IRAQI FOREIGN POLICY AND ETHNIC-SECTARIAN POLITICAL IDENTITY SINCE 2003

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Political Science and International Relations

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ABSTRACT

IRAQI FOREIGN POLICY AND ETHNIC-SECTARIAN POLITICAL

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This thesis aims to tackle the relationship between foreign policy and political identity, mainly sectarian and ethnic identity. The main question of this thesis is why Iraqi foreign policy (post-US occupation) is instrumentalizing sectarian and ethnic identity. That due to the pro-ethnic and sectarian foreign policy is boosting the regime survival domestically in the domestic division and fragmentation, and gives the regime regional legitimacy. Sectarian and ethnic identity are rationally used and pursued by the regime. The importance of this thesis is driven from underlining the role of ethnic and sectarian motives in foreign policy and how such motives have been rationally used by Iraqi foreign policy-makers. Besides, throughout history Iraqi foreign policy has been instrumentalized to boost ethnic and sectarian identities that are the cornerstone of regime survival. The main findings that enabled the argument is that Iraqi foreign policy is contested, lacks independency, and is affiliated to different parties. Similarly, the contested foreign policy and open vulnerability of the country troubled the Iraqi foreign policy, this was seen mainly from the Ba'ath and post-2003 era. In the post-occupation period, the different foreign interests and objectives of regional and global powers determined vulnerability and interference. Therefore, the main characteristic of the Shia-majority regime since 2003 is domestic political, social, and economic fragmentation. Moreover, the heavy regional influence led to the sectarian and ethnic foreign policy.

Keywords: Foreign policy, political identity, ethnic and sectarian identity, regime survival, US occupation

ÖZ

2003'TEN BU YANA IRAK DIŞ POLİTİKASI VE ETNİK-MEZHEPÇİ SİYASİ KİMLİK

Al-Ellam, Amena Mohanad Abdullah

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Bu tez, dış politika ve siyasi kimlik arasındaki ilişkiyi, özellikle de mezhepsel ve etnik kimlik arasındaki ilişkiyi ele almayı amaçlamaktadır. ''Neden (ABD işgali sonrası) Irak dış politikası, mezhepsel ve etnik kimliği araçlara dönüştürdü?'' bu tezin ana sorusudur. Bu, etnik ve mezhepsel dış politika nedeniyle, yerel bölünme ve parçalanma rejimin hayatta kalmasını arttırmakta ve rejime bölgedeki belirli çevrelerde meşruiyet sağlamaktadır. Mezhepsel ve etnik kimlik, rejim tarafından rasyonel olarak kullanılmaktadır. Bu tezin önemi, dış politikadaki etnik ve mezhepsel motiflerin rolünü ve bu motiflerin Iraklı dış politika yapıcılar tarafından rasyonel olarak nasıl kullanıldığını vurgulamasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Ayrıca, Irak dış politikası geleneksel olarak rejimin hayatta kalmasının temel taşı olarak etnik ve mezhepsel kimlikleri arttırmayı araçsallaştırılmıştır. Argümanı destekleyen temel bulgular, Irak dış politikasının tartışmalı olduğu, bağımsızlıktan yoksun olup farklı partilere bağlı olarak değiştiğidir. Benzer şekilde, bu tartışmalı dış politika ve ülkenin kırılganlığı, Irak dış politikasında sorunlar çıkarmış, bu durum ağırlıklı olarak Baas dönemi ve 2003 sonrası dönemde görülmüştür. İşgal sonrası dönemde, bölgesel ve küresel güçlerin çıkar ve hedefleri, Irak'ta güvenlik açığı doğurmuş ve ülkeyi müdahaleye açık hale getirmiştir. Bu nedenle, 2003'ten bu yana gelen Şii çoğunluklu rejiminin temel özelliği, yerel olarak siyasi, sosyal ve ekonomik yönlerden parçalı olmasıdır. Dahası, bölgesel aktörlerin Irak'taki etkisi, Irak'ı mezhepsel ve etnik dış politika izlemeye itmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: dış politika, siyasi kimlik, etnik-mezhepçi kimlik, rejim bekası, Amerikan İşgali.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Following long years of suffering from wars, sanctions, and political suppression, the Iraqi people aspire for political change. However, the longtime of neglect and underdevelopment of some social segments created frustration and disappointment. With the eruption of the 2003 war and the new political regime, many hoped for better conditions. People especially those who had eliminated from political participation by the previous regime, hoped for peace, prosperity and stability. But the new political regime that came after the occupation was based on *Muhasasa Ta'ifia* (sectarian appointment), assigning offices according to the three communities in Iraq: the Shia, Sunnis and the Kurds.[1] The consequences of this system along with a variety of ethnic and sectarian identities in Iraq led to civil war, radicalization, and corruption. Also, the system led to a lack of integrity in choosing office holders who, in general, should be selected based on merit not on sect or ethnic identity. After the fall of the old regime, the occupation sought to restructure the new regime through the de-Bathification process. The process was based on removing the police and military institution from the new regime, which destroyed all the state institutions and their functions. Weak national identity and a lack of national unity led to the civil war and the emergence of new actors, agencies, and parties to dominate the new political regime.

1.1. Thesis Statement

My goal in this thesis is to tackle the relationship between foreign policy and political identity, mainly sectarian and ethnic identity. The main question of this thesis is why Iraqi foreign policy (post-US occupation) is instrumentalizing sectarian and ethnic identity. The answer to this question, which is at the same time the argument of this thesis, is that pro-ethnic and sectarian foreign policy is boosting the regime survival

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[1] Dodge, Toby. "Is There Hope for Reform in Post-Election Iraq?" Foreign Affairs, Oct. 2018. www.foreignaffairs.com, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iraq/2018-10-17/there-hope-reform-post-election-iraq.

domestically in the domestic division and fragmentation and gives the regime regional legitimacy. The sectarian and ethnic identity are rationally used and pursued by the regime. As a result, Iraqi foreign policy is characterized as not independent in decision making due to the affiliation to different parties and the ruling elite's motives, who are using ethnic and sectarian identity to survive.

The importance of this thesis lies in underlining the role of ethnic and sectarian motives in foreign policy and how such motives have been rationally used by Iraqi foreign policy-makers. The sectarian and ethnic division in Iraq is not a new phenomenon that emerged only after 2003. Claiming otherwise ignores the historical experience. The aim of this thesis is to explain how throughout history, Iraqi foreign policy has been instrumentalized to boost ethnic and sectarian identities that are the cornerstone of regime survival.

This thesis will start with the introductory part, which will conceptualize the notions of foreign policy, political identity, ethnic and sectarian identity, and regime survival. Secondly, the case will be located on a theoretical framework by applying the theories of neo-classical realism and constructivism, which takes into consideration the domestic level. Therefore, revealing the major approaches and the theory of neoclassical realism and the constructivist approach will enable me to determine the relationship between utilizing foreign policy and how it boosts the chance for the regime to survive.

The first chapter underlines the historical background since the formation of the Iraqi state, especially the critical events in the foreign policy of the country that have led to the current situation. Under the historical chapter, the domestic context is explored to reveal the development of foreign policy and political identity, starting from the late Ottoman period Periodizing the critical junctures in the history of Iraqi foreign policy is done as follows: the period of the British mandate; independence in 1932; the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958; and the republican era, with different political leaders who ruled Iraq till the 1990s.

The second chapter explores the recent history of Iraqi foreign policy from the 1990s until 2011. It begins with Iraqi foreign policy in Saddam's era during the 1990s till his fall with the US occupation. It will also include post-occupation period and the main events of forming of the first government and the civil war. Under this chapter, the domestic context of this period until the American withdrawal will be exposed, along with the external interference of the regional and global powers in Iraq.

The third chapter highlights the current history of Iraqi foreign policy after the American withdrawal in 2011. The focus in this chapter is about the challenges facing Iraqi foreign policy post-2011 and Iraq's relationship with regional powers, including Iran, Turkey, and Arab Gulf states.

The conclusion summarizes the main findings and argument of the thesis and questions how the current regime deals with contemporary domestic problems and regional crisis. Also, tracing the future of the region changes and dynamics such as the new change in the balance of power of the region and the global change. Further, this chapter will discuss the limitations of this thesis in terms of its sources and propose a future projection of to develop this thesis.

1.2. Literature Review

This section presents the major approaches of this thesis, starting by conceptualizing the main notions of foreign policy, political identity, ethnic and sectarian identity, and regime survival. Secondly, it provides the theoretical framework of the thesis, built on the theory of neoclassical realism and domestic-level constructivism. Hence, reviewing the literature of the core concepts with the theoretical framework will develop the relation between foremost foreign policy and realism and the constructivist approach with the political identity. My theoretical framework that locates my argument is that ethnic and sectarian foreign policy aiding the post- US occupation regime to survive. Indeed, instrumentalizing foreign policy to strengthen ethnic and sectarian identity is the cornerstone of regime survival.

1.2.1. Foreign Policy

Sectarianism in Iraq is not a new phenomenon related to events post-2003. However, in today's Iraqi politics it is instrumentalized as a strategy of group and party solidarity, and the political groups that control the regime strategically pursue sectarian identity for their survival. Ethnic and sectarian identities are not being reinforced merely for the domestic division and fragmentation, but also in foreign policy. Foreign policy is being utilized and used to enhance domestic division. Foreign policy as Kenneth Waltz defines it, is where the state behaves in different situations according to its domestic structure. Foreign policy is more specific and in accordance to a certain context, a more practical theory is needed about state action toward other states, which means the specific actions of specific states.[2] In his book *Theory of International Politics* Waltz also developed the understanding of the importance of domestic composition and motives in foreign policy.[3] He says that the structure of the system determines the patterns and regulations that the state should follow for its material and the ideological interests. Eventually, those interests or motives are clarified by the neo-realists in term of security and power. However, there are other motives that the state's foreign policy includes, such as "domestic politics, ideology, leaders' personal preferences and moral consideration."[4]

The importance of foreign relations in the context of ethnic and sectarian identities is driven by uses of foreign policy, which at the same time shapes the attitude of the actors toward others. Foreign policy is based on value and interest, and ideology comes here in explaining both approaches. In foreign policy analysis, material and ideational factors are interrelated with state behaviour, because ideas are used to justify the state's or regime's policies. Foreign policy analysis is related to IR theory; however, the domestic national identity or the domestic state is part of this dimension. Tradition and ideas are what determine the identity politics of the regime and the decision-making by the actors.[5] Certainly, the identity politics of Arabism,

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[2] Waltz, K. N. (1996). International politics is not foreign policy. *Security Studies*, *6*(1), 54-57.
[3] Waltz, K. N. (2010). *Theory of international politics*. Waveland Press.
[4] Telhami, S. (2003). An Essay on Neorealism and Foreign Policy. In *Perspectives on Structural Realism* (pp. 105-118). Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
[5] Hudson, V. M. (2005). Foreign policy analysis: actor-specific theory and the ground of international relations. *Foreign policy analysis*, *1*(1), 1-30.

Islamism and sectarian-ethnic identity gave the self-interest of the state leaders to benefits them to gain local support and a justification for their foreign policies.[6]

Furthermore, foreign policy analysis includes the constructivist explanation of the relationship between identity and foreign policy from the domestic level. According to Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, the ideational factor is central in shaping interaction between people, while material factors play a role in driving the interests. This ideational element is related to shared ideas and beliefs which eventually construct the motives of different elites and ruling actors.[7] Key term here is the role of actors who are seeking to maximize their domestic political interests externally by promoting their own identity through foreign policy. Constructivism acknowledges the importance of the social structure for state leaders in forming their identity. For instance, constructivism explains the interaction between Arab nationalism and the Arab leaders' interest, in enabling their survival.[8]

Identity is a key factor in foreign policy, mainly in the process of decision making and setting the foreign goals, because decisions should meet with the national interest of the state. On the other hand, identity changes when there is a response to a threat from the outside and when interest changes. A change in norms or the adoption of a new norm by state leaders and elites is essential because according to Finnemore and Sikkink, norms increase the esteem of the state position. Further, both authors emphasize the role of a state's identity in shaping its foreign policy, and in return foreign policy influencing the state's identity and ideology.[9] Therefore, sectarianism and ethnic identity influence Iraqi foreign policy and domestic policies.

[6] Telhami, S., & Barnett, M. N. (Eds.). (2002). *Identity and foreign policy in the Middle East*. Cornell University Press.

[7] Finnemore, M., & Sikkink, K. (2001). Taking stock: the constructivist research program in international relations and comparative politics. *Annual review of political science*, *4*(1), 391-416.

[8] Telhami, S., & Barnett, M. N. (Eds.). (2002). *Identity and foreign policy in the Middle East*. Cornell University Press.

[9] Finnemore, M., & Sikkink, K. (2001). Taking stock: the constructivist research program in international relations and comparative politics. *Annual review of political science*, *4*(1), 391-416.

1.2.2. Political Identity

In the middle of the 20th century, the concept of political identity became a major concern and started to develop due to many social movements, but before going into the history of the concept, the concept of identity needs to be underlined from the political perspective. Francis Fukuyama relates identity to the Greek word *thymos*, which meant it is part of the soul and determines a recognition of the people.[10] Recognition is a key term in defining identity because people seek and desire to be recognized and have equal rights. Later on, the concept was developed from individual identity or self to the political national identity and dignity that aim for recognition for all the society. Besides recognition, the idea of perception about one's identity that differentiates a person from others was also developed afterward with globalization, which played a role in shaping this perception.[11]

In 1992 Charles Taylor emphasized the shift in identity recognition and the struggle to be recognized. This struggle starts when the self-identity is formed to be recognized from the other, or from the one's self-identity and the political identity. This recognition is not limited to the self, but is related to the public and political, and the aim is to have equal rights.[12] In contrast, even though the aim of the individuals to have equal rights, later recognition was used by the state or the regime. Besides that, according to Zygmunt Bauman, identity started as an "individual task" for people formation into different functions.

Identity politics became a tool for the state to draw its borders under the national identity and to form the people under one political community. But at the same time, the state favors one identity over the other identities and excludes others. Also, globalization help to weaken identities. Identity in the Middle East generally and in Iraq particularly became the source of pragmatism for the regime or the dominant government. In a broader sense, national identity became essential in state-building

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[10] May, R. J. (1996). Revisiting Fukuyama: ON THE STRUGGLE FOR RECOGNITION, AGGRESSION, AND TERRITORIAL IMPERATIVES FROM THE BEGINNING OF HISTORY TO THE END OF TIME. *World Affairs*, *158*(4), 193-197.

[11] Menand, Louis. Francis Fukuyama Postpones the End of History. Aug. 2018. www.newyorker.com, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/09/03/francis-fukuyama-postpones-the-end-of-history.

[12] Taylor, C. (1994). *Multiculturalism: Examining the politics of recognition*. Princeton University Press, 41 William St., Princeton, NJ 08540..

because it creates a unified one society and provides it with identity and common history. In accordance, we conceive a mobilized mess and legitimacy in a state. In the case of Iraq, national identity and the identity of the state was not an easy project due to the incongruence between the variety of identities and the huge territory.

The notion of recognition is not only an individual concept, it is also related to the ruling regime, as James Tully described in his article "The Agonic Freedom of Citizens". The author connected "identity politics and struggle for recognition" because the rulers change their identities according to the time. Identity is related to power and it is always about power, which the state and individuals hold according to their identity.[13]

The focus of this thesis is not how identity is a unifying force, however. The concentration is on how identity politics is used in foreign policy to boost regime survival. Identity in Iraq is formulated around regime interest and survival, and in the post-US occupation period sectarian and ethnic identity became an important source of division and manipulation. The following section will highlight the ethnic and sectarian identities and how they have been used to shape the politics of the state.

1.2.3. Ethnic-Sectarian Identity

In order to underline the role of ethnic and sectarian identities, we need first to define ethnicity. In the book *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism*, ethnicity was defined as "a group of people whose members believe they are ancestrally related". Constructivist ethnicity and nationhood is a process that develops through time due to the need for social relations. As a result, we see fluctuation over time and contingence in groups and ethnic communities.

There have been two main approaches in the ethnicity literature, the primordial and instrumental, in defining the basics of ethnicity. As the primordial approach perceives the relation between the basics of group identity to the birth, according to Harold

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[13] Tully, J. The Agonic Freedom of Citizens"(1999). *Econ. & Soc'y, 28*, 161.

Isaacs. The second approach and are used in this thesis is the instrumental one. It argues that ethnic identity is developed and constructed along with the political process and it became the source for different interest groups socially, politically, and culturally. Thus, as the name of instrumentalism entails, ethnicity is being used as an instrument and as a source in the hand of leaders for mobilizing their material or ideological interests and goals. According to Shibley Telhami and Micheal Barnett in their introduction to the book *Identity and foreign policy in the Middle East*, the role of instrumental uses of identity and power of elites is the core source of political identity.[14]

On the other hand, ethnic identity creates problems in regard to building boundaries by unifying the population and dividing others. Furthermore, since ethnicity according to instrumentalism is constructed, this leads to continuous change and fluctuation by the people themselves or external elements. The reason behind addressing the argument about the instrumental and constructive approach of ethnic identity is because the Arabs and the Kurds are divided inside their territories such as in Iraq. However, the Kurdish ethnic minority is using their ethnicity as one political identity to define themselves. The historical legacy is part of the construction of identity, mainly the ethnic identity, and how it develops and moves over time. Further, the author Adeed Dawisha, in his argument about Iraq and the relationship between identity and foreign policy, emphasizes the essential role of ruling elites in constructing and shaping the national identity in the country. Therefore, identity comes to define the interests and the motives, in which it directs the policies of ruling elites.[15]

Moreover, the historical legacy shaped ethnic identity and sectarian identity. Under the study of sectarianism, many aspects are included, such as ethnic identity, tribes, and religious groups. According to Lawrence G. Potter who perceives the idea behind

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[14] Telhami, S., & Barnett, M. N. (Eds.). (2002). *Identity and foreign policy in the Middle East*. Cornell University Press.
[15] Telhami, S., & Barnett, M. N. (Eds.). (2002). *Identity and foreign policy in the Middle East*. Cornell University Press.

sect as a group who have different beliefs in religion and politics.[16] However, in time, the concept of sect or sectarianism developed a negative image due to conflict and violence. The reason behind this image or attribution to sectarianism is because of the constant change and "being renegotiated" of sectarian identities, as the author Fanar Haddad has claimed. The sectarian identities competition is not merely about plurality and distinct, but also is about the modern nation state-building.[17]

Fanar Haddad in his introduction to the book *Sectarianization Mapping the New Politics of the Middle East*, related sectarian identities' competition to the era of state formation in Iraq. Also, Haddad claimed that sectarianism was alive long ago and people did not use or relate sectarian identity to political power and mobilization. The distinct feature about the nation- state is the idea of citizenship, which melted the variety of identities under one national identity. The author gave the example of Iraq in 1921, where the Sunni and Shia relation became overlapped both domestically and globally. Over time and with many political events and changes in the country, the sectarianism changed, becoming more "sect-centric" and the center of the political process.[18]

1.2.4. Regime Survival

Foremost, the literature on conceptualizing regime is differentiated in three main concepts: the regime, state, and government. Secondly, the literature analyzes the types of regimes, and lastly the role of institutional and political leaders in the change and survival of regimes. Robert M. Fishman conceptualizes the regime as an organization that is at the center of political power, at the same time in relation with the society. Also, the regime asserts who can have political power or not. The characteristic of the regime is that it remains even with the change of many governments, and that is what makes the regime distinct from the government. Also, according to Stephanie Lawson, who quoted from Stephen D. Krasner, each regime has its features from norms or rulers or principles that the actors should have.

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[16] Lawson, S. (1993). Conceptual issues in the comparative study of regime change and democratization. *Comparative Politics*, 183-205.

[17] Haddad, F. (2011). *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic visions of unity*. Oxford University Press, USA.

[18] Haddad, F. (2011). *Sectarianism in Iraq: Antagonistic visions of unity*. Oxford University Press, USA.

Therefore, any change in previous notions of rules or decision-making meanings lead to change in the regime.[19]

Further defining the regime by highlighting the role of power, the author Peter Calvert distinguishes between the regime and administration. For instance, the authoritarian government as a regime like the "Baath regime" or "military regime" and the administration like the "Bush administration or government". Additionally, Peter Calvert refers to the regime change as the political succession or transformation of power from one to another. It is also a "fundamental feature of politics" and the stability of the regime to be in the hand of actors who aim for the continuation of the regime. Stephanie Lawson, who quoted from Calvert, defines the state as a community with a political aim, unlike the government that composes of individuals and one government succeed another.[20]

Stephanie Lawson, in the article "Conceptual issue in the comparative study of regime change and democratization" underlined the type of regimes, such as democratic and nondemocratic, and says the reason behind addressing the regime types is to understand power relations within the state. Constitutional opposition is required in a democratic regime and in working with the government. However, in authoritarian regimes, governments are established by the regime and the party is controlled by the leaders, who organize the government. Fishman presents another dimension of the regime type and political power, because is about how the regime deals with others who are not in power, which is the distinction between democratic and authoritarian. The government is less permanent than the state, but regimes are permanent forms. At the same time, the state is a permanent body who can use coercive power. Regime type is essential to the study about the Iraqi regimes and their character throughout history and recently.

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[19] Fishman, R. M. (1990). Rethinking state and regime: Southern Europe's transition to democracy. *World Politics*, *42*(3), 422-440.

[20] Calvert, P. (1987). *The Process of political succession*. Springer.

The study of regime reveals two main approaches, primarily the institutional and elite/agent factors. Institutions in the general sense are about giving orders and regulating political relations by repeating the practice. As it been revealed before, norms and principles are part of any regime change. The demolishment of old institutions and establishment of new ones are essential in new regimes, because through institutions, the regime can control the people and mobilize them. At the same time, according to R. Keohane and J. Nye, institutions maintain the regime interest in a way that regulates practices and patterns for self-interest. Not only the structure but also the political process is regulated by institutions. Further, with the distinction of the regime type, the democratic and nondemocratic, the opposition political institution plays a role in explaining regime change.

Along with the importance of the institutional factor in the regime, elites/ agents play an essential role in the regime system internationally and domestically. Moreover, since the focus of this thesis is on the domestic level, elites serve as a communications network to maintain norms, principles, and identity of the regime in the state. Elites are the key to regime survival. According to R. Keohane and J. Nye, the elite's perceptions and choices are reflected in the state. Also, usually elites who run elections and who attempt coups, they are mostly with sold ethnic or sectarian or even political identities, the reason for that is to pursue their interest in regime change or survival.

In addition, Percy C. Hintzen draws relationship between powerful elites and actors and the survival of the regime, because actors can mobilize the support they need. In the chapter "Elite support and control of the state: race, ideology, and clientelism" the author argued that "Such actors are able to employ their formidable resources to make the task of retaining power impossible for a political directorate".[21] Regarding the ideological aspect, it is key for the regimes to commit to ideologies for more interest in the powerful elites, that is also a strategy for the regime to survive. Further, Scott Mainwaring shows different factors for regime survival. In his chapter

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[21] Hintzen, P. C. (1989). *The Costs of Regime Survival: Racial Mobilization, Elite Domination and Control of the State in Guyana and Trinidad*. Cambridge University Press.

"A Theory of Regime Survival and Fall" he argues that political processes along with the historical factors determine regime survival or failure.[22] The main focus of the chapter is on the domestic level of political organizations, movement, and actors such as presidents.

Under the discussion of the regime breakdown or survival, both authors Scott Mainwaring and Anibal Perez-Linan argues that in democratic regime actors play a role. Two main factors led to the survival of the democratic regime is firstly, the political actor prefer democratic aspiration and avoid radicalism. Secondly, the role of regional environment contributes to the democratic rule. Both authors in the article "Democratic breakdown and survival" build their argument on the work of Guill-ermo O'Donnell, mainly the role of actors' policies for the fall or survival of the regime, especially when actors "value democracy as a political regime". The preferences of democracy are pursuit rationally by actors for the survival of the regime. Thus, the approach of actor-based is essential in the study of the regimes, due to the normative preferences for the regime to sustain or breakdown[23]. Since the article of "Democratic breakdown and survival" is written to examine the case of Latin America, however its applicable to the case of this thesis about the survival of the regime in Iraq post-2003.

Therefore, the reason behind reflecting on the role of elites and commitment to the ideology of the regime is because the survival of the current regime in Iraq, mainly due to the powerful elites and actors who are using the ethnic and sectarian foreign policy to promote their interests, provides them the stability to pursue their interests.

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[22] Mainwaring, S., & Pérez-Liñán, A. (2013). Democracies and dictatorships in Latin America: emergence, survival, and fall. Cambridge University Press.

[23] Mainwaring, S., & Pérez-Liñán, A. (2013). Lessons from Latin America: Democratic breakdown and survival. *Journal of Democracy*, *24*(2), 123-137.

1.3. Theories

1.3.1. Neo-classical realism and Foreign Policy

Generally, realism, and in particular the neoclassical realist approach, questions what power and what the state are. These theories also aim at understanding human nature and behaviour. The question about the state or human nature applies not only to international politics, but also to the domestic politics of individual states. Realism seeks to explain the struggle for power internationally and domestically. However, realism and foreign policy analysis conceive a different relationship between power and interest among different groups and that in order to reconcile interest. Foreign policy analysis is a powerful tool used by neoclassical realists for creating a balance of power. In the case of Iraqi politics, foreign policy is utilized and strengthened by the dominant regime in order to seek domestic interest along with the regional and international legitimization and benefit.

The writing of Jack Snyder's Myths of Empire demonstrates the argument about the state expansionism, where the elites in a state exaggerate the external threats to mobilize the society for their benefit. The elites in the regime seek self-survival by utilizing nationalism or other propaganda and ideology. The elites or "the ruling class" act rationally to have powerful interest especially in the society, that's why realism according to Snyder should capture what is happing within the societies. Due to the role of ideology inside the societies, it is essential even for the elites to perceive interests. The author Jack Snyder is highlighting the role of ideology because, in the case of Iraq, sectarianism and ethnicity became an ideology used by the new political regime and its elites. The elites or the political parties utilized the uncertainty and chaos of the 2003 war to shape the power according to what serves them, and the foreign policy became the instrument.

Neoclassical realism draws the line between domestic politics and foreign policy, not only according to Snyder but also Gideon Rose. The main argument of Rose is that realism or neoclassical realism aims to see the outcome of the interactions between the state and foreign policy and what the state achieves from this interaction. Four main schools under the theories of foreign policy come to provide this analysis,

mainly the Innenpolitik and neoclassical realism, because they see the core role of internal factors on foreign policy. The school of Innenpolitik acknowledges the importance of domestic politics on foreign policy, such as the political or economic situation or ideology. The second school, neoclassical realism, stresses foremost the role of material power and capabilities, and this is what makes it realist. The concept of power is vital under this analysis because relative power and natural resources all play role in dealing with foreign relations.

Further, under neoclassical realism, Randall Schweller, in his work Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In, brings a new form of a grand strategy, which is forming allies. The author compares two tools, "Bandwagoning", which is about self-extension and gaining, and balancing, which is about self-preservation and trying to avoid any losses. The idea of forming alliances is also explained by Walt Bandwagoning in his theory, the balance of threat theory, which is about "attribute to domestic sources" and the state's balance related to its survival. In bandwagoning, states aim to share advantages or war spoils, which leads states to form alliances in order to profit, as can be seen in the relation between Iraq and its neighboring countries. Along with that, Randall Schweller compared two significant notions, which are the status-quo and revisionist state. Both Walt and Waltz in their book the Theory of International Politics talked about the kind of strong state which joins strong alliances, for instance, the alliance between Iraq and Iran or US and European states. Also, Waltz emphasizes that for that state in order to gain power should be bandwagon. Status-quo states can seek "self-preservation and protection of value", but in revisionist states, states seek more than what they have.[24] In our case, keeping status quo is the core goal for the current Shia majority regime. Thus, the key term that Waltz tried to explain is the alliances with the potential power for balance of power in the region.

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[24] Randall Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In," *International Security* 19(1)(1994): 72-107.

1.3.2. Domestic-level Constructivism

Under constructivism, the state is foremost, and it should be treated as an individual that has an identity, a role, norms, and ideas, and this understanding is connected to neo-realism. The interaction through foreign relations between the states is mobilized by identities and interests. Further, realism is close to constructivism, mainly in talking about the concept of power in shaping political and social power. According to Michael Foucault, norms produce power and norms enables interest. Both realism and constructivism emphasize the rational act in their studies, mainly in identity politics, because it is what shapes the political action of the actors. Constructivism is not only related to international politics, but also to the domestic politics of unitary and individual states. According to Christian Resu-Smit in his chapter (Constructivism), he quoted from Wendt in acknowledging the importance of state identity in informing its interest, therefore, we can predict the state actions. A state's identity includes its ideology, culture, and material factors. Therefore, realism is close to constructivism in the way that, both are state-centric in perceiving interest. Along with that, constructivism, with its idea of identity, is related to realism, because identity created the power struggle where realism entails. While most of the theories and approaches in IR have a different and distinct core of analysis, nevertheless, there is a similarity between constructivism and realism.

Further, the role of actors is vital in perceiving interests, because the actors who construct and utilize interests, which makes them a rational entity. Interest is related also to establishing hegemony, which is maintained by strong and powerful actors who can legitimate their norms and discourses. Along with constructing new norms that can generate hegemonic order, norms go through "life cycle" according to the article by Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink.

The essence of constructivism and foreign policy is related to the role of identity in shaping the interest and actions of the agents and norms. According to Trine Flockhart, identities involve many interests and preferences regarding any choice. Also, since interest is structured around agents and their practice, foreign policy according to Trine Flockhart is defined as "agent-level activity performed by various

policy makers (agents) within both domestic and international environments and therefore responsive to the structures of both".[25]

1.4. Research Design and Methodology

In the research design, the testing of the hypothesis about the relationship between foreign policy and ethnic and sectarian political identity in Iraqi post-2003. The state that I will observe to test this causal relationship is Iraq in the post-Saddam era. The reason behind focusing on this period is to test the relationship between foreign policy and the survival of the current regime in Iraq. Finally, the testing in this context is in relating the theory of neoclassical realism and domestic-level constructivism approach with hypotheses, and infer and evaluate them.

Because the unit of analysis is the foreign policy of Iraq post-2003, the level of analysis is the state level. The scope of analysis is post-2003 Iraq. The independent variable is regime survival. The dependent variable is sectarian and ethnic foreign policy.

In order to measure this causal relationship, I will look at the history of Iraqi foreign policy and the development of political identity in Iraq. Also, I will perceive the policy change and transformation throughout history till recently. Both the elite's role and regime change will be analyzed. The aim is to understand the current ruling regime of post-2003 and its survival. This thesis is a case study that uses the qualitative method. Also, it is deductive research by using the general claims, afterward seeing the different events and comparing them. Lastly, about the research design, the methods that will be used are the content analysis and comparative and historical research. Starting with the data collection and data analysis, this thesis relies on different academic and news databases, and research. In the data analysis, the test of the hypotheses is by drawing a path of the process or using process tracing to figure the relationship.

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[25] Flockhart, T. (2012). Constructivism and foreign policy. *Foreign policy: theories, actors, cases*, 78-93.

The data sources include official statements, databases such as JSTOR, SAGE, Talor&Francis, and EBSCO, and secondary sources. The sampling is the region of Iraq, the cluster sampling is important in this case because it is about the geographical stratified. Also, in order to measure the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, the ordinal level of measurement is the best fit in this research. In addition, this case study is cross-sectional and includes a multi-time dimension, since it is part of the historical process analysis.

Despite the fact that during the data collection I eliminated the uses of the experiment or survey or interview in addressing the causal relationship between foreign policy and sectarian and ethnic political identity. Take the regime's elites and institutions as a source. During my research on this topic, there have been many alternative explanations to this case, especially about theorizing the case such as the neo-liberalism justification. But in my perspective, this topic can be best explained by the theory of neoclassical realism and constructivism from the domestic level. The neoclassical realism and constructivist theories are generalized to many states and applied to many cases; however, reflecting the theory into the case took little attention mainly post-2003 regime. Therefore, this thesis is original in connecting Iraqi foreign policy and ethnic-sectarian political identity with the regime survival in the post-2003 period. The argument is based on the theoretical framework of the theory of neoclassical realism and domestic-level constructivism.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The chapter underlines the historical background since the formation of the Iraqi state. However, starting from the late Ottoman period is vital in order to see the development of political identity. The chapter will be periodized as the following: the late Ottoman period and the development of identity, the period of the British mandate, independence in 1932, the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958, and the republican era with different political leaders who ruled Iraq till the 1990s.

2.1. Late Ottoman Period and the Development of Identity

To begin with, the identity of Iraq came from a long history of conflict, wars, and transformations. Identity became the center of rivalry between the Sunni Ottoman Empire and the Shia Safavid dynasty. Both states used identity and ideology as a tool to create a sense of belonging, mobilize a large number of people in their territory, and conduct their foreign relations. However, when the people lost their sense of belonging and strong identity, the Ottoman state started to lose territory. The reason for that is the process of reforms and modernization during the time of the Ottoman Empire and the Safavid dynasty. A weak sense of national belonging arose due to globalization and cosmopolitanism. During the 18th century, the Ottoman Empire faced the process of decentralization and the beginning of losing territory. This was because of the emergence of the two mainstreams, the force of change toward westernization and the continuation from conservatism and traditionalism in both the empire and the dynasty. In the historical transformation of the Ottoman Empire and the Safavid dynasty, the role of identity was key in shaping the foreign relation between the two states. Identity also determined the disputed boundaries, and it has played a role in creating the arbitrary boundaries of the modern states of the Middle East.

Further, the ideological change during the 19th century played a role in the domestic and the international arena. The shift toward the West and the aspiration for reforms

is seen in some aspects as getting rid of traditionalist Islamism, because Islam is considered as an ideology in the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, many ulama such as Ibn Taymiyyah regarded the backwardness of the Islamic world as due to people becoming far away from religion, unlike Ibn Khaldun, who emphasized the cycle of power for each state starting from rise to decline. Though the Ottoman Empire was not composed only of Muslims, the state understood that religion or Islam was the ideological tool to maintain the territorial unity of the empire, mainly after the Greek rebellion (Cleveland, 2016, p. 48-51). For instance, during the time of Sultan Abdul Hamid, pan-Islamism was adopted as the state policy in order to face the emerging ethnic and national identities. Nonetheless, this attempt failed due to the Kurdish ethnicity and Arab nationalist movements. Thus, with development and modernization, the ideology of Ottomanism and Islamism became weak in mobilizing large territories with an enormous population. That is why the nationalist identity in the late period came to provide a sense of belonging and solidarity to the newborn states in the Middle East.

The end of the Ottoman order, which was based on Islamic sharia rule, brought a new order to the region after World War I. This order was characterized by the emergence of nation-states and their citizens. Nationalist identity was shaped by the emergence of nationalism. This enabled state-building, because it provided a unified society under regional ideology rather than a "universal order" like Islam, which was the case during the Ottoman period. Despite this, according to Cleveland, Ottomanism remained strong in the Arab provinces with their Islamic attitude and among the elites who served during the Ottoman Empire and continued to be important in the post-war era (Cleveland, 2016, p.170). However, the British officials determined the fate of the region and the new created arbitrary state of Iraq, and they directed the state's identity and its foreign relations. Identity faced many changes from the formation of the state in 1921 till recently. Foreign relations were changing along with the interactions with other states, in accordance with the changes in the objectives and priorities of the ruling regime. Hence, after World War I, the new political order changed in the Middle East from the Ottoman rule to the British or the European, which played a role in shaping Iraqi foreign policy and its political identity

regionally and globally.[26] Additionally, social and economic developments contributed to the formation of the Iraqi state and the British presence in the region in the 20th century.

From the social aspect, the newborn nationalist identity was a social force that emerged from different events. For instance, the increase in the number of students who joined the schools and academies in Istanbul and the spread of books and magazines all facilitated communication between the people. Consequently, the spread of the nationalist consciousness among the people was due to the growth of awareness of common language and origins and more importantly in the Iraqi case, the British occupation in 1914-1918 and later the revolution of 1920. Furthermore, conflict is one of the main features in the history of Iraq between different sides such as the tribes and cities or even between the tribes themselves. Hence, the conflict in Iraq was not regarded to the late period of the Ottoman Empire.[27]

2.2. British Mandate

British attempts during this era focused on the state building, decentralization of the Ottoman system in the newly created state, and securing their interest in the country. That is why the Iraqi foreign policy since the early days was characterized by its close ties with British rule. Their legacy was in leaving the country unstable and without political institutions. According to Cleveland in his book *A History of the Middle East*, the main British interest in Iraq was in guaranteeing the security of the trade network with India and protecting both the Iraqi and Iranian oil fields.[28] Additionally, the British interest was in protecting their interest in the land and sea routes to India and in the land of Iraq as a frontier to control.[29] As a result, the Iraqi people rebelled against foreign rule in 1920 and established many political parties. Those parties were connected with religious and tribal authorities and sought to end the British mandate and gain independence, form an Iraqi government, and enter the League of Nations.

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[26] Cleveland, W. L., & Bunton, M. (2016). *A history of the modern Middle East*. Hachette UK.
[27] حنا بطاطو, العراق, الطبقات الاجتماعية والحركات الثورية من العهد العثماني حتى قيام الجمهورية - الكتاب الاول, ترجمة عفيف الرزار, بيروت, مؤسسة الابحاث العربية, 1992.
[28] Cleveland, W. L., & Bunton, M. (2016). *A history of the modern Middle East*. Hachette UK.
[29] Simon, R. S., Tejirian, E. H., Sick, G., & Sick, G. G. (2004). *The creation of Iraq, 1914-1921*. Columbia University Press.

The role of the rebellion in 1920 was vital in conceiving the national identity of the Iraqi people and shaping the future of the British existence in the country.

Moreover, Toby Dodge, in his article the "Iraq: The Contradictions of Exogenous State- Building in Historical Perspective" attributed the instability from 1914 till 1932, to the British failure in creating a stable state. As a result, we see "regional instability and dictatorial government".[30] On the other hand, according to James L. Gelvin the instability of Iraqi politics and its foreign policy during this period was because of ethnic and religious differences or affiliations to different groups, and identity is associated with the group's political identity. The large territory of the three major provinces (Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul) created a different political claim for each ethnic and religious group. The majority in modern Iraq were Shia Arab, although the ruling elites were Sunnis Arab, and the northern city of Mosul was inhabited by Sunni Kurds. As a result, according to Dodge, this composition created political instability.[31] Hence, the main character of this phase was the political instability and the problems that been created by British rule until the country gained its independence in 1932. And the foreign policy during this era of the mandate was not independent.

2.3. Independence

The system that the British created in the new Iraq did not only create instability, it also did not meet the needs of the people or serve the different segments of the society. Amal Vinogradov, in the article of "The 1920 Revolt in Iraq Reconsidered: The Role of Tribes in National Politics", stated that "During this time, the British were obliged to force-feed an artificial and outmoded system that was barely capable of holding primordial sentiments in check."[32] The "ethnically and religiously fragmented society" as Cleveland calls it, was not prepared to accept the imposed European system of institutions or new foreign king Feisal in the country, because he identified himself with the British. However, with his death and the absence of leadership,

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[30] Dodge, T. (2006). Iraq: The contradictions of exogenous State-Building in historical perspective. *Third World Quarterly*, *27*(1), 187-200.

[31] Gelvin, J. L. (2005). *The modern middle east: A History* (p. 357). New York: Oxford University Press.

[32] Vinogradov, A. (1972). The 1920 revolt in Iraq reconsidered: the role of tribes in national politics. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *3*(2), 123-139.

many figures came to control political life, and they were mostly Sunni Muslims. Therefore, the changes during this period resulted in the instability due to the foreign element. Also, the instability was because of the domestic composition of different communities and their ethnic-sectarian political identity.[33]

The emerging of new political elites in Iraqi politics enhanced the power struggle during this period. Their interest clashing in ideology or identity furthered the struggle, and the sentiment of pan-Arabism or even nationalism was used by politicians as a symbol for the new nation. While this sentiment came to provide unity among the people, according to Gelvin, this later turned into "nebulous sentiment". Further, the army leaders were more enthusiastic to pan- Arabism, because the army saw themselves as the guardian of Iraqi nationalism. The key point in analyzing the role of domestic figures and actors from the politicians to the army is to trace how identity or ideologies were used in the critical time of independence to create a unified nation. Along with that, identity helped the survival of the regime internally and externally. Another characteristic of this period is that the Iraqi foreign policy remained affiliated with Western politics, mainly the British, since there were many treaties signed between both states in 1922, 1927, and 1930 and later on with the Baghdad Pact.[34]

The author Judith S. Yaphe, in her article "The view from Basra: Southern Iraq's Reaction to War and Occupation, 1915-1925" in the book *The Creation of Iraq 1914 to 1921*, summarized the long years of British occupation in Iraq led to arose of nationalist groups who is aware of the British occupation. That resulted in social and political unrest and military revolts.[35]

On the other hand, Hanna Batatu summarizes the period from 1921-1939, is where the British interest meets with the aspiration of the Hashemite monarchy and the

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[33] Cleveland, W. L., & Bunton, M. (2016). *A history of the modern Middle East*. Hachette UK.

[34] العربى, المركز الديمقراطى. "السياسة الخارجية العراقية بعد عام 2014." المركز الديمقراطي العربي, 10 Oct. 2018, https://democraticac.de/?p=56760.

[35] Simon, R. S., Tejirian, E. H., Sick, G., & Sick, G. G. (2004). *The creation of Iraq, 1914-1921*. Columbia University Press.

Arab nationalist to create the state of Iraq. Similarly, the policies of the monarchy domestically aimed at forming a common sentiment and destination for the different segments of Iraq. Batatu argued that King Faisal I of Iraq relied on stimulating the Shia and the Kurds and including them in the new state and its institutions. The main efforts of King Faisal I were in establishing a strong nationalist Iraqi identity, which was structured around his family and a strong Iraq. Despite all the attempts of the monarch family to build a strong nationalist identity, they faced much disobediences from the tribes and military coups. During the years of 1936 and 1937, the Arab nationalist identity was at the core of political life.[36]

2.4. Iraq between 1939 and 1958

During the period of World War II and after Iraqi independence, British interference continued in political life. This created a domestic conflict between the supporters of a British tie and the sovereign groups who sought "true sovereignty". As a result, we see the Anglo-Iraqi War in 1941 by the British against the rebel government under the leadership of Rashid Ali. The incident of Rashid Ali is vital during WWII because it revealed the frustration and gap between the people, and the military, particularly toward British interference and reoccupation.[37] Hence, the event of 1941 empowered the nationalist sentiments among the people and created a reaction toward the monarchy because they get their support from the British. This led the monarchy to lose its nationalist outlook.[38]

The movement of Rashid Ali was led by young military officers, according to Cleveland, was due to dissatisfaction of the civilian politicians with the British rule (Cleveland, 2016, p. 215). The British role in the Middle East generally and in Iraq specifically was coming to an end by the end of WWII, despite their influence continuing till the 1958 coup. Rashid Ali Al-Gaylani became the prime minister and started to established ties with Nazi Germany.[39]

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[36] حنا بطاطو, العراق, الطبقات الاجتماعية والحركات الثورية من العهد العثماني حتى قيام الجمهورية - الكتاب الاول, ترجمة عفيف الرزاز, بيروت, مؤسسة الابحاث العربية, 1992.

[37] Cleveland, W. L., & Bunton, M. (2016). *A history of the modern Middle East*. Hachette UK.

[38] حنا بطاطو, العراق, الطبقات الاجتماعية والحركات الثورية من العهد العثماني حتى قيام الجمهورية - الكتاب الاول, ترجمة عفيف الرزاز, بيروت, مؤسسة الابحاث العربية, 1992.

[39] Cleveland, W. L., & Bunton, M. (2016). *A history of the modern Middle East*. Hachette UK.

Iraqi foreign policy was under the direct influence of Britain, but at the same time King Faisal was willing to build close relations with the United States. Iraq during the time of Nuri al-Said considered the relationship with the US significant, primarily due to the case of Palestine. With the Baghdad Pact in 1955, the US took lead from Britain in the Middle East, at the same time eradicating the Soviet expansionism in the region. The Baghdad Pact symbolized that Iraqi foreign relations would remain pro-Western and pro-British. In the book *A History of the Modern Middle East*, the author referred to an important player during the WWII till 1958, Nuri al-Said, who was the key in conceiving Iraq's foreign policy.[40]

Another element that played a role is the Iraqi population's different domestic compositions, which as the domestic factor determined the foreign relations with the non-Arab states and the Arab states. The political power was concentrated in the hand of the Sunni Arab and they are eager to pan-Arabism ideology, however, during this period it was rejected by the Shia because in Arab unity they would be a minority. The Kurds shared the same sentiments with the Shia in opposing any Arab unity, and they struggled for their independence. Furthering this complex composition of Iraqi society, around 80 percent of the Iraqi population was rural (Cleveland, 2016, p. 327).

Domestically, the general tendency during this era of the monarchy was in fostering the nationalist identity, regardless of the obstacles for the nationalist process to success. Also, the nationalist identity faced long years of crisis, suffering, and divisions. For instance, the military movement of 1941 and the execution of many officers weakened the military and brought the British advisers back to their positions. That led to disappointment and bad sentiments in the domestic arena. Further, regionally, the war in Palestine and the negotiation between the Hashemite family in Jordan and Israel created distrust. The opposition used the policies of Nuri-Said in the Baghdad Pact of 1955. All those legacies determined the new period of the republican era. According to Hanna Batatu, the upcoming revolution that overthrew the monarchy would not only destroy the ruling system, but would also

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[40] Cleveland, W. L., & Bunton, M. (2016). *A history of the modern Middle East*. Hachette UK.

change the class structure and upset the balance between the ethnic and sectarian communities in the country, mainly between the Arab and the Kurds, and the Shia and the Sunnis.[41]

Before 1939, the power was concentrated in the hands of the British, the ruling Hashemite family, and the officers. Nevertheless, in the following years the power would be in the hands of the military officers. Also, their individual interests and motives would be affiliated to the regional countries Turkey and Iran. The change during this period reflected the division inside the officer's establishment and the weakened in the monarchy, which lead to its overthrow[42]. To conclude, this era of the monarchy the national identity was contested and the ethnic and sectarian identity was conceived.

2.5. Republican Era

In the period that followed the overthrow of the monarchy, many features determined the future of the country. Starting from the declaration of the republic in 1958, the British control over the country ended by leaving the Baghdad Pact. Secondly, ending the treaties with the British and the United States, and formatting a government that follow nationalist policies aiming for the unity of Arab federation. All those features foresaw the future with the new political elites and new changes in the world order. With the Cold War, Iraq joined the Non-Aligned Movement. The country would witness a new phase of its foreign policy with major shifts and changes under five main leaders: Abd al-Karim Qasim from 1958-1963, Abdul Salam Arif and Abdul Rahman Arif from 1966-1968, Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, and Saddam Hussein.

2.5.1. Abd al-Karim Qasim, 1958-1963

During the time of Abd al-Karim Qasim, Iraqi foreign policy was isolated and distanced from Western influence and the Arabic region. This situation brought Iraq closer to

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[41] حنا بطاطو, العراق, الطبقات الاجتماعية والحركات الثورية من العهد العثماني حتى قيام الجمهورية - الكتاب الاول, ترجمة عفيف الرزاز, بيروت, مؤسسة الابحاث العربية, 1992.

[42] حنا بطاطو, العراق, الطبقات الاجتماعية والحركات الثورية من العهد العثماني حتى قيام الجمهورية - الكتاب الاول, ترجمة عفيف الرزاز, بيروت, مؤسسة الابحاث العربية, 1992.

the communist bloc. For instance, an agreement that was signed under Abd al-Karim Qasim between Iraq and the Soviet Union for military and economic assistance, and Iraq withdrew from the Baghdad Pact.[43] This relation with the Soviet Union would last for twenty years. Qasim created ties with the communist bloc not only in foreign relations but also in the domestic sphere.

In addition, Qasim's policies created an impact on external foreign relations and domestic conflict. Especially in the era of the Cold War and the ideological tension between the communist Soviet and the western liberals which played a vital role in the Middle East.[44] The internal conflict was between the Pan-Arab nationalists, who aimed for a unified Arab country and the communists, who opposed this idea. Qasim sided with the latter; that is why we see Iraq's withdrawal from the Arab League. Also, there was a crisis between the tribes, ethnic, and classes that led to the Mosul incident in 1959.[45] As a result, Iraq was isolated from the Arab countries, despite of the objectives of 14 July revolution objectives to keep the Arab cooperation and unity.[46] Yet, the isolation would not remain, but would change later on with Abdul Salam Arif, particularly toward the Arab countries.

The book *The Iraqi Foreign Policy after 2014* says that Iraqi relations with Britain continued in secret despite the apparent tension between the two countries. Iraq maintained relations with the British because of the British interest in Iraqi oil and the region. For instance, Iraq did not nationalize its oil field as Iran did and Egypt with the Suez Canal. Similarly, Qasim followed the same policy with the United States and ended a security treaty between the two states. The United States was not happy with this situation viewed and the overthrow of Qasim in 1963 as a major "positive development", as Peter Sluglett stated. Also, taking into consideration the relation between the oil and political struggle during this era. The author Timothy Mitchell draws the interconnected relationship between the policies of Qasim regarding the

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[43] Cleveland, W. L., & Bunton, M. (2016). *A history of the modern Middle East*. Hachette UK.

[44] Sluglett, P. (2005). The cold war in the middle east. *International Relations of the Middle East*, 41-58.

[45] حنا بطاطو, العراق, الشيوعيين والبعثيين والضباط الاحرار- الكتاب الثالث, ترجمة عفيف الرزار, بيروت, مؤسسة الابحاث العربية, 1992.

[46] العربى, المركز الديمقراطى. "السياسة الخارجية العراقية بعد عام 2014." المركز الديمقراطي العربي, 10 Oct. 2018, https://democraticac.de/?p=56760.

Iraq Petroleum Company and its revenues, which was not accepted by the United States, as a result was the assassination of Qasim by "CIA- supported coups of 1963".[47]

To sum up, Iraqi foreign policy under Qasim was not clear and stable. The policies followed during his period were not strategic and did not serve the interest of the country, according to the book *The Iraqi Foreign Policy after 2014*.The reasons behind this unstable foreign policy were the external relationships with the Western bloc and the alliances with the Soviets, along with domestic opposition. Since the regime was a military regime, it was difficult to see reformist attempts in a large society with different sects, ethnicities and interest groups. A further element that destabilized the country during the period of Qasim was the Kurds and the government. Likewise, the concern of Pan-Arabism that influences the governments in post-war period.[48] Even though Qasim regime Kurdish support and allied with the Soviets, he did not give the Kurds independence, which led to tension and conflict between 1961 and 1963. Therefore, different identities during this period shaped the domestic context and relations with foreign countries, and boosted the survival of the regime.

2.5.2. Abdul Salam Arif and Abdul Rahman Arif, 1966-1968

Abdul Salam Arif followed Qasim in a very critical time of the Cold War, which affected his policy toward the Western and Eastern bloc. As Peter Sluggte has argued, "until the 1970s, Iraq could be written off as hopelessly socialist and pro-Soviet", and as such was an object of fashionable concern and approval in some more short-sighted and forgetful European leftist circles."[49] The Iraqi foreign policy during this period was neutral, joining the Non-Aligned Movement and bringing back the relations with the Arab countries, particularly with Egypt. The role of Abdul Salam Arif was vital in establishing the unity between Egypt and Syria, and in creating a full union in 1966 between Egypt and Iraq after major policies and plans for the military and economy. However, those attempts faced opposition against any unification and

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[47] Mitchell, T. (2009). Carbon democracy. *Economy and Society*, *38*(3), 399-432.
[48] Cleveland, W. L., & Bunton, M. (2016). *A history of the modern Middle East*. Hachette UK.
[49] Sluglett, P. (2005). The cold war in the middle east. *International Relations of the Middle East*, 71

remained a dream due to the political unrest, ethnic differences, and different leaders' aspirations and ambitions in the Arab countries.[50]

The foreign policies that followed under Abdul Rahman Arif, from 1966 till 1968, were clearer and more balanced, aiming to maintain the stability and sovereignty of the country, especially after the crisis with Kuwait. During the time of the monarch, Nuri-Sadi had tried to unite Kuwait and Iraq; however, with the 1958 revolution he attempted to keep stability. In 1961 a crisis between the two countries took place again after the British signed an agreement with Kuwait to guarantee its protection; the same year, Kuwait declared its independence. Qasim declared that Kuwait was part of Iraq and during the Ottoman time it was part of Basra. All the attempts of Qasim to unite Kuwait with Iraq failed and isolated Iraq. With Abdul Rahman Arif, the tension was reduced, and the government tried to have a good relationship with Kuwait.

Good relations were maintained between Iraq and the neighboring countries during the two years of Abdul Rahman Arif's rule. Firstly, relations with Kuwait were developed and stabilized, and agreements on economic projects were signed between the two counties. Relations with Iran, which Arif visited in 1967, were quiet and balanced. These good relations were not only regionally but also globally, especially with the Western countries. In 1967, Abdul Rahman Arif visited France to boost the positive relations between the two states; nevertheless, these relations did not last, because of the president's refusal to give privileges to the international oil companies to invest in Iraqi oil fields. Later, this relation would face a critical point with the war of 1967. The tension between Iraq and the Western countries started with their support of Israel in wars and conflict with the Arab countries. The outbreak of war and their military support for Israel resulted in the of the relations with the US and Britain and stopping the flow of oil.

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[50] Cleveland, W. L., & Bunton, M. (2016). *A history of the modern Middle East*. Hachette UK.

2.5.3. Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr 1968-1979

The history of Iraq is characterized by social and political instability, from the formation of the state under the monarchy, the monarchy's overthrow in 1958, and the coup of 1968 to the country's later domestic and regional convulsions. Over the years, we witness the continuous change of regimes and leaders. However, the 1968 coup d'etat brought a stable regime that lasted for thirty-five years until the invasion in 2003. The sole and authoritarian regime centered on one personality: Saddam Hussain. Before that, the era of Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr was essential as the beginning of Ba'ath rule.

The policies of Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr led to closers relations with the Soviet bloc and the signing of a friendship and cooperation treaty in 1972. This treaty was critical to successful Iraqi foreign policy during the Cold War and as a move toward the Eastern bloc. Along with that, Iraq maintained a good relationship with the Arab countries, although for the first time it disagreed with Egypt after the signing of the Camp David treaty with Israel.[51]

A further significant move during the time of Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr that affected foreign relations was the nationalization of the Iraqi oil company in 1972. The implication of this attempt was in the disagreement among the different foreign partners in the oil companies, for instance, the French company. In 1973, Iraq's oil income tripled and it became the second-largest oil exporter in the region.[52] Therefore, the oil industry played a significant role in the foreign policy of the new period, especially due to the oil global market.

2.5.4. Saddam Hussein

In the 1970s, Saddam Hussein emerged as an important figure, along with al-Bakr, and they carried out an important reform in economic and social life. According to William L. Cleveland and Martin Bunton, the main objectives of the Ba'ath regime

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[51] العربي, المركز الديمقراطي. "السياسة الخارجية العراقية بعد عام 2014." المركز الديمقراطي العربي, 10 Oct. 2018, https://democraticac.de/?p=56760.

[52] Sluglett, P. (2005). The cold war in the middle east. *International Relations of the Middle East*, 41-58.

domestically were to create a one-party system and controlling all aspects of society.[53] In 1979, with the resignation of al-Bakr, Hussein seized power, concentrated it around him, and became "a one-man dictatorship".

Domestically, the policy of the regime was centralized at the hand of the Sunnis against any Kurdish wishes for independence or Shia religious identity. As a result, the Kurdish rebellion continued and the influence of the Shia ulama continued strongly in the south. The Shia disagreed with the regime on three points: the regime's was following secular policies; its refusal to appoint Shia people to high positions in the government or the party; and the domination of the Ba'ath over all the institutions, including the religious ones.[54] As a result, the al-Dawa party was formed to topple the Ba'ath regime and establish an Islamic authority. Ultimately, domestically, the society continued to be fragmented and the national unity continued to suffer.

On the other hand, the above argument about the Shia and Kurdish elimination under the Ba'ath Party and the strong tie with Sunnis is challenged by Hanna Batatu in his book. Batatu argues that the decreased influence of the Shia during this era was not due to politics or party politics. The Baathists relied not only on the Sunnis in Tikrit but also on other social segments such as the Kurds in 1970 and the communists in 1972.[55]

The role of oil was critical for the survival of the Ba'ath regime because it controlled the Iraq Petroleum Company due to the nationalization of the company, which was significant for political and economic events. For instance, controlling the prices during the time of crisis such the war with Israel. Another vital phase of the regime during the early decade of its rule was the social change and reforms.

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[53] Cleveland, W. L., & Bunton, M. (2016). *A history of the modern Middle East*. Hachette UK.
[54] Cleveland, W. L., & Bunton, M. (2016). *A history of the modern Middle East*. Hachette UK.
[55] حنا بطاطو, العراق, الشيوعيين والبعثيين والضباط الاحرار- الكتاب الثالث, ترجمة عفيف الرزار, بيروت, مؤسسة الابحاث العربية, 1992.

Under the domination of Saddam Hussein, Iraqi foreign policy faced major complications and confrontations with regional countries and the global powers. As revealed above, Iraqi foreign policy during the Cold War was isolated from the Western bloc because of the British mandate and support for Israel, which created a negative sentiment domestically. The friendship and alliance with the Eastern bloc, the Soviet Union, was crucial, especially in economic and military relations such as purchases of arms and serving technical staff. With the Ba'ath regime, this tie with the Soviets continued, but it faced some changes due to the petroleum industry.

The Ba'ath regime under Saddam was pragmatic in its foreign relations, particularly toward the US, Britain, and France. The Western powers tried to have a foothold in the country through contracts and projects in the oil sector by providing technology and advice. For instance, "France won a contract to supply Mirage fighter aircraft and 200 tanks, and Italy agreed to provide the regime with sophisticated naval vessels".[56] Despite this relation and cooperation, Iraq confronted the West on certain occasions, mainly involving Israel, the Iraqi expansionism in the Gulf region with the Kuwait occupation, and the its domination over the Persian Gulf.

The domestic events and escalations shaped the foreign relations, the Iraqi-Iranian relation was determined by the Shia relation and confrontation with the state center in Iraq. Fanar Haddad in his writings conceived the role of political identity or the sectarian identity with the Shia political activism in the 1960s and more intensively in the 1970s. The author also linked between the increase of authoritarianism and political activism, which led the Shia to demand more political activism.[57] In order to broaden the Shia- centric, the external support was needed particularly from Iran.

The concept of sect-centric, and here we mean the Shia-centric, was regarded according to Fanar Haddad as the state conceiving sectarianism. Haddad discussed this topic is in order to understand the situation post-2003. In according the events

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[56] Cleveland, W. L., & Bunton, M. (2016). *A history of the modern Middle East*. Hachette UK. P.414
[57] Haddad, F. (2016). *Shia-Centric State Building and Sunni Rejection in Post-2003 Iraq*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

pre-2003 is vital, for instance, the 1970s and post period to the "Shia self-assertion". Further, the sect-centric in post-2003 would be asserted to the Sunni identity and their struggle.[58]

The use of religion or sect as an identity politics was not merely used by Shia to have political participation. Even Saddam Hussein used religion as an instrument to mobilize domestic support and in foreign affairs. The author Samuel Helfont stressed this point, the Saddam Hussein regime's use of the Islamism as a tool in foreign policy. The argument is that the regime used Islam as a tool to gain the support of some Islamists in his strategies and neutralize the other oppositions.[59] During the early period of the republic, Pan-Arabism, which is seen as a more secular policy was a tool used by the regime elites and leaders to unify the masses and to conduct the regional foreign relations with the Arab countries. However, this ideological rhetoric shifted to something more religious and sectarian.

The article "Saddam and the Islamists: the Baathist Regime's Instrumentalization of Religion in Foreign Affairs" by Samuel Helfont argued that religion is always classified and referred to as an ideology or identity by the scholars who deal with foreign policy.[60] Further, as noted above Iraqi foreign policy was pragmatic in its relationship with the international arena. Similarly, Iraq uses Islam as a tool in domestic politics and the region to get support and influence and to advance its survival and interests. For instance, the Iraqi-Iranian relation was critical despite the uses of Islam from both sides to gain the support they need. Also, the Iraqi-Saudi relation was in counterpart, and Saudis scholars declared that Iraq is violating the principle of Islam due to the invasion of Kuwait. In short, Iraqi foreign policy oscillated between the pragmatic use of religion and secular policy.

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[58] Majed, R. (2018). Sectarianization: mapping the new politics of the Middle East. *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 1-4.

[59] Helfont, S. (2014). Saddam and the Islamists: The Ba'thist regime's instrumentalization of religion in foreign affairs. *The Middle East Journal*, *68*(3), 352-366.

[60] Helfont, S. (2014). Saddam and the Islamists: The Ba'thist regime's instrumentalization of religion in foreign affairs. *The Middle East Journal*, *68*(3), 352-366.

According to the article by Gareth Stansfield, who quoted from Tripp, in summarizing foreign relations during Saddam's era, Iraqi foreign policy faced constraints. These constrains included domestic political, social, and cultural contests, especially in the contested question of Iraq's national identity and regional and economic insecurity. A further character of Iraqi foreign policy under Saddam's regime was distrust of outsiders: "everything beyond the inner circle of figures was, in effect, foreign".[61] As a result, Iraqi foreign policy fall apart after the collapse of his regime.

To sum up, Iraqi foreign policy from the overthrow of the monarchy till the 1990s faced major critical junctures, starting from the major upheavals of the 1958 revolution and the coup of 1968 that brought the Ba'ath Party to power. Secondly, there was a long period of wars with Iran and with Kuwait, and the sanctions after that in the 1990s. The critical events and occasions were not only domestic but also regional and international because those events affected the foreign policy. The changes in the international system from the Cold War until the collapse of the USSR affected Iraqi foreign policy. Furthermore, the regimes in each period with different leaders and different ideologies sought to survive domestically and regionally. This is seen from the uses of pan-Arabism as an ideology, political identity, and path toward economic unity between the Arab states. Also, domestically the ethnic and sectarian identity became an ideological tool used by the regime to survive.

2.6. Conclusion

The importance of history derives from its ability to explain current events and transformations and reveal the connections between the past and the present. The reading of history does not only tell the historical events of a country or its formation. Primarily, the study of the modern history of the Middle East is important because history shaped current events. This chapter highlighted the vital historical events and transformations in the history of modern Iraq. The main aim was to question in what ways historical events shaped the Iraqi foreign policy and its political identity. Starting from the late period of the Ottoman Empire, the first period of state formation, the

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[61] Stansfield, G. (2010). The reformation of Iraq's foreign relations: new elites and enduring legacies. *International Affairs*, *86*(6), 1395-1409. P.1401

republican era, and the Ba'ath Party period. Under this chapter, the periodization of the events from the domestic context emphasized in order to see relationship between foreign policy and political identity.

Iraq's geopolitical significance and global changes have changed the Iraqi social structure throughout history. The British and the European interest in the country were reflected in the social and economic life of the Iraqi people. The country's political life alternated between political parties and movements, such as the communist activists, the free officers, the nationalists and lastly the Baathists. This transformations in Iraqi political and social history were seen in the events of the 1920 revolution, the military movements and coups of 1936 and 1941, and the overthrowal of the monarchy in 1958. More importantly, the external factor of the British involvement in the country contributed to the domestic crisis and conflict after the formation of new Iraq. This foreign influence in the country's political, social, and economic affairs created a domestic reaction mainly in 1920.

The major change of 1958 was the rise to power of middle-class leaders who maintained control over the political organs. Through this mechanism, they could pursue their interests and monopolies over the main institutions in the state. Nevertheless, the middle class was not cohesive due to the divisions between different social segments and communities, especially between the Shia and the Sunnis. Regional differences and tribal conflict were important factors that played a role in shaping Iraq this era, as did the weak nationalist identity of the people and their loyalties to their communities rather than the broader identity of the country.

The identity of the political leaders or the officers following the era of the republic impacted their policies, such as the era of Qasim who relied on the different parties and got the sentiments of the Shia poor people. During Arif's time, the political leaders relied on the Arab Sunni officers and used tribal, ethnic, and nationalist loyalties and class sentiments for support, which Batatu describes as a Nasserist path. Lastly, with the Ba'ath period, the strong connection with Tikrit was foremost in the party, military, and government. And according to Batatu, the decrease influence of

the Shia during this era was not due to politics or party politics. The Baathists relied not only on the Sunnis in Tikrit but also on other social segments such as the Kurds in 1970 and the communists in 1972.[62]

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[62] حنا بطاطو, العراق, الشيوعيين والبعثيين والضباط الاحرار- الكتاب الثالث, ترجمة عفيف الرزار, بيروت, مؤسسة الابحاث العربية, 1992.

CHAPTER 3

RECENT HISTORY OF IRAQI FOREIGN POLICY

This chapter explores the recent history of Iraqi foreign policy from the 1990s till 2011. The chapter is structured around two parts: the first addresses Iraqi foreign policy during the Saddam era during the 1990s domestically and externally, with attention to foreign interference, mainly from the United States, Iran, and Turkey. The second part reveals the Iraqi foreign policy from the 2003 occupation till the withdrawal, by underlining the domestic contexts of the phase of insurgencies and US strategies during the occupation. Under this section, external and the regional factors are essential, such as Iranian relations with the Shia, Turkish concerns about the Kurds, and the Arab Gulf States.

3.1 Iraqi Foreign Policy during 1990s till 2003

Iraqi foreign policy after the formation of the state in 1921 was determined by the changing regional environment. The last chapter revealed the historical context of Iraqi foreign policy; enabled the argument that Iraq is following an ethnic and sectarian foreign policy and lack of independency since the past. Because the state was fragile socially and politically, it was vulnerable to external powers. The periods that followed the establishment of the state were characterized by political crisis, because the leaders sought only their interests and the survival of their regimes, which led to a lack of political and social integration. As a result, we see a lack of independent and integrated foreign policy with a weak national identity domestically.

The legacy of history resulted in a contested and vulnerable foreign policy. In the early days of the formation, Iraqi foreign policy was dictated to serve British interests. The aftermath of the overthrow of the monarchy witnessed a deeply fragmented society and isolation, especially during Qassim's period when Iraq withdrew from the Arab league and isolated itself from the West. With the Ba'ath era, the troubled foreign policy continued between its identity and foreign or regional relations. The Iraqi foreign policy during Saddam's era reflected both the domestic and regional

environment. Throughout this period, Iraq witnessed the legacy of Ba'ath rule. Also, there was a major shift and regime change with the 2003 occupation that led to civil war and current problems in the country. Thus, this period reveals both the domestic and external factors that played a key role in foreign policy. The goal is to acknowledge the instrumental uses of sectarian foreign policy for the survival of the current Shia-majority government.

3.1.1. United States Factor

During the new era of the Cold War and the 1990s, the American interest in the Middle East had in three main pillars: anti-communism, the security of Israel, and the oil of the region. The US became a major player which was a turning point during this new regional development. Also, the change during this period was in Iraq and the emergence of Saddam Hussein. American foreign policy was shaped by a material factor which is about the geography of the Middle East during the Cold War. Iraq has been considered a strategic partner by the US, chiefly after the Iranian revolution; nonetheless, with the 1990s, this relation changed.

Iraqi foreign policy under Saddam was characterized by complexity and crisis, which is seen from the eight years' war and the invasion of Kuwait. During this period, Iraqi foreign policy was shifting and changing due to one figure; meanwhile, many variables played a key role in directing the foreign policy during this era. Most importantly, the American variable was at the core because Iraq is a geostrategic country rich with oil, and this was a priority in American foreign policy. Along with the geostrategic position of Iraq in the Gulf region, the protection of Israel was a priority; therefore, those two elements reflected the realistic American foreign policy toward Iraq. "For US elites, Iraq's invasion was, therefore, a threat to US interests and allies, including Israel and pro-western Arab regimes".[63] Neoclassical realism justified the US interest in the region for both material and ideological reasons, such as maintaining the security of its allies and the status quo in the region.

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[63] Hinnebusch, R. A., & Ehteshami, A. (Eds.). (2002). *The foreign policies of Middle East states*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 56

With the post-Cold War era and globalization an isolationist foreign policy became very difficult; instead, expansionism and interventionism were reflected in Iraq foreign policy. The global and regional changes affected Iraq but also conflicted with Saddam's personality and ambition. Many factors shaped the American-Iraqi relationship, such as the nature of the Ba'ath Iraqi state, the regional conflict with Israel and its existence in the region, and, globally, relations with the Soviet Union. Iraqi-American relations went through in four main periods. The first was the period of the Iranian revolution in 1979 and was characterized by collaboration against the revolution. Iraq during this period was a strategic ally for the US to secure American interests in the region; similarly, Iraq needed American support the war against Iran. The United States provided strategic support and imposed sanctions on Iran in order to stop weapons imports during the war. However, this relationship ended with the beginning of 1990 despite of the crisis that was in the edge.[64] Mohamed Soffar, in a chapter in "Foreign Policy under Occupation Does Iraq Need a Foreign Policy", argued that American foreign policy during this era was not clear and was characterized by confusion: "the George H.W. Bush administration produced neither a clear vision for Iraq's future nor fresh objectives for its own intervention.".[65]

The second period of Iraqi-American relations was a turning point from an amity to an enmity. This was due to the change in the regional environment after Iraq won the war against Iran. After the war, Iraq changed its position toward Israel, where Israel declared the threat of Saddam rule against its security. As a consequence of Kuwait invasion, the relation with the US turned to an opposed direction, and the destruction of Iraqi army and imposes of sanctions. As a result, Iraqi geostrategic capability was destroyed entirely.[66]

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[64] العلاقات السياسية العراقية – الأمريكية 1979 - 2003. العلاقات-السياسية-العراقية-—-الأمريكية-1979/1/10/2009/coverage2003/https://www.aljazeera.net/specialcoverage 2003. Accessed 16 Mar. 2019.

[65] Soffar, M. (2008). Foreign Policy under Occupation: Does Iraq Need a Foreign Policy?,197

[66] العلاقات السياسية العراقية – الأمريكية 1979 - 2003. العلاقات-السياسية-العراقية-—-الأمريكية-1979/1/10/2009/coverage2003/https://www.aljazeera.net/specialcoverage 2003. Accessed 16 Mar. 2019.

The third stage of American relations with Iraq, and with the Gulf region generally, came next. The United States was seen as the protector of the region, embracing a policy of dual containment that aimed to isolate Iraq and Iran through hard economic sanctions (Cleveland, 2016, p.595). Also, as Cleveland claimed, the American administration during this period, 1991-2001, was even more aggressive toward Iraq than against Iran. The international supervision imposed sanctions on Iraq resulted in full destruction, especially on the chemical and biological sectors.[67] Thus, during this period, American policy was seeking to destroy Saddam's regime and isolate him economically and politically through sanctions and by uniting the opposition, including the Kurds and others. However, all the attempts to topple Saddam Hussein failed. In according, the external option came with the invasion of 2003.

Indeed, sanctions were imposed on Iraq because the regime was threatening the flow of oil to the global market. But those sanctions did not achieve their objectives, especially during the first phase in 1991. However, the second phase of the sanctions was succeeded in preventing the rebuilding of the Iraqi army by Saddam. Finally, Saddam's regime recognized Kuwait as a legitimate and independent state, despite the continuation of the economic sanctions. Initially, the sanctions on Iraq created some restrictions on Saddam, but did not end his objectives. According to the book by Richard N. Haass, under the chapter written of Eric D. K. Melby, argued that "thus lack of clear success in one arena does not necessarily mean sanctions have failed. These sanctions closely resemble other foreign policy instruments."[68]

The chapter of Mohamed Soffar presents the strategic developments of the dual containment by the United States. The aim was to create a balance in the Gulf region with the American military presence and "security arrangements" with the Gulf countries. The security of the Gulf was vital for the US, but even more importantly was the security of Israel during the era of peace-making and the proposal of a two-state solution between the Palestinians and Israelis.[69]

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[67] Cleveland, W. L., & Bunton, M. (2016). *A history of the modern Middle East*. Hachette UK.
[68] Haass, R. N., & Haass, R. (Eds.). (1998). *Economic sanctions and American diplomacy*. Council on Foreign Relations, 123
[69] Soffar, M. (2008). Foreign Policy under Occupation: Does Iraq Need a Foreign Policy?.

In the last stage, the American foreign policy toward the region and particularly toward Iraq was more ideational. That is in declaring discourses against the Islamic world "anti-Islamic foreign policy" and against the regime of Saddam Hussein, which shaped the American public opinion. This ideational factor and the cultural context of the American foreign policy toward Iraq was a key in the US declaring war in 2003. Also, the 9/11 attack asserted the Bush claim of "axis of evil" and "war on terror". Al–Qaida and the attack of September 11 determined the fate of Iraqi politics because the Bush administration linked the attack and the Baathist regime. American foreign policy aimed to keep its interest in Iraq and in the Gulf. Mohammed Soffer, brought a different dimension of these interlinkages between the ideational factor and American interest, "Other sought to establish the link in president Bush's Hobbesian worldview and his messianic principles of American's role in making such a dangerous world a safer place".[70]

Chiefly, the change in the global system and the regional environment presented new opportunities and constraints to the Iraqi foreign policy under Saddam; thus, it created a pragmatic and rational foreign policy in some ways. The authoritarian rule of Saddam Hussein in Iraq allowed the US to use democratic discourses in declaring the war in the name of bringing democracy to Iraq. Along with the authoritarian rule, especially in the realm of foreign policy, the claims of Iraq's violation of human rights and support for terrorism were enhanced. Mohamed Soffar summarized this concern by stating that the core aim of the new foreign policy was to restore the Iraqi position in the international community and eliminate all the old troubles.[71]

Iraq's troubled foreign policy reflects the domestic context, from the division against the authoritarian rule of Saddam Hussein to the long years of sanctions. The authoritarian Ba'ath rule kept the people under heavy control; in other words, "The politicization of ethnicity or ethnic/religious identity meant that politics was pursued in an alternative space whose external boundaries and internal bonds were forged by the experience of exclusion and repression, with the aim of factional identity

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[70] Soffar, M. (2008). Foreign Policy under Occupation: Does Iraq Need a Foreign Policy?, 198
[71] Soffar, M. (2008). Foreign Policy under Occupation: Does Iraq Need a Foreign Policy?.

assertion and interest satisfaction" (Soffer, 2008, p. 201). This was indeed due to a fragile and weak national identity, and the regime strengthened tribal and ethnic identity to repress the society and to achieve its interests in surviving. With the fall of Saddam's regime, different segments of the society tried to boost their ethnic or sectarian identity, such as the Shia and the Kurdish identity. In the coming period, both the Shia and the Kurdish identity would be the core of Iraqi politics. As a result, ethnic and sectarian foreign policy would play a significant role in boosting the regime's survival.

3.1.2. Iranian Factor and Domestic Context: Shia

The internal variable or the domestic context that determined Iraqi foreign relations with external powers were the Shia and the Kurds during the late era of Saddam's rule. The sections below will lay out the domestic changes of identity, mainly after the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979. The Iranian variable is essential in revealing the relationship between the foreign policy and the political identity of Iraq during this period. First, the Shia role during this period, the nature of their establishment and their political and religious affiliation will be addressed to understand the role of the new elites and their establishment after 2003 and to understand the patterns of Iraqi foreign policy during and after Saddam's era.

The Iranian revolution in 1979 marked the beginning of the Shia awareness of their political and sectarian identity, and the declaring of Iran as the major Shiite country. Besides, there was the aspiration to spread the Islamic revolution to the neighbouring majority-Shia countries, particularly to Iraq. This was a security threat to the Iraqi regime because Iran was a large and powerful state with a strong army. In Iraq, there have been four main Shia dominated forces, firstly the *hawza* (doctors of Islamic law), which includes ulama. Under Ba'ath rule, ulama lost their influence politically and were financially weakened. Conversely, in the post-Saddam period they played the major and sole role in Iraqi politics. According to Mohamed Soffar, *hawza* was "regarded it as a source of identity and certainly as the country sank more and more into violence and anarchy" (Soffer, 2008, p. 202).

Further, *hawza* is referred as a *marjaiyya* and it is located in Najaf, the authority of *hawza* is related to Ayatollah Ali Sistani, Khomeini, and other clerics. The chief claim in the marjaiyya is that clerics can exercise power and intervene in the politics of the state; this understanding is emphasized by *wilayat al-faqih*. According to Sajjad Rizvi, who acknowledged the centrality of *wilayat al-faqih* argument in the Islamic governing and ruling "The legacy of Khomeini is contested, but the fact that everyone claims to be a faithful follower of the Imam's line remains a striking and important model for the role of the marjaiyya in directing politics".[72]

The second Shia-dominated force is the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SCIRI) of Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim. They share the same principle of *wilayat al-faqih* and advocate it. The SCIRI created a military wing that played a significant role during the 2003 occupation. Thirdly, is the *dawa* members who did not accept the relation with Iran. Besides they refused to follow Khomeini's marjaiyya and did not accepted the ideological supremacy of Iran and political control.[73] The last socio-political force presented by Mohamad Soffar is the Sadrist movement, which was the main opposition to Saddam's Baath regime and was similarly opposed to Iran and in a challenge with Khomeini. Sadr aimed was to establish the *wali amr al-Muslimin* (Commander of the Muslims).

The many incidents and confrontations between the Shiite forces from al-Dawa and al-Sadr led to the growth of the fear and insecurity of Saddam's regime that enhanced the Shiite identity which contradicts with the secularist Sunni government. The confrontation between Iraq and Iran was presented during this period as ideological, and Saddam advocated the Arab identity to unite the people and differentiate them from the Persians. "The use of Arabist symbolism drew a clear ethnic distinction between the Arab Iraqis and the racist and resentful Persian Iranians" (Relhami and Barnett, 2002, p. 131). Similarly, Ayatollah Khomeini embraced the same language, but used more broadly religious language. In 1982, Khomeini sent a speech to the

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[72] Rizvi, S. (2010). Political mobilization and the Shi'i religious establishment (marja'iyya). *International Affairs*, *86*(6), 1302

[73] Shanahan, R. (2004). Shi a political development in Iraq: the case of the Islamic Da wa Party. *Third World Quarterly*, *25*(5), 943-954.

people of Iraq, the "beloved Muslims of Iraq", where he spoke to the Shiites and incited them against the regime.[74]

Domestically, during the war with Iran Saddam Hussein implemented the language of ethnicity which was in order to distance the Kurds from the Arab ethnicity, rather than using Iraqi national identity as one identity. Despite that, Arabism created a clear separated line from the Persians, mainly dividing the Shia of Iraq from the Shia of Persian Iran. Chiefly, Saddam attempted throughout the war to unite the Iraqis from different sects and ethnicities. Thus, according to Adeed Dawisha in the book *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, "Hussein and Bath could promote Iraq's Arab identity knowing that they easily could defend the legitimacy of the concept on historical and linguistic grounds" (Relhami &Barnett, 2002, p. 135).

3.1.3. Kurds and the Turkish Factor

An additional variable that determined Iraqi foreign relations with the regional countries was ethnicity, primarily in Iraqi-Turkish relations. Throughout history, the Kurdish question has been at the center in shaping the history of the region. The Kurdish aspiration to have autonomy and independent nationhood, due to their strong sense of difference and separate identity, put them constantly in a position of rivalry and rebellion with the central government.[75] This strong sense of difference was developed in order to have a separated nation-state or autonomy. That is why it has been difficult for them to reach a peaceful agreement with the central government. In the meantime, the Turkish state anxiously worried about Kurdish separation and their ambition, regardless of the authoritarian rule of Saddam's regime.[76]

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[74] Telhami, S., & Barnett, M. N. (Eds.). (2002). *Identity and foreign policy in the Middle East*. Cornell University Press.
[75] Telhami, S., & Barnett, M. N. (Eds.). (2002). *Identity and foreign policy in the Middle East*. Cornell University Press.
[76] Turkey's Policy towards Iraq in the Post-Saddam Era | Foreign Policy Institute. http://foreignpolicy.org.tr/turkeys-policy-towards-iraq-in-the-post-saddam-era-tarik-oguzlu/ . Accessed 16 Mar. 2019.

Both the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) under Jalal Talabani and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) had their difference in ideologies and organizations, despite their strength and shared aspiration of independence for Kurdistan. Between 1994 and 1998, both the KDP and PUK confronted each other after the upheavals of 1991 and the passing of the resolution by the UN Security Council to establish an Iraqi federal government. The resolution was about creating a no-fly zone in northern Iraq. After 2003, the Kurds would become an important player in Iraqi politics.[77]

Before the 1990s, the traditional Turkish foreign policy was isolated and distanced from Middle East politics, particularly from Iraq. However, later we witness a major shift and turning points regarding Iraq, a pro-active and integration policies of Turkey with Iraq because of the operations against the PKK. Along with that, under the Justice and Development Party (AKP), Turkish foreign policy would seek non-military intervention, meaning more economic cooperation and conferences between the two states. For instance, with the American occupation, Turkey refused to allow American troops to pass through Turkish land to Iraq.

Therefore, the security question of the Kurds is what shapes Iraqi foreign relations with Turkey in the domestic and external context. The developments in the Turkish policy toward Iraq during the 1990s were shaped by the Gulf War, which enhanced the PKK's activities. The Turkish reaction was in collaborating with the KDP and PUK against the PKK militants. The Turkish relationship with Iraq changed from Turkey's being a "neutral observer" to being a more "proactive regional player" in the following decades under the AKP.[78]

3.2. Iraqi Foreign Policy from 2003 till 2011

This section reveals the new era of the Iraqi foreign policy during the post-2003 occupation in order to trace the changes and shifts in the country. The changes came with the new political elites and a system that aimed to destroy the old regime. The

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[77] Soffar, M. (2008). Foreign Policy under Occupation: Does Iraq Need a Foreign Policy?.
[78] Özcan, M. (2011). From Distance to Engagement: Turkish Policy towards the Middle East, Iraq and Iraqi Kurds. *Insight Turkey*, *13*(2).

goal was to build a new state based on their interests and motives domestically and externally. Starting firstly from the early days of the occupation, one can see the phases of insurgency and strategies brought by the occupiers. Secondly, this section will discuss the ideological change that came with a new period and how it affected the behaviour of policymakers and their relations with the region. Lastly, it will present the major changes, shifts, and challenges that faced the new era, which will allow to conceive the sectarian foreign policy in after 2003 and the role of identity in the current regime's survival.

The changes in the Iraqi political system in 2003 led to the emergence of different political parties, elites, players, and agencies that determined the fate of the coming era. These created new foreign policy strategies and directions that reflect the domestic element. That is why the Iraqi state faced new variables internally and externally. To begin with, the former Iraqi foreign minister Hoshyar Zebari, who became the foreign minister after 2003, presented his vision of an independent foreign policy as follows: "the ministry of foreign affairs most difficult task has been to develop an independent Iraqi foreign policy at a time when our country is under legal occupation". This vision and statement of having an independent foreign policy will be challenged in this paper by proving that Iraqi foreign policy lacks independency. The post-2003 regime has been characterized by increased sectarianism. According to Gareth Stansfield, the reasons that led to a different foreign policy were that "there are new elites, newly empowered political groupings, an ethnicized and sectarianized political system, and far more penetration of Iraq's domestic politics by regional and international actors."[79]

3.2.1. The Domestic Context and the Phases of Insurgencies

The role of actors is essential in shaping the state foreign policy because through them we will see a certain foreign policy. The parties and coalitions that came during the invasion would dominate the political sphere, and they were shaped by their different sects and ideologies. The nature of a fragmented society and political arena

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[79] Stansfield, G. (2010). The reformation of Iraq's foreign relations: new elites and enduring legacies. *International Affairs*, *86*(6), 1395.

strengthened and provided the landscape for many local and foreign actors to dominate such as the opposition parties during Saddam's regime from the Kurds and the Shia *Da'wa* party. Indeed, the different parties and elites who entered politics in this period and who had also been marginalized for their ideologies and sects encouraged the rise of insurgency and the civil war. Mohamed Soffar, in his chapter "Foreign Policy Under Occupation: Does Iraq Need a Foreign Policy?", summarized this period in four phases: The first phase, starting from 2003 and 2004 was marked by "competition" between small local agencies and groups. The second phase was where groups such as the (national resistance) groups declaring jihad and asking for legitimation mainly in mid-2004 till mid-2005.

The third phase of insurgency provided the ground for the sectarian violence. This phase of "confidence" ran from mid-2005 till 2006. The phase was marked by the self-confidence of the armed resistance groups and their claim of jihad against the US occupation. The last phase was at the beginning of 2006, when sectarian cleavage and violence erupted: "Moqtada al-Sadr developed death squads that acted independently of his command and that he failed to restrain on several occasions. Sunnis, in contrast, sought the protection of armed resistance groups or formed loosely organized neighbourhood death squads to defend against al-Sadr's Mahdi army".[80] Along with the violence in Kirkuk between the Shia, Sunnis, and Kurds. This power struggle over survival and security for each group affected the outcome of this period and domestic and regional relations. Overall, the period of the four phases was based on a realistic calculation of the groups to preserve and survive in this chaos post-occupation. Additionally, sectarian identity provided the actors a tool to dominate and achieve their different interests, and according to constructivism where it justifies the important role of identity.

The sectarian militias grew and strengthened due to the political weakness in governing and the lack of strong institutions, all of which allowed militant groups and foreign fighters to function. The beginning of insurgency by the Iraqi Sunnis targeted

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[80] Soffar, M. (2008). Foreign Policy under Occupation: Does Iraq Need a Foreign Policy?, 213.

the foreign troops, but it because more extreme with the gathering of foreign jihadists. For instance, Al-Qaida was recruiting foreign fighters for its jihad against the US, which at the same time provoked the sectarian violence between the Sunnis and the Shia. Further, there was the domination of the Shia groups, who were known by proxies for Iran. These came with the invasion and included the al-Dawa party of Nuri al-Maliki, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) under Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, and the Sadrist movement.

On the ground al-Sadr movement, considered many as an enemy from the Shia, Sunnis and the Americans. The militias are known for the Mahdi Army that confronted the Americans during 2004. Yet they also clashed with al-Maliki due to his policy of excluding them from the elections and of "strengthening of centralized institutions". Despite the fact that, al-Maliki with his sectarian policies was seen as a militia more than "a representative of a true national government".[81]

3.2.2. US Strategies

The domestic violence in Iraq was enhanced due and policies or the strategies that were implemented by the Coalition Provisional Authority after the US invasion. The importance of the US strategies was in shaping the political landscape of the new regime and eliminating the old one. Three chief strategies were implemented: the disestablishment or "de-Baathification" of the society, decentralization, and balkanization. Under the de-Baathification, all the old regime government officials were displaced from their jobs by creating the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA); "even former Baathists who cooperated with the occupation authorities and the ORHA were not excluded from dismissal" (Soffar, 2008, p.216). The outcome of this policy was the spread of violence and insurgency which led to the civil war due to the dismissal of security institutions.

A further strategy was decentralization. The implementation of this strategy after the invasion fostered a weak and fragmented state. This strategy was designed to check

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[81] Cleveland, W. L., & Bunton, M. (2016). *A history of the modern Middle East*. Hachette UK.

the state in the center and the local authorities, along with aiming to weaken the state. Besides that, this strategy was boosted with balkanization strategy, which is about the balancing power between different social groups, and this strategy was open to any manipulation from different actors. Eventually, this strategy was more effective in controlling the behaviours.

Moreover, writing the constitution of 2005 that draw the feature relations between the domestic affairs and the foreign relations. Later with the first parliamentary election, which reflected the map of Iraq in which was based on ethnic and sectarian division. The Sunni boycotted the election and the Shia coalition won the majority seats next to the Kurdish party Democratic Patriotic Alliance of Kurdistan. In accordance with the political system of governance the Kurds were given the presidency; the Shia were given the premiership, where the executive power lays; and the Sunni took over the parliament presidency. "In that context, ministers became partisan fiefdoms" (Tripp 2007) used by the main parties against their political enemies, especially the Iraqi insurgent groups, who attempted to derail the state building process".[82]

3.2.3. Iran and the Shia

This section analysis Iraqi foreign policy toward the regional countries, the policies that are based on a realistic and pragmatic relations. Similarly, how Iraqi foreign policy responded to the foreign objectives in Iraq. firstly, the American intervention and the chaos of the civil war enhanced the regional intervention in the country domestically from the insurgency, such as Al-Qaida fighters, and politically in determining the politics of the country, for instance, the Iranian intervention. In the meantime, this foreign intervention and vulnerability furthered the country's domestic cleavage and sectarian foreign policy. The vulnerability of the Iraqi state emboldened the Iranians to intervene in supporting the Shiite parties, who sought to have support from both the Americans and the Iranians. However, according to Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, "Of the Shiite factions, the Sadr Movement was explicitly

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[82] Hinnebusch, R. A., & Ehteshami, A. (Eds.). (2002). *The foreign policies of Middle East states*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 121.

anti-occupation. Although it participated in the election and supported the political process, the Sadr Movement fought against both occupation and government forces" (Hinnebusch& Ehteshami, 2002, p.121).

Although there was tension between the United States and Iran after the Iranian Islamic revolution and the theocratic regime, both benefited from the Shiite regime after 2003. According to Cleveland, "America's occupation of Iraq emboldened Iran" and their relationship after the fall of Saddam had never been that good, despite the indirect Iranian support of some arm groups to fight the American forces on the ground. Nonetheless, it was the Iranians who first recognized the new political process that came with the American occupation and developed a tie relation with the regime. The Iranian aim was to build bridge alliances between the regimes in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon to reach the Mediterranean coast. This Iranian vision was enabled after the American withdraw from Iraq and the Arab Spring in 2011.

Sectarian identity is what tied the Shiite regime in Iraq with Iran, along with common interests and motives. The use of sectarianism as a political identity is what determined the relationship between the two countries, since the majority of the Shia population share a common religious ideology or doctrine. Further reason that determined this relationship is the long years of the Iraqi Shia oppositions living in Iran like the religious and political actors. On the other hand, fear or insecurity also played a role in shaping this relationship from both sides the Iraqi and the Iranian. The survival of the Shiite-dominated regime was and continues to be in the interest of Iran. This understanding of insecurity came under the realm of realism, in claiming that in insecurity is what generates the struggle for power, and maintaining this power. Here, identity is defined in accordance to who is a friend or an enemy. For instance, Iran was regarded under Saddam as an enemy, but is currently seen as a close friend of the regime. Similarly, this identity is constructed by different elites and agencies who keep this relationship between the states.

The Iranian foreign policy objective in interfering in Iraq is to stop the American aspiration in the country. Also, the plan is spread the theocratic regime in Iran,

creating a regime in Iraq that would be an ally to Iran, unlike the old regime. At the same time, there is a desire to prevent any Kurdish aspiration for independence, a desire shared with Turkey. Iraqi foreign policy is in line with the Iranian objectives in keeping the Iranian support and benefitting from this relationship: "By playing the role of a mediator between the US and Iran, Iraq not only seeks to open up for itself a limited leeway for action, but also, most importantly, to balance the overwhelming US hard power presence, with the soft power of historical, cultural, and economic relations with Iran" (Soffar, 2008, p.234). The productive cooperation and exchange of delegations between the two states started officially in 2005. It included establishing cooperation in many fields, such as energy and security. Consequently, pragmatism and interest-based relation are what shape the relationship between the two countries.

3.2.4. Turkey and the Kurds

The Kurdish ethnicity is a further vital domestic parameter that became essential in the post-Saddam era and played a role in Iraqi politics. The goal of the Kurds' long years of rebellion was a regional government independent from the capital, Baghdad. In the Kurdish question, three main topics stand out. First, initially, the borders of Kurdistan, which is not fixed especially the border of Kirkuk, and the importance of Kirkuk is driven from composing of both the Kurds and the Arab families. The second element that determines the Kurdish question is the oil in Kirkuk. The last is Kurdish relations with neighbouring countries that have Kurdish populations, mainly Turkey. The priority in Iraqi-Turkish relations is Iraqi Kurdish relations with the PKK, which is in tension with the Turkish state. In the meantime, any Kurdish separatism will threaten Turkey. All these elements played a vital role in the Kurdish independence referendum in 2017.

The Iraqi-Turkish relationship is driven by the historical and geostrategic connection that benefits both states, such as Iraqi oil exports to Europe through Turkish lands. The Turkish perspective in Iraq lies primarily in eliminating the Kurdish PKK insurgents from getting support and countering their aspiration for independence. The convergence between Iraq and Turkey is also mediated by the United States in

creating a balance of power with Iran in the region. Fixing the Kurdish question, creating stability, and adopting democratic roles in the region were the main objectives for Turkey, which sought to join the European Union, during that time. Also important were economic cooperation and trade relations between the two states, especially in northern Iraq. On the other hand, the fear and divergence of Turkey continued due the regional government of Kurdistan, the Turkish security concerns is presented in dealing with Iraq post-2003, the PKK, and the Kurdish question. Also, there were Sunni elements supporting the Sunnis parties in Iraq to balance the power of Iran in dominating the region, also with Qatar and the Gulf countries playing a role to achieve this balance.

Turkish foreign policy aimed at peaceful integration and cooperation regionally, and mainly with Iraq. However, with the PKK attack on the Dağlıca military post in 2007 and the Aktutun military post in 2008 destabilized this relation. The aim was trying to create pressure on Turkey to use military operation. Any military operations would create tension between Ankara, Baghdad, and Kurdistan, which Turkish foreign policy was trying to avoid.

Thus, the transformation and changes in the Turkish foreign policy toward Iraq was in moving from the security concerns to more economic and peaceful cooperation. The aim of Turkey was to ensure stability in Iraq, which in reverse will create stability in Turkey. Turkey also engaged during this era with the different ethnic and sectarian actors in the political process mainly the Sunnis, besides hosting Sunni opposition leaders such as Tarak al-Hashimi and reaching out to the Turcomans. As a result, political identity, whether in line with ethnicity or sectarianism, determined the relations between the two countries. Also, the Turkish engagement in Iraq was due to the domestic concerns since one has to consider the regional environment from the large intervening of Iran in the regional politics and the politics in Iraq. The article "From Distance to Engagement: Turkish Policy towards the Middle East, Iraq and Iraqi Kurds" summarized the Turkish engagement in Iraq as extending beyond in the security arena. Relations with Iraq are also seen in the economic, cultural, and

military spheres, and in diplomatic relations.[83] Iraqi foreign policy benefits from this relationship with Turkey.

3.2.5. Arab Gulf States

Another important variable in Iraqi foreign relations that changed after 2003 is the Saudis and the Arab Gulf states. Despite the disagreement with Saddam's regime due to the invasion of Kuwait, with the regime change after the US occupation, Saudi Arabia feared the domination of its Iranian rival and the spread of its influence and power in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon. The fear of the spread of the Iranian revolution against its Wahhabi ideologies led the Saudis to try to cooperate with Iraq. Similarly, the Gulf countries started to build a good relationship with Iraq in the political and economic spheres. Therefore, due to the sectarian politics of this era, the Arab Gulf countries along with Turkey aimed to support the Sunni groups in Iraq: "Seeking to curb Iranian influence, Saudi Arabia poured money into sympathetic Sunni clerics and tribes, such as the Shammar with substantial memberships in both Saudi Arabia and Iraq". Nevertheless, despite the major attempts of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries to empower the Sunnis and counter the Iranian influence, they failed due the fragmentation of Sunnis in the country.[84]

Lastly, after the Arab Spring, the Arab Gulf states' concern became more about the Shia community. Sectarian identity was much politicized and energized after the 2003 occupation and determined the relationship with regional countries. Along with the consistent fear of the spread of Iranian ideology and influence, the Saudi, on one hand, supported the US policies in Iraq, and on the other hand, disagreed with handing power to Iran.

3.3. Conclusion

The foremost aim of this chapter was to discuss Iraqi foreign policy in the late period of Ba'ath Party during the 1990s till 2003. The first part of this chapter analysed the

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[83] Özcan, M. (2011). From Distance to Engagement: Turkish Policy towards the Middle East, Iraq and Iraqi Kurds. *Insight Turkey*, *13*(2).
[84] Mansour, R. Saudi Arabia's New Approach in Iraq.

American interest in the region, and specifically in Iraq, and how Iraq foreign policy reacted to US interests. Also, the domestic context was essential during this era, as was the relations of regional countries with different communities in the country. Further, the second part of this chapter stressed the Iraqi foreign policy between 2003 till 2011 under the occupation, and the role of insurgency and strategies during this period. Hence, the realistic and pragmatic response of Iraqi foreign policy post-occupation toward the changing role of regional countries. Indeed, not only did foreign countries benefit from the vulnerability in the Iraqi state, but also Iraq utilized this foreign interference for its own ends. As a result, we see interest-based relation.

CHAPTER 4

CURRENT FOREIGN POLICY

In 2011 the region witnessed a new era of political change due to the US military withdrawal and the Arab Spring. Those changes determined and shaped the features of the new phase, from threats to opportunities. Therefore, this chapter discusses Iraq's post-2011 foreign policy in post 2011 and political identity, and the challenges it with force regional powers (Iran, Turkey, and the Arab Gulf states). In the meantime, seeing how Iraqi foreign policy acted pragmatically toward the foreign objectives, despite it's considered as a sectarian foreign policy. The focus of this chapter will be on Iraq's domestic challenges, mainly political fragmentation, ISIS, the Kurdish referendum, and the Basra protest, and how these domestic problems have shaped its foreign relations. Ultimately, I will discuss how the sectarian foreign policy in post-US-invasion Iraq has boosted the survival of the current Shia-majority government.

4.1. Domestic Context Post-2011

4.1.1. US Withdrawal

The Iraqi foreign policy that followed the American invasion was not independent and followed a sectarian policy. After the fall of Baghdad, we saw the collapse of the state, along with the spread of disorder and insecurity. This pushed militias and different political parties to take a role, and also enabled regional countries to pursue their interests in Iraq. During the post-invasion period, civil war and organized violence was at a high level. As a result, the state built up and depended on the security and armed forces. Eventually, this situation empowered the ruling elites, mainly the former prime minister al-Maliki. On the other hand, despite the domestic challenges of the previous years, the Iraqi foreign policy was trying to endorse neutrality toward the regional states because the aim was in "freeing the country from the many sanctions and reparation obligations to which it was subjected under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter" (Maggiolini, 2013, p. 4) In the meanwhile, it was trying to end the US occupation peacefully.

The period after of the American withdrawal in 2011 faced a continuation of the ethnic and sectarian division that would spill over to the regional countries. The internal problems in Iraq, from sectarian division to Islamic extremists, would spread to the region, leading regional powers to intervene even more in Iraqi politics. Despite that, according to Paolo Maggiolini, argued that the Iraqi foreign policy was trying to remain neutral toward the neighboring states; but with all the challenges this aim did not work. Nevertheless, Iraqi foreign policy has progressed since Iraq gained the sovereignty after the coalition withdrawal. However, due to the weakness in the Iraqi state's structure and its institutions, and the different political elites who benefited from this situation, it has not been able to pursue an independent foreign policy. Another reason for this, according to Maggiolini is that "Iraqi foreign policy has been frequently flexed in line with al-Maliki's ambition to consolidate his system of power and personal control of state institutions."[85]

The post-2011 period has also been characterized with ethnic and sectarian division in the social segment. Also, this situation has been exacerbated by the political struggle between the prime minister and many opponents from the Sunnis and some from the Kurds. Al-Maliki's consolidation of power in his hands is seen as the new authoritarianism in Iraq. For instance, according to an article from the Council of Foreign Relations, the tension between al-Maliki and his rivals can be summarized in three main cases. Firstly, there was the disagreement with the vice president Tariq al-Hashemi, the Sunni politician from the Iraqiya Party. Second was as well the tension with the Kurds over oil revenue. And finally; there was the tension with the electoral commission members.[86]

The political fragmentation and the concentration of power in the hands of Maliki has been described as a "posed a direct threat to the country's nascent democratic institutions". [87] And by 2012 mass demonstrations in the Sunni provinces started,

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[85] Maggiolini, P. (2013). Iraq's foreign policy directions and regional developments. Where does Iraqi foreign policy start?. *Institute for International Political Studies*, 5

[86] "Renewed Violence in Iraq." Council on Foreign Relations, https://www.cfr.org/report/renewed-violence-iraq. Accessed 16 Mar. 2019.

[87] Dodge, T. (2013). State and society in Iraq ten years after regime change: the rise of a new authoritarianism. *International Affairs*, *89*(2), 241-257.

mainly after the charges against the finance minister Rafi al-Issawi. Therefore, the cases of both Hashemi and Issawi represented the new phase of authoritarian rule in Iraq under one man, one who is trying to secure his long-term power, in what is considered as a threat to the democracy in the country.

The new authoritarianism and coercion in Iraq was the result of the state institutions and military forces being controlled under one hand. This is seen in the use of the security services for protection the "state of law", or Dawlat al-Qanoun; and for Maliki's election campaign, which allowed him to weaken the other ruling elite and have stronger hand in controlling the country. On the other hand, the weak and fragile military institution and the vulnerability of the state helped al-Maliki to exploit the army and special forces. Other Shia parties, such as the Sadrists and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq favored using their own militias. The two main elements that encouraged the emergence of new authoritarian rule in the country, as according to Toby Dodge were "the weakness of civil institution in Iraq" and "the dominance of Iraq's military institution." in which this power struggle over the civil institution and the military enabled the insecurity and instability.[88]

One of the reasons that fostered the weakness of the state and widespread corruption was the *Muhasasa Taifia* (sectarian apportionment) system which, also according to Toby Dodge, produced the mass protest in the society. This system was primarily imposed to "empower people and parties who claimed to be acting as representatives of three allegedly distinct communities, Shi'a, Sunni and Kurd". This system resulted in the civil war, corruption, and the weakness of the state institutions. The different parties that came after the invasion defended and worked along with this system to further their interests. The system was key in forming the post-2003 government, in which it created ethnic and sectarian division. Eventually, this system determined the three national elections along with the recent one in 2018

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[88] Dodge, T. (2013). State and society in Iraq ten years after regime change: the rise of a new authoritarianism. *International Affairs*, *89*(2), 241-257.

in the choosing of ministers and distribution of resources.[89] This system was also extended by external regional players, as the second part of this chapter will reveal.

The centrality of sectarian division lessened after the civil war and the 2010 election; however, the system that was built after 2003 overwhelmed and boosted sectarianism. Fanar Haddad argued that the foundations which enabled the weakness of the political system lay in "a political establishment that seems prepared periodically to exacerbate sectarian tensions for political gain".[90] Also, sectarian discourses and rhetoric were used in each election, and this deepened sectarianism and created a social gap. The political elites used the sectarian instrument to gain votes: "positioning oneself as the defender of ethno-sectarian interests in a state founded on ethno-sectarian apportionment has proved a relatively successful fall-back position". The exacerbation of ethno-sectarian division socially was also due to the absence of a clear idea of Iraqi nationalism, and the political elites benefited from this situation.[91]

Furthermore, the attitude of the sectarian government under al-Maliki was aggressive toward the Sunnis and after the 2012 election, blocked Sunnis from participating in the political process. Mainly after the incidents of the arrest of al-Issawi and later the death sentence against al-Hashemi, this attitude pushed the western provinces to protest due to their loss of confidence in the prospect of any political participation or even better social conditions. In the meanwhile, the Arab Spring started in the region. This also inspired the Sunnis to protest, but it faced repression by Maliki's forces under the name of terrorism. According to the article "From power- sharing to majoritarianism: Iraq's transitioning political system" the Arab Spring was due to the fear of "tyranny of the majority". Nevertheless, in Iraq, the fear was on the dominating of another ethno-sectarian group, such as replacing the majoritarianism of al-Maliki and the fear of exclusion. The authors argued that in

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[89] "Iraq and Muhasasa Ta'ifia; the External Imposition of Sectarian Politics." The Foreign Policy Centre, 12 Nov. 2018, https://fpc.org.uk/iraq-and-muhasasa-taifia-the-external-imposition-of-sectarian-politics/.
[90] Haddad, F. (2016). *Shia-Centric State Building and Sunni Rejection in Post-2003 Iraq*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
[91] Spencer, C., Kinninmont, J., & Sirri, O. (Eds.). (2013). *Iraq ten years on*. Chatham House.

case we see any transition from majority rule to power sharing, it would be one that "acknowledges the validity of the victimhood of all Iraq's communities" (Spencer and Sirri, 2013, p. 21).

The Iraqi foreign policy under Maliki reflected his policies to exclude the Sunnis from of ministries and security, alongside his ally with Iran and Assad regime during this period. Despite the disagreement between al-Maliki and the Assad regime about enabling the Islamist militias to get access to Iraqi borders. This issue represents the sectarian division even within the allies between al-Maliki and his regime with the Alawite regime in Syria and Iran. Thus, the essence of the interaction between Iraq's internal sectarian division and its regional policies during the Arab Spring is that following the American withdrawal, domestic division and fragmentation became part of the region. The strength of the Shia regime in Iraq and the Alawite regime in Syria did not prevent the Sunnis in Lebanon from rising. Therefore, Adham Saouli, in a chapter of "The foreign policies of Iraq and Lebanon", concludes that the domestic struggle of the actors in persisting in their identity and seeking their interests was reflected in state interaction with regional environment.[92] Under the realm of classical realism, the state as an individual and sees its interaction with others is looked at through the preservation of interests, such as material interests.

Another dimension in Iraq from the domestic sphere is the Sunnis's are suspicious about the Shia dominated government in Baghdad, and fear from the growing influence of Iran in Iraq that all resulted in the emergence of the ISIS. The argument of Fanar Haddad in explaining the emergence of the Islamic State and the Hashd al-Shaabi is that "The summer of 2014 saw the dynamic between Shia-centric state building and Sunni rejection reach its most extreme expression to date in the form of the Islamic State and the Hashd al-Shaabi (the Hashd hereafter)".[93] Moreover, the massive Shia mobilization under the Hashd al-Shaabi was to fight against ISIS in Mosul, this security forces represented the centrality of Shia political identity as a

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[92] Hinnebusch, R. A., & Ehteshami, A. (Eds.). (2002). *The foreign policies of Middle East states*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

[93] Haddad, F. (2016). *Shia-Centric State Building and Sunni Rejection in Post-2003 Iraq*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 17

state building identity. The Hashd was not the only force Badr, Kataib Hezolloah, and Asaib Ahl al-Haq are all Shia militias used by different Shia elites.[94]

The rise of ISIS was considered as a threat to the Shia regime and al-Hashd was a reaction to this threat. When Grand Ayaollah Ali al-Sistani called for the Shia mobilization, his call was "enthusiastically answered by the Iraqi Shias", because IS was aiming to move toward Baghdad. Thus, this period with the fall of Mosul brought a new mind set of sectarian division between the massive mobilization of the Shia and the IS recruitment of more fighters, and between the Shia securing the Shia centric state and the Sunni rejection of the exiting regime. This led to the deepening of state fragmentation politically and socially.[95] Theoretically, the rise of IS can be explained from the realm of the realists, especially under the dynamic of the "security dilemma" that emerged right after the invasion.

Further, with the new era of Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi after the replacement of Maliki, Abadi described himself as a reformist and he launched forces to liberate Mosul from ISIS.[96] And the attempt to integrate the Sunnis in the political process, in which it failed due to mistrusting of the new government and lack of any difference from the previous government. The aftermath of Mosul liberation, the Sunnis still sees the Hashd militias dominating in the state, despite they violate the human rights according to Human rights reports.[97] and their massive destruction of Sunni provinces.

Eventually, the Sunnis in Iraq faced a lack of unity under one party or group, mainly after the invasion, in contrast to the Shia, who are usually affiliated with *marjaiyya*. This enabled the division inside them and with variety of mainstreams inside the Sunni groups; however, with the election of 2010 and 2014, they participated more

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[94] Haddad, F. (2016). *Shia-Centric State Building and Sunni Rejection in Post-2003 Iraq*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

[95] Haddad, F. (2016). *Shia-Centric State Building and Sunni Rejection in Post-2003 Iraq*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

[96] Daragahi, Borzou. "Welcome to Iraq's First Post-Sectarian Election." Foreign Policy, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/05/10/welcome-to-iraqs-first-post-sectarian-election/. Accessed 16 Mar. 2019.

[97] Avenue, Human Rights Watch |. 350 Fifth, et al. "World Report 2016: Rights Trends in Iraq." Human Rights Watch, 22 Dec. 2015, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/iraq.

and gained sets in the parliament. The Sunnis lack of organizations and institutions in contrast to the Shia and the Kurds, the sole party who played a role in 2011 demonstration is the Iraqi Islamic Party. For this reason, there are a number of Sunni politicians and religious or tribal leaders in the political arena, but they lack centrality and institutional positions. Alongside, the fear of Sunnis from corruption financially and politically, which makes them lose their legitimacy among the people.[98]

4.1.2. Kurdish Referendum

The aftermath of the Arab Spring provided an opportunity to the Kurds in Iraq and in Syria, in contrast to the Sunnis in Iraq. As the long- time aim of the Kurds has been to establish a state of their own their spring, their rebellion against the state, has started earlier. The Arab Spring bolstered the Kurdish autonomy under Masoud Barazani. The Syrian Kurds, however, were unlike the Kurds in Iraq, and they would also see the threat and struggle against ISIS. Moreover, the Arab Spring inspired the Kurds in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to change of the status quo of the region and create unity. Their aim is explained by Adham Saouli: "such a prospect would connect Iraq's Kurds, who provide a political model for emulation, with the Kurds of Syria possibly breaking the KRGs geographical isolation and facilitating access to the Mediterranean".[99] The wealth of the Kurdish region and the prospect of access to the sea gave a powerful position to the Kurds. However, it threatened the Iraqi central government along with regional states such as Turkey. Therefore, the change that came with the Arab Spring was an opportunity for the Kurds to unite and empower their position, but also, this created a threat due to the instability and tension from the central government and from ISIS.

The foremost dispute between the Kurds and the central government in Baghdad is related to the territorial borders dispute of the Kurdish areas, in which it was grown after the invasion. Legally, the Kurds attempted to negotiate in including article 140 into the constitution of 2015, in order to have referendum in the disputed lands to

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[98] Mansour, R. (2016). *The Sunni Predicament in Iraq*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
[99] Hinnebusch, R. A., & Ehteshami, A. (Eds.). (2002). *The foreign policies of Middle East states*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 126

include in Kurdistan. On the other hand, this fear the central government in Baghdad because "as long as they lacked Kirkuk and other territories in Iraq with large Kurdish populations, the Iraqi Kurds would be unlikely to secede from Iraq for fear of leaving both behind."[100] Besides that the disagreement between Erbil and Baghdad, the dispute over the territories was mainly because of the fields of oil and gas.

Despite the insecurity that ISIS posed to the region and to the Kurds, after the fall of Mosul to ISIS and the flight of the Iraqi army, the KRGs peshmerga saw the chance to take control of all the disputed lands between the Kurds and central Baghdad and more importantly, to gain the control over the oil fields around Kirkuk. For the Kurds, the oil was significant for their autonomy and politically: "Meanwhile, Erbil is seeking to use its oil and gas to secure its own economic future and political autonomy from Baghdad. Given the realities of politics and geography, this makes it dependent on Turkey for export routes."[101] The geostrategic importance of the Kurdish region along with the resources richness inspired the Kurds to demand a greater role in the politics of the region.

Gareth Stansfied, in his article "from the "Kurdish issue" to the "Kurdistan region of Iraq", noted a new dimension of the dispute between the Kurds and the center, Baghdad, regarding the Iraqi national identity. This came due to the weak sense of the Iraqi national identity as the common identity among the people in Iraq. The use of ethnic and sectarian identity and the regional changes and leaders determined the political identity of the region: "Indeed, the country's politics have become penetrated by the national interest of regional powers, and the Kurdish leaders of Iraq".[102]

During the aftermath of ISIS's defeat in Iraq by the Kurds and the Western coalition, the Kurds aspired to have their independent state with the support of their allies. The decision of the Kurds to go for the referendum in 2017 was after the sacrifices they

[100] Romano, D. (2015). The "Arab Spring's" Eect on Kurdish Political Fortunes. *Insight Turkey 2015-Summer 2015 (Vol. 17, No. 3): The New Middle East*, 60.

[101] Mills, R. M. (2013). Northern Iraq's Oil Chessboard: Energy, Politics and Power. *Insight Turkey*, *15*(1).

[102] Spencer, C., Kinninmont, J., & Sirri, O. (Eds.). (2013). *Iraq ten years on*. Chatham House, 26

made against ISIS, in return for which they hoped to get support for their aspiration. Nevertheless, the result was abandonment of the Kurds by the US and regional allies Turkey to Iran, which believed any independence of the Kurds in Iraq would encourage the Kurds in both countries to aim for the same. With the failure of the referendum, Baghdad sent troops to the disputed territories establish its authority, mainly to the Kirkuk oil fields, which the Kurds had seized in 2014.

As it revealed before, Kirkuk was very significant for the Kurds because of the leverage they could gain from its revenue in exporting oil. The lose of those oil fields means the Kurds will be again dependent on the center, which was one of the disagreements between Kurdistan and Baghdad earlier. Therefore, "Baghdad's approach since it retook Kirkuk in mid-October suggests that this is precisely the situation it intends to restore: the Kurdish region's almost complete reliance on Baghdad." The Kurdish leadership took the step toward the referendum in hoping for the democratic principles that the US brought to Iraq after 2003. This miscalculation of its US ally led to the failure.[103]

The controversial relation between the two main parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), created a reaction over the referendum, even among the Kurdish people, in seeking autonomy after long years of war. However, on the other hand, the old leaders would maintain power due to the mistrust of coming new generation to rule. This internal division between the old leaders who have been in power for long and the new younger generation created barriers for the independent nationhood, "In 2012, regional turmoil undid whatever progress had been made between the KDP and PUK. The rise of ISIS left the parties internally divided and more reliant on their competing regional patrons, Turkey (KDP) and Iran (PUK)."[104] Thus, both internal division and disagreement and the regional

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[103] Fantappie, Joost Hiltermann, Maria. "Twilight of the Kurds." Foreign Policy, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/01/16/twilight-of-the-kurds-iraq-syria-kurdistan/. Accessed 16 Mar. 2019.
[104] Fantappie, Maria, and Cale Salih. "The Politics of the Kurdish Independence Referendum." Foreign Affairs, Sept. 2017. www.foreignaffairs.com, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2017-09-19/politics-kurdish-independence-referendum.

opposition to the referendum created obstacles to the Kurdish statehood and independence.

4.1.3. Basra Protest

The upheaval that followed the American withdrawal from Iraq and the change in the region during the Arab uprising did not stabilize the country. All people from the Sunnis to the Kurds in Iraq, faced instability and insecurity, especially with the recent protest in Basra. The destruction of the war and the corrupt governments that followed the invasion fostered the current crisis in the city. Yet, this crisis is not new but is a result of long years of neglection and corruption. According to an article by Foreign Policy, the central government was greatly engaged in fighting ISIS in the north, which made the crisis in Basra more likely: "With most national and international attention focused on reconciling Iraq's diverse communities in these liberated areas, Iraq's predominantly Shiite southern cities have been neglected and their relative stability taken for granted.".[105]

The domestic problems in Iraq generally and in Basra particularly are on one hand due to poor conditions and the widespread corruption; on the other hand, they are because of the foreign intervention of both the US and Iran in Basra in support of the current government. The domestic condition of the people in a city with rich oil reserves, which contribute more than 80% of total GDP, was devastating. There is also the matter of the city's important geostrategic location on the Gulf. The author of the article "Northern Iraq May Be Free, but the South Is Seething" argued that this situation in Basra is mainly because of the focus on the north of the country. In a contrast view, the corrupted political elites are the main reason for this situation because they utilize from this chaos, despite they follow the same sect cleric or Islamic parties.

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[105] Twaij, Ahmed. "Northern Iraq May Be Free, but the South Is Seething." Foreign Policy, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/11/09/northern-iraq-may-be-free-but-the-south-is-seething-basra-isis-sistani-pmf-shiites-oil-poverty/. Accessed 16 Mar. 2019.

4.2. Regional Context Post-2011 and Regional Powers

Since the domestic contexts and internal factors shaped Iraqi foreign policy, identity politics during this era played a role. External relations were essential in influencing the foreign policy of the country, as Iraqi foreign policy has been under the heavy influence of the regional powers due to the vulnerability of the country post-2004. This section will reveal foreign countries' objectives in their relationship with Iraq and how Iraq responds pragmatically and rationally to those foreign objectives and interests. Iraqi foreign policy during this era is not only based on sect, but is also interest-based.

4.2.1. Iran

The withdrawal of the American forces from Iraq and the upheaval of the Arab Spring changed the balance of power in the Middle East and led Iran to emerge as a dominant power. A new phase of ideological rivalry between the two-sectarian blocs represented by the Shia of Iran and the Sunni of Saudi Arabia has taken place in Iraq. The Iranian perspective was a reaction to the Western, chiefly American, presence in Iraq and Afghanistan and to the "Sunni backlash", or growing power of Islamists after the uprising, and its a threat to Iranian power. According to Anoushirvvvan Ehteshami in his writing about the Iranian foreign policy after the Arab Spring, it enhanced the spread of sectarian discourses in a region where the states fragile and contain multiple identities. In this ideological rivalry for the Iranians, "It not only has to protect the Shiite bloc but also has to contain the spread of militant Sunni forces in such strategically important theaters as Lebanon and Iraq" (Hinnebusch& Ehteshami, 2002, p. 281-282).

As this rivalry presented as an ideological rivalry which started post-2003 invasion, Mai Yamani revealed this change as "The balance of power in the Muslim world has changes for good- the 'Shia crescent' benefitting at the expense of the Sunni arc." The occupation enhanced this division by empowering different groups. The ideological crescent of Iran in supporting the Shia communities in many different

Arab countries and mainly in Iraq had led it to be seen as the defender of the Shia political identity.[106]

The Iranian objective in Iraq since the fall of Saddam has been to make an ally of the country after a long period of confrontation and war between the two states. During the post-2003 era and with the formation of the first government in 2005, Iran backed the Shia Islamist parties who long lived in Iran due to their exile. The internal cleavage also helped Iran to pursue its interest. Further, with the period of civil war, Iran sought to support the Shia militias financially. With the strong political support of Iran to the Shia political parties, Iran also established strong economic tie with Iraq which "reached $US 11 billion per annum in 2012". Not only did Iran export to Iraq, but also Iraq imported electricity, gas and oil along with the benefit of the religious tourism. Despite this, the author Paolo Maggionlini argued that "Iraq's foreign policy interests can differ significantly from those of Iran. Oil wealth is a primary factor that can lead to changes in Iran-Iraq relations" (Maggiolini, 2013, p. 6). Therefore, Iraqi-Iranian relations, despite seeming strong, are also limited by constrains and pragmatism.[107] Mainly due to the oil factor, the situation in Syria, and the support of Iran for the Assad regime, insecurity and spread violence to Iraq. Lastly, Iraq also aimed to maintain good relationship with the Iranian rivals, Saudi Arabia and Turkey because of their trade relation, primarily in oil.

The pragmatism of Iranian foreign policy toward Iraq after the US occupation is conceived for the national security of Iran. According to the Iranian scholar Kayhan Barzegar, there are three main factors that determined the relation between both states: first "Iraq's ethnic geopolitics", which concern the Iranian security because of the division between the three Iraqi communities; second, the "regional rivalry" between different powers, including the ideological rivalry between the Saudi and Iranian blocs; and third, the historical tension, including war compensation and the 1975 Algiers Treaty, which is about the territorial disputes between the two states.[108]

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[106] Yamani, M. (2006). Arcs and Crescents. *The World Today*, *62*(12), 7-8.

[107] Maggiolini, P. (2013). Iraq's foreign policy directions and regional developments. Where does Iraqi foreign policy start?. *Institute for International Political Studies*.

[108] Barzegar, K. (2008). Iran's Foreign Policy in Post-Invasion Iraq. *Middle East Policy*, *15*(4), 47-58.

Iranian pragmatism is driven by different ethnic, historical, and cultural characteristics. The benefits and the opportunities created various interactions between the two different societies, elites, and economies. However, taking into consideration what was stated in the article of Kayhan Barzegar, he presented this interaction between states as an opportunity for the both sides despite of its pragmatic attitude. This argument is challenged by different factors that are driven by Iraqi domestic conditions such as the Basra protest.[109] Likewise, there are also Iranian domestic concerns, dissatisfaction about Iranian spending and involvement in Iraq and in the region generally, and a political split among the religious clerics regarding *Vilayat-e Faqih*.

Along with the social unrest of the Iraq-Iran relationship, the political stances of the two states are also unstable due to the Shia factions. The political reality and differences among the Shia groups is seen, for instance, regarding the presence of foreign troops on the ground: "The Sadrists are strongly opposed to any idea of federalism. Al Dawa, as expressed by Prime Minister Maliki in an interview in late 2007, follows a policy of federalism with a strong state capable of controlling all Iraqi issues. In contrast, the Islamic Supreme Council for Iraq (ISCI), according to its leaders, would welcome the idea of federalism and a reduction of the central government's power." The different views of the Shia groups are Iraq is not merely domestically oriented; they also concern relations with Iran. Iranian pragmatism is based on creating a balance among the Shia factions to preserve its interest and security.[110]

One of the foremost source of power in Iranian foreign policy is ideology, mainly in the interaction with Iraq and the region, which is to establish the "Shia Crescent". The Iranian aim in building close ties with the Shia is because of the religious and cultural identity of both countries. In contrast, the ideological factor is the main tool in Iranian foreign policy in pursuit of its national interest. Kayhan Barzegar summarized this argument by claiming that "Ideology serves as only one element of national power

[109] Barzegar, K. (2008). Iran's Foreign Policy in Post-Invasion Iraq. *Middle East Policy*, *15*(4), 47-58.
[110] Devine, J. (2015). Iran versus ISIL. *Insight Turkey*, *17*(2), 21-34.

and as an optimizing mechanism in the regulating of foreign policy. Iran's actions are dictated more by security concerns than expansionist designs."[111]

Furthermore, the nature of Iraqi-Iranian relations imposes constraints and challenges that predate American military presence in Iraq. The US invasion created a security threat and an enemy on the borders; however, the American withdrawal and the changes after 2011 created a new security threat. The rise of ISIL destabilized Iranian security, mainly because of the presence of an enemy on the border and its regional alliances. In other words, Iran is aiming for influence on the Iraqi government in order to prevent any security challenges to its borders, whether from the Islamic caliphate or Kurdish independence. Additionally, ISIL presented a threat to Iranian-Syrian relations because it threatened the supply routes between the two states. Despite the existence alternative routes, they were still vulnerable.[112]

The goal of Iranian realpolitik and pragmatism in building interconnected regional alliances with Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq is to serve the Iranian national interest. This realpolitik includes the military support through the Iranian Revolutionary Guards for the Shia militias involved in the Syrian war. This support is also provided to the Kurdish government, despite the tensions over Kurdish independence.[113] The Iranian proxy wars and the violence bolstered Iran's influence over Iraq, and the sectarian cleavage in Iraq allowed Iran to persist in the political life of the country.[114]

The sectarian dimension of disputes between Iran and ISIL boosted the flame of sectarian division after the Arab Spring. This is because Iran objected to the threat of ISIL because it hindered the regional power relation, mainly the Saudi-Iranian relations. The Arab Spring created a vulnerable environment for intervention of the regional power. The upheaval in Bahrain and later the war in Yemen provided Iran an opportunity in the Arabian Peninsula, which likely was a threat to the Saudis.

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[111] Barzegar, K. (2008). Iran's Foreign Policy in Post-Invasion Iraq. *Middle East Policy*, *15*(4), 47-58.

[112] Devine, J. (2015). Iran versus ISIL. *Insight Turkey*, *17*(2), 21-34.

[113] Devine, J. (2015). Iran versus ISIL. *Insight Turkey*, *17*(2), 21-34.

[114] Richard Jr, R., Ries, C. P., Hanauer, L., Connable, B., & Kelly, T. K. (2013). *Ending the US war in Iraq: the final transition, operational maneuver, and disestablishment of United States Forces-Iraq*. Rand Corporation.

According to James Devine, "Although ISIL represents a threat to the al-Saud as well, Riyadh is more concerned that Iran is using the crisis to deepen this encirclement".[115]

The influential role of Iranian objectives and interests in Iraq shaped Iraqi foreign policy. For Iran to achieve its desires and ambitions in Iraq, it first aimed to weaken the society with its three communities. For the Iranian national security interest, it is best to keep the Iraqi military weak. The article "Iranian interests in Iraq in the post-Saddam era" highlights the Iranian political influence in maintaining the balance of power and its ideological interest in spreading the Islamic revolution. Despite the sphere of Iranian influence, Iran is also trying to keep Iraq as an ally, particularly in the confrontation with Saudi Arabia. Also, the Iranian state is concerned about keeping Iraq outside the Western and US sphere any attack from them would threaten the Iranian nuclear program.[116]

Iran's Revolutionary Guards play a crucial role in securing the influence and interest of Iran in the region, mainly in Iraq. The commander of the Quds Force, Qassem Soleimani, has direct influence in Iraq. His role is not solely in directing armed groups, but also in directing the tourism, which is a primary segment of Iranian influence in Iraq. In a chapter of "Enduring Security Challenges", the author summarized the Iranian influence which is permeated in every aspect, this result in endured a threat to the sovereignty and stability in Iraq. Initially, the Iranian economic influence was dominant, for instance, among pilgrims. "Thus, while Iranian tourism is adding to the Iraqi economy, the tourism industry is also a cover for Iranian movement of arms and munitions throughout Iraq and, more recently, to Syria, Lebanon, and other countries in the Levant" (Richard, Ries, Hanauer, Connable & Kelly, 2013, p. 130).

Qassem Soleimani is a core figure in the Iranian foreign policy, and his role is key in strengthening the Iranian sphere of influence regionally. He has achievements in the battlefield and in running the proxy wars in the region. "Suleimani is arguably the

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[115] Devine, J. (2015). Iran versus ISIL. *Insight Turkey*, *17*(2), 21-34.
[116] Hussein Abdulhasan Moeh ,Kamarulnizam Abdullah , (2016) " Iranian Interests In Iraq In The Post-Saddam Era " , International Journal of Management and Applied Science (IJMAS) , pp. 1-6, Volume-2,Issue-5

most powerful and unconstrained actor in the Middle East today. U.S. defense officials have reported that Suleimani is running the Syrian civil war (via Iran's local proxies) all on his own." Iranian ambitions in bolstering its Shiite allies in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon are being pursued notably through the Quads force under the leadership of Suleimani. Consequently, the Quads force became a major influencer in spreading Iranian influence.[117]

As a result of the heavy Iranian influence on Iraqi politics, economics, and social life, there was a major harm on the domestic level. Iranian interference was responsible for of the Iraqi Shiites' protest in Basra. At the political level, corruption is high, and the Iranian influence is obvious. Economically, Iran saw the chance to overcome its sanctions and flooded the Iraqi market with cheap products that harmed the local economy. Iran also controlled the water supply and electricity supply to Basra and was blamed for cutting the flow of water. Therefore, domestically, all these factors panicked the people and they hold the government and Iran responsibility.[118] Further, likewise the Iranian foreign interest, Iraq also benefit from this relation in keeping the Iranian support, mainly politics and in the military sector.

4.2.2. Turkey during the Arab Spring

Another non-Arab regional power involved in Iraq is Turkey, which mainly since 2011 has had a major interest in Iraq. Turkish foreign policy is generally based on the doctrine of Realpolitik, and Turkey is similar to its neighboring country Iran in approaching relations with Iraq. Turkish foreign policy seeks its national interest and motives in dealing with Iraq. This realist realpolitik of Turkish FP spreading democratic aspirations and building economic ties. Since the eruption of the Arab Spring and the American withdrawal from Iraq, the Turkish FP changed its vision regarding Iraq and the balance of power in the region. The regional influence of Iran after 2011 concerned Turkey, and Turkey tried to determine its sphere of influence over Iraq,

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[117] McChrystal, Stanley. "Iran's Deadly Puppet Master." Foreign Policy, https://foreignpolicy.com/gt-essay/irans-deadly-puppet-master-qassem-suleimani/ . Accessed 16 Mar. 2019.
[118] "Analysis | Iran's Influence in Iraq Is Declining. Here's Why." Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/11/16/irans-influence-in-iraq-is-declining-heres-why/. Accessed 16 Mar. 2019.

Syria, and other regional countries such as Israel, along with US.[119] Indeed, the Iraqi foreign policy also tried to utilize Turkish influence to preserve the balance of power in Iraq and in the region generally.

The foremost concern of Turkish foreign policy in approaching Iraq is the security question of the Kurds in the north. This security question brought Baghdad into a close relationship with Turkey. This concern is shared with Iran and Syria due to the PKK activity in both states. Yet, according to Hasan Kosebalaban in his article "Turkey and the New Middle East: Between Liberalism and Realism", "both Iran and Syria have not completely abandoned their interest in using the PKK card against Turkey" (Kosebalaban, 2011, p. 104). The reason behind the Turkish security concerns regarding the Kurds in Iraq is that any Kurdish independence in Iraq is a threat to the Turkish national interest, which create a complicated implication of the Turkish fight against the PKK. At the same time, Turkey aims for stability in Iraq because it will promote stability in Turkish lands. Turkey seeks to build close relations with the Sunni parties and Shiite Arabs. For instance, in 2011, Erdogan paid a visit to Najaf and met with Ayatollah Sistani. The importance of this is that "Turkey accepts the existence of Shia populations as a reality and has sought ties with the Shia community".[120]

Additionally, the Turkish foreign policy activism is driven from being a middle power, meaning the combination of both soft and material power. The reason behind addressing the Turkish foreign policy middle power is to see the mechanism that drives its foreign policy with Iraq. Turkish behaviour favored stability in the region and serve to "create a compatible image with other actors in the region"[121] This behaviour can be seen in Turkey's attitude toward Northern Iraq. The Turkish strategic interests have centered on three main issues in the post-2011 period, when Iraq aimed to improve its diplomatic relations with Turkey and achieve a balance of power domestically: its relations with the KRG, the oil pipeline between Kurdistan and Turkey, and the Syrian war. After 2011, Turkey increased its economic

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[119] Kösebalaban, H. (2011). Turkey and the New Middle East: Between liberalism and realism.
[120] Kösebalaban, H. (2011). Turkey and the New Middle East: Between liberalism and realism.
[121] Yalçın, H. B. (2012). The concept of 'middle power' and the recent Turkish foreign policy activism. *Afro Eurasian Studies*, *1*(1), 195-213.

cooperation and trade relations with Iraq, and primarily with Kurdistan. Its aim, according to Paolo Maggionlini, was not only strategic interest, but also "to contain the possible repercussion of Iraqi Kurdish autonomy on its own Kurdish minority". Furthermore, the Turkish strategic interest is to become an energy center by transferring oil from Kurdistan to the port of Ceyhan and then to the world market.[122] As a result, the realistic behaviour of Turkey toward Iraq aims to achieve its material interest. That's why stability in Iraq means stability in the relations between both countries. Hence Iraqi foreign policy engagement with Turkey determined the balance of power in Iraq domestically and bolstered the economic and trade relations.

The Turkish economic interests in Iraq, mainly in energy would benefit its economy and regional influence. The need of the Turkish economy for oil and gas affected its strategic relations, primarily with Iraq and the KRG, with which it signed agreements in 2012 to build pipelines for oil and gas export. According to the article "Turkey and Iran: Between friendly competition and fierce rivalry" that estimated the Turkish trade with Iraq "Turkey's trade volume with Iraq is around $15 billion, the bulk of which is with KRG, while only $4 billion is with the rest of the country."[123] In meantime, Iraq aimed to use its economic relations to export oil and energy to Turkey and to Europe.

On the other hand, developments over the past five years, with the civil war in Syria and the fight against ISIS, have given rise to different characteristic of Turkish foreign policy: military power. As before, economic cooperation and the diplomatic relations with Iraq continue, but with the change of power calculation, Turkish foreign policy has pursued more pragmatic relations. The Turkish policies stands on two main interpretation, which is firstly the Kurdish question, and the Turkish ambitious agenda to weaken the PKK on ground and the PYD allies.[124] Therefore, with the post-

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[122] Maggiolini, P. (2013). Iraq's foreign policy directions and regional developments. Where does Iraqi foreign policy start?. *Institute for International Political Studies*.

[123] Ayman, S. G. (2014). Turkey and Iran: Between friendly competition and fierce rivalry. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, *36*(1), 6-26.

[124] Mufti, M. (2017). Turkey's Choice. *Insight Turkey*, *19*(1), 71-88.

2011 regional development, Turkish foreign policy arose different visions, firstly increasing its sphere of influence, and securing the borders. For the security, Turkey used the military involvement as an alternative, in which however, it troubled the Iraqi-Turkish relation. A further factor that led Turkey to use its military power and to abandon its soft power policies is tension with Iran. The post Arab Spring, deepened the Turkish involvement by engaging in Syria after the uprising and emergence of ISIS, because its consisted of security concerns for Turkey.

4.2.3. Arab Gulf States

After long years of broken relations between the Gulf states and Iraq, the recent developments of the Arab spring and changes in the regional order have led both parties to reestablish ties. The establishment of new relations with Iraq is based on realism and pragmatism, mainly to counter the large sphere of Iranian influence on Iraq and the region after 2011. The growth of Iraqi-Saudi relations started with opening of the Saudi embassy in 2016 and later, the visit of important political leaders to Riyadh. According to the article "Saudi Arabia: Back to Baghdad", "the rationale for Riyadh's rapprochement with Baghdad begins with a broader Saudi assessment of foreign policy vis-à-vis its regional rival, Iran". The challenges that the Arab Spring posed to the Saudi status quo led the Saudis to reassess their policies and to balance the Iranian expansionism. In meanwhile, the current US administration encouraged the Saudis to act as a counterweight to the Iranians in the region. Further, ideology, mainly sectarian division, fostered this encountering and instability.

The Saudis' core vision in approaching a new relation with Iraq has in three main aims: political, confessional, and economical relations. Firstly, the establishment of political tie between the Saudis and the Shia-majority government was primarily during Abadi rule, and they supported him during the 2014 election. The reason behind building this tie with the Shiite of Iraq was "because they dominate the government and represent the greater area of tensions in the relationship". This support was not merely by the Saudis, but the Gulf states too. On the other hand, the Iraqis favor this tie because the Saudis addresses the Shiite leaders as Arabs and are not following the

velayat-e faqih.[125] Initially, the visit of Muqtada al-Sadr to Riyadh was vital. On one hand, he represented Iraqi patriotism; and on the other hand, he has his allies with Iran, which is seen from his militia Saraya al-Salam. This visit marked the beginning of cooperation and relations between the two countries, including engaging the Sunnis in the political process.[126] Yet this relation is pragmatic and realistic because both parties seek balance internally and regionally by balancing the Iranian influence and engaging the Sunnis in the political participation. As a result, there was a mutual benefit for the Saudis and the Iraqis from this relationship.

In the political realm a further political factor that led to the Saudi rapprochement with Iraq was the ideological threat that ISIL posed Saudi domestic politics. According to the article "Saudi Arabia's new approach in Iraq", "The group represented an ideological and security threat to the kingdom that was becoming embedded in the Sunni community". As a result of this stimulus, the Saudis established ties with Iraq.[127] This Saudi justification for expanding in Iraq was thus similar to that of Iran, which legitimatized its policies in expansion with the threat of ISIS and al-Qaeda[128].

A further approach of the Saudis toward Iraq is "confessional engagement", because Riyadh sees that majority of Shiite Iraqis follow the religious school in Najaf, unlike the Iranian doctrine of *velayat-e faqih*. Therefore, the Saudis can contain and promote the unity of Arab identity in Iraq rather than the affiliation to Iran. During Sadr's visit to Riyadh, he asked for the opening of a Saudi consulate in Najaf in order to facilitate pilgrimage for the both the Shiites in Saudi Arabia to visit Najaf and for the Iraqis to travel to Mecca and Medina. Najaf played a sensitive role in this relationship because "Shiite leaders close to the *marja* (religious reference) share

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[125] "Saudi Arabia: Back to Baghdad." Crisis Group, 22 May 2018, https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/iraq/186-saudi-arabia-back-baghdad.

[126] Maksad, Firas, and Kenneth M. Pollack. "How Saudi Arabia Is Stepping Up in Iraq." Foreign Affairs, Aug. 2017. www.foreignaffairs.com, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2017-08-21/how-saudi-arabia-stepping-iraq.

[127] Saudi Arabia's New Approach in Iraq. https://www.csis.org/analysis/saudi-arabias-new-approach-iraq .Accessed 19 Mar. 2019.

[128] Ulutaş, U., & Duran, B. (2018). Traditional Rivalry or Regional Design in the Middle East?. *Insight Turkey*, *20*(2), 81-106.

their political colleagues' support for Saudi steps toward acknowledging and better understanding Shiite religious practice"[129]

The economic element is significant in the Saudi-Iraqi reengagement. This includes funds, investments, and cooperation. By 2017, the borders opened for trade, and the Saudis aimed to decrease tariffs. Also, this opening included plans in developing construction and building roads. More importantly is the reopening of pipelines from Iraq to the Red Sea that were closed during the war of 1990. The key point of this economic relation is that Saudi and the Gulf states competed or gained leverage over the Iranians in Iraq. Riyadh aimed for rapid reconstruction in Iraq; however, this reconstruction faced problems such as "rampant corruption, outdated infrastructure, and antiquated commercial code, and a lack of essential service and skilled labor" (Mansour, 2018, p. 4) The good will of the Saudis' economic relations with Iraq, mainly in southern part of Iraq, such as in Basra, is in competition with the Iranian influence.[130]

In addition, the Arab Gulf states such as Qatar and United Arab Emirates followed same approach of the Saudis in imposing relations with Iraq. Kuwait established the diplomatic relations with Iraq with the visit of the Emir of Kuwait to Baghdad for the Arab League summit in 2012. Both Qatar and the UAE have invested in Iraq, and the UAE announced they will fund the reconstruction of the Grand al-Nouri Mosque of Mosul for around $50.4 million.[131] Likewise, the Saudis aim to invest in the areas that have been liberated from ISIS.

4.3. Conclusion

The core focus of the thesis has been Iraqi foreign policy since 2003. This chapter has shown the continuation of the pro-ethnic and sectarian foreign policy by the current regime. The legacy of the occupation continued after the withdrawal with various of

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[129] "Saudi Arabia: Back to Baghdad." Crisis Group, 22 May 2018, https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/iraq/186-saudi-arabia-back-baghdad.
[130] Saudi Arabia's New Approach in Iraq. https://www.csis.org/analysis/saudi-arabias-new-approach-iraq .Accessed 19 Mar. 2019.
[131] "Saudi Arabia: Back to Baghdad." Crisis Group, 22 May 2018, https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/iraq/186-saudi-arabia-back-baghdad.

challenges and problems. The first part of this chapter addressed these challenges. The domestic context of the post-2011 period was characterized by security problems, political struggle, corruption, and fragmentation. This resulted in the rise of ISIS, the Kurdish referendum for independence, and more recently the protest of Basra. All the domestic concerns are not limited to the domestic context, however; external factors and the heavy influence of regional countries also played an important role.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Throughout this thesis, the main concern was to see the relationship between the foreign policy and the political identity of Iraq after 2003. In particular, I examined the pro-ethnic and sectarian foreign policy which boosted the survival of the post-US occupation regime. In this thesis, the aim was to answer the question of why Iraqi foreign policy is instrumentalizing sectarian and ethnic identity? Furthermore, throughout the chapters, it was proved that Iraqi foreign policy lacks independency and the pro-ethnic and sectarian foreign policy, which was the tool to boost the regime survival mainly in the post-2003 period.

The thesis began with the introductory part, which revealed the main concepts and theories. The foremost notions that this thesis was based on were foreign policy, political identity, ethnic and sectarian identity, and regime survival. After defining the concept of foreign policy, it could be seen how it has been used as a tool by actors to maintain their interests. Likewise, political identity has been pragmatically used by the state and individuals for power. The next concept that was presented was ethnic and sectarian identity which in the case of Iraq was used as an instrument. Indicating how ethnic and sectarian identity, was shaped by history, the first chapter revealed the identity that was used in the early days of state formation. Lastly, the concept of regime survival was emphasized to distinguish between the types of regime and to see the role of institutions and elites in the survival of the regime.

In the introduction, the theoretical framework also included mainly the theories of neo-classical realism and domestic-level constructivism, on which the thesis was built. Under neo-classical realism, the core concepts of power, state, interest, and power struggle were presented. The concepts of state expansionism, self-preservation, building alliances, and maintaining the status quo were vital to justify the state interaction with others through foreign policy. Indeed, the domestic-level constructivist approach emphasized the state uses of identity and norms for the

actors to seek power and interest. Therefore, reviewing the literature of the core concepts with the theoretical framework developed the two approaches and determined the relation between foreign policy and realism and between the constructivist approach and the political identity. The ending of the introductory chapter laid at the research design and methodology.

The first chapter exposed the historical background since the formation of the Iraqi state. Under this chapter, the domestic context was stressed to see the development of foreign policy and political identity throughout the modern history of Iraq. The chapter began with the late Ottoman period in order to see the ideological change till the end of the Ottoman order with the First World War. This period was followed by social change and the emergence of national identity. Also, the British mandate played a vital role. This period of state building was characterized by instability and rebellion, along with the variety of religious and ethnic communities in the country. As a result, we saw the rebellion against the foreign interference despite the country's independence in 1932, and the Iraqi foreign policy affiliation to the West by the Hashemite monarchy. Those features continued from the instability and rebellions till the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958. With the new republican era and during the new world order of the Cold War, a new political elite came with different foreign policies which was more isolated or neutral. Lastly, under Ba'ath Party rules the Iraqi foreign policy was pragmatic in its regional and international relations. Also, the uses of sectarian identity and the instrumentalization of religion came to the fore along with the insecurity and domestic problems caused by the wars. Therefore, the domestical, regional, and global transformation affected the Iraqi foreign policy, and the regime used a different ideology to survive, but this weakened the national identity.

The focus of the second chapter was Iraqi foreign policy in period between the 1990s and 2011. The chapter started with the recent history from the 1990s till 2003 with the US occupation, along with the period from 2003 till 2011 with the withdrawal. In the first section, the emphasis was on the US interest in the Middle East and the three main pillars; anti-communism, the security of Israel and the oil of the region. During

this period, Iraqi foreign policy was characterized by rationality, pragmatism, opportunity, and constraints. The domestic context is essential in foreign relations, for instance the relation between the Shia in Iraq with Iran and the Turkish concern with the Kurds. Additionally, the second part discussed the foreign policy under the occupation and the new regime. During this period, the shift and changes was seen firstly from the three phases of insurgency and strategies, and the ideological change. Also, there is the vulnerability of the country due to the foreign interest such as the Iranian, the Turkish and the Arab Gulf countries.

The final chapter analyzed the current practical events of post-2011 mainly the new political change and events of the Arab Spring. This chapter revealed the internal or the domestic dimension along with the regional relations. Starting from the consequences of the US withdrawal from the security challenges, instability, corruption, and the spillover of sectarian cleavages that is related to the Arab Spring. The Iraqi foreign policy under Maliki and the centrality of sectarian division was followed by the rise of ISIS. Furthermore, the domestic challenge was the Kurdish referendum and ambitions for independence from the capital due to the territorial dispute, insecurity of ISIS, and the oil of Kirkuk. Finally, the most recent challenge was with the Basra protest which is because of corruption, neglect, and foreign intervention. In addition, the domestic challenges shaped the foreign relations with the regional powers. The sectarian foreign policy during this period with Iran, Turkey, and the Arab Gulf region boosted the regime survival and continuous to do so. Similarly, sectarian policies determined the foreign relations of Iraq, as is seen from their realistic objectives and ideology.

To conclude, the main findings in the thesis were that Iraqi foreign policy is contested, lacks independency, and is affiliated with different parties. Ethnic and sectarian foreign policy was rationally used by the new political regime post-2003. And throughout the history, the ethnic and sectarian identities was the cornerstone of regime survival. Additionally, the struggle for national identity has a long history of conflict. Since the early days, the monarchy attempted to build a strong national identity, which led to instability and rebellions inside the country due to foreign

intervention. As a result, in each period, the regimes pragmatically relied on different identities to survive. For instance, the Ba'ath Party relied on a number of factors, such as the Sunnis, religion, Arab socialism during 1972, and oil. Along with all the domestic reasons for the regime to survive and the uses of foreign policy, foreign intervention and influence shaped the legacy of dependency and affiliation that we see today.

The contested foreign policy and open vulnerability of the country troubled the Iraqi foreign policy. This was seen mainly in the Ba'ath and post-2003 era. In the post-occupation period, the different foreign interests and objectives of regional and global powers determined vulnerability of the country and foreign interference domestically. Therefore, the main characteristic of the Shia-majority regime since 2003 is domestic political, social, and economic fragmentation. Moreover, the heavy regional influence led to the sectarian and ethnic foreign policy.

Further, discussing the causal relationship between foreign policy and political identity which boost the regime survival in Iraq is vital and unique study. However, the case in this thesis is applicable to other cases and other regions. The theoretical framework can also be applicable to other cases such as the Syrian or the Lebanese case despite uniqueness of each case in terms of its history, social or ethnic or sect composition, and state system. Indeed, such similarities as divided societies and the foreign intervention leading to sectarian foreign policy or the lack of an independent foreign policy can be seen in all these cases.

This thesis faced various limitations during the research and writing stages, mainly in finding reliable sources on Iraqi foreign policy and political identity. There are very limited sources on the history and literature of the Iraqi foreign policy in Arabic and English. In general, most of the sources were only news or opinion articles. Therefore, this thesis relied on very few well-known academic books and articles, with known authors who wrote on this topic.

Additionally, since the topic of this paper is recent and many of topics contain events that are ongoing, it is still debatable and open to change. Accordingly, in the future it would be best to visit the field and to meet with influential figures who play a crucial role in determining the current policies. However, this step may face challenges due to security concerns and difficulties. Despite all the challenges and obstacles, this thesis is unique in discussing very rare topics that have become significant recently. It is also unique in discussing sectarian identity from the political perspective rather than from the religious point of view and relating the topic to foreign policy. In the future, this topic of Iraqi foreign policy and political identity can be furthered in a more in-depth way and compared to other cases, such as with the regional Arab counties like Syria or Gulf countries.

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