consequently, extremist religious groups have risen in Sunni areas. One unsung achievement of the US was to co-opt Sunni paramilitary organisations to fight terrorist groups,[39] but he IG since 2005 has conversely induced Sunnis to support various terrorist militias such as ISIS due to Sunni civilians' inability to resist such groups and the basic security offered to them by such groups (ICG, 2014). An emerging field of study demonstrates the causal connection between political grievances and the likelihood of ethnic terrorism (Boylan, 2016).

Based on the results of the survey conducted in the second half of 2014, more than 90% of Sunni residents view ISIS as a terrorist organization (al-Dagher, 2015), but they nevertheless supported them because they perceived that they had no choice. A Sunni politician stated:

> 'The government forced Sunnis to get involved with ISIS and I can say Sunni people's life under ISIS is better than the government, because at least they are not at the mercy of Shia militias. ISIS is a danger and they

A. Freedom of expression using all means. B. Freedom of press, printing, advertisement, media and publication. C. Freedom of assembly and peaceful demonstration, and this shall be regulated by law.

[39] While members of the Sunni community started insurgency in the name of al-Qaeda to fight the US Army in Sunni areas, they were able to persuade Sunni tribes to create a Sahwa (Awakening squads) military force to fight al-Qaeda in 2006. However, this force was disbanded in 2008 and their leaders encountered sentences after the withdrawal of the US Army from Iraq. The government's refusal to incorporate Sahwa of Sunni fighters meant that most of these Sunnis were faced with a limited choice: to suffer unemployment, or join ISIS. For more information see Fisher (2014).

should be excluded from our area, but the alternative is not the rule of Shia militias'. IR3

As a result, Iraq could not be a country for all and exceed the hegemony by one group at the expense of other groups. In contrast, discrimination and inequality toward other communities that followed in the previous regime is repeated. Even at the individual levels, Shia chances for employment are vastly inflated above those of other communities' members.

- *The new Iraq could not be a civil state*

Iraq has always been a military state that has served the incumbent regime more than the country. Despite the 2003 invasion resulting in disbanding the Iraqi military and establishing a civil state, the new governments have steadily increased the size of the Iraqi military, and vast budgetary allocations have been devoted to the military. As shown in Figure 5.2, military expenditure increased from $2,118,000,000 in 2004 to $9,604,000000 US dollar in 2015, declining to $6,188,000,000 in 2016 (still a net increase of 192% from 2004) due to declining oil prices (SIPRI, 2017), but this still consist about 20 percent of Iraq's 2016 national budget devoted to the defence sector (Georgy and Kalin, 2015).

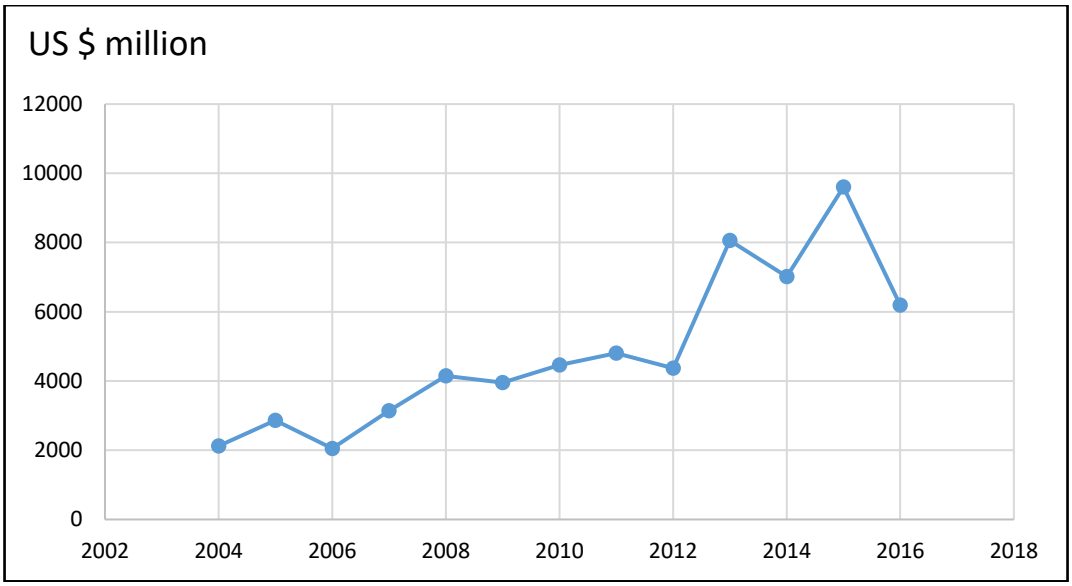


Figure 5.2: Iraqi military expenditure, 2004-2016

Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 2017

The problem of the military is not its size *per se*, but its detrimental function by enshrining and enforcing Shia hegemony in Iraq, which exacerbates ethnic conflict. The Iraqi Armed Forces have always functioned to serve a specific group of people and elites in power. For instance, the ISF were closely controlled by al-Maliki to secure his power (O'Driscoll, 2015:8). Aside from the majority of army positions being filled by his close allies, many extra commanders, security forces and intelligence services were deployed, such as the Office of the Commander in Chief and the Baghdad Operational Command, which acted only on the Prime Minister's orders.

These forces are designed to impose order on Iraqi's own population rather than to protect the country from external aggression (Dodge, 2013:249-250). After 2010, Maliki, alongside his role as Prime Minister accrued three ministerial portfolios (Interior, Defence and State for National Security) and supreme command (Commander-in-Chief) of the Armed Forces; clearly this makes a mockery of any pretensions to the normative democracy envisioned by the Iraqi Constitution (O'Driscoll, 2016).

Regardless of constitutional obstructions, the government has steadily politicized the Army to be more sectarian and it is used to suppress unrest in Sunni areas as well as to threaten Kurds (Abu Ltaif, 2015:14). The appointment of these security positions are based on Article 61,[40] and must be approved by parliament (Constitution, 2005), nonetheless, it was increasingly ignored (Romano, 2014:554).

Shia militias known as al-Hashid al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilisation Units, PMUs) were legalised by the Iraqi Parliament on 26/11/2016, with Sunni Arab and Kurdish MPs abstaining. According to the law, alongside the official army, PMUs will be the second military entity in Iraq which is subjected to applicable military laws, except for the age and certificate requirement. The law also places PMUs under the prime minister's command (Iraqi Law of the Popular Crowd, 2016). Obviously this paramilitary force is a tool of Shia power, cynically clothed in article 78 of the Constitution providing for the Prime Minster to be Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.

This legalisation of Shia sectarian paramilitary squads does accord official responsibility to the government administration, which is technically preferable to them operating outside of the law, but this theoretical benefit is vastly outweighed by the practical effect of empowering and legitimising them, facilitating funding and arming them with advanced military equipment and weapons, particularly as the government itself is a tool of Shia sectarianism and not an impartial observer.

[40] Article 61- fifth-C: The Iraqi Army Chief of Staff, his assistants, those of the rank of division Commander and above, and the director of the intelligence service, based on a proposal from the Council of Ministers.

❖ *The country could not be a secular state*

Despite the Ba'ath regime being a secularist nationalist party, Arab-Islamic heritage and history were always implicit ideological appeals of Ba'athism.[41] However, in the aftermath of international sanctions and their failure in the war with the coalition forces over Kuwait in 1991, the role of religion was promoted in its last decade of rule (Dodge, 2007b:28). Saddam Hussein added by his own hand 'Allahu Akbar' (God is Great) on the Iraqi flag (Marr, 2012:208), attempting to save their regime by promoting Islam within society and its militia groups like the Fedyian Saddam. Thus, he aimed to capitalise on and control the rise of religious sentiments among an exhausted people (Hashim, 2016:43).



1963-1991 1991-2004

Figure 5.3: Adding 'Allahu Akbar' to Iraqi flag in 1991

In the new Iraq, clerics' interference in political affairs became much more pronounced and often overrode secular governmental institutions. After moderate centrist views

[41] The Ba'athists used religion to legitimize their appeal and to give a wider audience something to identify their 'Arabness', specifically to obtain Shia Arab support. The un-Islamic idea was promoted that the Arabs were the vanguard and supreme guardians of Islam (despite Turks, Kurds and Persians having been far more significant in Islamic civilization in Iraq from the 11th century CE). Furthermore, Saddam Hussein invented a family lineage that tied him to the *Ahl ul-Bayt* (the Family of the Prophet, venerated by Shias and Sunnis) to sacralise his authority. While this 'Return to Faith' campaign was mainly instituted after 1993, there were already presentiments of this trend during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), in which the majority of battles were given names evoking the Quran and archetypal Islamic history (such as the Battle of al-Qadisiyya) in order to present the conflict as a reiteration of the historical conflict between the Muslims of the Arab Muslim Caliphate and the Zoroastrian Persians (despite the fact that Iraq was constituted as a secular state and Iran as an 'Islamic Republic'). They even named their genocidal campaign against the Kurds after a Quranic chapter, *Al-Anfal* ('The Bounties') (Marr, 2012:208; Hashim, 2016:43).

failed to achieve votes in the first free elections in 2005, the rule of the country reverted to political Islam on a quasi-Iranian model. The 2005 Constitution indicates that 'Islam is the official religion of the State and is a foundation source of legislation ... No law may be enacted that contradicts the established provisions of Islam' (Article 2 of Constitution, 2005), although this is a standard trope scattered throughout Arab-Islamic countries (e.g. Egypt has similar provision) to maintain legitimacy that does not seriously impinge on government policy and administration, and the Iraqi Constitution expresses that the principles of democracy should be appreciated. Results confirm that religious clerics have been instrumental in undermining ethnic cohesion among groups, accelerating the drift of the political system toward theocracy;

> 'When Shia clerics ask people to vote for the Shia List, Shia people accept this as a fatwa and religious commitment'. FG2G

Our results suggest the necessity of separating religion into political affairs, as more than half of respondents, over the past decade of Independent Institute for Administration and Civil Society Studies (IIACSS) research, had the same sense' (al-Dagher, 2015).

In light of the above points, the regime change in Iraq can be considered a change of form but not of content. The new government has not acted as the federal and democratic settlement that new Iraq was supposed to be, but instead it has become about central control and authoritarianism or more precisely as Dodge (2013:244) labelled it, 'competitive authoritarianism', which implies competitive elections coexisted with substantial abuses of democratic procedure (Levitsky and Way, 2005). Although elections have been conducted, democracy could not improve because state

power was exploited to privilege Shia identity, and to undermine many democratic criteria related to opposition and political rights.

However, the shortcomings of democratization process in Iraq do not mean that in a nondemocratic cultural society democracy should not be considered, but it has to be known that it may take a very long time with international support. Meanwhile, the mechanisms that can be obstacles for the dominant group's tendency of monopolising power can play a role. In this regard, Iraq needs further restricted mechanisms to reduce federal government powers toward groups and enrich groups' confidence that their future will not be at risk. On the other hand, a citizenship state in which institutions provide equality and justice for all should enhance futures regardless of people's cultural backgrounds.

5.6 FORMS OF GOVERNMENT IN A DEEPLY DIVIDED SOCIETY

Despite the division of power among two levels of governments in a federal state, the forms of federal government are crucially sensitive in deeply divided societies to build confidence among minority groups. This relates to consociationalism and the participation of ethno-sectarian groups in federal government, either based on equality or proportion. Generally, power-sharing principles are appreciated in ethnofederal systems, in which in the majority of ethnofederal states implement a kind of consociationalism to keep balance among groups and prevent the monopoly of power. Lijphart (1979) argues that consociationalism can be considered a means of federation subject to the proviso of geographically concentrated groups; the local group boundaries of the federation must be followed as much as possible in the institutional composition. A federation is considered to manifest consociation by implementing power sharing elements.

However, there are no specific models; each country has its unique implementation between maximum and minimum levels of consociationalism, as well as between countries where all power sharing elements are constitutionally recognised, such as BH, and those it has not, such as Iraq. According to the Bosnian Dayton Accord, all positions have been divided between three main communities. This form of institutionalised ethnic division, as in the BH experience, renders institutions fragile (Pupavac, 2005). Conversely, this form of consociationalism and division of posts was not enshrined in the Iraqi Constitution (in contrast to Lebanon, where it is), rather political expediency since 2005 resulted in tacit division of the three main presidencies (Iraqi President, Prime Minister, and Parliament President) among the three main ethnic components (Kurd, Shia and Sunni).

Nonetheless, many of Lijphart's principles, such as proportional representation and group autonomy (for Kurds) are politically considered (Younis, 2011). Iraqi elites have always affirmed that the new Iraq should be established on a consociational basis. Respondents presented that consociationalism has been violated by the federal government, while the government steadily centralised power under majoritarian rule, although this is not approved by Shia participants. The voice of majoritarian government has dominated among Shias, who think Iraq should have a majority established government and a minority opposition, regardless of ethnic and sectarian matters. In addition, the majority of them denied that the current crisis was related to government-led Shia sectarianism but to consociationalism itself.

> 'The problem is related to quotas, each minister or head of institution belongs to a specific political party and ethnic group; even Parliament cannot question them to avoid stirring up any problems among the blocs'. FG9E

Basically, the idea of the formation of a majority government in Iraq was mainly manifest by the former PM al-Maliki, but recently it has gained support from the majority of Shia blocs (Habib, 2016). Indeed, majority rule was a Shia ambition from the establishment of the new Iraq. Shias, who comprise some 60% of the Iraqi population, looked forward to a rule of the majority through election as soon as Iraqis took power from the US-led CPA (Romano, 2014:550). However, the efforts to force majoritarian and implicit centralisation by Shias did not establish a strong national government and civic nationalism, rather they projected Shia domination on others. Shia politicians desire centralism, but they know it is not possible practically, thus they focus on the importance of a majoritarian government instead of talking about centralism in their rhetoric.

However, our results show, based on cultural backgrounds, that there are different viewpoints toward preferred forms of government. While Shias are focused on the necessity of majoritarian rather than a proportional government, the majority of Kurds, Sunnis and other respondents reject a majority ruled government, which would negate any political importance to which they aspire. It seems that in the deeply divided societies in conflict, the perspectives that are offered are mostly ethnocentric and sectarian in nature. For instance, Shias prefer majoritarian government or centralism not to conduct a sustainable and civic solution, but to cynically accrue absolute control over state power and resources, while Kurds seek decentralisation because it brings them closer to independence.

In a deeply divided or a multi-ethnic society, the question of which form of government could satisfy groups is controversial, particularly between majoritarian (where the majority takes power and minorities are in opposition) and proportional systems. Generally, there are two theories in literature about which form of

government is more appropriate to be followed in the multicultural societies: the theory that supports a proportional government and the theory of the preferred majoritarian government. While a proportional system depends on power-sharing and the participation of all cultural groups in executive power, a majoritarian system depends on government by the winner of elections and opposition by losers of elections, regardless of groups' cultural backgrounds. However, for divided societies, there is a consensus among scholars against majoritarian systems (Lijphart, 1977, 1984, 2004; Cohen, 1997; Reynal-Querol, 2002).

It is particularly criticised as inappropriate due to its lack in giving assurances for ethnic groups (Caspersen, 2004:572). In such a society, if the largest group forms a majoritarian government, the risk of rebellion is significantly increased because the minorities may reasonably fear that it will lead them to permanent exclusion from influence (Collier *et al.*, 2003:57). Thus, a consociationalism approach is always proposed to avoid the risks of winner-take-all outcomes (Norris, 2005:5). In contrast to these views, Horowitz (1985) thought majoritarian system encourage cooperation among rival groups due to it requires support from different ethnic groups.

Fundamentally, the new Iraq was established on power-sharing elements, although to the same extent that Sunnis have been excluded (Dixon, 2011). However, the majority of consociational arrangements that federalism depends on have steadily been nullified (O'Driscoll, 2014; 2015).

On the other hand, Abu Ltaif (2015) thought that two of 'consociational democracy' elements (grand coalition and mutual veto) are basically absent in the constitutional arrangements in Iraq. Actually, grand coalition has politically regarded in all previous governments, and veto right was determined in a specific period. However, the IG has

steadily attempted to ignore all consociational elements and monopolise power in favour of a dominant group (Shias).

Expert respondents confirm that consociational arrangements were implemented in Iraq only in 2005-2010, and components felt secure and definite. In this period, according to article 138 of the Transitional Provisions of the 2005 Constitution, each member (Sunni, Shia and Kurd) of the Presidency Council had a veto right.[42] However, after this period, consociational elements in terms of grand coalition and inclusiveness were eroded, and the Shia-led government began to monopolise power. As Figure 5.4 shows, the number of civilian killings during the consociational period gradually declined, but after 2011 the escalation of violence increased this number from 4,162 in 2011 to 4,622 in 2012, 9,852 in 2013 and 20,218 in 2014 (Iraq Body Count, 2017).

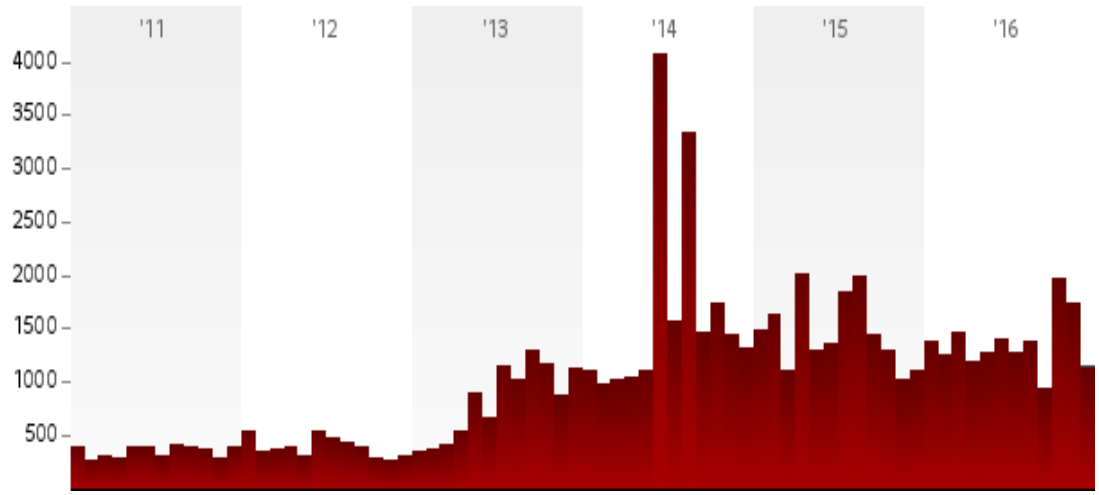


Figure 5.4: Annual total for civilian deaths, 2011-2016

Source: Iraq Body Count (2017)

[42] According to this article, legislation passed by the parliament must be ratified unanimously by the Presidency Council, made up of the country's two Vice Presidents and the President. Iraq experienced this form in 2005-2010 and it was relatively successful. In this period, groups could exercise veto rights toward the legislations that seen it suppressed their rights; for instance when the Arab majority voted for the Provincial Election Law regarding the status of Kirkuk, Kurds saw it as an attack on Kurdish rights in Kirkuk city, thus President Jalal Talabani used his veto right to reject it in 2008. When parliament passed public election law, the Sunni Arab Vice President Tariq Al-Hashimi refused to sign it without an amendment that would increase the number of seats allocated to refugees from five percent to 15 percent in 2009.

Al-Maliki exploited the end of article 138 with the withdrawal of the US troops to expand the power of his faction, nullifying consociationalism influences (O'Driscoll, 2014:9). A according to the survey conducted in 2011-2014, just before ISIS captured Mosul, the 20% of Sunni respondents who said they did not feel safe in 2011 increased to 80% in 2014 (al-Dagher, 2015).

The risks are therefore higher if one faction temporarily gains all the reins of government power, whereby few or no effective safeguards may prevent them from manipulating the rules to exclude others from power on a permanent basis (Norris 2005:5). Shias in all the previous electoral processes obtained the majority of seats. Regardless of their internal disputes, since the 2005 election, they have always formed an alliance to keep their power over the country, thus they have a vested interest in majoritarian government, which ensures that Iraq remains under their control; any reform in the current scenario would be detrimental to their power. For example, they did not allow the establishment of new regions or a 'regional council' because this would undermine their exclusive power.

Collier and Hoeffler (2004:588) found that societies characterised by ethnic and religious diversity are unproblematic as long as one group does not become dominant (with a monopoly on power). Ethnic dominance is remarkably harmful because of the tendency of dominance whereby the monopoly group oppresses other groups' rights. Thus, in societies characterized by ethnic dominance, the majority probably holds both the power and the interest to exploit the minority. The minority may become sufficiently fearful of permanent exploitation, which perhaps induces them to resort to armed tactics, whereas in societies not characterized by ethnic dominance, small groups can hope at some stage to bid themselves in to a winning coalition (Collier, 2006:14).

However, results show that consociationalism is undesirable, because with the exception of the Kurds, the majority of respondents have a negative perception toward consociationalism and see it as a tool of corruption. Thus, there are contradictory viewpoints by respondents; while the majority of respondents (except Shias) do not prefer a majority-ruled government, they do not desire a consociational democracy that focuses on group's participation in power. This may also relate to the different understanding of concepts. The concept of consociationalism especially has acquired a bad name because its implementation led to quotas (*Muhasasa*) and exacerbated nepotism and corruption. The approach was implemented in the wrong manner, by which despite the consideration of groups, political parties also obtained their portions that led to corruption.

> 'They do not deal with people as citizens but they deal with sectionalism, there is a Kurdish block for a specific political party and another Kurdish block for another political party. It is Shias for a specific political party etc., regardless of their qualifications'. FG1A

Thus, the main limitations of Iraqi types of consociationalism may relate to the mechanisms of choosing people for the positions that depended on political patronages. Moreover, it disadvantages small minorities (e.g. Assyrian and Turkmen) in favour of the main groups. Results show that these minorities' rights were not considered as groups due to their size. This has allowed politicians to exploit national institutions for personal gain and to fund their parties (Dodge and Wasser, 2014:32), i.e. instead of implementing consociational elements, political patronage and ethnic-sectarian quota is provided. 'The payrolls and budgets of ministries have become the private fiefdoms of the parties to which they are awarded, fostering personal and

political corruption, as well as an incoherent approach to governance' (Dodge, 2014:14).

With regard to nepotism, many unnecessary positions with a significant wage have been created in a consensual context for the satisfaction of political entities. For example, each of the three main presidency councils and other important institutions (such as ministries) had two deputies from the other two ethnic groups with very huge salaries and various privileges, although these created many administrative restrictions for people. Indeed, a large amount of the Iraqi budget was devoted to these positions, although the al-Abadi government attempted to abolish and reduce some of these sinecures (O'Driscoll, 2015:12). However, Sunnis and Kurds accused the government of exploiting reform and excluding them from the political process.

Basically, the aim of the consociational democracy is far removed from what was implemented in Iraq. Consociationalism is a political mechanism that prevents a group's monopoly on power and provides a kind of assurance for minority groups in multicultural societies, in which veto powers protect minorities in cases where the group believes its vital interests is threatened (Abu Ltaif, 2015:8). The current problems in Iraq are a result of the absence of consociational provisions in the Constitution to accommodate different cultural backgrounds into the system. In particular, the powers of the Prime Minister leave little room for accommodation, bargaining and power sharing between groups, and practically weakened power sharing arrangements within government are partly responsible for the emergence of ISIS (O'Driscoll, 2011, 2015; Abu Ltaif, 2015:2).

Albeit consociationalism is not fully desirable among Iraqi groups, it will be a necessary requirement to prevent a monopoly tendency and build the confidence of

minorities. Meanwhile, it is seen as an essential condition for democracy in a deeply divided country (Lijphart, 2007). There are two basic choices for managing ethnic-sectarian diversity: they may seek to construct a single public identity through integration, or try to accommodate dual or multiple public identities through consociation (McGarry and O'Leary, 2007). However, it was criticised as being a way to freeze existing divisions that would result in political immobilism (McCulloch, 2012:502), leading to a lengthy process of government formation and the creation of an ineffective government, as in Iraq (Younis, 2011). In contrast to these views, it can be argued that consociationalism does not restrict integration, rather it may improve it by reinforcing groups' confidence about their future.

As discussed in this chapter, in divided societies, voters tend to vote for their ethnic candidates because they fear their loss from election would be a result of excluding them from power permanently. However, if they were sure that they would not be excluded permanently, they would vote on the basis of a political program regardless of how backgrounds and integration would be enhanced. Thereby, interethnic conflicts would be replaced by intra-ethnic competition.

5.7 THE LEGACY OF BAD GOVERNMENT POLICY AND ETHNO-SECTARIAN CONFLICTS

5.7.1 Ethno-sectarian violence creating territorial divisions

The legacy of ethno-sectarian conflicts and inappropriate government policies are measureless for all aspects of society, not only countries that descend to civil war but also neighbouring countries. There are economic, social and psychological costs, and internal, regional and international legacies of conflicts, which may have unforeseen implications for a very long time (Collier *et al.*, 2003). Social fabric and cultural

diversity in Iraq faces crucial challenges which may lead to the entire collapse of living together in the new Iraq. Results underscore that lasting ethno-sectarian conflicts affect politics and economic and social capital, particularly due to Iraqi multiculturalism changing to a deeply divided society in conflict.

> 'There are distances and psychological gaps between components which led to division psychologically before practically. It is impossible for Kurds to live within Shias area or Shias within Sunni areas'. FG7C

A deeply divided society is a statement that can be provide for the societies that polarized due to ethnic war. The society of Iraq is obviously deeply divided alongside the ethno-sectarian lines and any re-integration cannot be achieved in the short term at least, such that the country is realistically divided on the ground into three regional entities representing Shias, Sunnis and Kurds, with limited movement of the eponymous groups in 'enemy' territory, although the KRI has been a notable haven for internal refugees of all affiliations, particularly those fleeing ISIS.

Basically, since 2003 onward, no ethnic group has been safe in areas dominated by other groups, particularly between Arab Sunnis and Shias (Kaufmann, 2006:157). According to a major survey, 31% of respondents stated that they had experienced ethnic cleansing in Baghdad and 100% of respondents had witnessed some form of violence (Cordesman, 2007:16). Consequently, voluntary movement steadily emerged (and forced expulsion in the worst cases), while violent conflicts have escalated. The majority of Kurds living in southern and central Iraq migrated to the KRI, while Sunnis from the south and Baghdad migrated to Sunni areas (and Kurdistan), while Shias from the north and other Sunni cities went to south and Baghdad. This sort of ethnic movement has been called 'soft ethnic cleansing' (Cordesman, 2007:2), which

encompasses threats, kidnappings, disappearances, raids on homes and businesses, seizer of properties, misuse of government offices, physical intimidation, blackmail, checkpoints to force others out and extortion. Shias, Sunnis, and Kurds seek to push the weaker side out of areas where they exert majority, superior power to dominate others and to survive.

> 'All Sunni people from Shia areas were forced to leave their houses and fled to other Sunni-dominant areas, and Shia people left Sunni areas, they left their interests, jobs and properties'. FG10D

> 'Haswa, located between Abu Ghreb and Fallujah, was completely Shia, all of them left their places and went to the Shia area of Shu'la (in Baghdad), and vice versa'. FG9A

This long-term process was intensified after ISIS seized Mosul in 2014, with each community strictly controlling its own area and excluding others, creating three territorial entities on the ground. Although the border between Sunni and Shia areas was unclear before 2014, war created a map between them. ISIS has sized the majority of areas in which Sunnis comprise the majority, although some of these places were not traditionally inherently Arab places, but were Arabized by population transfer policies during the Ba'ath period. In these areas, non-Arab Sunnis have been excluded. According to the last update of the UNHCR (2015), about 4.5 million Iraqis have been displaced, of whom 4 million are IDPs settled in various camps within Iraq. In addition to the existential problem of division, secondary risks fester as a result of division, and members from all groups do not feel secure within other communities' areas.

However, according to the reports from different sources of media and international organisations, in Sunni-majority provinces controlled by ISIS since 2014 and

subsequently recaptured by IG forces and paramilitary militias, the displaced people were restricted from returning to their homes by Iraqi forces (Amnesty International Report, 2015, 2016, Human Rights Watch 2015). Kurds have also been accused of preventing Arab residents of mixed Arab-Kurdish towns from returning to their homes, and in some cases have destroyed or permitted the destruction of their homes and property (Amnesty International Report, 2016). Despite the KRG attempting to offer the justification that these areas are not safe yet, and their fear that Arab residents may be ISIS collaborators, there are obvious ethnic interests in preventing an Arab influx into areas coveted by the KRG, including historically Kurdish areas Arabicized by previous regimes (e.g. Kirkuk).

Hence, it can be argued that lasting ethno-sectarian violence results in de facto territorial division and creating a map between conflicting groups. Even if the groups have inherently not had a territorial concentration, each group's members due to threat would gravitate to areas where their in-group has a stronger presence. BH is an example in which violent conflict between factions through the period 1992-1995 created a real map between three sides. Civil wars between two main Kurdish political parties, the KDP and PUK, during the period 1994-1998 created a territorial division between them within the KRI (Gunter 2008:14), known as the 'Degala border', and its influence has remained to the present.

Therefore, the de facto map that has created due to violence among components in Iraq will remain in influence in the coming years even if actual conflict ceases. However, if the sources of new ethnic conflicts change territorial disputes, even federalism cannot be a viable solution. Federalism can constrain the group demands for political autonomy when the conflicts are not territory, otherwise it tends to increase self-determination claims rather than offering solutions (Toft, 2003:128-132).

Thus, territorial division has its own consequences and implications. Territory-based conflicts are generally more violent and harder to resolve (Eriksen, 2002). Violent war will be an obvious result of ethnic groups demanding sovereignty over territory they occupy, which the state sees as its indivisible territory (Toft, 2003). There are historical evidences that in the vast majority of the cases when ethnic groups have demands related to territory, governments respond with complete refusal to compromise (Walter 2006), as seen in the Iraqi attitude to Kurdish demands for separation after their referendum on 25/09/2017.

A large body of studies argued that groups that are geographically concentrated and they have grievances against the state have greater motivation and opportunity to seek self-determination (Horowitz, 1985; Toft, 2003; Walter, 2006). For these cases, partition, whether hard (independence, confederation) or soft (federalism) eventually achieve ethnic conflict regulation where a conventional nation state model is unobtainable (Kaufmann, 1996; Lijphart, 1977, 2004; Downes, 2001; Kymlicka, 2007a; McGarry and O'Leary, 2007).

In this regard, if the current impasse continues, Arab Sunnis' impetus to self-determination is expected to increase, although Sunni elites have traditionally been the chief antagonists to maintain Iraq as a unitary and centralised state (McGarry and O'Leary, 2007, Al-Qarawee, 2010). Evidently the current demographic changes of their areas by Shias are overriding their traditional national affiliation and their vision has narrowed to maintaining their Sunni demographics in key cities.

Kurds have always maintained that their territorial border is the natural one of the Series Mountains of Hamrin. The disputed boundaries between the Kurds and Iraq (Arabs) have been a persistent fault-line in the state's history and rapidly emerged as

a core dispute after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Previous negotiations on the extent of Kurdish autonomy in 1963, 1970–74, 1983 and 1991 had failed on the questions of defining the Kurdish region (Yildiz, 2007; Bartu, 2010). After 2003 a Kurdish delegation brought a map for negotiation with Arab leaders that selected the Kurdistan border to delineate the KRI, which included Kirkuk, in February 2004 (Figure 5.5).



Figure 5.5: Photo of former Iraqi President Jalal Talabani providing the IGC a historical map of Kurdistan

Source: www.pukmedia.com

Despite this not being formally acknowledged, the KRG physically separated the border by digging lines between Kurdistan and Iraq, on the pretext of security purposes.



Figure 5.6: Photo of digging border between Kurdistan region and rest of Iraq

As a result, on the macro level, as shown in the Figure 5.7, Iraqi multicultural society is destroyed and divided along lines created by violent conflicts between communities that may take generations to overcome, and Kurds and Shias are not expected to withdraw from disputed areas even after the ISIS crisis abates.[43]

[43] For more information, see an interview that conducted by Sam Kiley in 'Sky News' with the Kurdish Regional Government's National Security chief in 5th October 2016. He clearly reported that 'we are just regaining what was originally ours. All the areas that Peshmerga are controlling we believe is part of Kurdistan and there's no reason for the Peshmerga to leave those areas'. Retrieved from http://news.sky.com/story/land-grab-by-Iraqi-kurds-risks-undermining-final-mosul-assault-10606492 [05/10/16].

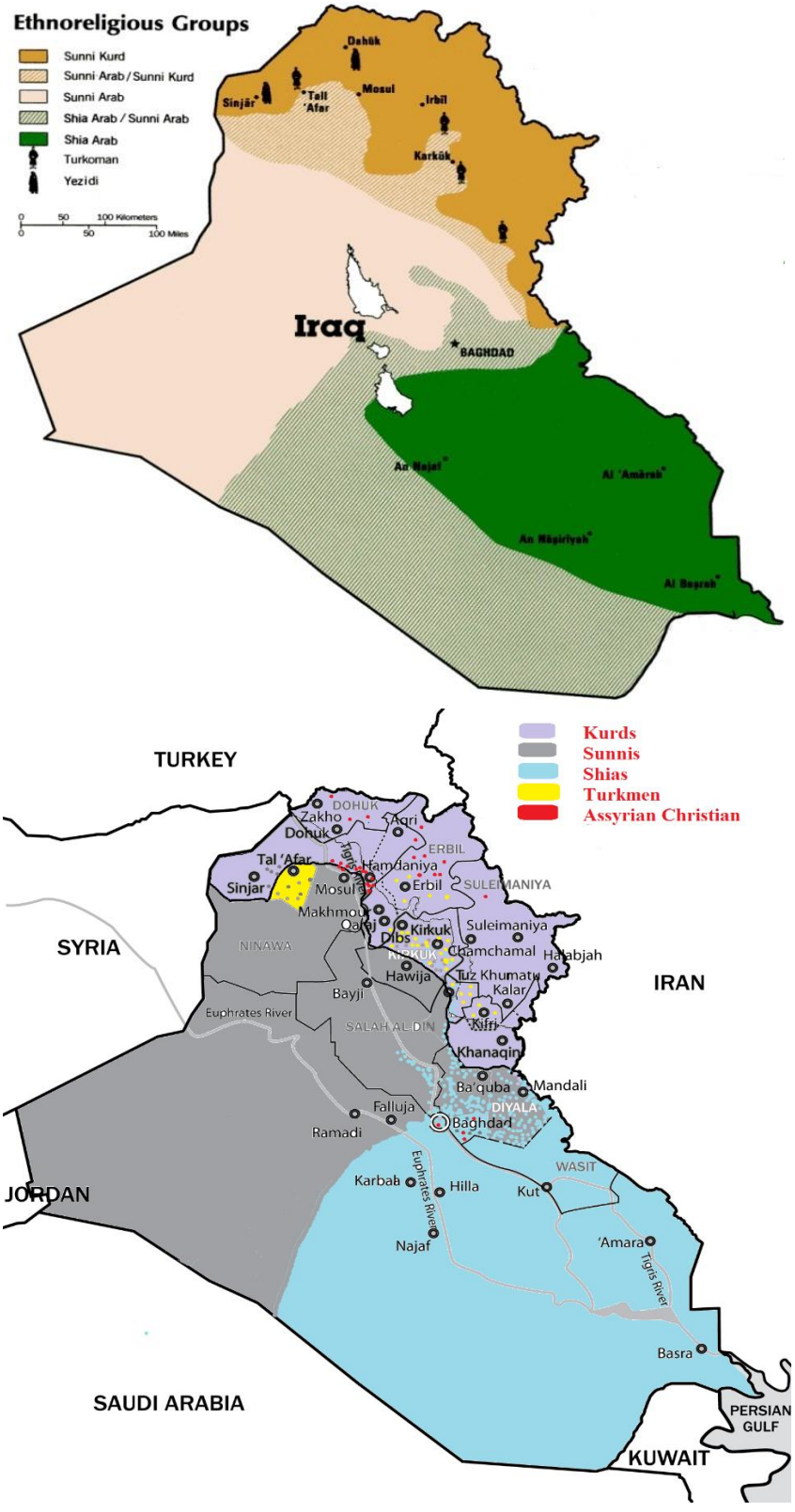


Figure 5.7: Maps showing ethnic demographic changes, 2003 (top) – 2016 (bottom)

Source: (Top) http://theglobalstate.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/iraq-ethnic-map [13/11/2016], (Bottom) Adapted from ICG Report (2011)

Nonetheless, the disputes between these communities about borders and their places will be a crucial risk for the re-emergence of violent conflicts in near future, unless official separation is acknowledged for each group's territory. As Kaufmann (1996) claimed, ethnic conflicts that occur due to security dilemmas cannot be addressed unless the security dilemma is reduced by physical separation. Sunnis complain that many of their areas have been occupied by Shias and Kurds; Shias would generally not accept division (Stansfield, 2004:143), and recently the former PM al-Maliki threatened Kurds, warning them to withdraw their forces from the disputed areas, but the Kurds have already rejected these demands (Kiley, 2016; Rudaw, 2017b). Therefore, the border between these communities should be addressed, otherwise any solution will lack sustainability.

5.7.2 Social cleavage and fragmentation

Iraqi society is not only nationally divided on ethno-sectarian lines but at the micro level, in terms of the erosion of social cohesion and relationships among cultural groups destroyed. The majority of cities and towns that historically included different cultural backgrounds have lost their diversity, reflecting the ability and willingness of dominant groups to force weaker ones out.

> 'Christians have already spread in the majority of Iraqi cities from the south to the north and the richest areas in Basra and Baghdad already belonged to them, but now due to ethnic and sectarian attacks, they are excluded from their places and their properties were occupied'. FG7C

Meanwhile, in cities that maintain diverse populations – often because a certain critical mass makes ethnic cleansing too difficult for militias, as in Baghdad, Diyala and Kirkuk – the population is subject to violent attacks and remains internally fragmented

and divided into factional neighbourhoods. In Baghdad (e.g.), despite Shias controlling the majority of the city as explained in Figure 5.8, they have concentrated in Sadir City, Jamila, Hay Akrad, and Palestine Street. Sunnis have located in Mansur and Sidia and are generally confined to enclaves in the west of the city (Khan and Kirmanj, 2015:376). Christians are living in Rasafa and Karkh. Except for a small number of Kurdish Shias living in Kifah Street, the vast majority of them left the city.

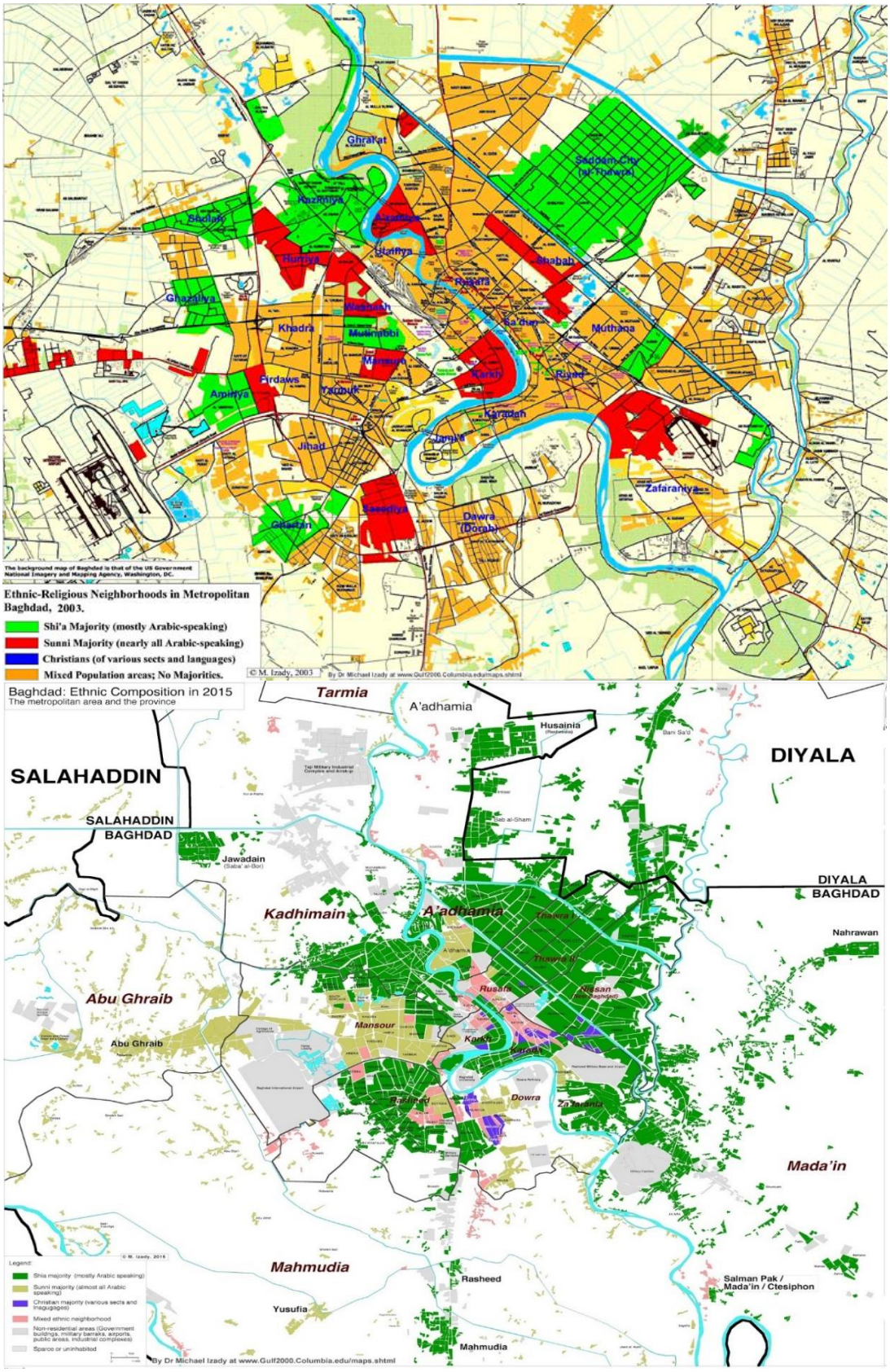


Figure 5.8: Maps showing demographic changes in Baghdad from 2003 to 2015 2003 (top): Shia (green), Sunni (red), mixed (yellow); 2015 (bottom): Sunni (yellow) mixed (pink)

Source: Michael Izady at Gulf2000.colombia.edu/maps.shtml

Cultural diversity is expected to be more fragmented at the micro level, while the divisible elements are more realised than integrated ones. The crucial legacy is the relations between groups escalated from mistrust to fear and hatred. As FG12H reported, 'trust is gone between components… people are scared to go to other communities' places'. Thus, the norms and networks that enable people to act collectively are going to be very weak (Narayan, 2000). Acrimonious conflict often serves to increase distrust, which makes conflict resolution ever more difficult (Lewicki, 2006). The majority of respondents confirmed that before 2003 they had trust and close networks with others, but intensive fighting naturally lowered this, and reinforced ethno-sectarian identity.

Social cohesion reached its lowest ebb with the escalation of the ISIS terrorist insurgency in 2014, epitomised in the Fall of Mosul, which escalated links among different ethnic and religious groups from friendly relationships to offensive attacks and hatred on the neighbourhood level, with the mass expulsion (at best) of non-Arab Sunnis from ISIS-controlled areas. Many minorities (along with Arab Sunnis themselves) faced brutal offenses such as widespread rape, looting and killing. For instance, when the Yazidi Kurds in Sinjar (Shingal) district in northwest Iraq were captured in August 2014, about 400,000 fled to Mount Sinjar and then Kurdistan, while those who stayed behind were subjected to brutal, genocidal acts: thousands were killed amid countless acts of rape, kidnapping and enslavement, systematically perpetuated against Yazidi women and children (Martin, 2016).

In addition, all Christians left their homes in Mosul and towns in the Nineveh Plain such as Bartylla, Qaraqosh, Telkef and Al-Hamdaniya. Conversely, in cities such as Diyala, Babil, Anbar and Tikrit seized by Shia Militias, Sunnis encountered brutal attacks, and it might be difficult for them to go back to their original areas; at the very

least they cannot return to the norms of coexistence that previously existed, and violence is likely in encounters between returning refugees and local militias and usurpers.

5.7.3 Military division

The armed forces are an important state institution in most countries affect integration on the basis of national relations. However, each of Iraqi community would like to have its own force to protect their people. Attempts to institute genuinely inclusive national armed forces after 2003 foundered because of sectarian policies; conversely, the militias that legitimised themselves by the deployment of sectarian and ethnic appeal enabled ethnic-religious cleansing across the country (Dodge, 2007a:93). There have always been Shia militias and substantive Kurdish paramilitary organizations (most notably the Peshmerga), but both phenomena have escalated in numbers, power, and significance since 2003.

During the period of the al-Maliki government the majority of senior positions in the Iraqi army were filled by Arab Shias, alongside the formation of many sectarian militias (Dodge and Wasser, 2014:23). Seven paramilitaries had been working with or primarily focused on supporting the fledgling Iraqi state, allowing them to officially operate in Iraq. These original seven groups included the Badr Organization, Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH), Asaib ahl al-Haq (AAH), Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada, Kata'ib al-Imam Ali, and Kata'ib Jund al-Imam. Al-Maliki used these predominantly Shia forces, referred to loosely as the PMUs as early as 2013, to combat the emergence of ISIS and maintain his influence in predominantly Sunni areas (Mansour and Jabar, 2017:6). The sectarian favouritism of the IG has escalated sectarian violence and created the political atmosphere that has allowed ISIS to flourish (O'Driscoll, 2015, 2016). ISIS is an unmitigated disaster for Iraq as a society

and state. However, the failure of the Iraqi army to contain the advance of ISIS, particularly the humiliation of the fall of Mosul in June 2014, inspired all communities to redouble their efforts to maintain their own militias for self-protection. As FG11A mentioned, 'there is no real Iraqi army; it is just militias following their groups'.

The most serious paramilitary organisations are the Kurdish forces combined under the Kurdistan Peshmerga Ministry and Shia militias administered through PMUs that supervised by the Prime Minister of Iraq. Although a large part of Sunni militia and previous officers were fighting within the ISIS group, there were efforts from the US, Iraq and the KRG to strengthen national Sunni military forces, which led to form many Sunni military units either within PMUs or independent units such as al-Hashid al-Watani ('National Mobilization').[44] Even minorities of Turkmen and Assyrians have recently established their own militias.[45] It is implicit that each of these communities is more instrumental in Iraqi security than the actual national army, thus one of the national tools that could create a collective identity is very weak.

Despite disarmament and demobilisation being affirmed by many scholars as a crucial requirement of post-conflict settlement and peacebuilding (Lyons, 2002; Spear, 2002; Brancati and Snyder, 2011, 2013), this is not viable for the case of Iraq, whereas our results show that these groups are more favoured by their communities than national army. Spear (2002) argued that the successful implementation of civil war peacebuilding connected to the effective disarmament and demobilisation of warring sides. This provides confidence-building among the parties and development of institutions that can encourage democratisation. Meanwhile, it reduces the chances that

[44] Headed by former governor of Mosul province, Atheel al-Nujaifi.
[45] From a long time, Assyrian efforts to create their own forces were rejected by Iraq, but they recently received permission to establish their own militia, the Nineveh Protection Unit (NPU), after the conspicuous failure of the Iraqi armed forces to protect their community.

war will be reignited (Lyons, 2002:226), however there are many challenges to disarmament and demobilisation processes that need to be considered (Paes, 2005; Diamond, 2006; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2007). Disarmament and demobilisation in Iraq would be very complicated, particularly as the national armed forces manifestly cannot guarantee the safety of any communities. This explains why obviously dubious or even repugnant military configurations are reluctantly accepted by Iraqi ethnic groups (Figure 5.9).

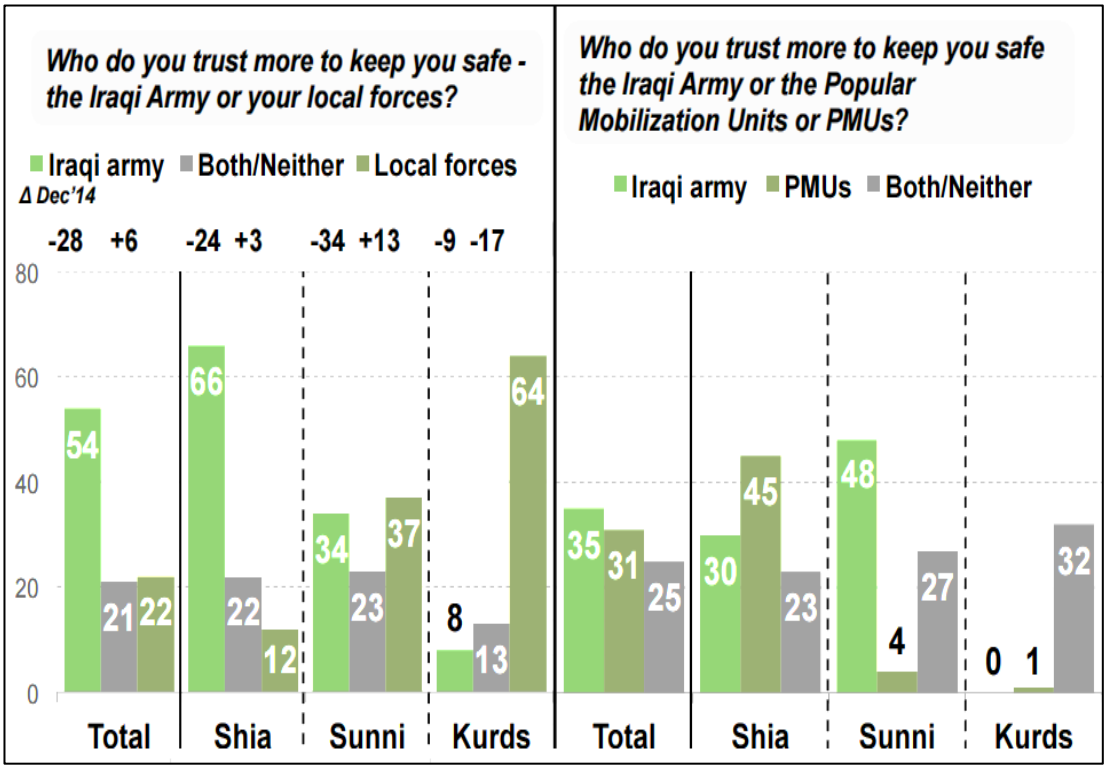


Figure 5.9: Groups' distrust toward Iraqi army
Sources: Greenberg Quinlan Rosner August/September 2015 poll

According to the survey conducted by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research in August/September 2015, as shown in the Figure 5.9, the majority of Sunnis and Kurds do trust on their local forces more than Iraqi national army; even Shias, who comprise the vast majority of Iraqi Army personnel, trust PMUs to keep them safe more than the national army. Kurdish and Sunni trust in PMUs is very low. Indeed, this force

included many different groups/agendas and incited an internal war against Iraqi communities (ICG, 2014), especially as part of these forces are more or less under direct Iranian influences, trained, equipped and supervised by Iran's Quds Force (Hiltermann, 2015).

> 'In counter-attacks against ISIS in Tikrit city [Saddam Hussein's hometown], they committed crimes against the Sunni community and looted people's properties. In Baghdad as well, many Arab Sunnis were attacked by Shiite militias and many Sunni youths were killed because of their names, such as Omer, Yazid and Osman'. IR8

Sunnis see these forces as sectarian militias backed by Iran and complicit in the killing, abuse and destruction of Sunni properties and mosques (Al Jazeera News and Agencies, 2016; Human Rights Watch, 2016), while Kurds view Kurds who joined this force as traitors. All forces that have already participated in sectarian conflicts are PMUs (e.g. Mehdi Army, Badr Bridge, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, Kata'ib Hezbollah etc.).

Basically, since 2003, many extreme groups have appeared in Iraq, such as Iraqi al-Qaida (Sunni), the Mahdi Army (Shia), Sunni Affiliation (Sunni), Shafi'i Group (Sunni), Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (Shia) and ISIS (Sunni), which affected peaceful coexistence. These groups have contributed to deteriorating the links and common relations between components, while each of them implicitly claimed that they defend a specific sectarian group. The expression of ethno-sectarian conflicts in terrorist violence is one of the confounding challenges encountered in some multicultural societies, such as the raw political violence of the Irish Republican Army in the UK (Horgan and Taylor, 1997). More than one-third of all terrorist organizations in the world operate to advance the interests of ethnic groups (Boylan, 2016:250). Ethnic

terrorism seeks to their identity through terrorist activities and creates a climate of fear. It poses a dilemma for the state in which retaliation would be core behaviour to tackle the conflicts by both state and groups which lead to limitation of solution of the violent conflicts (Byman, 1998).

Any non-state sanctioned violence is normatively considered terrorism, but such distinctions are blurred in nations where the state cannot protect people. Consequently, each side in Iraq denounces counterpart militias as terrorist groups, while its own defenders are hailed as sacred warriors incapable of transgression.

> ‘The Mahdi Army was playing a bad role in fomenting conflicts; they are similar with al-Qaida, they have the same idea and are doing the same things. Iran motivated them to fight the Sunni community’. FG10B

> ‘Maybe some events occurred but it does not mean Mahdi Army (Shia militia) killed people, they are national army. For me, al-Hashid al-Shaabi (PMUs) as well is sacred because they fight for us’. FG9A

Thus, members of military forces are accorded a certain status and even veneration in their own communities, and potential critics are silenced by hysteria and violence. These groups would only stand to lose from disarmament and demobilisation, thus they oppose it (Spear, 2002:145). Meanwhile, in contrast to the view that disarmament and demobilisation would help reduce conflict risk through direct effects of decrease military expenditure and manpower and indirect effects on growth and poverty reduction (Collier *et al.*, 2003:159), this may help increase conflict risk in Iraq because it will lead to increasing unemployment; the Armed Forces are a major source of livelihood in Iraq. According to Iraqi statistics, 22.5% of Iraqis live below the poverty line, which is up to 40% in many Sunni areas (Omar, 2016).

Meanwhile, as discussed in chapter three, the de-Ba'athification policy and barring Sunnis from employment in the Iraqi Army directly exacerbated the material wellbeing of Sunnis and contributed to their joining insurgent groups. After the 2003 invasion efforts were made by the US and the CPA (2003-2004) to enhance the process of disarmament and demobilisation, but these were refused by the ethno-sectarian groups because they were understandably wary of any new central IG (Diamond, 2004:41). Therefore, after a while the international community (particularly the US) came to accept the role of local militias and attempt to integrate them in strategies to protect communities and fight terrorist groups (Eland, 2009), particularly since 2014, with extensive international support for groups to counteract ISIS (O'Driscoll, 2016).

Domestic policy also currently supports the expansion of PMUs, with attractive salaries for fighters. Consequently, the only practical solution to harness these groups to a national unity mission is to organise such militias within local governments, embedded within a broad national army context, rather than demobilisation.[46] However, there is still difficulties about how to isolate theses militia groups from their previous leaderships and political parties.

5.7.4 The possibility of living together

Having these profound problems for ethno-sectarian diversity, by which its values have been shifted to violent ethno-sectarian conflicts, participants encountered questions about the possibility of living together, especially after the recent upsurge of violence. The implications of conflicts since 2003 and the last events of armed

[46] The 2005 Constitution allowed regions to create local forces, article 121, section 5 mentions: The regional government shall be responsible for all the administrative requirements of the region, particularly the establishment and organization of the internal security forces for the region such as police, security forces, and guards of the region.

conflicts in 2014 made living together in the same area untenable because these events made groups distrust each other and think about revenge.

> ‘It is very difficult because there is bad blood between us… people were attacked by their neighbours; how we can live together?’ FG3A

The majority of refugee participants confirmed that they cannot trust others, and even if the situation stabilized they could not live with others because of the bad blood among them. Even those who reported the hypothetical possibility of living together connected their opinions with some ideal conditions that cannot be envisaged in the near future.

> ‘I think there is still a possibility for different religious and ethnic groups to live together, if there is the rule of non-sectarian government and effective authority to enforce the law fairly’. IR2

Experts’ participants went beyond this view to posit that people were living together in harmony before 2003 because of the suppressive policy of the Ba’athist regime, not because of intrinsic tolerance and mutual respect. Nevertheless, participants particularly in non-war areas attempts to confirm that people are tolerant toward ethno-sectarian diversity and they see official policy and politicians as working toward dividing society.

> ‘Our history witnessed a peaceful coexistence of the Iraqi people, regardless of cultural backgrounds. Ethno-sectarian conflicts happened due to the inappropriate policies of the new Iraqi government’. IR5

However, it should be noted that there is sometimes a distance between what people do and what they say and ‘data on what people do is critical for trying to make sense

of what they say' (Hayden, 2007:107). Whereas, the majority of respondents in these areas affirm that they as 'civilians' do not have problem to live together, they do not ready to vote to candidates from other communities. These are indicators to explain to what extent the problem of ethnicity and sectarianism affect Iraqi society. In social and psychological aspects, Iraqi society has been irreparably divided and hatred has been entrenched, as IR11 explained: 'psychologically, Kurds cannot feel convenient within Sunni areas, Sunnis and Shias as well'.

Nonetheless, the results confirm that despite the reality of the ground and divided society, there is a conspicuous lack of popular support on division. People would still like Iraq to remain as an undivided and multicultural country, however impractical this seems. Except for Kurds, a large contingent of respondents rejected any type of solution that involves the ultimate division of the country. Meanwhile, living together in the war shattered areas untenable. This complicates the problem due to disconnect between practical and possible solutions (e.g. partition) and the nostalgic ideation of national unity. Thus, the alternative models that can keep the sovereignty of Iraq as a state should be developed with realistic acknowledgement of ethnic divisions to avoid complete balkanisation.

5.8 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter discussed identity and the challenges of ethnic diversity and its impacts on ethno-sectarian conflict regulation. It analysed the rationale and effects of the new IG's policies toward cultural groups, suggesting that government policy should answer groups' aspirations for cultural recognition, with anti-discrimination and equal opportunities for all citizens. However, numerous factors have ensured that ethnic division and inequality has been exacerbated in a deteriorating security matrix within

Iraq since the 2003 invasion. It is not reasonable to identify a specific factor as the key root-cause of the problems, but based on the stages identified, different causes have been noted that contributed to sustain conflicts since 2003. Political elites have played crucial in inducing, provoking, and exacerbating ethno-sectarian conflicts, using political manipulating the political process as well as people's daily lives to foster a psychological environment of distrust and hatred, whereby diverse ethnic components cannot live together in the same places.

It can be considered that lasting ethno-sectarian conflicts increase distrust and create more obstacles to resolution. Iraqi society is currently divided along ethno-sectarian lines not only in political and socio-economic aspects but rather in territorial aspects. War created a map on the ground between communities, and social capitals in terms of trust and relationships between these communities are very weak, and in the war zones destroyed, with no viable possibility of living together in future.

Each community is compelled to revert to its primordial identity in the way it conducts politics and daily life, thinking of self-interest (i.e. survival) rather than community or national common interests. This situation is one of risk, because these societies are vulnerable to the reoccurrence of conflict due to the failure to build safety and confidence. Any long-term solution must determine this reality in the ground; thereby the models of integration and assimilation cannot be suitable, rather they exacerbate the problems. Currently it is difficult to find out strong common symbols among groups, meanwhile there are no efforts to create common interests to collect different ethnic and sectarian groups together.

Most domains (e.g. political parties, geography, military and mass psychology) have divided over ethnic-sectarian lines, and solutions that focus on separation forms have

more obvious potential to overcome problems. Partition would be an undesirable but practical conclusion to the Iraqi stalemate, separating the major populations institutionally and allowing each group to keep its identity within Iraqi state.

Aside from this possibility, it is illustrated that the government's policies have acted to project the dominant group's identity on others as an 'Iraqi' identity. The government in its nationalism policy instead of employing civic characteristics, focused on Shia doctrine. Building national identity must not be a barrier to ethnic identity in deeply divided society, otherwise it affects instability, because other groups would feel grievances and consequently resort to insurrection and conflict, without genuine integration. Therefore, this chapter illustrated that efforts of imposing a single identity is not acceptable in federal and deeply divided states.

It is confirmed that the Shia group used state power to privilege their group and suppress others. The Shia-dominated government, which was described as sectarian, started to monopolise power and hegemony on other communities. Markedly, after the second round of the al-Maliki government, competitive authoritarianism was realised through excluding and marginalising effective Sunni leaders in the political process and threatening Kurds with military campaigns in disputed areas to secure Shia domination of the Iraqi state.

The chapter investigated the violation of democratic principles and efforts to control power by dominant group in new Iraq, finding that this led to disenfranchisement, grievance and a consequent expansion of conflict, including terrorist activities, with the new government manifestly failing to be a government for all. Despite the regime change, the new incumbents have failed to overcome the paradigm of oppression and

they continue to reiterate oppression against non-dominant ethnic group identities and rights.

6 THE CRISES AND SOLUTIONS OF IRAQI FEDERAL GOVERNANCE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the findings related to ethno-sectarian conflict regulations and Iraqi federal governance. It synthesises the results, connecting them to theories and comparing them with previous literature, facilitating understanding of the failures to overcome ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq, and suggesting how critiques of centralism could be enriched by analysing the failures of centralization policies by IG in last decade. It analyses critiques of partition, which to a large extent have lost their explanatory power for the case of Iraq. Despite recent studies in this field having discussed a confederation alternative for deeply divided societies, this study illustrates that federalism is still a viable and acceptable solution for Iraq. It investigates the limitations of the Iraq federal model which has made it ineffective so far; the significant failing is that it did not lead to the separation of conflicting groups. Therefore, it emphasises the necessity of separating groups through the creation of three new federal regions alongside the KRI.

The chapter discusses other major themes related to ethnic conflict regulation, and illustrates the new framework for ethno-sectarian conflicts. Section 6.2 analyses and discusses models for the resolution Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflicts, which includes federalism, the strength of federal-based soft partition over hard partition, and limitations of the Iraqi federal model. Section 6.3 presents the development of a new framework for ethnic conflicts regulation, before concluding in the final section.

6.2 RESOLUTION FOR IRAQI ETHNO-SECTARIAN CONFLICTS

6.2.1 Separation versus integration models

The results demonstrate that inappropriate policies of IG generally contributed to the current predicaments in Iraq. Respondents reported that the current political status quo is not viable to address ethnic conflicts and it needs to be reformed. They present different ethnic conflict regulation such as federalism, soft and hard partition, centralism and confederalism. However, their concentration focused on federalism and other separation models. It is notable that participants mostly presented their viewpoints toward ethnic conflict regulation models on the basis of their ethnic background rather than national interests.

Generally, there are two different perspectives among scholars and policymakers about the models of regulating ethnic conflicts; the perspectives that support solving ethnic conflicts by enhancing integrated multi-ethnic societies through integration models such as centralism, and advocators who support ending ethnic conflicts by separating disputed groups through partition models. It seems the second perspective is an inevitable solution for Iraq where current Iraqi society is entirely divided along ethno-sectarian lines which cannot be integrated in the short term and the results confirmed the difficulty of living together in conflicting areas. Therefore, models such as integration through centralism is not considered appropriate for addressing current ethno-sectarian conflicts. Although the intention to return Iraq to a unitary centralism have recently been noted among Shias, returning Iraq to a unitary centralism means not having a dominant voice for respondents. Many Shias and some of Assyrian respondents confirmed that a strong government and central state are required in the Iraqi predicaments.

> ‘If we have a strong central government, we don’t need province councils… there is no rule of law neither in local nor national levels. I support central system with plan and justice’. FG9G

Prior to 2005, there was a strong tendency for a unitary state among Sunnis and some Shias (Dodge, 2007b; Al-Qarawee, 2010), but recently Sunni enthusiasm for this has waned while Shia affirmation of this model has intensified. For instance, SCIRI was one of the Shia forces that supported ethnofederalism (combining nine Shia-majority provinces into a single federal entity) (Cordesman, 2007; Visser, 2007:815), but their recent attempts focused on a central and unitary state (Habib, 2016). Shias supported decentralism in 2005, by which about 90% of the Shia population voted for the 2005 Constitution that supports decentralism (McGarry and O’Leary, 2007:669), but this seems to have declined among them.

Nevertheless, according to the results, returning Iraq to a unitary central state is not acceptable among the majority of components. The last decade of governance in Iraq proved that attempting centralised rule would lead to more fragmentation. The current crisis is seen that originated to the centralization process of al-Maliki rule which escalated violent conflicts and forced Sunnis to cooperate with ISIS (Dodge, 2013; O’Driscoll, 2014, 2016). Contrarily, decentralised models (e.g. federalism) are more preferable to respondents.

Based on the results, there are two prospects of such a scenario at present for regulating ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq; either an entire division of Iraq to create two or three independent states or a partially divided country into three or four federal regions. Although the first scenario was not supported by the majority of respondents, the difficulty of living together and distrust between components were confirmed. Results

show that the majority of Shias and a part of Sunni communities see a partition as an undesirable alternative and they see it as the enemy project. Conversely, the majority of Kurds and some participants from different backgrounds see partition as the solution. However, with the exception of the Kurds, a hard partition (dividing Iraq into multiple independent states) was rejected severely.

Partition as the solution for ethno-sectarian conflicts has been argued by many scholars, especially in the case of a violent civil war (Kaufmann, 1996; Sambanis, 2000; Downes, 2001; Chapman and Roeder, 2007; Johnson, 2008). It has been the dominant voice in the discourse surrounding the solution of Iraqi predicaments, when violent conflicts were growing in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion. International policy-makers and researchers presented different perspectives toward the forms of partition. The large contingent of them advocated so-called soft partition, by which Iraq should be divide into three federal regions alongside three ethno-sectarian communities of Shias, Sunnis and Kurds (Brancati, 2004; Biden and Gelb, 2006; Kaufmann, 2006; Joseph and O'Hanlon, 2007), or in non-ethnic based regions (Williams and Simpson, 2008).

Senator Joe Biden (Vice President 2009-2017) and Leslie Gelb, a former President of the Council on Foreign Relations in the US, laid out the five-point plan in 2006. They suggested having a soft partition as a blueprint to address the ethnic-sectarian conflicts in Iraq. This solution was inspired by BH and it is intended to maintain a unified Iraq by decentralizing it and giving Kurds, Shias and Sunnis their own regions while guaranteeing Arab Sunnis a share of oil revenues (Biden and Gelb, 2006). However, this solution was not warmly welcomed by the Iraqis,[47] and it was also rejected by the

[47] One of the Participants of FG1 in Kirkuk reported that when Biden met people in Kirkuk to talk about their partition proposal, they rejected it strongly.

US. Dodge (2007b:33-35) argued that this solution could localise the conflicts and reignite the conflicts between groups within communities not cease it, thus what the country needs is one coherent and functioning state, not three.

Soft partition proposals have been criticized as the unfit solution because the conditions that existed in the Bosnian case does not exist in Iraq and thus they thought that the concept of a soft partition misreads the Iraqi realities (Shanker, 2007; Rubin, 2007; Hiltermann, 2007; Dodge, 2007b; Visser, 2007, 2008). The major criticisms were that BH had already been divided and war created a tangible map on the ground, but the geographical boundaries between groups in Iraq were not quite clear and the majority of cities are very heterogeneous. In BH all three sides had fought and the militia fully contributed, whereas in Iraq the militia fighters of groups remain fully tooled for combat. The outside powers participated in the Dayton Accord in BH, whereas in Iraq there is no will among international powers to participate. Furthermore, the major criticisms presented were related to the lack of historical roots of division and public support in which Iraqis do not accept partition.

Visser (2007, 2008) argued that partition proposals are historically illiterate due to Iraq never historically being divided into ethno-sectarian lines. While history plays a formidable role in the competition of partitioning ideas, the US policymaking views of Iraq are historically incorrect. The terms of ‘Sunnistan’ and ‘Shiistan’ that are used by foreigners are more artificial due to Iraq components historically not experiencing these terms to express their demands. Meantime, public perceptions (except Kurds) from the population and clerics, both in power and in opposition, saw partition as the worst possible outcome both before and after the 2003 invasion.

Nonetheless, the ongoing ethno-sectarian conflicts see the changes in the Iraqi predicament as bringing it closer to the scenario of the BH model. Essentially, the threat that ISIS poses to the territorial integrity of Iraq has changed things (O'Driscoll, 2016; Stansfield, 2014). Violent conflicts have steadily created a real map on the ground, especially as discussed in chapter five; the last armed conflicts fragmented the majority of mixed cities and created clear territorial boundaries between groups. All components of militias fully contributed, and the international community, especially the US, has become involved in the problems once again. Moreover, historical evidence cannot change the reality that violent conflicts have steadily shaped three ethno-sectarian entities which can be demographically, ideologically, economically and politically distinguished.

Even though the IG could, with support from the international community, militarily recapture of the majority of Sunni areas, the implications of this division will remain. Sectarianism affected social cohesion insomuch that trust among Shia, Sunni and Kurdish communities was destroyed. Even in socio-economic aspects, these territorial communities got different levels of development. Despite the US authorities making efforts to restrict differences, Natali (2007:1119) noted that three distinct zones can be identified.[48] Sunni areas are very poor and their economic performance and infrastructure is close to total collapse due to most sectarian fighting occurring in those areas. Conversely, Shia areas are relatively secure places for economic development

[48] For instance, the American authorities in Iraq attempted to prevent the KRI from advancing too far in relation to the rest of Iraq. Of $18.6 billion allocated for Iraqi reconstruction, only $600 million was devoted to Kurdistan. Of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) sponsored local capacity building projects implemented between 2004 and 2007, only 3.6% were spent in the Kurdistan. However, it was still able to get benefits from its stability and being an economic centre to other part of the country. For more information see Natali (2007).

and the majority of Iraqi budgets are allotted to Shia communities. Nonetheless, Shia areas also encounter a lack of basic services and endemic corruption.

Kurdistan is more developed compared to Shia and Sunni areas, although currently Kurds are encountering a severe economic challenge and are rarely paid their salaries. After 2003, the relative stability of Kurdistan and the continued insurgency in Iraqi cities led to fast economic development and investment in KRI, although its development has recently encountered crises as the consequence of three major economic shocks, (the cut of its budget by federal government since 2014, decrease of the oil prices, and the cost of the ISIS war).

It is notable that the majority of the studies that have criticized an ethno-sectarian partition did so prior to the 2000s, but after this period, many instrumental events in Iraq occurred. Especially after ISIS attacks, violent brutal armed conflicts have polarized Iraqi society and it cannot stabilize in the near future. Even if the IG's military would be able to recapture the whole Sunni cities, they cannot change the affiliation of Sunnis toward their identities, which make them unaccepting of Shia power, thereby the continuation of violence (i.e. terrorism) can be expected. Another lack in these studies is that they have admitted that Kurds in all surveys welcome partition, and they have a stronger ethnic and historical case for not being forced to remain within Iraq than the other ethnicities (Brancati, 2004). Kurds are not a number; they are one of the core communities in Iraq, and their perspectives should be taken into account. Otherwise, the country cannot achieve stability as the ignorance of Sunni perspectives in the last decade did not allow the country to be secure.

However, our results confirmed that major changes from people's perceptions toward partition. In addition to the Kurds, many of the other respondents did not disagree with

a kind of soft partition within a federal context. Thus, the critiques already presented against a soft partition may not work for the current situation, or at least they have lost their effectiveness. It seems that Iraqi people have their own understanding of concepts related to the Arabic lexicon. Generally, the concept of partition is referred to as *Taqsim*, *Tajzi'a* or *Tafraqa*, which have negative semantic connotations pertaining to 'dissolution' in Arabic.

Perhaps it belongs to the traditional attitude that colonialism followed the strategy called 'divide and conquer' against societies in the Middle East in order to control them. This attitude is still very common in Iraqi society and any argument to divide Iraq is seen as a colonial agenda to divide a country. In the new era people heard of partition from the American policy-makers in 2006, whereby they see the project as a US-Israeli project to divide and control Iraq. Even the wrong translation of federalism (as synonymous with division) played a role in why many Sunnis did not vote for the 2005 Constitution:

> 'Sunni imams played a negative role in misleading people about federalism; they were able to persuade people that federalism means the complete division of Iraq'. FG7B

Therefore, Arab politicians are always attempting to stop themselves from saying these words. In their rhetoric, Arabic elites attempt to present their disagreement with partition (*Taqsim*), but practically their policies indicate otherwise (Eland, 2009). For instance, Iraqi elites have imposed economic sanctions on the KRI, issued arrest warrants for many Sunni leaders and killed Sunni civilians; clearly these policies cannot be justified in a federal state, nor are they conducive to integration. Visser (2007) has depended on some effective leaders and clerics' perspectives as proof of

anti-sectarianism and partition. If two of them, 'Muqtada al-Sadr and Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani' are taken as examples, it demonstrates the extent to which they motivated disintegration. The Mahdi Army is the militia wing of the Sadr movement led by Muqtada al-Sadr and has been accused as being the most brutal militia targeting Sunnis. In all previous elections, al-Sistani urged the creation of a 'Shia List' to collect all Shia parties and individuals (Dodge, 2007a:94), and issued a fatwa which committed all Shia voters to support Shia candidates.

On the other hand, aside from these arguments, hard partition (either as the form of confederation or independence) is narrowly proposed as the model to tackle ethno-sectarian conflicts. Increasing violent conflicts led authors to think that soft partition is not sufficient and examined a hard partition or complete division of Iraq on ethno-sectarian lines. Baker (2007), the president of the Washington-based Fund for Peace, presented hard partition (complete sovereignty for three states) versus soft partition. Like the EU version, the 'Union of Iraqi States' three component parts would mean political independence linked economically. This would be a guarantee to prevent the hegemony of one group over other major ethnic-religious groups, as each would enjoy its own government and security forces. Similarly, Eland (2009) in his study 'partitioning for peace' affirmed that the country should inevitably be partitioned either for three or more confederations or three independent states in order to stop violent conflicts.

Nonetheless, hard partition alternatives have pervasively increased in the aftermath of the events of the ISIS attacks since 2014. Results demonstrate that Kurds' desire has risen from federalism to independence or a kind of confederalism that gives them more independence. Kurdish respondents confirmed that their experience with the IG in the

last decades have proved that their future is in danger because the government has not honoured the Constitution. A Kurdish MP in the Iraqi Parliament stated:

> 'I think federalism is failed and it cannot be a sustainable solution in Iraq. The best solution is dividing Iraq into three independent states'. IR12

The KRG accused the IG of not providing them with rights that were approved in the 2005 Constitution and other legislations. Despite the previous crisis about oil agreements, Peshmerga forces and article 140, since 2014 the IG has stopped the KRI's budget allocation (O'Driscoll, 2015:9). The KRG President (Massoud Barzani) announced the ambition for a new agreement to divide Iraq on a confederal structure, despite having not drafted an official project, they claimed that it was discussed with Baghdad.[49] As President of Kurdistan, Barzani explained their will to conduct a referendum in September 2017:

> 'An independent Kurdistan could have a much stronger relationship with Baghdad. Kurdistan will be a great neighbour, cooperating against terrorism and sharing resources — including water and petroleum infrastructure — in ways that benefit both countries' (The Washington Post, 2017).

However, the KRG has not yet clarified what they take confederalism to entail, nor have they developed its mechanism for agreement and implementation. The Kurdish aspiration to create a national homeland is a historical grievance dating to their betrayal by the Anglo-French colonial settlement in the Middle East during the 1920s and their subsequent subjugation to hostile central governments in Iraq (as well as in Iran, Syria

[49] For more information see the interview conducted by Rudaw with President Barzani (Rudaw 2017a, January 20).

and Turkey) (Heacock, 2010:8). Despite complying with remaining within Iraq after 2005, they were latterly very unhappy with the IG's hostile policies against them. It seems that for the groups that have had a historical struggle to obtain self-determination, their demands will appear if the new political system and government policy does not satisfy their aspirations. Conversely, Shias reject letting Kurds hold a referendum and separate from Iraq. Amar al-Hakim, leader of the ISCI and Shia alliance in the Iraqi Parliament, was very close to the Kurds and his party cooperated with Kurds for fulfilling federalism in 2005 Constitution. He urged Kurds to declare independence, otherwise they will inevitably encounter on-going Iraqi conflicts (Goran, 2017).

Undoubtedly, in practical terms, the powers that have been implemented by Kurds are much wider than the federal region structure. This is because the Kurds have their own military forces and security services, foreign policy and relationships with outside, and economic relations and oil export channels, all of which work independent of Iraq (Khalilzad and Pollack, 2014). A quasi-state structure, rather than a more limited federative one, has developed in the KRI (Bengio, 2008:76). Ironically, the KRI has become a refuge for Arab Sunni political opposition to the Shia-dominated IG. Kurds have not announced that their separation from Iraq might relate to external geopolitical factors rather than internal political dynamics (Khan and Kirmanj, 2015:373).

It is clear that Kurds would not accept any effort to erode their current autonomy level, and they seek more. Kurds see the new event in Iraq as being similar to the stage of collapse of the Ottoman Empire before the creation of Iraq (Stansfield, 2014). This is why they talk about the necessity of abrogating the Sykes-Picot Agreement with the creation of a Kurdish state (Chulov, 2016). However, it seems that Kurds alone support this solution, although they have not officially presented this model.



Figure 6.1: Picture of Kurdish demonstrations to support independence in May 2016, Erbil

O'Leary (2015)[50] argued that because the IG has not honoured the Constitution, the KRG has the right to renegotiate with Baghdad in order to create a confederal compromise in which Kurdistan should be a confederal state as well as keeping the exterior structure of Iraq intact. In the same token, Khalilzad[51] and Pollack (2014) thought a one-country-two-system model (with federalism for the Arab provinces and confederation with Kurdistan) is certainly a plausible solution for Iraq, but it may well be the least plausible due to its complexity and expectation of Iraq's various warring factions' disagreement.

Regardless of the advantages and disadvantages of a hypothetical 'Republic of Kurdistan', Stansfield (2014:1) thought the US should read the Kurdish political reality: 'ignoring Kurdish realities at this moment may prove to be not only a strategic risk but a missed opportunity at a time when there are few others on the table'. The 'reality' on

[50] O'Leary was part of a constitutional advisory team that assisted the KRG in writing the 2005 Constitution.
[51] Zalmay Khalilzad was a former US ambassador in Iraq, currently working in oil fields in the Kurdistan region.

the ground was conducive to giving Kurdistan independent rights through confederal or independent rights, i.e. dividing Iraq into two confederal states whereby the Kurdish issue would be expediently solved (as an implicit reward for the Kurds' military burden after the Iraqi Army fled Mosul and left a windfall of advanced weaponry for ISIS). However, Khan and Kirmanj (2015) demonstrated the necessity of dividing Iraq into three confederations corresponding to the three main groups (Shia, Sunni and Kurds), with Baghdad remaining as a common region. They argued that a confederal structure is a better and more lasting political solution for Iraq than federal or other models.

Generally, the key justifications behind the arguments' development of these studies is either in the forms of confederalism or independence and can be summarised as follows:

(1) While there is a strong link between partition and heterogeneity, Iraqi society have never been able to be a homogeneous and integrated society. Historically, the IG has failed to establish an integrated nation which consists of the core foundation of states but also recent violent conflicts emerged that demonstrated that factions cannot live together within the state. Therefore, each ethno-sectarian group should be allowed to create its homogenous state.

(2) Despite the approval of federalism since 2005, ethnic conflicts are still persisting, i.e. federalism is not sufficient to overcome the deep violent ethno-sectarian conflicts. As well as centralism and a unitary state having already been experienced, this led to ethnic cleansing, genocide and suppression. Therefore, the best alternative is dividing the country into three stable states.

Even though these points are relatively not unrealistic, their solutions are not very different from federal proposals, whereas both sides agreed to remain with Iraqi

external sovereignty. Ideally, confederalism should focus on independent sovereignty of state members. 'It comes about when two or more autonomous states, or entities, agree to the joint exercise of power in a number of defined areas of governmental activity (e.g. in trade or defence).…it must be reasonable to assume that secession is a right' (Dodd, 1999:3). Nevertheless, these studies still talked about the republic of Iraq and central government. Therefore, it cannot find major differences between advocators of a soft partition in a federal framework and a hard partition in a confederal framework. Both sides argued for the necessity of giving main components their own governments; both preferred to remain with Iraq as a common state and both suggested the necessity of sharing groups in an economical sense.

The crucial difference between them is related to the power. While the advocators of a soft partition (federal structure) emphasise a federal government with frequently strong power over regional governments, confederal advocators confirm weaker central power and equality among confederations. Therefore, if the concept of confederalism in these studies were replaced by federalism, the core of their arguments would not change but it makes them more plausible. Furthermore, these studies lack empirical data, and as such depend upon a theoretical basis, even though they could not quite present relevant references. If the Khan and Kirmanj (2015) study is taken as an example, it can be found to have almost no support from both academic references and practical politics. It was supposed that the Sunnis preferred a confederal structure, whereas our data confirmed that they have never supported confederation. In the second part of the study that instituted the core of its discussion, there is a significant lack in academic support, even the few authors that were cited are not from within this field. For instance, the study depends on the Lijphart (2004) theory of power-sharing

arrangement to develop discussion while in his study, Lijphart clearly supported power sharing within a federal and not a confederal context:

> ‘For divided societies with geographically concentrated communal groups, a federal system is undoubtedly an excellent way to provide autonomy for these groups. My specific recommendation regards the second (federal) legislative chamber that is usually provided for in federal systems’ (Lijphart, 2004:104).

In addition, many of the case studies that are put forth to support their arguments, such as India, Malaysia, the USA, and Australia, are federal and not confederal countries. However, their suggestion of accounting for the status of Baghdad and for it to be an independent region does make sense. Based on the results, with the exception of the Kurds, the alternative suggestion of an entire division is still not accepted by the majority of groups. Respondents showed their disagreement with regard to dividing Iraq:

> ‘Partition is the worst solution for Iraq; we will never accept the country to be divided into three states’. FG9A

In addition, there is an important lack of the ground in terms of justification of hard partition. Ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq has not emerged due to one of the grouping conflicts struggled in order to separate from Iraq. Neither Sunni nor Shia combatants in the ethnic conflict seek independence; they profoundly want to maintain the integrity of Iraq. Even the Kurds were not uncompromising in their desire for autonomy before 1992, when they committed to cultural autonomy and federal configuration within Iraq, nor after 2003 asked for independence, but recently a conviction that the future of the KRI lies outside Iraq has emerged. Partition, either *de*

jure or *de facto*, is feasible when groups struggled to obtain independence (Smooha and Hanf, 1996). It would almost certainly take more years of fruitless bloodshed to convince both the Sunnis and Shias to ask division (Khalilzad and Pollack, 2014). Despite millions of IDPs, hundreds of thousands of deaths, and the destruction of many of cities' infrastructure, most of them are still not persuaded to accept dividing the country into two or three independent states.

Furthermore, the regional dimensions of hard partition should not be ignored, which is seemingly not accepting Iraq to be divided. Hence, it will be a key factor for more tensions when regional state actors such as Turkey and Iran will not accept this solution.

> 'Division is not solution, if the country divide to three states, immediately Iran will control the south, Saudi Arabia control middle and Turkey will never allow Kurds to live, even Iran do not accept Kurds to be a state because they afraid from Kurds in their countries to copy the same thing. That is why it will be the worst solution'. FG9C

This reflex in anti-partitioning studies concerns the costs of partition (Sambanis, 2000; Etzioni, 2009; Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl, 2009; Forsberg 2013). It is true that the costs are considerable, but the potential costs of deteriorating ethnic conflicts without partition can potentially be greater. If we compare BH with Iraq; both may not succeed in developing democracy and sense of integration. However, the accomplishments that have been achieved from Bosnia due to partition since 1995 cannot be compared with the catastrophic results of non-partition in Iraq since 2005. Over 12 years of violent conflict in Iraq, about 165,000 civilians lost their lives (Iraq Body Count, 2017), creating more than four million of refugees and IDPs (UNHCR,

2015). The damage to Iraqi infrastructure cannot be presented accurately due to lack of data availability, but it can be estimated that Iraq needs hundreds of billions dollars to be reconstructed. An estimated 80% of the infrastructure of Mosul (Figure 6.2), the second biggest city in Iraq, has been destroyed (Najjar, 2017). Indeed, a partition model *per se* is not a factor of civil war and a divided society but it is a product of it.



Figure 6.2: Photo of the damage incurred in Mosul in the fight against ISIS
Source: Najjar (2017)

Therefore, the second scenario, soft partition, is more plausible and it is more acceptable by the majority of respondents. While the majority of participants emphasized the impossibility of living together especially in the war lines, a partially divided country, for three or four regions in the federal context (federal-based soft partition) is compromised. However, in contrast to the previous studies that supported the empowerment of central government over regions (Biden and Gelb, 2006), weaker central power will be more reasonable regarding the Kurds' concern and the last decade's experience of an authoritarian tendency. This is especially so in foreign affairs and resource management, where regions can have greater power. The Kurds

must be granted all of their constitutional rights, as well as there being an acceptance of the territorial advances they have made (O'Driscoll, 2015:13). Nonetheless, a soft partition is still likely to be difficult as the Shias may not prefer this, as many of Shia participants showed their desire for more centralism, or at least to maintain the current status quo.

> 'Federalism is not a successful solution. If the Kurds have a region, it is because they have a unique case… but other parts do not need a federal region, the current system is good, but it needs some reform'. FG9E

Basically, as argued in chapter five, the country is realistically divided into three entities; Shias, Sunni and Kurdistan. Kurds cannot go to Sunni or Shia areas, Shias cannot go to the Sunni areas. The purpose of partition is to end the ethnic wars that make it nearly impossible to build trust among disputing groups (Downes, 2001) and it is increasingly considered where groups are territorially concentrated, even if this requires moving some people (Horowitz, 1985:588). Thus, Iraqi elites can play a role to convince people. It is notable that Czech and Slovak citizens were initially against partition, but their leaders eventually led them to accept it (Eland, 2009:45). Shia leaders in particular, who are currently ascendant, should take responsibility to persuade their people for accepting a partially divided the country to end bloody conflicts.

6.2.2 Is federalism a viable solution? Its limitations in an Iraqi model

The rational question arises of whether, if federalism is a valid solution, ethno-sectarian conflicts have not been addressed, despite federalism being enshrined in the 2005 Constitution. The results confirm that ethno-sectarian conflicts are not related to the federalism *per se* but the unique federal structure in Iraq and its government policy,

which led to the model being ineffective. Many of the respondents argued that federalism had not been given a chance to be implemented. Cameron (2007) argued that the 2005 Constitution does not, in reality, create federalism and Iraq is not in fact a federal country as yet because it has not led to federal regions and none of the major federal institutions is up and running. In other words, it can be considered that federalism has not succeeded in addressing conflicts due to it not leading to the separation of conflicting groups. For more discussion on the federal structure in Iraq, based on the focus groups' discussions, the lack of the Iraqi federal governance can be illustrated in the following points.

- *The biggest problem was that the government elites did not believe in democracy and federalism and it has not worked as a federal state because it depends on decentralism and the division of power*

Elites did not commit to federalism despite the constitutional provisions toward cultural groups (Romano, 2014; O'Leary, 2015). Thus, regardless of the constitution, IG has steadily attempted to control all resources of power as it implemented in authoritarian centralisation or competitive authoritarianism. Federalism in an authoritarian framework tends to exacerbate ethnic divisions, due to impossibility of maintaining the promises of federalism for decentralisation of power (Adeghe, 2009:49).

The balance of power is a significant foundation of federalism to prevent the federal government's abuse of regional governments. Through decentralizing the power, the federal government is less able to monopolise the power, particularly, ethno-federalism succeeds only insofar as it achieves a balance in power-sharing between regions and the federal government (Herther-Spiro, 2007). However, as discussed in

the chapter five, the federal government was exploited to extend the Baghdad power at the expense of others.

Federal institutions are used as political capital in the struggle between ethnic groups. All power has been concentrated in Baghdad, but also is in the hands of the prime mister. Zakaria (1997:42) argued that 'democracy without constitutional liberalism is not simply inadequate, but dangerous, bringing with it the erosion of liberty, the abuse of power, ethnic divisions, and even war'. However, despite the 2005 Constitution being seen as a liberal and democratic document that could have led the country to a much more propitious future (McGarry and O'Leary, 2007; Romano, 2014:548), officials have violated it. This relatively invalidates Zakaria's (1997) assertion on existing constitutional liberalism as the essential requirement of succeeding democracy, but elite commitments to the constitutional responsibility are more significant.

The rule of law is of remarkable significance to the practice of democracy, and the government should act in the way that the constitution has allowed, otherwise the role of government might change to arbitrary rule and it would affect the aggravation of the group's confidence in the government (Smith, 2004:31). There is evidence that the lack of the rule of law and the gap between constitutional principle and practice led to the collapse of many federal countries (Adeghe 2009:50). Federal experiences of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Nigeria has failed precisely because it did not go far enough in granting regional autonomy. Despite regional governments being granted certain powers in principal, denying these powers in practice would cause federalism to fail (Brancati, 2004:13). The denial of adequate autonomy (to Kurds and Sunnis), as well as a share of the power at the central level, has resulted in Kurds acting on their

secessionist desires and has led to the rise of ISIS in the Sunni provinces (O'Driscoll, 2015).

In this regard, the weaknesses of the Supreme Federal Court to address the disputes which arise between governments can be regarded as another of Iraqi's federal limitations. In the last decade, many legislative problems emerged between the IG and the KRG or governorates (for example over oil issues), but the role of the court was absent in determining the correct side. In contrast, the judiciary has been politicised and has been working in favour of a group-dominated government (Dodge, 2013:242).

As Levitsky and Way (2002:56) argued, in competitive authoritarianism, governments follow different strategies to subordinate the judiciary, often via impeachment or bribery, extortion, and other mechanisms of co-optation. 'Instead of independently fulfilling these functions, the court increasingly fell under Prime Minister Maliki's sway, with its chief justice attending political meetings and events' (Romano, 2014:554). This court issued arrest warrants for those who opposed the al-Maliki rule (ibid). Therefore, it can be admitted that federalism has lost its value as a democratic decentralised model in Iraq since 2011, and the federal system envisioned by the Constitution gave way to an authoritarian system on the ground.

- *The crucial limitation of Iraqi federalism is that it did not lead to the separation of conflicting groups*

The only existential federal region in Iraq is the KRI, whereas federalism needs at least two sub-national regions. Furthermore, the border between the KRI and Iraq is disputed, a source of conflict between the IG and the KRG. The 'disputed areas' mentioned in the 2005 Constitution were to be addressed no later than 2007, but the

issue was deliberately ignored by the IG (O'Driscoll, 2015:6); consequently, residents of these places live in great insecurity.

Although the Constitution allows for the creation of new regions, and there were efforts made by Sunni and Shia provinces to announce themselves regions, the federal government was inherently antipathetic to this constitutional right (Duman, 2013; O'Driscoll, 2016:36). When some Sunni provinces such as Salah ad-Din, Anbar and Diyala attempted to come together to form a federal region in 2011 (which might have prevented the subsequent rise of ISIS), the IG rejected this, fearing it would give the Sunnis the right to establish their own security forces equivalent to the Peshmerga (Duman, 2013; Abu Ltaif, 2015:15). In this view, if the Sunni region alongside the KRI would have already separated in 2005, the situations would have been different. It may be that government-backed Shia militias would have been restricted to attack Sunnis and its government would have provided security, while one of the crucial root-causes of the current crisis is related to these attacks (O'Driscoll, 2014:6-7). This supports Kaufmann's (1996) study, which argued that political arrangement without ethnic separation would not prevent the reoccurrence of conflict.

Colomer (2003:186) provided that particular federal states that adopted two regional federations failed, such as India-Pakistan, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Rhodesia-Nyasaland, and Czechoslovakia. McGarry and O'Leary (2007:679) carried out a study about the 2005 Constitution of Iraq, confirming that a federal system is likely to be more stable with more than three regions, while two-region federations are particularly prone to collapse.

- *Whereas a federal council (senate or upper house) is able to mitigate the influences of majoritarian government, it is absent in Iraq*

The federal council is a crucial foundation of federal arrangement that is responsible in protecting communities' interests by reducing the majority group influences. Lijphart (1999:39) argued that a bicameral instead of a unicameral legislature is the basic principle of a federal system, which gives special representation to minorities. This can be regarded as the place for exercising consociationalism and groups' veto rights for preventing the monopoly of power. However, Iraqi federalism may be the only one that does not have a federal council, although the Constitution provides for its establishment:

> 'A legislative council shall be established named the 'Federation Council,' to include representatives from the regions and the governorates that are not organized in a region. A law, enacted by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Council of Representatives, shall regulate the formation of the Federation Council, its membership conditions, its competencies, and all that is connected with it' (Article 65 of Constitution, 2005).

Fundamentally, the leave of regional council power and responsibility for the representative council is problematic *per se* because this forced the regional council to hierarchically be under the representative council which may lead to a lack of balance. While allowing a representative council to determine the powers of the other branch of the legislature will likely result in those powers being limited (Herther-Spiro, 2007:343), it should have the same power as a representative council (Lijphart, 1999). Nevertheless, in the absence of federation council, the representative council giving a clear principle of the tyranny of the Shia majority to pass laws without the consent of

the Arab Sunnis and the Kurds by a simple majority (Abu Ltaif 2015:8), it is worth considering that the Shias are a majority of the population who also have a majority of seats in the Council of Representatives.

Therefore, the formation of a federal council is essential to prevent the tendency of dominant groups to monopolise power, and it should be created on the basis of genuine equality for members of each main grouping (Shia, Sunni and Kurd), with appropriate veto rights. Smaller minorities (Assyrian, Turkmen and Yazidi) can be given equivalent half representation instead of full. For example, if each of the three main communities had ten representatives, each of other minorities could have five representatives in a federal council. This model is followed in Switzerland, where there are 20 cantons and six half-cantons, which have only one instead of two representatives in the federal chamber (Lijphart, 1999:38).

These do not mean that the KRG has not misused the powers allocated to it by the Constitution. It seems the Kurds sought international support for their own quest for statehood, but they wanted to expand their abilities *within* the Iraqi federal model. The KRG conducts its own foreign policy and in many ways deals with foreign countries as a sovereign state, not as a federal region. The major misuse of powers over natural resources implemented by the KRG in exporting and marketing its oil, bypassing the IG, is ideologically based on its rejection of the authority of the central government, which it views as an Arab Shia fiefdom hostile to its interests, and not a representative national government upon which the authority of the Constitution is based; and pragmatically enabled by the diplomatic support and implicit military guarantees it receives from Turkey (which stands to be the main beneficiary of an independent Kurdish oil policy, snatching the lion's share of Iraqi oil from under the nose of Iran and its client regime in Baghdad). Indeed, the abuse of power by the only recognized

region and Sunni insurgencies might make the authorities in Baghdad hesitant to relinquish more powers to provinces, and to create hurdles to any attempt to establish other federal regions.

Based on the above limitations, Iraqi federalism could be determined by federalism or centralism. Lijphart (1979:502), in addition to the primary federal principle of a central-regional division of power, identified five secondary characteristics of federalism: a written constitution, bicameralism, decentralized government and the right of the component units to be involved in the process of amending the federal constitution. In light of the evidence demonstrated, in addition to the primary principle, most of these characteristics are either absent or are violated by Iraqi elites. Therefore, a federal model *per se* cannot be accused as the key factor of the current crises but the absence of federal governance.

Hence, federal-based soft partition or ethnofederalism can still be regarded as a compromise solution in which each group will create its own autonomous government to run their regional community as well as having to participate in a federal government. Lijphart (2007) underscored that the federal system is undoubtedly an excellent way to provide autonomy for groups in divided societies with geographically concentrated communal groups. Essentially, although the 2005 Constitution acknowledged the KRI within the borders the main Kurdish factions controlled in March 2003, it did not enshrine ethnofederalism, but envisioned the formation of other regions not necessarily ethnically defined, and also allowed provinces to be federal regions (Romano, 2014:549).

According to Bakke and Wibbels (2006), ethnofederalism can be regarded as a wise choice, which is proposed as a compromise between the demands for independence

and the desire for a unitary state. This compromise may be necessary where separation is not desirable, and group identities have a geographical base. Ethnofederalism is the formidable political form of decentralization which works in an efficient way to address ethnic conflicts by enabling ethnic territorial groups to wield a degree of autonomous government. This sort of federalism has worked in Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, India and lastly BH (Smooha and Hanf, 1992; Caluwaerts and Reuchamps, 2015; O'Driscoll, 2015).

Above all, federalism is currently more acceptable than other models by the majority of respondents in that it is the most frequent word that is emphasised by them. Arab Sunnis were the people who most rejected federalism in 2005, it seems that their experiences with the Shia-dominated government in the last decade made them change their mind that federalism is better for them for governing their area than nothing (O'Driscoll, 2015:10).

Due to Arab Sunni historically running Iraq, strengthened their belief they were the owners of the country. Thus, they rejected any type of decentralization which may lead to a threat of Iraq's unity (Romano, 2014). So far, a part of the Sunni population and politicians think that the country should remain as the unitary state and be run by them. They cannot convince themselves that they are not a dominant group in Iraq any more. However, as the result of their struggle with a Shia-led government, a large contingent of Arab Sunnis were convinced that the federal region was the method to protect them from Shia rule. Sunni respondents expressed:

> 'We have to be honest, we cannot get a chance to live with the Shia government, therefore the best alternative for us is to create our federal region in our area'. FG10B

> ‘Iraq should divide on federal regions, because we cannot live together any more, it is reality. It is the solution, because every region is responsible to protect its people and their security, such as in Kurdistan region, the Kurds run their region, and we need this type of solution, where the original people govern their region’. FG4A

Thus, since 2011 the calls for a Sunni federal region have increased, and have been vociferously advocated by Sunni political leaders (Al-Qarawee, 2013; Duman, 2013), who attended political conferences held in Turkey, Doha, Jordan and Erbil to unify the Sunnis and encourage them to create a region (al-Salhy, 2016). One of the essential concerns that was previously presented toward creating a federal region in the Sunni area related to the lack of economic resources (Biden and Gelb, 2006; Rubin, 2007; Al-Qarawee, 2010:37). Many of the observers already criticised the constitution that gives Shias and Kurds an opportunity to develop their areas due to receiving permission to develop new oil fields, whereas the Sunni areas lack natural resources (Makiya 2005; Said, 2006). However, recently the oil and gas fields have been found in the Sunni provinces such as Anbar and Mosul (al-Sanjary, 2013; Khan and Kirmanj, 2015:375). Regardless of the theoretical promise of future riches, the most immediate problem facing the Arab Sunni community is their on-going oppression by Shia militias and the Iraqi state, and the lack of a coherent political programme. Additionally, they face the general problem of differing viewpoints on whether federation should be based on an ethnic or governorate basis.

6.2.3 The significance of federal-based soft partition for Iraq

Despite ethnofederalism facing critiques due to its failure to restrict the group’s separatist ambitions and its failure in some countries in Eastern Europe (Bunce, 2007; Roeder, 2009), as well as the critiques toward ethnofederalism’s proposal in the case

of Iraq (Dodge, 2007b; Visser, 2007), several reasons could be cited in support of an ethnofederalism structure:

- *The framework of the political system is not changed and constitutionally it is allowed*

While the majority of studies interested in ethno-sectarian regulation in Iraq emphasized a draft or amendment of the constitution (Eland, 2009; Khan and Kirmanj, 2015), this model does not require a constitutional amendment. The 2005 Iraqi Constitution already provides a procedure for combining provinces into regional governments.

The Iraqi Constitution is a rigid constitution that cannot be modified in normal ways through a simple majority in the legislative council. Any amendment should be going to public referendum and 'the referendum on the amended Articles shall be successful if approved by the majority of the voters, and if not rejected by two-thirds of the voters in three or more governorates' (article 142 of Constitution, 2005). The last paragraph of this article has written as veto right for KRI where includes three governorates.

Basically, if the al-Maliki government had been able to amend the Constitution, it would have done so. There were efforts among Arab Sunnis, Turkmens, and Shias (except ISIC), led by the former Prime Minister al-Maliki, to amend the constitution and increase the power of the federal government vis-à-vis the regions (Stansfield and Anderson, 2009:135). However, the Constitution emphatically restricted any amendment that would reduce the powers of the regions (in article 126).[52] Based on

[52] Articles 126, section 4: Articles of the Constitution may not be amended if such amendment takes away from the powers of the regions that are not within the exclusive powers of the federal authorities, except by the approval of the legislative authority of the concerned region and the approval of the majority of its citizens in a general referendum.

article 142 section 1, the Council of Representatives formed a committee from its members to draft a report of the necessary amendments,[53] but this failed due to disagreement among cultural groups, and the possibility of reaching agreement remains very low.

Actually, the approval of the current Constitution encountered severe difficulties. The USA, UN and other international actors had played essential to encourage the Iraqi leaders to come an agreement toward it. Therefore, it will be very hard to make the groups' politicians create new agreement toward constitutional amendments, whereas none of them accept reduce their powers. Basically, the current Constitution is relatively appropriate with democracy and it was written in favour of regions (McGarry and O'Leary, 2007; Stansfield and Anderson, 2009; Romano, 2014), thereby the crises were not related to it as much related to elite's disavowal of their constitutional obligations (O'Driscoll, 2015; O'Leary, 2015).

- *It does not lead to a further problem; while a hard partition is rejected by the vast majority of respondents, this solution is accepted by people more than other models*

Our results show that a vast shift is happening in Iraqi communities' views of federalism. For instance, the vast majority of Arab Sunnis, Assyrian and Turkmen had previously not preferred federalism for Iraq (Brancati, 2004; Cameron, 2007; McGarry and O'Leary, 2007), but recently, as the results confirmed, the majority of these

[53] Basically, this article was written to make Sunni leaders agree to the Constitution with the promise to amend some articles. 'The Council of Representatives shall form at the beginning of its work a committee from its members representing the principal components of the Iraqi society with the mission of presenting to the Council of Representatives, within a period not to exceed four months, a report that contains recommendations of the necessary amendments that could be made to the Constitution, and the committee shall be dissolved after a decision is made regarding its proposals'.

communities' respondents accept federalism. Some Shia respondents accepted it as the current status quo and/or creating three federal regions.

- *It allows each group to run their people and keep their own identity alongside national identity*

Whereas the Sunni community is very vulnerable, having encountered suppression and demographic changes, this would lead to saving them from Shia militia attacks. In other words, it leads to solving the issue of identity; federalism allows dual identity, whereby people can identify themselves as both Iraqi and Kurdish, Arabic or Shia and Sunni. Ethnofederalism is a model that accept citizens as having dual identity, as the citizens of the state and as the member of a particular group (Herther-Spiro, 2007:330). Thus, ethnic and sectarian identity would not be a barrier to people's affiliation with national identity if the federal government provided equality and anti-discrimination policy. Cohen (1997:625) confirmed that proportionality and federalism are able to mitigate ethnic tensions, in which local governments provide vents for communal affiliation, and federal government provides meaningful national loyalty. This would be a mechanism to prevent ethnicity from becoming a force for extremism. Political institutions of federal authority can enhance the preference for cooperation among different groups on the basis of transparency and competition rather than identity politics.

- *Reducing ethnic cleansing and other crimes*

The most important objective is to end the brutal persecution and murder of people based on their ethnic identity. In the last decade, mixed cities encountered more conflicts and terrorist attacks compared to other cities that were ethno-religiously homogeneous in the KRI and southern Shia cities. Partition could thus provide stability for each region.

- *It is not expected to give rise to more regional tensions concerning Iraqi neighbouring states*

A hard partition is not acceptable by Iraqi neighbouring states because it may lead to a domino effect and trigger their minority groups to replicate the same demands. Forsberg (2013) claimed that ethnic separation may trigger other minority groups to replicate the same demands, even from behind transnational borders. Thus, it may generate a domino effect and promote the voicing of separatist demands from other ethnic groups, potentially inciting new ethnic conflicts and security dilemmas. Iraqi Kurdistan's neighbours – Iran, Syria, and especially Turkey – have generally opposed outright independence, fearing it would increase the demands of their own Kurdish populations (Mills, 2016:4). Despite Turkey-Kurdish relationships developing and resulting in an oil deal (Stansfield, 2013; 2014), Turkey's foreign policy still supports the internal integrity of Iraq. Any support for an independent Kurdistan, which could form a nucleus for international Kurdish movements, would be anathema to any political movement in Turkey, Syria or Iran.

- *Internationally, the USA, a vital political and security partner for both Baghdad and Erbil, has also discouraged Kurdish independence aspirations*

This is because of the potential for regional destabilization (Hashim, 2016:46). However, despite the official policy of the US continually reiterating the commitment to the territorial integrity of Iraq, they do not do so against federalism and the creation of regions. Practically, the US have long had security relationships with Kurds, Shias and Sunnis, and these groups are generally encouraged to solve their own problems within Iraq. The US policy for supporting Kurds and Sunnis as separate entities has arisen following the aftermath of new events of the ISIS attacks in 2014 (O'Driscoll 2016).

Basically, except Israel, none of international actors have officially supported secession in Iraq. In this view, when the KRG announced its intention to conduct an independence referendum in 2017, there were many reactions from the international community to reject such steps. For example, UNAMI stated that 'it has no intention to be engaged in any way or form as concerns the referendum, to be held on 25 September 2017, as announced through an order by the Kurdistan Region of Iraq's Presidency' (UNAMI, 2017).

- *It is allowed to accommodate local paramilitary organisations as local defence forces.*

The last decade's experience proved that the military from different communities did not defend others, as one of the interviewee mentioned:

> 'The forces who were supposed to defend the Mosul, they were from the south and central, and they were not ready to defend those in the North'. IR13

Meanwhile each community has no desire to accept policing by military forces from other backgrounds. Establishing security within one's own regional population is essential for ensuring growth within a federal or indeed any other model of governance. There is clear evidence for the effectiveness of military employment within an original population. Unlike most Iraqi cities, between 2005 and 2014 the KRI provided a good level of security and enjoyed strong economic growth and development (Mills, 2016:3). Whilst the demilitarization of groups' militia is very difficult, it allows militia forces to be organized within the regional governments and provinces as regional armies and security forces to provide security for federal regions like Peshmerga in Kurdistan.

Sunni areas experienced very difficult insecurity, and through enhancing local security forces they may achieve stability. Those who were trained either by Americans, Iraqis or Kurdistan should be employed for the establishment of regional forces in the Sunni regions. In the KRI the Peshmerga has been exemplary in combatting ISIS and ensuring security for multiple ethnicities within Kurdistan, organised by the Ministry of Peshmerga; Sunni and Shia regional PMUs could be organised on a similar basis. This suggests providing a kind of force balance between communities to provide security (and mutual security against terrorist groups).

Addressing Sunni feelings of alienation is crucial to achieving stability and excluding terrorist groups (Al-Qarawee, 2014:19). Currently, Sunnis are suffering from acute insecurity, poverty and suppression, which has induced them to support ISIS in many cases. A federal model would give them a chance to develop their regions and provide security. Otherwise, the current Shia policies of the IG will continue to alienate Sunnis and push them towards secession, analogous to the Kurds. Thereby, the only option would be a hard partition of the country. The actions taken to date have seemingly served to further fragmentation.

6.3 DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR ETHNIC CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In light of the evidence presented, it can be argued that for Iraqi society engulfed by violent conflict, federal based-soft partition offers a compromise. It is a solution between a separatist and unitary tendency in a deeply divided society which suffered with ethno-sectarian violence. In such societies where the entire division of the state is not possible, there is no alternative better than a partially divided society, which

gives each group the authority to manage their people. It is also developed to distrust relations among groups, minorities and majority in which confidence-building required through mechanism of preventing monopoly of power by dominant group.

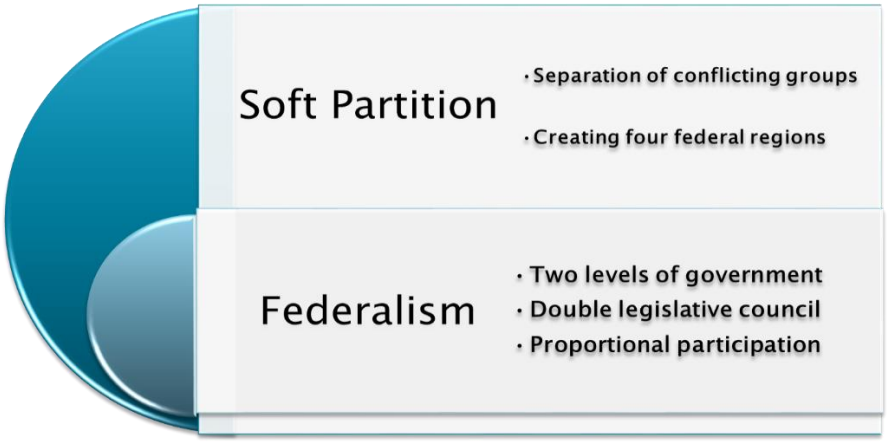


Figure 6.3: Combination of two models for ethnic conflict resolution

As shown in Figure 6.3, Iraqi predicaments can be addressed through combining models of soft partition (separation of disputed groups) and federalism (division of power between two levels of governments) with regarding consociational arrangements in federal government. Undoubtedly, there are differences about the ways in which to manage ethnic conflicts and the way to provide a continuous element. This model is not developed just to overcome the conflicts, but also the element of sustainability is regarded.

6.3.1 Soft partition

Dividing the country into four regions for the main groups (Arab Shia, Arab Sunni, Kurd and Baghdad) as shown in Figure 6.4. Baghdad is proposed to be a federal region[54] and its border can be extended to include Diyala due to its role for providing populous and power balance among other regions and preventing any regional group to control the centre. This does not reject the five-region proposed solution of Anderson and Stansfield (2005), if Shias themselves accept such solution; however, this does not seem likely based on the events of the last thirteen years. This study found that Shias are seeking to expand their powers to include Sunni areas, rather than divide their areas or cede any aspect of the political, military and economic power they have accrued since 2003. Hence, the differences of the current study's findings compared to other scholars in the same field (particularly those studied five regions) can be exposed in methodology and justification. Whereas those studies' arguments were built upon electoral results and the political influences of political forces, our findings arise from the perceptions and experiences of Iraqi people.

[54] Article 124 of 2005 Constitution mentions that, as the national capital, Baghdad cannot merge with federal regions, and it suggests that Baghdad, including Diyala, is an independent federal region in its own right. However, there is no provision restricting Baghdad to be a region, and it could remain the capital of Iraq.

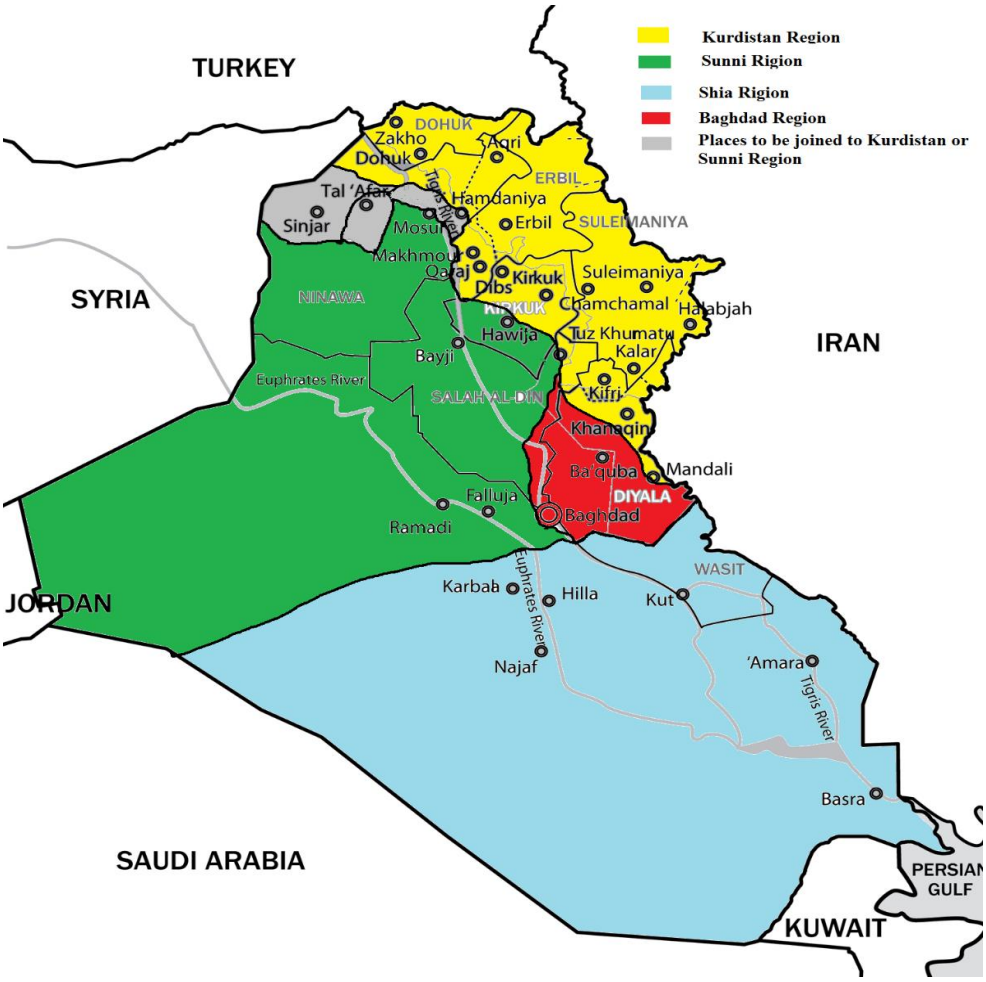


Figure 6.4: Proposed federal-based soft partition map
Adapted from ICG Report (2011)

As Colomer (2003:186) found, a high number of differentiated regional units provide a more solid ground for a federal state. Mostly, large regional groups may reasonably be able to control the centre and develop the corresponding ambition. This can lead either to erode other regional groups in a 'unified structure' or to creating conflict and secession. The major shortcoming of the previous soft partition proposals, however, is that it does not account for the status of Baghdad, the most populated city in Iraq with an estimated seven million people, almost 21% of the total population (Anderson and Stansfield, 2005:376; Khan and Kirmanj, 2015:373). Hence, the reasons behind Baghdad and Diyala being an independent region are:

1. Baghdad and Diyala are two cities where their multiculturalism remains. Although Shias have a dominant rule over them, it cannot join them with the Shia region because many Sunnis are still living there and both having previously been known as Sunni cities, joining them with the Shia region gives rise to conflicts.
2. This provides a populous balance among regions, each region will be between 7-8 million but if they are joined with the Shia region, this leads to the hegemonic power of the Shias over others. A populous balance is seen as vital for federal arrangement as an assurance that one unit will not dominate the others (Dodd, 1999; Anderson and Stansfield, 2005).
3. The line where Diyala is already integrated with other Sunni areas is now controlled by the Shia population.

The important thing is that, the partition should be led in order to complete the separation of the conflicting groups, even if it needs to divert the administrative frontier of some towns.

There is academic evidence which proves that in cases of incomplete partitioning conflicts can continue or reoccur. Ethno-sectarian partitions have a bad name because of historical experiences, such as Ireland in 1921, India-Pakistan in 1947 and Palestine in 1948, due to violence during and after partition (Kaufmann, 1998; Johnson, 2008; Eland, 2009). However, Kaufmann (1998) examined these four cases and concluded that in these cases, the partition of the warning groups reduced subsequent violence, and recurrent conflicts resulted from the incompleteness of separation rather than the partition itself. Iraq itself can be considered one of the cases whereby ethnic conflicts reoccurred due to its federal model not completely separating conflicting communities. Therefore, a partition should lead to separate regional groups regarding a clear

administrative border between them, otherwise the solution cannot be viable. Thus, the new round of violent conflicts will reoccur at any time when groups find an opportunity.

Therefore, the model is strongly recommended in relation to overcoming the disputed areas in order to prevent conflict recurrence. The case of Kirkuk in particular, which is a locus of historical grievances between Kurds and the IG, should not be postponed. For that, the fate of the mixed places such as Kirkuk could be addressed on the basis of current ethno-sectarian lines that were created by war or the last election results in 2014, which can be considered to overcome the fate of these places. For example, Kurds alone could win eight seats from an average of twelve of the city's portion. This implies that Kurds comprise the majority of the city and it should be joined to the KRI, but the town of Haweeja that voted Sunni can be incorporated in a Sunni region. As Kurdish majority areas, Khanaqin and Jalawla could be detached from Diyala and joint the KRI, as in all previous elections and referendums they voted in favour of Kurdish parties, although denominationally they are mainly Shias.

It is notable that during the ISIS 2014 offensive, the KRG forces (Peshmerga) took control of the city of Kirkuk and most of the disputed territories in northern Iraq, which greatly bolstered the KRG's bargaining position (Mills, 2016:3). However, proportional participation in executive and public sectors should be secured for all minorities, especially Turkmen, who comprise the second biggest indigenous community in Kirkuk.

Moreover, to reduce minorities' concerns, some new provinces are required to be established in the Nineveh Plain. The majority of peoples were living in this area in the religious aspect are not Sunnis or Arab. Despite the differences of their cultural

backgrounds, they were living together peacefully until their areas were seized by ISIS in 2014, which has led to a humanitarian catastrophe. These people encountered brutal attacks and the majority of them have fled to the KRI. Therefore, they do not want to go back to their areas without guarantee and confidence that, their life will not be at risk.

> ‘We as Christians would ask guarantee and insurance from the international community, we ask the international community to save us in Nineveh Plain, because we experienced that the Iraqi government could not protect us. This requirement is not coming from the sky; we have a logical demand because we have not been protected from attacks’. IR16

Thus, a new province should be established for Assyrian Christians, Shabak and Kakayi formerly living in this area. Meanwhile, new provinces should be created in Sinjar (Shingal) for the Yazidi and Tala’far for Turkmen population.

In terms of the question of which new provinces should join to which region, a referendum is a good alternative to let the population of these areas make their own decision of either joining with the KRI or the Sunni region or creating their own federal region. Primarily, these areas were regarded as the disputed area in article 140 of the Iraqi constitution.

Meanwhile it is important that Iraqis themselves agree to the regions’ boundaries through official institutions. As Smooha and Hanf (1996) suggested, in order to succeed partition, it should be negotiated, agreed upon, internationally endorsed and also it should allow for voluntary population exchange. While *de jure* partitions are more likely to have a peaceful impact, *de facto* partitions would be vulnerable to a

recurrence of ethnic violence (Chapman and Roeder, 2007). One of the positive aspects is that political leaders can still negotiate together and the official institutions which encompass all factions are working. There were lessons that many of ethnic conflicts have relatively been solved from Sri Lanka, Cyprus, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia and South Africa by negotiation processes between group leaders and central governments (Lake and Rothchild, 1996b:62).

Nevertheless, in opposition to the perspectives that focused on the necessity of international engagement in Iraq (al-Rahim, 2007), it may not need the same process if it were followed in other cases such as BH. Despite the fact that in the majority of partitioning cases the international community has been involved as intermediaries or in extreme cases as peace keepers, the Iraqi situation has not supported peace keepers for the following reasons:

1. 'Iraq is somewhat unique' due to it collapsed as a result of external action not as a result of an internal conflict (Diamond, 2005), whereas in other cases such as BH, international actors engaged as the result of internal violent conflicts, i.e. international engagement was not happened upon people's demands.
2. Iraqi political institutions are working and relationships between group leaders are still persisting, so they can reach a consensus together.
3. Iraqi people do not support international intervention; except Christians, other respondents are not happy to engage international actors.
4. Generally, groups in the region is not welcoming of foreign actors either due to the colonial legacy that affected people distrust of the Western powers or due to religious perspectives.
5. In technical aspects, the reality in BH is very different from Iraq; for instance, BH's population comprises less than 4 million whereas the Iraqi population is

more than 38 million. It is impossible for international community to provide sufficient troops to keep order and stability.

Thus, the participation of foreign forces and the international community should be limited to advisory roles and motivation rather than intervention and direct administrative interference. As long as the current status quo is in favour of Shias, they may not be expected to accept any solution that lead to less their powers, thus international engagement is required to motivate/force the incumbent IG to address national problems.

6.3.2 Federalism

Each of the regions mentioned should officially be acknowledged as federal regions and each should be held responsible for protecting its people and security. However, the federal government will be a common governance for all regions and people. In contrast to the majority of studies that have preferred the centralized Baghdad power as a central government over regions (Biden and Gelb, 2006; Joseph and O'Hanlon, 2007; Visser, 2007, 2008), this study emphasises the removal of the concept of central government but confirms regional governments and federal government.

As previous studies emphasized (Brinkerhoff, 2005; Brinkerhoff and Johnson, 2010), this study focuses on the significance of decentralism rather than centralism in preventing conflicts. That last decade proved that the dominant group would be likely to use state power to privilege its community. Therefore, through a proportional representation of groups in authority and the right of the group's veto will build confidence among groups in that their rights of participation are preserved (O'Leary, 2003:16). Proportional participation in the public sector, especially the security and

military sectors, is essential to promote groups' loyalty to the country; currently, both Sunnis and Kurds complain that these sectors are the preserve of Shias.

Indeed, in the majority of ethnofederal systems such as India, Switzerland, Belgium and BH, a form of power sharing is implemented. India is the best model which has relied on all four crucial elements of consociational theory, although from the late 1960s, some of these characteristics have weakened under the pressure of greater mass mobilization (Lijphart, 2007). In the case of violent conflicts that lasted years, confidence-building for the groups' fear about their future and loss of their identity is of significant importance. It has been found that power-sharing is especially effective for good governance in segmented societies (Norris, 2005). In the case of BH, the Dayton Agreement accommodated all four elements of the consociational model and it has seen as more effective in fostering stability (Caspersen, 2004). Thus, resolution will not be sufficient unless instruments to build trust between groups, both minority and majority, can prevent the potentiality of the monopoly of power.

Therefore, despite the 2005 Constitution allowing for establishing a government cabinet by only a Shia majority (McGarry and O'Leary, 2007:694), a majoritarian government is not appropriate for current Iraq because sectarianism is very powerful, whereby a dominant group can use the power to privilege their community, as they have done in the last decade. Kurds and Sunnis have been seriously disadvantaged and attacked by their exclusion from the political process, and their re-inclusion will be a crucial challenge of stability. Thus, this study affirms that institutions built on proportionalism principles outperform those built on majoritarian (Cohen, 1997). However, in the long term, if the ethno-sectarian fragmentation lightens or a trans-ethno-sectarian coalition emerges, a majority government can be established, whereas elements of veto right and group autonomy still works in protecting minorities rights.

Nevertheless, this model will not be excluded from side effects and limitations. The logic behind this solution is to avoid ethnic-sectarian violence among the groups that could not be addressed by other models. The major weaknesses may be connected to reinforce freezing the ethno-sectarian divisions but Iraqi society is already not an integrated society, it was fragmented and the level of distrust is high. Thus, this model will not be a factor to more fragmentation. In contrast, it may enhance integration due to providing a satisfactory facility and stability.

6.4 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter was particularly to discuss the results related to ethnic conflict regulation models. It analysed the current federal system in Iraq and its limitations in terms of structures and federal government policy. Despite arguing that the current political system in Iraq is inappropriate, there was a notable difference among Iraqi components about the best governance model, although the high desirability of the solution is illustrated. This has proved that the Iraqi situation is hard and making a social contract needs a lot of effort. It seems that Iraqis disagreements on the governance of their country during 2005 still persist, regardless of subsequent catastrophic events, and 12 years of new government. Therefore, integrationists and its models such as centralisation or majority government are not accepted. Aside from the historical centralism and authoritarian regime, the government's attempt to centralise power in new Iraq, which is being touted as a critical cause of new sectarian violence, is also evidence of the failure of this system.

Nonetheless, despite the society locally and nationally being divided on an ethno-sectarian basis in the way that war created territorial lines between three main factions, people still do not accept complete division of the country. Except the Kurds who show

their tendency to divide Iraq and obtain independence, other communities strongly rejected secessionist tendency. However, a partially divided country is relatively unavoidable in order to satisfy communities concerns toward their identities.

Despite federalism being approved through the constitutional referendum in 2005, the federal government was acting as a central one. The federal structure of the Iraqi model allowed elites to violate arrangements, whereas the vast majority of federal foundations were absent. This implies that the crisis was not related to federalism, as the ethnic conflict management model was not implemented by Iraqi elites. Thus, against recent studies of confederalism for Iraq, it can be argued that federalism is still a competent political alternative. However, in order to promote Iraqi federalism, the limitations of federal structure must be addressed regarding the partition alongside ethnic-sectarian lines is an effective way for Iraq, which leads to the creation of three new regions for the Arab Sunnis in the middle and the Arab Shias in the south and Baghdad, each region would be responsible in verifying security and stability.

Rebuilding the confidence of the minorities is a formidable task, to assure ethnic groups that their rights are not suppressed by the majority government. After conflicts, the important thing that should be considered in any resolution by those in power should consist of rebuilding trust between groups by acknowledging and showing respect for differences and by allowing and facilitating the sharing of power and resources (Lake and Rothchild, 1996b:63). Shias are in power and comprise the largest group, therefore it falls to them to take major responsibility to solve the crisis and keep Iraq as a stable and unified state.

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The research was designed to address the challenges that arise as a result of ethnic conflicts in deeply divided societies. It set out to analyse different forms of ethnic conflict management that might be applied for addressing ethno-sectarian conflicts. Particularly, it focused on how ethnic-sectarian conflicts in Iraq might be regulated, as in this new era for the country with an approved federal system the situation still has not stabilised. Thus, the study's main aim was to investigate the challenges of Iraqi federal governance and to determine whether Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflicts can be resolved by combining its federalism with soft partition (partially divided country along ethno-sectarian lines). The research also examined the causal dimensions of lasting ethnic conflicts in Iraq and to find out whether the country's policy of nationalism was historically succeeded in nation building task and integration or the 2003 invasion has led to fragmentation.

In this context, the study adds to the body of literature on ethnic conflicts more generally, and more particularly, it discusses ethno-sectarian conflicts and political events in Iraq after 2003 and the limitations that affected the dysfunction of federal governance. Hereby, the thesis contributes to the literature in four areas of political study and analysis: identity, ethnic conflict management, partition and federalism. Additionally, it provides further support to studies analysing the challenges of democratization in countries that have experienced long-term authoritarian regimes. It is argued that many policies implemented by former authoritarian regimes may be reiterated by new governments due to their normalization as features of general governance.

Whilst the majority of previous studies interested in Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflicts based their analysis on historical dimensions, this study is distinctive in seeking to explore results by using interviews and focus groups data, although it adds substantially to the understanding of the links of current ethno-sectarian conflicts with political landscapes in the deep history of Iraq. The study confirms previous findings that the failure of providing a proper political system to manage ethnic groups can be explained as the factor of ethnic conflicts. It also contributes additional evidence suggesting decentralisation to manage ethnic conflicts in deeply divided societies. Particularly, this confirms the efficacy of ethnofederalism for territorially concentrated groups, when secession is not desirable.

It is found that the government's policy in the new Iraq has profoundly contributed to the current crisis. It is illustrated that the government, rather than enhancing stability and integration, has served to exacerbate conflicts and impede federal and democratic principles while advancing a sectarian agenda. Despite the political system changing in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion, particularly after 2005, he underlying reality is that a changing of the guard has been effected, whereby the former Ba'athist ascendancy has been supplanted by Shia hegemony, with a marked decline in the limited progress achieved after 2005. The IG has reiterated the projection of a single identity built on ascriptive criteria, whereas the new Iraqi state building model supported by the international community was supposed to be a liberal, multicultural, federal state.

Democracy, civil state and power sharing were main principles that approved in the new Iraqi 2005 Constitution, essential to achieve the success of federalism in regulating ethnic conflicts, but they have steadily been violated. Thus, in deeply divided countries, government policies are crucial to enhance living together. In

federal and new democratic countries in particular, if the government does not act as the law permits, ethno-sectarian tensions would be exacerbated, especially when the government works in favour of a dominant group and enforces its identity on others, who thus resort to conflict to protect their identity and survival.

The violation of democracy that we have identified therefore assists in our understanding of role of elites in new democratisation country. It seems that the changing of regime and the formation of a new democratic political system does not always mean practising democracy or solving the issue of ethno-sectarian identities if elites are not acting on the basis of institutional powers. One of the election's implications of a newly democratised country may increase the power of groups who would not support democratisation process, as in Iraq the Islamist groups could obtain power and most elites that ruled the country were coming from the Islamist groups that inherently do not believe in democracy. Thus, changing of the political system cannot realise the rights of minorities without a changing of the elite's perceptions towards others.

Despite the development of democratic institutions in new Iraq, supported by the international community, non-dominant groups are still feeling that their rights are at risk. Even at the individual level, people were not dealt with as equal citizens with equal opportunities. Moreover, the study argues that the democratization process may have shortcomings in the country, as its regime changed due to international interventions, which was then withdrawn before the country could properly establish democracy and stable institutions. This does not support the view arising from analysis of BH that the international community *per se* restricted democratisation (Chandler, 2000), whereas the withdrawal of American troops in Iraq profoundly contributed to

opening the hands of the former PM al-Maliki to threatening the democratic process and implementing authoritarian centralism.

Whereas the study has analysed the different perceptions toward ethnic conflict onset, with focus on primordialist and instrumentalist perspectives, it is found that many reasons would contribute to emerge and lasting ethno-sectarian conflicts. Thus, it is examined that primordial society is vulnerable to ethnic conflict onset only when the state central security and its capacity to control population is collapsed or government imposed dominant group identity/interests at the expense of others, particularly when ethnic groups are fearful about their future positions (Lake and Rothchild, 1996a).

Despite the study findings suggesting that the Iraqi state was historically unable to unify different groups and build a nation, there was no civil war among communities and cultural groups were already living together without tensions. Therefore, primordial approaches cannot fully explain the root-cause of ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq (Dodge, 2007b), and the collapse of Iraqi central security as the result of 2003 invasion obviously facilitated the subsequent chaos and civil war. However, whereas the 2003 invasion can be considered the key element that led to the security dilemma and erupting civil war, the elite-manipulation approach can be seen more as a representation of the on-going and lasting conflicts.

Sectarianism and nationalism are two features employed by politicians to mobilise supporters and to spur them on to fight, which may be an easy way to serve politicians' own self-interest. Official institutions from both IG and KRG being a part of this policy or facilitate it. However, this does not support the idea that a primordial approach also cannot explain the necessity of admitting partition on ethno-sectarian lines in Iraq, while the last fourteen years of violent conflicts between groups asserted development

of their own identities, and in this case three different entities were formed along ethno-sectarian lines.

Furthermore, as witnessed over the last decade, the conflicts between these communities have come to the stage where many fundamentalist groups emerged whose main reason for existence is to kill opposing groups. The evidence from this study suggests that the on-going ethno-sectarian violence, aside from strengthening group's primordial identity, would create a *de facto* map between three ethno-sectarian entities, which makes primordialist views a more feasible to tackle the situation. Thus, if the integrationist's assertions were reasonable to reject inherently fragmented Iraqi society in 2000s, it is not effective for the current situation.

However, even though political parties and politicians are often accused of inciting ethno-sectarian conflict, people still follow them, and they have repeatedly voted for ethno-sectarian political leaders to put them in office, which partially may be justified by the fact that political parties hold the majority of the resources, but this fundamentally demonstrates groups' conviction that their material interests (i.e. individual security) are best served by adhering to their primordial identities rather than a national civic identity.

In chapter three, the historical efforts of nation building were analysed. It is found that the new independent states in the post-colonial era in Middle East faced great difficulties in their concerted efforts to unify people into nations, uprooting cultural groups from their primordial identities. Iraq is one of those colonial productions, which depended on assimilation of others into a single Arab identity, but which failed. The legacy of this policy actually brought instability and caused the society to disintegrate. Nonetheless, this policy was seemingly not corrected in the new Iraq, and attempts to

impose Shia identity accelerated Kurdish aspirations for separation and Sunni rebellion and support of extremist groups to survive.

It was found that the sectarian policy in place is exacerbating identity politics among groups that historically did not have socio-economic problems associated with their ethnic identity. In the case of Sunnis, Sunnification has grown and appears in different forms of demonstrations and rebellions as the result of sectarian policy of the Shia-led government. Meanwhile, for groups with historical demands for self-determination (e.g. the Kurds), demands seemingly increase as the IG's policies continue to thwart their aspirations and antagonise their interests.

Therefore, the empirical findings in this study support liberal multiculturalism (Kymlicka, 2007a), which avoids any attempts to reduce cultural differences or promote the dominance of a particular cultural group at the expense of others. This suggests that the old models of the nation state, wherein the dominant group implicitly or explicitly uses the state to privilege their identity, cannot address the issue of ethno-sectarian differences. 'Adopting the classic central European nation-state configuration in a country as heterogeneous as was the former Yugoslavia had to risk producing a catastrophic war' (Hayden, 2005:230).

The findings suggest that it is not necessary to have a single national identity in ethnofederal countries, rather a dual identity should be accepted in order to address the groups' aspirations for identity. However, it is important to create a balance between both identities, and the strength of ethno-sectarian identity does influence more secession demands, while the strength of national identity may lead to violent repression of minority groups' rights.

Where ethno-sectarian identity is currently stronger in Iraq, it is found that the government's policy of nationalism, which depends on civic characteristics, can play a crucial role in reinforcing national identity and integration. If the state encourages a civic nationalism based on equal citizenship for all in legal, rational and democratic terms, Iraqi politics could also stabilise and the state could evolve into a legitimate and sustainable organisation (Dodge, 2007b:29). In contrast, ethno-sectarian nationalism would not serve integration but lead to more division among groups.

These all are indications of the difficulties facing the solution to Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflicts. The Iraqi situation is further complicated through external intervention, linked to the interference of neighbouring states, in which they use their influences on political parties and their leaders to protect their interests. Many sectarian militia groups were created and supported outside the official institutions by neighbouring states whose basic functions were to attack others. The interventions of neighbouring states have increased after the last events of ethnic-sectarian conflicts and ISIS attacks. Thus, in many cases the Iraqi problems have taken regional and international dimensions, and because each has its own interests and agenda, stability is difficult, unless politicians come to persuasion to consider Iraqi national interests.

Previous studies have explored many significant models for managing ethnic conflicts. It is argued that there are variety of model for regulating ethnic violent conflicts. Identification of the levels of ethno-sectarian conflicts are significant to consider appropriateness of ethnic conflict regulation models because the quality and models of conflict managements may lead to constructive or destructive results (Ting-Toomey *et al.*, 2000:48). Hence, it is not reasonable to argue for a specific model for every form of ethnic conflicts because there are distances between a culturally diverse society with normal conflicts and a society with violent conflicts, as well as the governance models

in the society with very small ethnic diversity that happened because of immigration and work forces and the society with a high level of diversity or society with indigenous groups that are concentrated in their territorial lands.

Furthermore, there is no single standard model for regulating or controlling violent conflicts (Diamond, 2006:101). Conflict prevention can be implemented in the stages of pre-ethnic conflicts which depends on integration policies through nationalism-based civic characteristics. However, in the stages of ethnic violence in which the war created a *de facto* map among disputed communities, the models of assimilation and/or integration cannot be beneficial but in contrast may escalate ethno-sectarian tensions. Thus, one must think about models that give communities a chance to govern their people either within the state as a federal government or an independent government as a confederal context, if desirable for the people.

As discussed in chapter six, the study has shown that in deeply divided societies in conflict, such as Iraq, the models that enhance division and give self-governance work better than integration models. Indeed, centralisation and integrationist approaches are not found to be addressing identity issues in deeply divided societies in conflict, and violent conflict strongly indicates the inability to integrate. Thus, separation and decentralisation approaches are seen as more plausible to make each group able to enjoy its identity and self-governance.

Basically, debates among scholars and internal and international policy-makers surrounding Iraqi ethnic conflict regulation have coagulated into three alternative solutions to enable a path to stability:

1. Integrationists suggest that the country should be governed through a powerful centralised government; this view was historically supported by Sunnis but

their support has waned since 2005, while it has become a firm conviction among Shias.

2. Soft partition advocates call for the creation of three or more federal regions with a strong central power.
3. Confederalism advocates have urged the creation of two or three independent state. While traditionally anathema to Arabs and the international community, this view has attracted increasing support due to the escalation of armed conflicts in Iraq and the on-going repression by the IG of cultural groups. They argue that the federal model could not work to make the components live together; Kurds are the most supportive of this suggestion.

Although each of these models has its limitations, the latter (confederalism) suffered from the least public and academic support. However, it is also evident that support for a central powerful government is no longer a viable solution, as the IG (with US and international support) policy of centralism has exacerbated ethnic conflict, instability and violence. Partition and ethnofederalism cannot be criticised empirically due to the fact that they are not in existence on the ground, but the main objections to these models are basically sentimental and idealistic.

In this sense, attempting to develop a strong central government is not desired in a deeply divided society. Despite Iraq's history of centralism and authoritarian regime and its legacy of humanitarian catastrophe, the government's centralizing power in the new Iraq has also been characterised as authoritarian and is therefore evidence of the failure of this model. Centralised power is being touted as a critical cause of new waves of sectarian violence in the state (O'Driscoll, 2014; 2016). Thus, this thesis argues that the most likely alternative to address ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq is the

implementation of a federal-based soft partition, which gives each cultural group the authority to manage its own people and region, with minimal federal authority.

In contrast to hard partition and confederal alternative, federal-based soft partition has the broadest support and can be a compromise solution between Kurdish demands for more decentralisation and the Shia desire for more centralisation as well as Sunni concerns to prevent their area from forced demographic changes. This compromise is seen as necessary when separation is undesirable by both the successor state, its majority population and international actors.

However, in contrast to those who proposed the division of Iraq into three regions (Biden and Gelb, 2006; Galbraith, 2006; Kaufmann, 2006), and those who proposed five regions based on 2005 electoral results (Anderson and Stansfield, 2005; Al-Rubaie, 2008), based on the analysis of this study, four regions were proposed, aside from each of the three main groups. Baghdad is proposed to be joined with Diyala to become a federal region due to its role for providing populous and power balance among other regions. Furthermore, ethnic minorities of Assyrian, Turkmen and Yazidi could be represented in federation council to defend their interests. Although the current thesis supports four regions, it is not against five, if Shias themselves accept it, and it is evident that more regions in a federal state enhance stability, but as our results confirmed, Shias are currently unhappy with the KRI, and would not accept any other potential erosion of their sectional hegemony in Iraq by further regionalism.

It is true that Kurds have long sought to exercise their self-determination right to create an independent state, but such sentiments have been exponentially increased due to the IG's systematic policy of precipitating economic crisis in the KRI, withholding oil revenues, attempting to disarm the Peshmerga and inhibiting Kurdish relations with

regional powers, such as in contracting oil agreements with Turkey. Consequently, there is not widespread desire among Kurds for separation, as reflected in the recent referendum. Clearly the IG cannot pretend that there are advantages of remaining within Iraq if it continues its hostility against the KRI.

The negative blowback from the Sept. 25 independence referendum of the KRI in 2017 also indicates that remaining Kurds *within* Iraq would be more advantageous as a safeguard from internal and regional threats, due to the potential to lose territory, including Kirkuk, if embarking on a process to negotiate separation. As discussed in this study, the division Iraq would not be accepted by the IG, as proven by events in October 2017, when the Kurds implemented an independence referendum. Amid numerous threats to its authority, the IG ordered its forces to retake Kirkuk with support from the PMUs, Iran, Turkey, the GCC countries and the US (Mansour, 2017). Put simply, the KRI lacks sufficient support and leverage to counteract the powerful array of actors hostile to its national aspirations, and it is compelled to remain within Iraq against the expressed wishes of the majority of Kurdish people.

Our findings confirm that the escalation of ethno-sectarian conflicts is partly attributable to the failure to implement federalism as mandated by the Constitution of 2005, and widespread ignorance and aversion to the federal principle of power sharing and decentralisation among political entrepreneurs (particularly the ascendant Shia regime). Although the federal model was not convenient and its limitations have been discussed, it is confirmed that one of the crucial limitations of Iraqi federal governance is that it has not led to separation of conflicting groups and the government has acted to enhance central and authoritarian government rather than as a federal and democratic country. As Kaufmann (1996) reported, political partition without ethnic separation does not mean conflicts are restricted or prevented from re-emergence.

Conversely, demographic separation can overcome the conflicts even without separate sovereignty.

Despite the federal system to some extent being a mechanism to separate the power and political partition between components, it has not led to the separation of the disputed communities, thereby, the conflicts have not been mitigated (e.g. the majority of ethno-sectarian conflicts happened in mixed areas). Hence, if both the limitations of Iraqi federal structure and the government's policy are taken together, it can be argued that in practice federalism was indeed absent, whilst centralism and an authoritarian system are more likely to have been the reality. However, it is argued that if IG has not violated federal and democratic principles, the ethno-sectarian conflicts would have addressed.

Therefore, this study reaffirmed the impacts of different political systems on preventing ethnic conflicts (Ellingsen, 2000; Reynal-Querol, 2002). Previous studies found federalism could not succeed without democratic system (Bermeo, 2002; Adeghe, 2009). Our findings also suggest that federalism would not be effective if it did not separate conflicting groups (e.g. Shia and Sunni) with clear administrative borders between them. This entails institutionalising rather than denying existential ethnic divisions. Thus, although most disputed areas were militarily controlled by the IG in October 2017, this does not mean the root causes of the problem have been solved.

Kirkuk, for example, would most certainly become a vulnerable place for trouble to arise if the issue is not politically addressed. Kurds, especially the KDP-led KRG, have not acceded to the new reality in Kirkuk and accuse a group within the PUK for scheming with Baghdad to withdraw the majority of PUK forces from the battlefield,

enabling Iraqi forces to seize Kirkuk with minimal opposition. Consequently, the KDP is boycotting the Iraqi parliamentary elections in Kirkuk in May 2018. The concern regarding the re-emergence of violent conflicts along the borders may reoccur if the disputed area is not entirely addressed and if clear administrative borders between regions are not determined.

The results indicate that ethnically homogenous places such as the KRI and Shia cities in the south are more stable, while mixed areas produce more confrontation and violence. Therefore, this supports the idea that the preferred option might be for Iraqi politicians to come to an agreement to change the administrative border to create as homogeneous an entity as possible (e.g. the fully Arab Sunni region of Haweeja could be detached from Kirkuk and joined to an Arab Sunni region). Therefore, it is also preferable to create some new administrative entities such as governorate in Nineveh Plain for protecting Assyrian Christians, Turkmen and Yazidis, with particular consideration of the security concern for non-Muslim minorities.

The best way in Iraq is to give local governments a security responsibility to protect their communities. In this respect, the process of disarmament and demobilisation affirmed as a basic requirement by many scholars from international relations for stabilising post-conflict societies, the difficulties that presented in Iraqi case suggests recruitment and organisation of these groups within local governments would be a more suitable solution. The results confirm that Iraqis trust their groups' military forces to protect them than national army. Indeed, national army units are also mostly loyal to Shia leaders.

Basically, 'there is no typical way in which a deeply divided society handle their division' (Smooha and Hanf, 1992); this model is developed for the Iraqi case

regarding its residents' perceptions. Meanwhile, it can be considered for other simultaneous cases especially in the geographically concentrated groups, either their divisions indigenously existed or created by war, such as the Syrian Crisis. Most Middle Eastern countries comprise different ethno-sectarian groups, latent ethnic identities are not necessarily conducive to conflict, but the exacerbation of numerous antagonistic factors pertaining to cultural recognition, power and control of resources are likely to foment similar conflicts in future.

In this sense, this suggestion does not exclude the efficacy of Bosnian model in stopping violent conflicts. Whereas after three years of civil war, stability has been achieved in Bosnia through partition, Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflicts are on-going and periodically intensified after more than fourteen years, and stability has not been achieved in the absence of partition. However, the weaknesses of BH case must be taken into account, and the international community's role should be limited in providing advice, monitoring and motivation rather than a direct administrative role and providing security. Basically, there is very little trust between communal elites, which requires international actors – especially the UN, USA and the UK – to be engaged in the Iraqi case for intermediation, to motivate Iraqi sides to come to an agreement toward the power and disputed areas, otherwise Shias are currently too strong to accept any solution that lead to less their powers.

Economic relations are regarded as one of the significant factors that may lead to strengthening the links among components. It is a necessary component to prevent the secessionist tendency from local governments. Groups should be satisfied that their remaining within state would guarantee their major interests more than if they gained independence. In the new Iraq, this notion has not been emphasised; in contrast, certain groups have been made to feel their future will be at risk. Despite the financial relations

between Iraqi and Kurdistan governments already being suspended, results confirm that the extensive trade and economic engagement that formerly existed between the communities is currently very limited.

The present study confirms previous findings and contributes additional evidence that suggests proportional system in deeply divided society instead of majoritarian system (Cohen, 1997; Lijphart, 2004). While ethno-sectarian ambitions are currently very strong in Iraq, the majoritarian government is seen as a risk to development of central and authoritarian government, which may reasonably exacerbate ethno-sectarian conflicts. Iraq is still a country vulnerable to authoritarianism, unless there can be implementation of consociational democracy features. The practical politics of Iraqi elites proved that the tendency of the monopoly of power and assimilating others is still likely. Therefore, in order to avoid majoritarian group rule, the mechanisms that can restrict the monopoly of power are inevitably important to provide confidence for ethnic groups.

Forming a majority government will increase group's concern about being excluded from the political process. Although the grand coalition and group autonomy is seen as the most crucial requirement for consociational democracy (Lijphart, 2007), this study stressed veto rights alongside group autonomy as more significant for Iraq, whereas the Iraqi Constitution allows the formation of a majoritarian government, where elements can protect regional groups from authoritarian tendencies among the dominant group.

Methodologically, the research is nuanced and detailed, offering numerous notes and guidelines for future researchers to practically explore related phenomena. Qualitative data through both focus group interviews and individual interviews have been

employed as the process of data collection basing procedure and analysis in grounded theory. This can be considered as the appropriate method for ethnic conflict research and can be applied for this topic.

The results provide a significant basis for further work on Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflicts and its impacts to the nature of alternative resolution. Several points have emerged during the research analysis that can be worth looking into and developing further. A particularly significant aspect of this research that has not received much attention in previous Iraqi research is that of employing qualitative focus group methods of data collection. Previous studies found numerous essential findings in terms of ethnic-sectarian conflicts in Iraq, but it can be considered that the findings from this study are novel within the framework of using this method. It will open a new spectrum for Iraqi researchers to be familiar with using focus groups, whilst this method has not been common and rarely been implemented in Iraqi academic circles.

7.2 LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Identification of limitations of research gained through the research process experience is an important outcome of the thesis that can give a pathway for future research and initiate discussions on the progressive steps necessary for completion of future projects in this field. The current study was not specifically designed to evaluate factors related to the international dimension in the Iraqi problem. It is clear that more analysis is needed to study the impacts of the international actors on Iraqi crises. The project is also limited in exploring ethnic terrorism and its implications for social cohesion, as it changes the relationships among groups from trust to hatred. Ethno-sectarian terrorism is a relatively new phenomenon in Iraq, and because of the scope of the current study it could not be examined in depth. Thus, this phenomenon needs more research in

terms of differences between political and ideological terrorism and violent action as the way ethno-sectarian grievances are expressed. In particular, future research should investigate the extent to which fundamentalist groups and their brutal actions represent the cultural communities in Iraq. The evidence from this study suggests that terror attacks are and will continue to be a major source of instability in Iraq, which needs to be studied in order to find out the mechanisms for preventing terrorist ideologies to promote living together.

The study could not go deep into discussing the best way to reduce the disadvantages of consociationalism for Iraq, especially owing to the issues related to quota and finding the mechanism to participating main groups in the government and public sectors on the one hand and avoiding quota (*Muhasasa*) system on the other. While consociationalism is mostly focused on groups' concerns in the deeply divided society, it would be worth studying the role of the individual and the impacts of ethno-sectarian conflicts on individualism in these societies.

Further investigation of appropriate electoral system and political party development regarding deeply divided Iraqi society is very important to be studied by other researcher, whereas this study cannot go deeply into this aspect and discussing it as the method of ethnic conflict management. In the last twelve years, five public elections have been held in Iraq, each of which has relatively differed from the others. A comprehensive comparative study would be most welcome to develop suggestions for the optimal effectiveness of the electoral system, particularly to mitigate divisions and enhance trans-ethnic political parties.

Eventually, it should be realised that the study of ethno-sectarian conflicts brings its own limitations, some of which could not be predicted. The most important limitation

lies in the fact that instable country is difficult to be studied due to the new unexpected events would arise that affect the study's plan. During the process of this study, the challenges of ethnic conflicts in Iraq worsened, and terrorist groups increasingly exacerbated the Iraqi crises. The environment of insecurity and sensitivity of conflict issues made the data collection process regarding accessing and recruiting of people to be very difficult, whereas many of targeted people could not be accessed and some people was rejected to engage in our research. In addition, these problems might also have influenced participants' perceptions towards the themes discussed, despite efforts made to mitigate such issues, and it cannot be denied that people in a stable society would deliver their perspectives more differently.

Another aspect regarding studying instable state relates to access information. As Iraq is not a stable and institutional state, official information could not be obtained from the institutions, whereas official data required to support analysis. For instance, statistical data about the rate of groups' participations in public sectors, especially in security forces, or the rate of damages that faced the country's infrastructure due to ethnic conflicts not being available, although efforts were made in this direction. Therefore, when the state does eventually obtain stability, new research would be worthwhile to assess the government's policy toward cultural groups as a post-conflict state.

7.3 POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE IRAQI CASE

The findings of this study have a number of important implications. It contributes empirically by providing the evidences on the impacts of government's policy and lasting violent conflicts on social cohesion and dividing societies. As the results from this study suggest, such conflicts, which resulted in millions of refugees/IDPs, induce

large losses of human capital for the country, alongside the catastrophe that has occurred to the country's infrastructure.

The current Iraqi situation seems to be close to disaster, and all domains' infrastructures are heading to destruction. There are 4 million of IDPs and thousands of houses, schools and other institutions have been destroyed. Rebuilding these areas may need hundreds of billions of dollars. Iraq needs long-term development, which is impossible without stability. Even if the country can obtain stability for some periods, the new war and new terrorist groups might appear without fundamental solutions. The country has been in an aberrant state since the late 1960s (with the beginning of a one-party state), and subsequent decades of warfare, sanctions and privation have created perfect conditions for ethno-sectarian violence to flourish.

Longstanding ethnic grievances have always been postponed or suppressed, therefore society has intermittently suffered from continual reoccurrences of ethnic conflicts. This unstable legacy is not only affecting Iraqis but the region as a whole. Therefore, the Iraqi crisis should be solved before its instability causes further destabilisation in neighbouring countries. The continuation of ethnic conflicts by entrenching the current political impasse and Shia monopoly of power in the IG will lead to a perpetual morass of militias and paramilitary organizations vying for control, ultimately leading to violent secession. While paramilitary and terrorist ethnic conflict was a novelty after 2003, it is not a normative condition in Iraq, and those born since the 1990s are more accustomed to egregious violence and hatred than to tolerance and multicultural coexistence. The legions of widows and orphans created by conflicts in Iraq provide a vast recruitment pool for political violence.

Empirical evidence emergent in this thesis suggests that the friendly relationships among cultural groups are steadily turning to hatred and violence. Ethnic groups, especially Arab Sunnis and Kurds, must be convinced that their futures are not at risk if Iraq is to have any future. Otherwise, the militia attacks and terrorist activities are not expected to decrease. Thus, military victory and recapture of the Sunni places controlled by ISIS and disputed areas controlled by KRG's Peshmerga does not mean a solution to the root-cause of the conflicts, and a political solution and correction of the underlying problems in Iraq – particularly the Shia monopoly of state power – is still required.

It can be said that the environment that has led to the proliferation of violent groups, particularly in Sunni areas, is poverty, insecurity and attacks on civilians. Therefore, the elite's commitment to law and power sharing principles is crucial to rebuild confidence and run the country together, otherwise the situation will not achieve stability. Sunnis require a genuine effort to isolate extremist groups and delegitimize their claim of representing the Sunni community. The state's efforts are only reinforcing the appeal of these groups by targeting Sunnis broadly (Al-Qarawee, 2014:19). Thus, despite the suggestion that presented in this research to accept group's self-government, this may also require some new national legislation to limit the methods used for motivating violence, such as places of worship and TV channels. Furthermore, employment opportunities should be provided for young people on the basis of equality (or rather, at this stage, affirmative action and positive discrimination, particularly to ensure adequate representation of Sunnis and Kurds in the Iraqi Armed Forces).

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APPENDIX 1: AN EXAMPLE OF FOCUS GROUP AGENDA

Focus Group Agenda **Date: 03-03-2015**

Focus Group No._7____ **Place: Kirkuk**

Target Population: POLITICIANS

Theme: Reasons behind ethnic conflicts and potential solutions

Aim: This focus group will be organized in order to investigate the causal dimensions of emerging ethnic conflicts in multicultural societies and to test the acceptance of current governance model in Iraq. It attempts to observe different groups' perspectives toward the situation and solution of ethnic-sectarian conflicts. It is interesting to note how participants discuss a certain issue and why this issue concerns them more than other points.

Total duration: 110 min

Welcoming Participants (10 min)

As participants begin to arrive, they are welcomed into the room by the assistant facilitator and offered refreshments. They are asked to fill the provided entry form.

Introductions (15 min)

"My name is Yaseen Salih. I am going to lead today's' discussion. We wish to focus on the reasons behind ethnic conflicts in Iraq. That aims to discover the potentiality of best solution.

I expect our discussion will spend about 1:30 hours, I hope you bear with us. You are here because of the important things that relates to your country and your future life. Therefore, your participant is very important; I wish you participate in discussions warmly and honestly. There is no right or wrong answers and what matters is their opinion.

- My role as facilitator to help and guide the discussion and you know we need to record our discussions in order to transcript and use it in my study. It is a written consent form to sign it.

- This is Abdulla who assists in the room. His role in this focus group to take notes and help me in recording and take pictures.
- Please make sure to turn off or silence your mobiles, and you are free to help yourselves to refreshments.
- Now it is the time to introduce yourselves, can you tell your name and job, and area of study?… Thanks

Basic level of understanding of multiculturalism

Facilitator: we will now talk about multiculturalism.

Warm-up questions (25 minutes)

1. How can cultural diversity positively contribute to the development of societies?

   كيف يمكن للتنوع الثقافي ان يساهم بشكل إيجابي في تنمية المجتمعات؟

a. Why has cultural diversity made the shift from being a positive value to causing ethnic-sectarian conflicts in Iraq?

لماذا صنع التنوع الثقافي حالة من التحول في كونه قيمة إيجابية لكنها ادت فيما بعد إلى التسبب في نزاعات عرقية طائفية في العراق؟

Thematic Questions (50 min); Knowledge about reasons behind ethnic conflicts and solutions

1. What do you think about the causes of ethnic conflict?

   ما رأيك في أسباب الصراعات العرقيه و الطائفيه فى العراق؟

a. Do you think the current crisis is rooted to the historical divisions or is due to inappropriate policies of governments?

   هل تعتقد الأزمة الحالية تعود جذورها للانقسامات التاريخية أو انها ترجع إلى السياسات غير الملائمة للحكومات؟

2. In your opinion the political parties have played a negative or positive role in the issue of ethnic-sectarian conflicts?

   هل تعتقد ان الأحزاب السياسية قد لعبت دورا سلبيا أو إيجابيا في قضية الصراعات العرقية-الطائفية؟

   a. In this context, what do you think about political entrepreneurs?

   ما رأيك في دور قادة السياسيين فى العراق؟

3. Do you think if Kurds separated from Iraq, Shia and Sunni Arabs would live together peacefully within Iraq?

هل تعتقد إذا ما انفصل الكورد من العراق ان الشيعة والسنة العرب قد تتمكن من العيش معا بسلام داخل العراق؟

4. What do you think about the potential of soft partition model to be implemented in Iraq?

ما رأيك في نموذج التقسيم المرن الذي سيتم تنفيذه في العراق؟

5. In your opinion what can be done not to push the different ethnic groups towards a separation from Iraq?

في رأيك ماهى الخطوات والمتطلبات اللازمه لعدم دفع المجموعات العرقية المختلفة نحو الانفصال عن العراق؟

Conclusions (10 min)

Facilitator:

- *Summarizes the main points of the focus group discussions.*

Thank you very much for your cooperation and for attending our discussion. We are grateful for your time and contribution.

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

- In your opinions, what are the main causes and resource of ethnic conflicts in Iraq?
- Do you believe that the current political system is appropriate for addressing ethnic conflicts?
- Do you think it is important to protect multiculturalism by providing minority groups their rights in cultural recognition?
- What do you think about the role of governments in protecting cultural groups? (follow up: do you think the current government in Iraq is playing this role)?
- In your opinion, the level of trust among Iraqi people is now stronger than before in 2003?
- What do you think if somebody from your ethnic group would be a member in other group's political party (e.g. is it normal for Kurdish person to be a member in one of the Shia political party)
- The crisis of ethnic and sectarian conflicts in Iraq has interacted with terrorist activities. You had to move because of this. What do you think about this whole situation?
- Did you have friends and neighbours form other ethnic or religious groups? How are your relationships with them now?
- After these events that occurred in your area, do you think it is possible for different ethnic groups to live together? What should we do to make this possible?
- What do you think about Iraqi national identity?
- Do you have loyalty to Iraqi identity?
- You have been a victim of ethnic and sectarian wars; do you feel loyal to Iraq as a nation? How would you define yourself?
- What do you think about the role are played by political parties in Iraqi society?
- What is in your opinion the best governance model to be implemented in ethnically divided countries such as Iraq?

- Do you think soft partition as a model to assess the rights of different groups in Iraq could lead to a solution or it might exacerbate the current problems?
- What do you think about Partitioning of the country into three independence states for Arab Shias Arab Sunnis and Kurds?
- Do you think if Kurds separated from Iraq, Shia and Sunni Arabs would live together peacefully within Iraq?
- In your opinion what can be done not to push the different ethnic groups towards a separation from Iraq?
- What are the main demands of your ethnic group that you want to be considered in Iraq?
- To what extent the ignorance of democratic and power sharing principles affected the federalism to be ineffective?
- Is federalism still a valid solution for Iraqi ethno-sectarian conflicts? What are the limitations of a present federal governance model in Iraq?
- After the last events of violent conflicts in Iraq, to what degree Bosnia's model of partition can be applied as a lesson for Iraq?
- Do you think the government policies are serving a specific group or all groups equally?
- What is your assessment of national identity in Iraq, and its impacts on ethnic conflicts?
- Do you think partially divided country into three regions for Arab Shias Arab Sunnis and Kurds within ethnofederal context with cultural recognition for other groups will be a sustainable solution of ethnic conflicts in Iraq?

APPENDIX 3: EXAMPLE OF PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Participant Information Sheet for Residents Focus Groups

Title of the Study: **Federalism and the Challenges of Ethnic Conflict Regulations in Deeply Divided Societies: The Case of Iraq**

Researcher: *Yaseen Salih, University of Nottingham.*

Research aims

The main aim of the study is to address the challenges that arise from ethnic diversity and ethnic conflicts. It attempts to investigate the best governance models that can be used to manage ethnic conflicts for deeply divided societies. This research seeks to investigate the causal dimensions of emerging ethnic conflicts, thereby, examining how mismanagement of ethnic diversity leads to ethnic conflicts. In particular, it is an endeavour to study ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq, and how can be resolved by addressing its federalism limitations. The issue of national identity in deeply divided societies is also explored and discussed.

This project is being sponsored by the Human Capacity Development Program (HCDP) of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Iraq.

Who will take part?

The participants of these focus groups will comprise eight people from different ethnic-religious background, age cohorts and genders. This is in order to uncover the participants' perspectives about the ethnic conflicts and their opinions about the policy of current government in Iraq. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and you may stop at any point if you do not wish to continue. It means you have an option to withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect your status now or in the future.

Questions

In this context, participants will be asked some questions about conflicts and the relationships/trust among people, such as: What are the impacts of the issue of ethnic and sectarian conflicts on the populations? How is your relationship with your friends and neighbours? To what extent are you willing to cooperate with your friends/neighbours in other groups? What is the best model to be implemented in ethnically divided countries such as Iraq? What do you think about the limitations of Iraqi federalism?

Confidentiality and anonymity

The information gathered will be used for research purposes and will form a part of PhD project being conducted by researcher in the University of Nottingham (UK). All information will be kept strictly confidential. It will only be used by the researchers and no individual will be able to be identified in any results from this project. All information you provide will be stored securely in the secure area of the researcher's PC in Nottingham on a secure server at the University of Nottingham. In accordance with the UK Data Protection Act, the data will be saved securely for seven years following publication of results. After this time, electronic files will be deleted and any hard copies will be destroyed.

Contact

If you have any questions, please contact Yaseen Salih,

Email; yasin2007salih@yahoo.com. Phone Number; 07504487136

We anticipate that the study will take about 2 hours. Thanks

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project title:

Federalism and the Challenges of Ethnic Conflict Regulations in Deeply Divided Societies: The Case of Iraq

Contact Person:

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be used in future instance, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that data will be stored in a secure electronic file with hardcopies kept in a locked cabinet for 7 years.
- I understand that I may contact the indicated people if I require further information about the research and if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.
- I give my consent to *record (audio-recording of the Focus group sessions, or interviews, or photographs being taken),* which will be used for the only purpose of accuracy of reporting. All comments will be reported anonymously.

Print name……..…**Signed**……

Date ……

Contact details:
Yaseen Salih Hama
PhD Student in University of Nottingham
Email: yasin2007salih@yahoo.com
Phone: 07401484847

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEWEES' PROFILES AND CODES

Name	Code	Position	Cultural Background	Note
Dr Akram Mihrdad	IR1	Expert	Kurd	
Ahmed Saadun	IR2	Politician	Arab Sunni	
------	IR3	Iraqi MP	Arab Sunni	He asked to not mention his name
Aydin Maruf Selim	IR4	Kurdistan MP	Turkmen	
Dr Luis K Bandar	IR5	Iraqi MP	Christian	
Mohammed Rubai'y	IR6	Kurdistan MP	Arab Shia	
Dr Talib Kakayi	IR7	Chancellor in the KRI Presidency	Kurd-Kakayi	
Emad Rafat	IR8	Politician	Turkmen	
Yaqoob G Yaqo	IR9	Kurdistan MP	Christian	
Tariq	IR10	Expert	Arab Shia	
Dr Mohamad Sharif	IR11	Ex- Iraqi MP	Kurd	
Nada Mergasuri	IR12	Iraqi MP	Kurd	
Samir A Dawd	IR13	President of CNC	Christian	
Dr Sherko Kirmanji	IR14	Expert	Kurd	
Dr Uday Telfah	IR15	Expert	Arab Sunni	
Farris Y Jajo	IR16	Ex- Iraqi Minister	Christian	
Dr Fahmi	IR17	Expert	Arab Sunni	
------	IR18	Ex- Iraqi Minister	Arab Shia	He asked to not mention his name