Iraqi Shi'ites and Identity Conflict: A Study in the Developments of their Religious-Political Identities From 1920-2003

Waleed K. Almasaedi

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THESIS COMMITTEE:
BETTINA KOCH, CHAIR
ILJA LUCIAK
ARIEL AHRAM

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ABSTRACT

The Iraqi Shi'ites' revival post-2003 and the rise of communal identity make an increasing need to study the roots of their political identities. This study surveys literature written about the political behavior of Shi'ites at different historical eras in the 20th century (to be specific, from the 1920s to 2003). In this study, my aim is to evaluate, based on the collected evidence, the Shi'ites' sense of identity during these historical eras, how they viewed themselves, and with whom they affiliated? Particularly, I delve into these research questions: Did the Shi'ites behave as a homogenous group? Did they have a single dominant identity that defines them as Shi'ite political identity? Did the political behavior of different Shi'ite Islamic groups originate from their religious and communal identities, or did it come from their national aspiration as Iraqis? I apply a history of political thought/ ideology approach, implementing critical historical hermeneutics. The analysis of the evidence indicates that Shi'ites show different senses of belonging at different historical eras and political events. The findings suggest that the communal and political identity was developed at a later stage of Iraq's 20th-century history. It also shows the diverse identities Shi'ites have and how their political behavior differs according to these diverse identities.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the development of the Iraqi Shi'ites' political and religious identities since the founding of the modern state in Iraq in 1921. It tackles three overlapping historical periods in which the Iraqi Shi'ites' political identity crystallized and formed during these periods. The findings reveal that the Iraqi Shi'ites did not have a unified sectarian political identity, but they affiliated with multiple political entities and ideologies. The research suggests the absence of a unifying term to embrace Shi'ites' political behavior, and the terminology "Shi'ite" or "Shi'ites" should not be generalized to encompass all Iraqi Shi'ites' political behavior. Therefore, the sectarian Shi'ite political parties and groups that claim to represent the Shi'ites after 2003 still do not represent a broad spectrum of the Shi'ite society.

IN MEMORY OF MY MOTHER

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Map No. 3835 Rev. 6 UNITED NATIONS
July 2014

Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section

Iraq map No. 3835, July 2014
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Glossary

Awqaf: pious endowments

Ayatollah: Sign of God," title of a high-ranking Shi'ite cleric.

Bint al-Huda: "Daughter of the Righteous Path," public name of the Amina al-Sadr, Islamic scholar and sister of Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr.

Al-Da'wa: the call or invitation to believe in and defend Islam.

Faqih: Muslim jurisprudent, expert in Islamic law.

Fatwa: authoritative opinion based on religious law; religious injunction.

Fayli Kurds: Kurds who are Shi'ite Muslims.

Fellahin: Sharecroppers, peasant farmers.

Hawza: center of Shi'ite religious education

Hussainyya: a hole is essentially where Shi'ites commemorate the death of Imam Hussain.

imam: in the root sense, "religious leader:" prayers leader in charge of mosque; (capitalized) religious leader invested with political authority.

Intifada: an unarmed uprising or large public protest.

Islamists: advocates of Islamic government.

Khums: "one-fifth," the annual portion of an individual's increase in wealth that the Quran stipulates must be assigned to God and the needy.

Mamluks: freed slaves (mainly Georgian, Circassian) in the Ottoman Empire who converted to Islam. Their elite officers succeeded asserting autonomy and ruled over Iraq in the 18th and the 19th centuries.

Marja': a religious authority consulted by other *mujtahids*,

Mujtahid: cleric authorized to issue authoritative opinions on Islamic law: doctor of Islamic law (Wiley, 168-70).

Sufar: the second month of the lunar year in the Islamic calendar.

Wali (pl. Walis): governors

Introduction

The rise of Islamist Shi'ism and the revival of the Shi'ite identity/s in Iraq received wide attention and intrigued many researchers in the last few decades; a respectable amount of research has explored the Iraqi Shi'ites' identity/s. Researchers have generally viewed Shi'ism as a unified political or communal identity. A noticeable portion of the literature inaccurately used Shi'ism as a political identity and addressed the Iraqi Shi'ites as a homogenous or monolithic entity (Yitzhak Nakash and Sherko Kirmanj). This thesis intends to study the developments of Iraqi Shi'ites' communal and political identities from the early founding years of Iraq's state to the fall of the *Ba'th* regime in 2003. The study surveys the political, social, and religious roles the Shi'ite movements played during this period. It discusses the conflict between the Shi'ites' aspiration for an Iraqi national identity and the religious identity. This work aims to explore historical and political events and their impact on the Iraqi Shi'ites. It investigates the overlapping factors that contributed to the development of Shi'ites' identity or multiple identities.

The recent political and security incidents and the rise of sectarian polarization across the Middle East invites researchers to study the roots of the Shi'ite political activism and their identity affiliations in modern Iraq as a revival political power. The Shi'ite political scene in Iraq witnessed a polarization in the last decade. The emergence of various Shi'ite groups with different religious and political belonging showed signs of heterogeneity within the Iraqi Shi'ite body. Therefore, studying the concept of identity and its development of the Shi'ites in modern Iraq will provide a better understanding of the current Shi'ite political and militant entities and their political behavior.

Extensive research has been conducted about Iraqi Shi'ites treating them as a homogenous group. However, little analytical research has been done viewing them as a heterogeneous group. The Shi'ites' heterogeneous characteristic clearly appears in the diversity of their political activism and social classes. Politically, Shi'ites are divided into secular and Islamist devotees. Socially, they are divided into urban, tribesmen, merchants, and clerics. These social strata have various capacities or limitations in terms of their political influence. The Shi'ite cultural and religious identity is being generally stereotyped by some scholars as a unified political or communal identity. However, in this work, I highlight the evidence of the heterogeneity of the Iraqi Shi'ites. My argument challenges the general misconception that visualizes them as a unified entity with one identity. It also argues that the Iraqi Shi'ites did not have a clear communal and political identity until the emergence of the Islamist movements and their development into particularist Shi'ite movements in the late 1960s and afterword. It tackles how and why the Iraqi Shi'ites developed political and communal identities under the *Ba'th* regime.

The significance of the study rests in providing valuable insight into the complexity of Shi'ite identity and its development throughout the 20th century in Iraq. It reveals the early stages of the Shi'ites' revival as a political and militant power. It examines the Shi'ite identities in comparison to the Iraqi national identity. Iraq's national identity has been fluctuating and relying on different ideological resources, which undermined the Iraqi society's cohesiveness. Understanding the reasons behind these fluctuations and their influence on the Iraqi national identity helps to understand the sectarian and ethnic division that Iraqis are going through today. The contemporary mainstream analysis of the Shi'ites' identity pegs them to a sociological group with one unified identity. The Shi'ites' heterogeneity invites us to rethink the concept of Shi'ite

identity outside the binary scale of Sunni-Shi'ite sectarian identities, so we can better understand the sub-identities' elements.

The purpose of this study is to explore the development of the Iraqi Shi'ite identity in accordance with historical events and political periods. A history of political ideology analysis in this study shows whether or not Iraqi Shi'ites' religious transnational belonging was more substantial than their national identity throughout the 20th century. The study is done in an effort to expand our understanding of the concept of Shi'ites' identity/s.

Through the chapters, I am critically engaging the literature of leading scholars. Some scholars deprived the Shi'ite' Islamic movements of their national sense, and others treated Shi'ism as one collective identity. For example, Elie Kedourie notes that Iraqi Shi'ites held an uprising in 1920 to establish an Islamic state (Simon, 2004, 47). Similarly, Charles Tripp dismisses the Shi'ites' national sense by attributing their uprising to the *mujtahids'* religious dissent, socioeconomic insecurity, and Shi'ite tribes' armed might (Tripp,2007, 32-33). These arguments echo a similar tone of some British administrators. Believing in the nineteenth-century philosophy of "White man's burden," British administrators advocated the direct British rule of the colonies and distrusted the "natives" capacity for self-rule. Several administrators expressed their belief in the inferiority of the Arabs and their lack of wise and just rule. In this sense, one India Office administrator described "Arabs propensities for brutal murder and theft." He believes that "if conditions could be moulded aright men would grow good to fit them." (Yaphe, 2004, 22-3). In Iraq, Gertrude Bell, a well-known British administrator, advocated an Arab-self-rule under British tutelage after ending "the reactionary and obscurantists influence of the Shi'ite clerics and their tribal followers" (Yaphe, 2004, 27). Other scholars inaccurately treated the Iraqi Shi'ites as a homogenous group with a unified identity. Yitzhak Nakash and

Sherko Kirmanj suggest that "Iraq first" oriented parties were more appealing to the Iraqi Shi'ites than the pan-Arabism ideology. Both scholars colored communists, liberalists, and Marxists with a religious identity that they might not believe in. However, bearing a religious identity by birth does not make the individual a devotee for that identity.

Directed to a general political science audience, this study applies a history of political thought/ ideology approach, implementing critical historical hermeneutics in this work. Incorporating an extensive history/political analysis, I explore a variety of works authored by Western and Arab scholars in sociology and political history to collect and analyze evidence regarding the sense of belonging for Iraqi Shi'ites. Various Arabic sources integrated into this research are written by Arabic scholars/authors who have a unique experience in Iraq's political history. What distinguishes some of these scholars/authors from others is their tangible experience in important events in 20th century Iraq. They were part of the Iraqi political and social events not as merely Iraqi individuals, rather, they have a unique perspective as witnesses or makers of events. They were a part of significant events either by being activists/politicians themselves who indulged in Iraqi politics, or they were closely observed Iraq's historical and political events during the researched periods. For example, Hasan al-Alawy was a *Ba'thist* intellectual who has been a contemporary of Iraqi regimes since the 1950s. Another example is Abdulkareem al-Azri, who was a senior civil servant during the monarchy. The particular value of these Arabic sources is that the genre of the used books is closer to memoirs and bibliographies than just historical, political, and sociological sources. Nevertheless, these personal accounts are not immune against critical evaluation by analyzing or comparing them to other resources. Memoirs and bibliographies may not be accurate, or they may convey their writers' subjective perspectives concerning a particular event or interpretation. Therefore, the

study carefully considered the accuracy of these resources and their accendibility and studied them in juxtaposition to other scholarly works.

In my approach, I study the development of the Shi'ites' political and communal identities by focusing on their public figures, political personas, and religious leaders in different eras. I examine and analyze their detailed actions at particular historical periods. I apply the aforementioned theoretical framework to explain and interpret their political behavior. I chose to focus on the public figures because, unlike common individuals, there is a historical record of their actions documented by researchers and historians. In addition, I highlight some historical and regional events surrounding the Iraqi Shi'ites and their impact on Shi'ites' political behavior. In these analyses, I pursue the ideological and political motifs behind their actions to address the following research questions:

1. Were they behaving as a homogenous group? Did they have a single dominant identity that defines them as Shi'ite political entity?
2. Did the political behavior of different Shi'ite Islamic groups originate from their religious and communal identities? Or did it come from their national aspiration as Iraqis?

In this study, two terms might imply confusion or incorporate different meanings, which makes it necessary to define them. The first is the communal identity, which refers to a sociological category. However, in this study, this term is not used to imply a single social identity for the Iraqi Shi'ites as a homogenous or monolithic social group. In spite of the emergence of this categorization as a social identity, it still does not encompass all Shi'ite various social groups. For the second term, the study integrates Falah Jabar's definition of

Shi'ism, which is "a religious-cultural self-designation whose function is to distinguish a set of Islamic beliefs of one school from other schools" (Jabar, 2003, 162).

The research is designed in chronological order highlighting three main historical periods in 20th-century Iraq. The examined period extends from the foundation of the modern state in Iraq in 1921 and the fall of the *Ba'th* regime in 2003. The thesis consists of three chapters following the developments of the Shi'ites' identity in three sub-periods. The chapters depict the political and social changes in the Shi'ite body. In each chapter, I discuss the developments of Shi'ite communal and political identities in juxtapositions to their Iraqi national identity. In this research, I concentrate on the Shi'ite religious establishment and the religious elements (*Hawza* and clerics) and their role in the expansion of the Shi'ite political and communal identities. The study depends on scholarly analysis derived from primary resources. I used publications by leading scholars in the field, such as Hanna Batatu, Marion Farouk-Sluglett & Peter Sluglett, Falah Jabar, Adeed Dawisha, and others. I also used publications by Iraqi and Arab scholars and writers such as Ali al-Wardi, Hassan al-Alawy, Jawdat al-Qizwini, Azmi Bishara, and others. Chapter one discusses the emergence of the Iraqi Shi'ites as a majority in the newly founded Iraqi state. This chapter argues that Iraqi Shi'ites' communal and political identities were not as strong and evident as the tribal identity. I also analyze the Islamic and tribal Shi'ite movement founded as they led the national movement in Iraq, which resulted in funding Iraq's state. This period also marks conflict over Iraq's national identity.

Chapter two covers the first and second republic in Iraq (1958-1968). It sheds light on the emergence and development of the Shi'ite Islamist movement. In this chapter, I argue that the political identity was not yet developed among all Shi'ites; however, it sowed the seeds for

Shi'ite political identity. This period also witnessed vigorous activism by the Shi'ite religious hierarchy and the reemergence of *marja'ism* as an essential player in the political field.

Chapter three discusses the radicalization of the Shi'ite Islamist movements and their struggle against the *Ba'th* regime. In this chapter, I study the Islamist Shi'ite groups' reactions toward their national and communal identities. I highlight the influence of three major events—Iran's revolution, the Iraq-Iran war, and the Gulf War and the following uprising of 1991—on the Shi'ites' identity. I argue that Shi'ite communal identity surged under the *Ba'th* regime.

In summary, this study argues that the Shi'ite are heterogeneous group with different political identities. The revival of Iraqi Shi'ites to power provokes researchers to trace its gradual development and affiliations of the Shi'ite different groups. My work aims to provide a better understanding of the Shi'ites' sense of identity, and how Shi'ites' identity/s developed throughout the 20th century. I research whether they act as a homogenous group with religious ties, or they show a plurality of identities. I use the history of political thoughts/ideologies approach to examine the political behavior of Shi'ites' leading religious figures and political personas during three different eras of Iraq's 20th century. Important terms have been defined to overcome any confusion or misunderstanding. The studied historical periods are divided chronologically, representing a certain political development.

Chapter One

Iraqi Shi'ites and the Struggle to Found the Independent Iraq's State

Introduction

This chapter covers the period between the last years of the Ottoman Empire and the monarchy's fall in 1958. It discusses the founding of the Iraqi state and the formation of an Iraqi national identity. It sheds light on the Iraqi Shi'ites' endeavor to recognize Iraqiness as a primary source for the national identity. During this period, the Shi'ite *mujtahids'* political activism surged. The chapter surveys the Shi'ite religious hierarchy's role in establishing modern Iraq and leading in the national movement. I analyze the relationship between the Shi'ite religious hierarchy and the Shi'ite Arab tribe. I trace the history of the religious establishment's role in leading the Iraqi Shi'ites' political activism and their struggle to forge Iraq's national identity. Arguing against different scholarly readings, I am underlining the Shi'ites' struggle to formulate a comprehensive Iraqi national identity depending on the local cultural resources of the Iraqi Arab tribes to build an independent state. I am also underlining the roots of the sectarian tension between the Ottoman authorities and the Iraqi Shi'ites and its impact on building the Iraqi national identity.

Scholars have been generally divided into three camps regarding their interpretation of the Shi'ites' stances towards the new state. The first group of writers, represented by scholars such as Charles Tripp and Elie Kedourie, dismissed the idea of the Iraqi Shi'ites' national sense. Tripp claims that the Shi'ites' attempts for self-rule has no merits, despite their political initiatives. He argues that the personal interests drove the Shi'ites' political activism in Najaf, a center of political and religious movements in Iraq (Tripp, 2007, 32-33). He also delineates the

Shi'ite religious leadership's actions towards the British occupation as a personal interest-based behavior. He attributes their reactions to financial and administrative gains and dismisses or weakens the religious factor. Yet, Tripp missed the fact that Shi'ites' political behavior was driven by both a complex synthesis of Shi'ism and tribalism. Shi'ism proved to be the catalyst of all Shi'ites' national continuous protests in the decades that followed. The collaboration between the Shi'ite clerical class and Arab tribes led to the first Iraqi national revolution in 1920 that demanded a sovereign Iraqi state. However, Tripp again discredits any national spirit of the Shi'ite revolutionists in 1920. attributing the Shi'ites' revolution to three combined reasons: religious dissent, socioeconomic insecurity, and armed might (Tripp, 2007, 43-44). Adopting a similar analysis, Elie Kedourie argues that the reason behind the Shi'ites' revolution in 1920 was to establish an Islamic state (Simon, 2004, 47). Kedourie's stance lacks evidence because he missed the fact that according to Shi'ite theological teachings, only the Hidden Imam can establish an Islamic state.

The second group, including Toby Dodge and Yitzhak Nakash, presents a moderate approach when addressing the Shi'ites' strive to establish an Iraqi sovereign state. Dodge criticizes the short insight of the British, which is based on the views of British Orientalism. Such views conceive Iraqi society based on its different ethnic, religious, and social groupings. The British ranked these ethnic and religious groups according to two "overlapping criteria at the heart of an Orientalist discourse: how rational and hardworking were they and how favorably disposed towards the British." (Dodge, 2003, 67). The British administrators view "the rise of a nationalist movement directed at the reduction of British power in Iraq" as unjustified. They accuse the agitators of seeking positions in the administrative system and having interior motives (Dodge, 2003, 66). According to this narrative, the British viewed the *mujtahids* and their role as

a hindrance to state-building. They described them “as having a philosophy opposed to progress of any kind” (Dodge, 2003, 68). The British blamed the *mujtahids* for fomenting the revolt of 1920 and accused them of their hopes to imposition the theocratic state. Gertrude Bell was afraid that Iraq would be “a *mujtahid* run, theocratic state, which is the very devil;” therefore, she kept “the Sunni Mosul in Iraq and leaving the final authority with Sunni politicians” (Dodge, 2003, 69). The shortcoming of the British understanding of the Shi’ite religious establishment encouraged them to judge the Shi’ite *mujtahids* on materialistic bases and deny any national aspiration for an independent state. It is not expected from the British administrators to evaluate any upheaval against their presence objectively.

Nakash mentions that the Shi’ite religious authority in Najaf was divided between supporters of direct British rule over Iraq and advocates of an independent Iraqi state. He claims that economic and financial gains drove the first group of the Shi’ite chieftain, merchants, notables, and some *mujtahids* to support British direct governance (Nakash, 1994, 62). On the other side, the British rule opponents, led by leading *mujtahids* in Najaf and Karbala, were motivated by their Arab and Islamic national identity and sought an independent state. As social and religious leading figures, the prominent *mujtahids* insisted on having an independent state.

The third group of scholars looks at the Shi’ite dispute with the Iraqi state from the viewpoint of sectarian rivalry and interests. Adeed Dawisha, for example, argues that after establishing the Iraqi state, the “Iraqi Shi’ites demanded no more than a restructuring of the political and socio-economical balance which since Ottoman days had been heavily in favor of the minority Sunnis” (Dawisha, 2009, 71). The Sunni Ottoman Empire’s disintegration allowed the Iraqi Shi’ites to emerge as a majority and make such demands. Pegging the Shi’ites’ demands to political and economic interests is insufficient because the Iraqi Shi’ite politicians and

political activists were concerned with the Iraqi national identity the Sunni urban minority were forging rather than just political positions. As Nakash argues, the Iraqi Shi'ites "felt that the propagation of Pan-Arabism [promoted by Sunni political elite] excluded the majority of Iraq's tribal population and included only the ruling Sunni urban minority. They resented the government's narrow definition of Arab nationalism…" and believed that "Iraq and its tribes that preserved the true spirit of Arabism" (Nakash, 1994, 113).

Hawza and Sociopolitical Role

Before turning towards the political activism of the Iraqi Shi'ites, it is essential to understand the development of the Shi'ite religious establishment as it played a significant role in the emergence and development of the national movement in Iraq. Founded in the 11th century, *Hawza,* in Najafi jargon, consists of seminaries where seminarians study theology, jurisprudence, Arabic, and philosophy. The seminarian is required to complete three *halaqat* (levels or cycles) to be a *mujtahid*. On average, the first two cycles require a minimum of ten years to complete. Only the outstanding seminarians, usually few, make it to the level of *mujtahid* (Mallat, 1994, 39). A *mujtahid* sits at the top of the hierarchy of the clerical class. One *mujtahid*, among many others, assumes the *Marja' al-'Ala* (the highest religious reference). The *Marja' 'Ala* is selected in an informal process based on the criteria of his *a'lamiyya* (superiority in learning), probity, and piety. Accordingly, *Marj' al-'Ala* usually has the highest number of emulators and followers in the Shi'ite world. He holds the religious authority derived from his expertise to interpret the religious texts (Corboz, 2015, 6). By the 19th century, *Hawza* in Najaf rapidly developed because many distinguished Shi'ite religious scholars migrated from Iran to the holy cities in Iraq —Najaf, Karbala, Kadhimiya, and Samara— due to their ideological conflict with the Iranian religious establishment in their relation to the Qajarist

authority. Another reason was the additional huge financial resources flowing from Indian Shi'ites to the holy cities and their theological schools. Moreover, technological development in communication facilitated the appearance of central *marja'ism* (Al-Qarawee, 2012, 51). The independence and the diverse financial resources of the *Hawza* made it autonomous and immune to political and governmental interference. The *Hawza's* economic and political autonomy and its interaction with society enabled it to be a dependable and supportive body to the population.

Under the Ottoman rule, *Hawza* developed a credible client relationship with the tribes. The absence of Ottoman control in the tribal areas and confederations gave the tribe the leverage to form a semi-autonomous entity with a chieftain at the top. The tribal community usually represents a coherent political, social, and economic organization. The tribesmen are loyal to their tribe but not to other entities. Geographically, the further the tribe is from the political and religious authorities in the urban centers, the more autonomy the tribe enjoys, and less political and religious influence among its tribesmen prevail. Thus, constant clashes usually erupt between the Ottoman authorities and the tribes over taxes for cultivating lands and other economic matters. For the religious status, *Hawza* and its *mujtahids* played a mediator role to remove the tribes' financial burdens by negotiating their demands with the authorities. For that role, *Hawza* spontaneously claimed a political position beside its essential religious and social duty (Al-Qarawee, 2012, 49-50).

Hawza has established a wide communication between the holy cities and the rural tribes around these cities, assisted by the geographical contiguity and emissaries. It was able to convert most of the newly settled Arab tribes into Shi'ism by the 19th century. Despite their conversion to Shi'ism, the tribes kept the Arab tribal values and loyalties as the prominent guidance of their awareness and sense of belonging (Al-Qarawee, 2012, 51). The explanation of the conversion

magnitude of the tribe to Shi'ism is attributed to the indirect results of the Ottoman settlement policy. After the Mamluk Dynasty rule (1749-1831), Iraq came under the direct authority of the Ottoman Empire. As the Ottoman Empire became more involved in the world capitalist economy, Istanbul desired to increase its revenue resources through taxes and the increase of agricultural products. Accordingly, the Ottomans started improving the irrigation system and enlarging the cultivated areas, which accelerated the settlement of nomadic tribes. By the 19th century, most Iraqi tribes were settled down and changed from nomadic tribes to agrarian communities, and the tribesmen became attached to the small piece of land they cultivate.

Consequently, the chieftain became a tax farmer and title-deed holder. They claimed new responsibilities to solve disputations, distribute water shares, secure and maintain order within the tribal area, and organize forced labor, representing the tribe vis-à-vis the Ottoman government. The chieftains lost their political power and became representatives of the Ottoman authorities by controlling the tribesmen and collecting taxes. Therefore, this policy destroyed the most cherished primordial unity of the tribal system and disintegrated tribal confederations into factions disputing over lands and water resources (Nakash, 1995, 28-40). The disintegration led to identity crisis and alienation, filled by a form of Shi'ism that suits triable values and conceptions by presenting the Shi'ite Imams as gallant knights and brave warriors. (Jabbar, 2003, 64). The socioeconomic changes in the tribal structure and the wide gap between the chieftains and their tribesmen assisted in the emergence of *sayyids* and their role. *Sayyid* is an honoring title for those who claim the noble blood lineage to Prophet Mohammed. They settled among the tribes as an interface between the *Hawza* and the tribesmen. *Sayyids* and emissaries contributed to the transformation process of the tribes.

The *Mujtahids* and the State Founding

The early phases of the *Hawza's* political activism in Iraqi affairs started during WWI. The Shi'ite *mujtahids'* first organized political movement emerged in 1914 when they called for *jihad* against the British occupation. In the late the19th century, Muslim scholars such as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh had already warned about the danger of foreign imperialists on Islam. Thus, the Shi'ite *ulama* responded to the threat by calling for *jihad* to defend the Islamic society from European colonializing powers (Sakai, 1994, 25). The *mujtahids*, headed by Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Kadhim al-Yazdi (1831- 1918), called upon the Shi'ites to support the Ottoman's armies in their fight against the British colonizers by men and funds. The call for *jihad* against the British was "on account of their being a non-Muslim force engaged in a fight against the Muslim—albeit oppressive—Ottoman" (Kadhim, 2013, 87). However, the Shi'ites, especially the tribes which constituted the Shi'ite militant power, and the Ottoman authorities had a strained relation that quickly erupted during wartime. The following argument between a tribal chieftain and a Turkish military commander reveals the preexisting tension. For accusing him and his tribesmen of treason, a chieftain replies to the officer: "You are the traitors to Islam, and your treatment of the Arabs is the best proof, and after this, you should be our target. If it were not for the fatwas of our *ulama'*, we would not be on your side" (Al-Fir'aun, 1952, 40). This argument uncovers the ethnic tension between the Arab tribes and the Turks. Many Shi'ite tribes were already planning to revolt against the Ottomans while the Turks engaged in the war. However, they were preempted by the binding of their '*ulama's* call for *jihad*. The religious motive was the main drive for many tribes' support for the Turks. It would be the same motive that agitated the Shi'ite tribes to revolt against the British later on.

The collaboration between the effendi class and the Shi'ite clerical class marks the beginnings of Iraq's national movement. Effendis were the Sunni civil servants in the Ottoman administrative system who lost their jobs after the occupation. In comparison to the rest of the Iraqi population, effendis were well-educated and knowledgeable of the current events in the international arena. They maintained a respectful status in their communities and were perceived as trustworthy individuals. After the British occupation of Iraq, they had the impetus to agitate the public against the British administration. The effendis established a strong relationship with the Shi'ite clerical class as they both shared a common purpose to fight the British. Since the clerics were privileged with vast social networks, the effendi realized the clerics' importance to serve their purpose. Accordingly, the effendis established social communication with the clerics, particularly in Baghdad (Al-Wardi, vol. 5, 39 & 92).

On the other hand, the rise of Grand Ayatollah Mohamad Taqi al-Shirazi (1840-1920) to *marja'ism* after al-Yazdi's death in 1918 encouraged the clerics to engage in politics (Al-Wardi, vol. 5, 40 & 92). Directly or indirectly, the clerics supported the early political groups and formations among the Shi'ite population to organize the efforts against the British. Islam was the dominant aspect of the Shi'ite political activism during the Iraqi state's early forming years, and the clerics were the leaders of those political movements that emerged among the Shi'ites. By examining the history of the early political organizations and associations, one finds that they were either founded by a group of clerics or dominated by them. Although the clerics founded and supported these political groups and formations and called upon sustaining the Islamic identity, they did not adopt a radical theological Islam or called for establishing an Islamic theocracy. The notion of establishing an Islamic state was not popular, and the clerics were open to a secular nationalist movement. Furthermore, the Shi'ite *mujtahids* had expressed their will to

Sharif Hussain bin Ali to install one of his sons as a king of Iraq. Therefore, the claims that the Shi'ite *mujtahids* wanted an Islamic state does not have a foundation.

Many Shi'ite clerics and notables were unsatisfied with al-Yazdi's lukewarm stance towards the independence movement. Al-Yazdi's apolitical attitude towards the British swung Najaf behind the British administration (Atiyyah, 1973, 273). The British political officer in the Shamiya Division, for example, reported that in a visit he made to *Marja'* al-Yazdi on 28 April 1918, al-Yazidi bitterly complained about the attempts of some other clerics to compel him to antagonize the British. (Nadhmi, 1986, 350). To give Karbala a political weight against the British, many clerics recommended al-Shirazi to stay in Karbala when he planned to reside in Najaf in March 1920 (Shabbar, 2012, 64-65).

On the contrary, al-Shirazi expressed his antagonization to the British once he assumed the *marja'ism*. He issued his famous fatwa on 23 December 1919, stating that "No Muslim should elect or choose a non-Muslim for the rulership of Iraq." Al-Shirazi's fatwa marked the first time "a high [Shi'ite] religious authority had pronounced himself publicly against the British and had given demanded self-rule a religious sanction" (Atiyyah 1978, 273). Seventeen other senior clerics in Karbala have signed this fatwa as well, and it was disseminated among the towns in the Middle-Euphrates. Ali al-Wardi highlights that:

> Al-Shirazi's fatwa was an important factor in the development of political awareness in Iraq because it put nationalism and religion in one frame that was an unprecedented theme. A theme that peoples had not familiarized it yet. Thus, the nationalist became a religious person, and the religious person became a nationalist. Accordingly, the saying [Hadith], attributed to Prophet Mohamad, "love of homeland is part of faith" became common among the public and turned to be a slogan for the new national movement (Al-Wardi, vol 5, 104).

The Shi'ites' Reaction to the Plebiscite

Though Shi'ite clerics, chieftains, merchants, sayyids played a vital role in the national movement and demanded independence, other Shi'ites clerics and community leaders swung behind the British administration for various reasons. The British intelligence reported that there were other Shi'ite clerics in Karbala supporting the British rule. Still, they were afraid to publicly express their support for the sake of their reputation (Al-Wardi, vol 5, 103-5). The division among the Shi'ites different chieftains and clerics surfaced evidently when Arnold Wilson, the British Civil Commissioner in Iraq, conducted a plebiscite between December 1918-January 1919. After the Anglo-French Declaration, the British government wanted to know what government the liberated Arabs seek. The plebiscite consisted of three questions: 1) Do the people favor a single Arab State under British tutelage? 2.) Do they want an Arab titular head of state? 3.) And, if so, whom do they prefer?

The plebiscite responses displayed the division among the different Shi'ite social factions in all the predominantly Shi'ite cities and areas. The further the geographical area was from the Shi'ite holy cities and clerical influence, the less politically-minded its inhabitants became. Towards the south, many Shi'ite merchants landed notables and tribal chieftains in Kut, Amara, Qurna, Basra, and Nasiriyah were quite in support of the direct British rule. The opinion of Ahmad Chalabi Abd al-Wahid, a wealthy landowner from Basra, well reflects the pro-British rule among the Shi'ites in the south. Chalabi commented on the plebiscite questions: "Arabs cannot at present govern themselves […] they must have a Government from outside […] it would be leading us to suicide to appoint an Amir even under veiled British supervision. We have had a taste of the rule of Arab tyrants such as Saiyid Talib, the Sa' duns, etc." Another example of the lack of political consciousness can be seen in the petition signed by fourteen

chieftains in Amara advocating a united Iraq under British administration with Sir Percy Cox as Governor (Atiyyah, 1973, 270-2). Atiyyah argues that the tribes' attitude was natural because they had been ruled for centuries and had never been consulted about the type of government they should have. In this regard, one notices that even the Shi'ites in the Middle-Euphrates, who had a higher level of political awareness, did not think of an independent state before the British occupation when Lieutenant-General Sir Stanley Maude, the commander of British occupying forces, promised Iraqis an independence state. The following statement by some chieftains from the Middle Euphrates area reveals that the notion of an independent state did not exist until the British arrived. The chieftains were complaining to the British political officer in their area:

> You have offered us independence. We never asked for it, we never dreamt of it till you put the idea into our heads: for hundreds of years the country has lived in a state as far removed from independence as it is possible to conceive; then you came with your promise of independence, and every time we ask for it you imprison us. (Mann, 1921, 292).

Iraqis were ruled by foreigners for centuries, and for many of them, independence was a novel concept. Thus, Iraqis, with different backgrounds, were not accustomed to independent local leadership. Furthermore, most Iraqi cities and tribal confederations represented semi-autonomous city-states. Rivalry and cleavage were conspicuous features of the relationship among them. The dependent state was a relatively modern concept, and it did not become popular among Iraqis until the late 19th century. This was, in general, the case throughout the region. According to Wilson, Al-Yazdi himself was not in support of independence at the time. On 14 December 1918, one day before conducting the plebiscite in Najaf Wilson stated, in an interview with *Marja'* al-Yazdi:

> On morning of 12th, I was privileged to visit the aged Saiyid Muhammad Kazim Yazdi [...] 'I speak', he said 'for those who cannot speak for themselves. Whatever Government do let them consider well the interests involved at large of Shiahs in particular and especially the masses of the inarticulate and helpless. These people are not

> civilized; the installation of Arab officials will cause anarchy. They have not yet learnt honesty; until they have done so they must remain under the orders of Government. No man can be found who would be accepted as Amir (Atiyyah, 1973, 273).

Al-Yazdi himself attempted to distance himself from involving in politics and tried to kick the ball out of his court. His apolitical attituded was revealed when some Shi'ite politicians and triable chieftains discussed the plebiscite with him; he addressed them, saying that "the matter is important, and every Iraqi has the right in it. You should hold a public meeting attended by all social classes […] because everyone has the right to express his opinion, whether a merchant or groceryman, a leader or porters" (Al-Wardi, vol. 5, 71). Even when they insisted on knowing his position, he responded: "I do not know politics, but I know what *halal* and *haram* are (permissible and forbidden in Islamic law)" and after their insistence, he replied, "choose whatever is good for Muslims" (Al-Wardi, vol. 5, 72). This situation conveys two notions about Shi'ite political activism. The first is that the Shi'ite political class cannot ignore their *marja'ism's* consultation even if the *Marja'* is apolitical. The second is that Shi'ite *Marja'* might be apolitical and shows more reluctance to involve in politics, especially if it involves violence. Though he was vocal *Marja'*, Al-Shirazi exhibited a reluctance to call for *jihad* against the British. He replied to some chieftains and notables who considered a revolution as a possible option to act against the British:

> The burden is heavy, and I am afraid that the tribes may not have the capacity to fight the occupying forces […] I am afraid [when there is a revolution] the system will be disordered, security will be lost, and the country will be in chaos. You know that keeping the order is more important than the revolution. Moreover, it is more obligatory (Hasani, 1971, 170).

The Shi'ites Lead a Revolution

The clash between the Shi'ite religious hierarchy and the British was an evitable end. The Shi'ite national movement in the Middle-Euphrates concluded that armed struggle was an

inevitable end to gain independence. Notably, the British were procrastinating to move on with their early promises and grant Iraqis their autonomy. Undoubtedly, the heavy-handed British policies were the main factor to stir anti-British sentiments among the Shi'ites and, eventually, the revolution in 1920. Moreover, Commissioner Wilson and his administration in Baghdad were convinced that Iraq should be under direct British tutelage. They were under the impression that Iraqis were not capable yet of ruling themselves. The following impression was expressed through senior British administrators in Baghdad. It underpins the impolitic and arrogant attitude of some British administrators: The Creed of Islam is unprogressive, personally enervating, and destructive of any instinct for citizenship, social integrity or national aspirations…the Muslim, and particularly the Shia' is—and for many years must remain totally unfit for self-government, which he only "desires" as an opportunity to escape from all law and order." (Lyell, 1923, 7)

The Shi'ite revolutionists had a variety and conflicting motives for their revolution in 1920. Scholars have already highlighted several reasons, which ranged from the unruly nature of the tribes and their chieftains' private economic interests to *mujtahids'* defense of Islam. Put differently, the motives of the revolution vary from socioeconomic to religious causes. It is undeniable that the economic benefits were a drive for many opportunists. The *mujtahids* also must defend Islam as it is their primary concern. Nevertheless, the collaboration between the Middle Euphratean tribes and the *mujtahids* should be defined but in pan-Arabism and Iraqi nationalism terms. The Shi'ites' revolution marked a decisive moment in Iraq's modern history. The revolution became a symbol of national pride and apposition to the colonial domination. Gertrude Bell wrote in 1920 that "no one, not even His Majesty's Government, would have thought of giving the Arabs such a free hand as we shall now give them—as a result of the rebellion" (Yaphe, 2004, 32). The following account by one of the revolution's main

leaders, Mohsin Abu Tabikh*,* dismisses the claims that socioeconomic reasons were behind the revolt. Abu Tabikh expresses the frustration towards the outcome of the pro-independence revolt.

> The Iraqi Revolution resulted from our miscalculations and excessive discontent. We received from the occupying British authorities the kind of respect and appreciation that cannot be compared to what we had under the Turkish occupation and the austerity of the Turkish rulers. British governors used to exaggerate in giving us good treatment and to ensure that all our needs were met, especially myself, Sayyid Nur Al-Yasiri and *Shaykh* Abd al-Wahid al-Haj Sikar.
>
> But we did not honor their appreciation and made up excuses for revolution and fighting against them in the name of independence, only to prepare the governing positions for the effendis who had already enjoyed such civilian and military positions during the Turkish rule (Kadhim, 2013, 95).

Indeed, the revolt failed militarily, but it achieved independence. The Shi'ite *mujtahids* and triable chieftains succeeded in forcing the British administration to recognize Iraqis' rights as an independent state under King Faisal I, whose installation unveils two important facts about the Shi'ite revolution leaders and political elites: their pan-Arabism aspiration and their lack of political wit. The Shi'ite *mujtahids* had already dispatched letters to Sherif Hussein bin Ali, expressing their disposition to install one of his sons as a king of Iraq as an Arab Muslim Amir. Abbas Kadhim wonders what made Iraqis, particularly the Shi'ites, go to Hijaz to "bring an unrepentant British agent to be a king over them." When a British administrator asked a tribal chieftain why they concurred to have a Sunni Arab leader, he replied that "they say he is a Shia' at heart." (Kadhim, 2013, 95 & Lyell, 1923, 206). Living in the shadow of the Ottoman Empire as a marginalized minority in the Muslim Sunni World, the Iraqi Shi'ite political class and notables were less experienced in statecraft than their Sunni counterparts. They depended on the religious leadership, whose involvement in politics depends on the *Marja'* himself. The level of *Marja's* political activism depends on the *Marja's* interpretation of his role. Thus, some *Marjas* are more active, and others are more conservative in politics.

Iraqi Shi'ites had to deal with new political and identity challenges under the Iraqi government. By establishing the Iraqi government and coronating King Faisal I in 1921, the cooperation between the effendis and clerical class against the British came to an end. Effendis and the Sharifian officers believed the cause for the struggle was nulled by forming a government. (Al-Wardi, vol. 5, 39 & 92). However, the *mujtahids* did not accept the British's presence and cooperate with the British-sponsored state. Since then, the relationship between the state and the *Hawza* was strained. The following statement represents a common opinion of the Iraqi governing elite and how they dealt with the majority of their population. This rhetoric became an adherent feature of the Iraqi political discourse for decades. Upon the arrival of Percy Cox in Basra on 1 October 1920 with a mandate to form an Iraqi government, some Iraqi notables received him, and a party was organized to honor him and bid Commissioner Wilson farewell. Among the Iraqi political hopefuls, several gave speeches praising and thanking the efforts of Great Britain and accusing the leaders of the revolution of shortsightedness. Among those who gave a speech was Muzahim Al-Pachachi, a short-term prime minister (1948 -1949). He said:

> I very much regret that the follies of some individual Arabs have served to disappoint the British nation in its honorable undertaking [i.e., the occupation of Iraq]. These acts were committed partly owning to unattainable dreams and partly owing to selfish material interests. The present movement is not purely an Arab movement but is mixed with an alien element, which has been, to my deepest regret, successful in using Arab fame, wealth and blood for its own benefit, in the hope of weakening the position of Great Britain elsewhere. Do not believe in appearances, which are mostly deceptive, especially in the East. Do not consider the present revolt of some nomad tribes to be really a national revolt seeking independence. Such a movement cannot be taken as representing the feeling of the whole community. The influential families of Baghdad have no sympathy with a movement that has ruined their country (Kadhim, 2013, 137).

Many Shi'ite resolution's leaders held the Sarafian officers in low regard, and they did not trust their intention. This pre-existing mistrust overshadowed their relationship after the founding the Iraq's state. During the revolution, Abu Tabikh described the Sharifian officers as:

> They are the remaining of the Ottoman agents and waste which they left here. If they wanted to participate with the mujahedeen in the revolution, their majority would do so for job opportunities. I do not doubt if the English call upon them to fill positions, they will accept, forgetting all about nationalism and jihad. (Al-Wardi, vol. 5, 297-8).

The situation was concluded by founding the Iraqi state, as Abu Tabikh expected, and banishing leading *mujtahids* from Iraq in 1923 (Al-Wardi, vol. 5, 40). The *mujtahids* were a thorn in the flesh of the British administration and the effendis, who dominated the Iraqi government. Instigated by the British, who were under the influence of the vendetta, the Iraqi government wanted to restrain the *mujtahids'* role in the political sphere. Among the government's punitive actions was deporting the *mujtahids* under the pretext of their non-Arab ethnic identity. After Grand Ayatollah al-Shirazi's death, the leading *mujtahid,* Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Mahdi al-Khalissi*,* led the anti-colonialism camp and advocated for Iraq's independence. Al-Khalissi conditioned his support for King Faisal I by the latter's obligation to end the colonial influence. When King Faisal I was unable or unwilling to fulfill his obligation, al-Khalissi issued a *fatwa* delegitimizing the King's jurisdiction and called upon the Shi'ites to boycott the Constitutional Assembly's election. Al-Khalissi's adherence to his cause brought him into a confrontation with the King and, ultimately, with the British. The Iraqi government used an instrumental means to break in the *mujtahids*--their Persian citizenship. Since many Iraqi Shi'ite inhabitants, thought being Arabs, were holding Persian citizenship to avoid concertation in the Ottoman military, the government utilized this factor to blackmail and harass the *mujtahids*. Accordingly, the government exiled al-Khalissi and other *mujtahids* under the claim that foreign subjects were unfairly intruding on Iraqi affairs. Excluding al-*Khalissi,* the

government allowed the *mujtahids* to return to the learning center in Iraq after vowing not to interfere in politics. Since then, the political role of *Hawza* and the *mujtahids* diminished throughout the life of the Iraqi kingdom.

The Shi'ites' bitterness turned against the Sunni political and cultural hegemony. The alliance between the Shi'ites and Sunnis during the early years of the British occupation was of an ephemeral character. The dominant feature of the Shi'ite-Sunni political elites' rivalry was the "musical-chairs game." Dominated by the Sunni politicians, the game resulted in moving the losers from the government benches to oppositions or sending them home. The Sharifian officers' domination of Iraqi politics and the dismissal of the Shi'ite revolution leaders widened the political gap between the Shi'ites and the Iraqi government (Lukitz, 1995, 97). The poet Ahmed al-Safi al-Najafi described the situation after forming the first Iraqi government:

> What a batched revolution;
> We did the farming and others harvested! (Al-Fir'aun, 1952, 25 & Kadhim, 2012, 19)

During the formative year, the Shi'ite-Sunni political and religious alliance gave the illusion of common interests because it did not transcend to Shi'ite-Sunni communal boundaries (Lukitz, 1995, 57 & 97). The Shi'ites viewed Iraq as a Sunni-dominated state and struggled to end the Sunni hegemony. The relationship between the state and the Shi'ites continued to be in discord until the monarchy fell in 1958.

Shi'ites, Education, and Forging National Identity

The state-oriented education and the methodology of implementing it to form national identity were among the early disputable issues for its importance in forging Iraqi national identity. In the first few years of the occupation, the British needed to fill the vacuum after the Ottoman civil servants fled with their retreated forces. Since then, the British administration

worked to have “a loyal efficient, inexpensive, local bureaucracy to relive the overburdened troops in the field and the taxpayers at home.” In the words of Sir Percy Cox, the goal was to create an “administration with an Arab façade.” An administration of minor functionaries with elementary education. Hence, the British educational policy centered around elementary education while constrained secondary education. Between 1917 and 1920, the British administration cut funds from and closed secondary schools under the pretext of high numbers of students. The British claimed that the 400 high school students were too many for the country’s needs. The British feared the high school graduates would be a source of anti-British agitation. By 1923, the British lost their influence on education, but they kept their advisors in the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, those advisors did not have their superiors’ support; therefore, Sati al-Husri was in control of the educational policy, and he did as he pleased (Simon, 2004, 75-6). Besides what modern education means, in general terms, the Shi’ites consider the new educational system an opportunity to acquire tools to access the administrative system and associate themselves with the state. Yet, the winds blow with what the ships do not covet, and the educational policy turned problematic to many Shi’ites.

Sati’ al-Husri was the man responsible for conceptualizing the Iraq public educational system. The father of the Iraqi education, al-Husri was born to a family from Aleppo in 1880, and his education and career were thoroughly Ottoman. He attended the Mulkiya school in Istanbul and became an educator in the Balkan, where he was influenced by the Balkan nationalism and the role of language in promoting nationalism. He served as a Director of the Teachers’ Training Institute in Istanbul before joining the short-term Syrian government under King Faisal I, where he became Director of Education (Marr,1985, 89-90). When King Faisal

became the monarch of Iraq, al-Husri also served as the Director of Education in the new government. Politically, al-Husri was an Arab nationalist thinker and a well-known public figure. Influenced by the French educational philosophy, al-Husri utilized education as an instrument to make a social change and inculcate nationalism in the mind of the new generations. Al-Husri's educational policies provoked the Shi'ite as well as the Kurds' political class and public figures. He aimed to create a borderless Arab state that includes all Arab *Wilayat* in the former Ottoman empire. To do so, he needed to create cultural conditions to flourish Arab unity, which demanded the unity of language, values, and economic interest. As for Iraq, al-Husri promoted the idea that Iraq was a part of a wider-Arab world. Accordingly, all the different components of the Iraqi society should embrace al-Husri's idea. Al-Husri's primary educational system was based on the nineteenth-century French syllabus, which praised uniformity in approach and methodology. However, other Iraqi ethnic and religious factions did not welcome al-Husri's approach.

The contention between the Shi'ites and the government over education was due to imposing new methodological and political realities. The Shi'ites' complaints about al-Husri's methodology rest in its preference for foreign concepts to Iraqi cultural and traditional ideas to forge Iraqi citizenship. The Shi'ites demanded that the curriculum should be based on local resources of cultural heritage. Because Shi'ite ministers were political appointees of the Ministry of Education, they realized that they were powerless to spread modern education to the Shi'ite countryside. They were neutralized by al-Husri, whose ministry position was immune to political changes. Under the Ottoman rule, the Ottoman educational policies provided more accredited educational opportunities to the Sunni subjects and neglected the Shi'ites for different reasons. The Ottoman *Walis* established and patronized schools in the Sunni areas, while the Shi'ites had to build their schools depending on the rich' charities and endowments. Before the British

occupation, out of 36 Ottoman schools for Muslims in Baghdad, only one was for the Shi'ites (Hilali, 1959, 43, 80- 81). Therefore, the Shi'ite political elites wanted to disseminate education to the deprived areas, but they collided with al-Husri's centralizing education policy. The centralization policy intended to build a unified identity for the diverse, sometimes conflicting, societal factions. This policy, however, privileged the Sunni culture and heritage to other Iraqis, particularly the Shi'ites.

The Shi'ites openly criticized the Sunni cultural hegemony on the education process and imposing the Baghdadi dialect in teaching Arabic. To build a national identity in a divided country, al-Husri realized the importance of language in forging a unifying identity. Especially, he was infatuated with Arabic. Therefore, the plan was to centralize modern education across the country. To standardized the Arabic language, modern education introduced the phonetic method of teaching the Arabic language, replacing the old whole-word method in teaching Arabic, which was open to local variations and dialectal expressions.

The new analytical approach considers decoding the letters, letter combinations, and syllables in a word. The new method eliminates the dialectical variation in pronunciations, which was spread across Iraq, and privileges the Baghdadi dialect. Accepting the Baghdadi dialect implies the recognition of Baghdadi culture as the cultural center of the country and marginalizes other cultural centers. The Shi'ites resented the new policy because they considered themselves no less-guardians of the Arabic language and culture (Lukitz, 1995, 103). Ironically, al-Husri's mother tongue was Turkish. And his "vast knowledge of philosophy and political thought was a product of an Ottoman cosmopolitan milieu, underscored the adherence to a stricter national model that emphasized Arab language and history as the sole characteristics of national identity" (Bashkin, 2006, 4). Thus, Shi'ite criticized the Sunni political elite, who were responsible for

implementing the ideology of Arab nationalism, for being more immersed in and attached to the Turkish culture.

The Shi'ite denominational schools' curriculum was more instrumental in comprehending the Arab and Islamic dimensions in the Iraqi nationalism than the curriculum in the Ottoman Sultan's schools. The Shi'ite schools' curriculum was mostly religious and not secular, and Arabic grammar, rhetoric, and literature constituted the primary content. Phebe Marr observes that "Shi'ites in Ottoman Iraq received much better training in Arabic than their Sunni counterparts in the sultan's schools, inadvertently seeding the ground for their future identification with Arab nationalism." Second, the humanistic rather than scientific nature of the curriculum, which covers literature, philosophy, history, logic, and theology, gave the students a profound knowledge of the Arabic Islamic culture (Marr,1985, 88). The traditional Shi'ite educational system proved more instrumental in adopting the Arab dimension in Iraq's nationalism (Lukitz, 1995, 99-103). The Shi'ites justified their criticism of the educational methodology as they are no less-guardian of the Islamic and Arabic culture than their Sunnis fellow citizens.

Why Shi'ites' modern education was much less than the other social segments inhabited Iraq? The Shi'ites—tribesmen, and town dwellers alike—refrained from attending the modern Turkish schools. By the late 19th century, the Ottomans implemented a new educational policy towards the non-Turkish population to "ward off Western encroachment by adapting modern Western education to suit Ottoman needs" (Fortna, 2002, 12). After the Young Turks' coup in 1908 and the rise of Turkish nationalism, the new educational program emphasized the Turkification. Therefore, new program mandated the Turkish language of instruction, Turkish history and culture, and the Sunni doctrine in the religion classes. This program's goal was to

establish a new loyal generation of civil servants and military service members of the empire. Hence, new primary and secondary schools besides the teacher-training school and a law college in Baghdad were opened in Baghdad (Simon, 2004, 75). Nonetheless, the Shi'ite students were not attracted to these modern schools, and they kept attending their denominational institutions. Therefore, by founding the Iraqi state, the Shi'ite political elites wanted to change the status quo and compensate for the shortage in modern formal education among their tribal constituents. Under the Ottoman Empire, one reason for the Shi'ites' estrangement sprang from their resentment to the Turkish compulsory Sunni indoctrination in the schools.

The sectarian tension between the Shi'ites and the Sunnis, under the Ottoman authorities, was another cause of the Shi'ites' estrangement from attending the Turkish educational system. Because of the historical Ottoman-Safavid conflict, the Ottomans used to view the Shi'ites with suspicion. The following account well-illustrates the nature of the relationship between the Shi'ite community and the Ottoman authorities. In 1891, the Turkish authorities in Iraq, authorized by Sultan Abdouhimed II, delegated ten Shi'ite children to attend the "Tribal School" in Istanbul in an attempt to convert them into Sunnism (Deringil, 1991, 52). In clarifying the proposed plan of those delegated children when they returned home, Sultan Abdelhamid II stated that "since so much money has been spent [on these children] it is important that the necessary benefits be derived from their education. The training of those among them who are Shii should ensure that they abandon this sect and become Hanefi [a Sunni religious sect], to enable them to convert their countrymen to the Hanefi sect upon their return…" (Deringil, 1991, 59). However, the plan was a failure because the children either abandoned the school or did not convert into Sunnism. Consequently, the Shi'ite were looking to the Turkish educational institutions with suspicion. Another reason Shi'ites were reluctant to study the Turkish language was that they

believed they would not be integrated into the Ottoman public administration. Since the Shi'ite intelligentsia was the graduate of the religious seminars or (madrassa) but not the formal educational system, they were barred from being accepted into an administrative post or joining the government's higher educational institutions.

The contention over education erupted in a clash between the Shi'ite and Sunni elite in the form of a pedagogical dispute between Sati al-Husri and Fadil al-Jamali. Born in al-Kadhimiya in 1903, al-Jamali was a young Shi'ite intellectual and recent graduate of Columbia University. He received his early education in the Iranian school in Baghdad and the theological schools in Najaf before joining the Elementary Teachers' Training College in Baghdad. In 1927, he received his B.A. from the American University of Beirut. Jamali spent about four years (1929-32) in the Teachers College, Columbia University, and wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on Bedouin education under the supervision of Dr. Paul Monroe—professor of education with an international reputation (Al-Uzri, 1982, 20 & Marr, 1985, 98). Al-Jamali's pedagogical goals centered on "the equalization of educational opportunity, education for life rather than book learning, and the modernization of education to turn out whole individuals" (Simon, 2004, 79 & 82). Al-Jamali believes that "like-mindedness bringing national cohesion and unity could be obtained only by promoting an educational system compatible with the tribesmen's lifestyle and their social and cultural values" (Lukitz, 1995, 105). Another issue that triggered the conflict between the two pedagogical ideologues was a low rate of students in the Shi'ites- dominated provinces. In 1933, the number of pupils in the elementary schools for every 1,000 people was as following in the provinces: Mosul: 30. 5, Baghdad: 27, Basra: 25, Thi-Qar: 6, Wasit: 6, Diwaniyah: 8, Missan: 9, Anbar: 10,6. Actually, the discrepancy between the Education budget allocated for each province did not match the collected taxes from that province (Al-Azari, 1995,

30). The conflict between two different educational methodologies was settled by Paul Monroe's Educational Commission, and eventually, al-Husri lost his position as the Director of Education.

In 1932, the Iraqi government required Monroe's Commission or (The Educational Inquiry Commission) to assess Iraq's education system. The Commission included Dr. Paul Monroe from Columbia University and Dr. William Chandler Bagley Knight from South Carolina University, and Dr. Fadil al-Jamali, governmental attaché. The Commission assessed the suitability of the educational system with the country's needs, the curriculum, the administration, the funding, the availability of educational opportunities for different areas and groups. The Commission concluded that the spread of illiteracy among the Shi'ite tribesmen was due to the chieftains' "denial of the validity of an urban-oriented school system. After independence, this denial focused on the incompatibility between modern education and the needs of a tribal society." When the commission members met with the Mayor of Nasiriyah, he told them "of a real desire for education among the local tribes. The boys, he thought, 'would be delighted to attend an agricultural school and work half-time. Classroom work was a bore, and they would be glad to get out of it.'" (Monroe, 1932, February 27).

Therefore, the Commission summarized that modern education would appeal to the Shi'ite tribesmen only if some changes were made: 1) The implementation of an educational program that drew from the tribesmen's daily lives and was structured to meet the needs of a rural community. This curriculum would center on ways to modernize outdated agricultural methods and on modern marketing procedures, 2.) The training of teachers belonging to and interested in the tribal sector, 3.) The preservation of some of the 'native ways and methods' worth preserving, taking care not to arouse the tribesmen's resentment by attacking sensitive issues such as tribal social institutions and beliefs (Lukitz, 1995, 104-6).

Al-Husari stepped down, and some changes were made to the educational system in Iraq. However, al-Husri's educational theory and influence dominated the Iraqi education system and produced generations of Iraqi pan-Arabists, who toppled the monarchy and founded the Republic of Iraq. The struggle of many Shi'ite politicians and leaders to have the Shi'ite heritage integrated into the cultural heritage of the new state and a tributary to the official national identity of modern Iraq continued to stumble throughout the monarchy age.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, during the forming years of the Iraqi state, the main drive of the Iraqi Shi'ites to establish an independent Iraqi state was Islam and Arabism. The Shi'ites' cooperation with the other Iraqi social factions developed rapidly during the national movement against the British occupation. The Shi'ite religious authority was the main driver of the Iraqi national movement and had a major role in founding the modern state in Iraq. The resentment between the Shi'ites and the Iraqi government ended in deporting, leading *mujtahids* to Iran and block their political clout. Dominated by the Ottoman effendis and the Sharifian officers, the Iraqi state could not forge a unifying Iraqi national identity, and it practiced political sectarian discrimination against its Shi'ite citizens. As an essential element in forging a national identity for generations of Iraqi students, the educational policies were a controversial cultural and political issue between Shi'ite and the state. The Shi'ites demanded to disseminate education among the tribal society and using its culture for education. The Iraqi Shi'ites were divided into groups of tribesmen and urban dwellers. Most of the tribesmen were more attached to their primordial tribal identity and Arab traditions. The communal identity was less prominent among the Shi'ite tribes, especially among the tribes that lived far from the Shi'ite religious centers. On the contrary, the Shi'ite identity was more recognizable among the urban Shi'ites and the tribes

residing around the Shi’ite learning centers. The latter group was more politically conscious than the rest of the Shi’ites who lived in south Iraq. Thus, this group was the leading force of the Iraqi national movement, whose consequences were dire on them. In general, Iraqi Shi’ites lived as a marginalized majority, and their communal and political identities were unidentified for a large section of them. They were different social groups with different loyalties; however, they were unified by poverty and disfranchisement.

Chapter Two

The Shi'ite Islamic Movement: Genesis and Evolution

Introduction

Chapter Two traces the social and religious developments in the Shi'ite community under Iraq's first and second republic (1958-1968). It sheds light on the conflicting political trends and movements that dominated Iraq's political life as Iraqi nationalism (Wataniya) and pan-Arabism (Qawmiyah). This period is divided into two overlapping eras. The first era starts from 1958 to 1963, when the *Harkat al-Dhubadh al-Ahrar* (Free Officers Movement) overthrew the monarchy and founded the first Iraqi Republic under Col. Abd Al-Karim Qassim's leadership. This period examines the emergence of Iraqi religious Shi'ite activism against the secular ideologies, namely Communism. The second one extends from 1963 to 1968, covering the collision between the *Hawza* and the pan-Arabist driven regime of the 'Arif's brothers. It also referenced the early developments in Shi'ite Islamism and the seeds of the transformation from the universalist Islamic identity to a particular Shi'ite identity. I argue that these overlapping periods witnessed a surge in the Shi'ite religious activism as a reaction to the godless movement and, later, the state discrimination. The Shi'ite Islamist' political views were still in the forming process and had not crystallized yet. Shi'ite activism was still more of a religious and social character than a political one, and the Shi'ite political identity had not been born yet. I examine the stages of Shi'ite Islamic developments during those two periods, and the Shi'ite religious activism as a social protest.

The rise of Shi'ite Islamism was a reaction to the emergence and proliferation of secular ideological movements in the Shi'ite community. As Phebe Marr counts, in founding Iraq, the British and Arab Sunni leaders have taken a number of significant steps to create a national

identity. One of these steps is building a secular government system, separating religion from politics, and encouraging a relatively strong secular heritage. The government adopted measures against the Shi'ite ulama', such as deportation and exile after the failure of their revolution in 1920, restricted the *'ulama's* influence on the political stage, and encouraged the Shi'ites' peaceful traditional approach (Marr, 2016, 34-35). Such circumstances cultivated the Iraqi soil for secular ideologies such as Marxism and pan-Arabism to flourish in Iraq. Sherko Kirmanj remarks that starting in the mid-1940s of the 20th century, "political organizations and parties became a powerful force on Iraq's political stage, but the most notable aspect of political activism in Iraq since then is that political ideologies have been embedded along with ethnic and sectarian lines" (Kirmanj, 2010, 47). Kirmaj argues that the Shi'ite appealed to the parties that focused on "Iraq first" agenda (Kirmanj, 2010, 47). However, this argument does not reveal what Shi'ites were attracted to the "Iraq first" agenda because the Iraqi Shi'ites are not a homogeneous group. Similarly, Yitzhak Nakash suggests that communism was more appealing to Shi'ites because pan-Arabism failed to provide "a unifying framework in Iraq" and because communism stressed equality among various classes and ethnic groups. Nakash adds that Shi'ites voiced their opposition to including Iraq in the UAR because they feared they would be a minority in the Sunni Arab world (Nakash, 2003, 133-134). Nakash's arguments raised an important question, were the Iraqi Shi'ites organized in a particular political organization that spoke on their behalf and represented their interests? The Shi'ite did not have a sect-based political party that could represent their political interests. Even when the Islamist movement emerged in the late 1950s, it was an Islamic universalist rather than a particularist movement. The Iraqi Shi'ites were and still are divided among various political orientations and social groups.

The waxing in the Shi'ite religious activism came as a reaction to the surge of secular ideologies in Iraq, particularly among the Shi'ites. Liora Lukitz comments that the emergence of new threatening ideologies invigorated the Shi'ite *'ulama'* to confront such a threat. She argues that the Shi'ite *'ulama's* roles, like other religious authorities, exceeded their religious duty. She underlines two roles of the Shi'ite religious authority. The first is the guardianship role for the communal collective identity. The second is that these authorities shape "the parameters of collective consciousness which affected the way in which the communities faced the government, the state or modernity in a wider sense" (Lukitz, 1995, 98). In this respect, the rise of the Iraqi Communist Party and then the Socialist Arab *Ba'th* Party and the threats they imposed on the identity of Islam instigated the Islamic Shi'ite movement, represented by *Hizb al-Da'wa al-Islamia* (al-Da'wa Islamic Party) and *Jama'at al-'Ulama'* (The Society of Religious Scholars) in Najaf. The Islamic movements' essential purpose was to controvert the secular ideologies not to make political gains. The Shi'ite leading *mujtahids* had concerns that the imported faithless ideologies would jeopardize the Arab and Islamic identities of the Iraqi Muslims. Kirmanj adds that the new generation of Shi'ite clerics "grew frustrated by the passive approach of the traditional Shi'ite chief *Marja*' (such as Ayatollahs al-Ghatta and al-Hakim), and their reluctance to participate in Iraq's politics more actively" (Kirmanj, 2013, 108). The Shi'ite Islamic movement started as a societal reaction to the imminent threats to the Islamic identity before it developed to political activism.

The 'Arifs' brothers' era (1963-1968) marked a new phase in the Iraqi Shi'ite identity and the Shi'ites' relationship with the state. During this period, the sectarian exclusion of the Shi'ite communal identity became overt. Falah Abdul Jabar notices that the social and political awareness was perceived "neither in class terms, as in Marxism, nor a nationalistic/ ideological

idiom, in the manner of *Ba'thist* concept, but had to spontaneously construct or receive a third form of representation- a discourse embedded in communal identity" (Jabar, 2003, 134). Similarly, Hassan al-Alawy observes that under Abdul Salam 'Arif, the Shi'ite underwent outspoken political sectarian exclusion while practiced covertly (Al-Alawy, 1989, 353). During this period, the Shi'ites' Arab identity and national loyalty have been put into question, and the anti-Shi'ite narrative was propagated openly, such as labeling Iraqi Shi'ites as *Shu'ubiya* or anti-Arabism (Jabar, 2003, 134).

The Search for a National Identity

In December 1956, a group of officers in the Iraqi military forces formed a Supreme Committee of the Free Officers to topple the monarchy and free Iraq from colonization. The officers, led by Col Abdul Kareem Qassim and Col. Abdul Salam' Arif, overthrew the British-founded monarchy on 14 July 1958 in a bloody coup d'état and inaugurated the Republic of Iraq. Nationally, the officers' revolution was instigated by the social and economic injustice Iraqis had experienced under the monarchy. Regionally, the pan-Arabist and anti-imperialist trends that engulfed the Arab World in the 1940s and 1950s were overwhelmingly in favor of overthrowing the "pro-West regimes." In addition, the Arab World had experienced devastating episodes such as the Arabs' defeat in the 1948 war with Israel, the coups in Syria since 1949, the Egyptian revolution in 1952, and the tripartite invasion of Egypt in 1956. (Sluglett,1990, 47, Al-hamood, 2012, 153, Bishara, 670, 2018). The coup received unprecedented popular support that manifested the hope of the underprivileged majority of Iraqis to eliminate the corruption of the Western colonial powers and their internal proxies. The first promulgation of the free officers reads, "we moved to free our beloved homeland from the corrupt gang which was installed by the colonizer to rule the people and control their fortunes…this victory would not be complete

unless it is fortified against the conspiracies of the colonizer" (Al-Qarawee, 2013, 91). The 1958 coup d'état ushered in a new era of Iraqi nationalism. By the end of the elitist monarchy, lower-class individuals replaced the old elite class in the political sphere and occupied its hierarchy. The officers' goal was to eliminate Western colonizing power and their internal proxies. Therefore, nationalism was defined by pro-independence from the Western powers (Al-Qarawee, 2013, 91-2).

However, the coup of 1958 yielded two conflicting poles that dominated the Iraqi political life for a while: *Qawmiyah* (pan-Arabism) and *Wataniya* (Iraqi nationalism). The national identity became a disputed matter. The pan-Arabists (*Ba'thists* and *Nasserists*) visaged the Iraqi nationalism as a part of Arab World nationalism. They believed that the people inhabiting the Arabic-speaking states constitute a cultural unity, but the colonial policies separated them by artificial borders. Therefore, they need to remove those artificial borders and fused together, creating their organic united Arab nation-state. The pan-Arabist camp was adherent to join Egypt and Syria in the United Arab Republic. On the other side, there was the Iraqi nationalist pole, which consisted of a loosely-knit coalition. The major power of that coalition was the Iraqi Communist Party, which advocated for localized Iraqi identity. ICP focused on the social question and prone to link Iraqi social struggle to the global one, but it was less sensitive to the Iraqi cultural question. The second political element was the non-Leninists left represented by Kamel Chaderji's al-*Hizb al-Watani al-Dimuqrati* (The National Democratic Party). It was more sensitive to the heterogeneous Iraqi society. It sought a more inclusive and democratic system that accommodates the heterogeneous ethnic and religious groups. However, this trend was elitists and did not enjoy popularity as much as ICP. Also, the National Democratic Party's democratic ideals were at odds with the United Arab Republic's authoritarian

one-party political system. As a non-Arab minority, the Iraqi Kurds also opposed the UAR project. The last group was the Shi'ites, whose political representation was reflected by their political affiliation rather than their religious identity (Dawisha, 2009, 197 & Qarawee, 2012, 91).

The frequent argument suggests that the Iraqi Shi'ites, as a majority, opposed the pan-Arabism discourse and the unity plan because they were wary, they would become a minority in the Sunni-Arab world. Such an argument does not hold water when the historical context is closely examined. First, as a community, the Shi'ites had not developed an independent collective political identity yet when pan-Arabism surged. For the Shi'ite political elite, their political identity was defined by their political affiliations. Their political identity aligned with the ideals of their political movements they joined or represented. Thus, the Shi'ite politicians and political activists who associated with most political movements in Iraq—Communist, pan-Arabist, Democratic, and *Ba'thist* movements—did not speak in the name of their religious identity. They were a part of national political trends that held particular political views and did not adhere to their communal or religious identities. Their political activism was moving in the national sphere. The Iraqi Shi'ite is a heterogeneous group with diverse religious, social, and political orientations, and pigeonholing them as "Shi'ites" does not bring out their real identity.

The Shi'ite communal and religious identities were not a decisive factor in their political activism. The Shi'ite political elite behaved corresponding to their political affiliation. A relevant anecdote occurred after 'Arif's coup in 1963, and the *Ba'thists* reached power. al-Hakim once wanted to meet with the Shi'ite *Ba'thists*, calling upon them unofficially, "I want to see our sons," referring to Shi'ite members in RCC, al-Fukaiki, and al-Radhi. Both individuals rejected his request and conditioned him to dispatch an official request to the Socialist Arab *Ba'th* Party,

to decide whom to delegate to meet with him (Al-Alawy, 1990, 217). The Shi'ite political identity had not developed until the late 1960s. During the 1950s and the early 1960s, the Shi'ite Islamist activists and devotees were universalists Islamist devotees, and their political identity had not emerged yet. Even when that Shi'ite Islamism rose, its rejection of pan-Arabism was based on a theological justification rather than politicized sectarian opposition. Furthermore, the Shi'ite Islamists' opposition to pan-Arabism should not be viewed through the lenses of the Shi'ite's collective religious identity. Instead, it should be interpreted by analyzing the individual political affiliation of the Shi'ite political class. The Iraqi national identity has undergone different forming stages, all of which fell short to accommodate the Iraqi aspirations of unifying national identity. The origin of building an Iraqi national identity formally was set out by King Faysal I and his entourage of the former Ottoman army officers whom Faysal brought back to Iraq. Faysal relied on the myth of the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire during WWI to seed the *Qawmiyah* in Iraq. While the revolt gave Faysal and his allies a cultural capital, his officers' networks, who occupied the governmental posts, provided social capital. The early brand of the *Qawmiyah* Faysal and his allied forged in Iraq engender "powerful contradictions." The guardians of *Qawmiyah* were committed to first "expand the boundaries of the political field to include all Arabs" and second "to rid the area of colonial domination" (Dodge, 2018, 10). However, Faysal and his allies "had been allied to the most powerful colonial state, Britain, since 1916 and were dependent upon the British for their survival in Iraq" (Dodge, 2018, 10). Thus, the failed coup d'état of 1941 came to be the watershed in the evolution of *Qawmiyah* in Iraq. The British reinvasion to reinstate the monarchy and purge the political and coercive field of *Qawmiyah* empowered "more radical currents" of *Qawmiyah*. The radicalization led to fracturing it as a political force after the 1958 coup d'état. Its social capital was divided between military

figures and SABP (Dodge, 2018, 10). On the other side, the ICP and leftist movements had a large share of that social capital; particularly, ICP was the most influential and organized party in the political field.

Under Qassim, the nascent but popular republic worked under the rubric of an Iraq first agenda and dressed several social and economic inequalities. The regime's favored strategy was supported by groups of a fusion of leftists, liberal democrats, Iraqi nationalists, and Iraqi communists, which emerged back in the 1930s and 1940s. This strategy mobilized the public around the vision of a specifically Iraqi homeland rather than the wide Arab World. Those groups had a more pluralist conception, which was not limited to language, religion, or race. They defined themselves against the conservative pan-Arabists, who attempted to impose a political discourse "based on exclusionary language and race." They accused them of "promoting unity above social development." They also argued that "national cohesion would be delivered through political mobilization to gain social transformation, democracy, and equality." The communists, as a major group fighting for the Iraqist definition of the political field, argued that "all minorities had cultural rights and that the Kurdish nation, if they chose, had the right to self-determination" (Dodge, 2018, 11-12).

The Hawza and Social Protest

Under the cacophony of the political movements, the Iraqi Shi'ites experienced social and economic changes. These changes were fertile soil for national and socialist political trends, particularly Communism and *Ba'thism*. The large scale of Shi'ite migration from the rural areas in the south to Baghdad and other big cities created new social Shi'ite groups different from the urban established Shi'ites in those cities. The newcomers were distant from their urban coreligionists and, accordingly, less exposed to religious influence. Their Shi'ite religious

identity was more of a cultural character derived from their participation in processions but not prayers and fasting. Due to their extremely deprived living conditions, the new arrival peasants and poor urban Shi'ite were attracted to the egalitarian values and principles of Communism. The Shi'ite members' political attraction to Communism was mainly due to social reasons. In 1958, the Shi'ites' percentage in the leadership of the ICP almost matched their proportional weight in Iraqi society. Shi'ite members occupied seats in the ICP's Central Committee, and many others were advanced cadre in the party. The ICP's secretary-general, Salam Addil, was a Sayyid from Najaf (Jabar, 2003, 29).

The Shi'ite religious' hierarchy became politically active again when Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim (1989-1970) assumed *marja'ism*. Since the debacle of the 1920 revolt and deportation of their precursors, the Shi'ite hierarchy did not have a prominent role in the political affair. The social and political changes after the coup in 1958 energized the Shi'ite *mujtahids* to combat atheistic 'destructive' ideologies. Although al-Hakim is deemed to be among the traditional *mujtahids*, who do not incline to embroil directly in politics, he did not oppose forming Shi'ite political parties. Still, he did not have direct ties with any of them. He viewed the job of the *Marja'* as more inclusive that it cannot be limited to a particular party but to all, organized and unorganized, reforming movements (Al-Qizwini,2005, 270). His responses and reaction to critical issues had a proxy nature. Thus, he did not condemn the agrarian reform or the family law, but he instructed less prominent *mujtahids* to express their lambast (Jabar, 2003, 123-5).

Nevertheless, al-Hakim's name appeared among the sponsors of the Sunni Muslims Brotherhood branch in Iraq. According to the Iraqi Societies Law, at least ten individuals should apply for a party license. Al-Hakim's position may stem from a theological justification that

Sunni Islam, contrary to Shi'ite Islam, is incorporated in the state bureaucracy and does not have restrictions on forming religiopolitical parties. Accordingly, the Sunni Islamic establishment can be attacked and condemned as a part of the "corrupt" state. Moreover, Sunni Islam does not have the 'emulation' principle that subsumes the lay Shi'ite population under the *mujtahid's* authority, which may restrict indulging in politics. Therefore, al-Hakim distanced himself from any Shi'ite political activism that might impact the aura of the grand *Marja's* higher authority (Jabar, 2003, 123-5).

In addition, the revolution of 1958 opened the door to Shi'ite Islamism, cohered, and entered the political field once again. During the British occupation in WWI, the Shi'ite 'ulama's main concern was to drive the foreign forces out of Iraq and found the Iraqi state. Their antagonist political activism and militancy towards the British exposed them to the British coercive measures. The *'ulama's* activism this time was not to combat foreign forces but to counter foreign atheistic ideologies. The Shi'ite *'ulama'* believed that Islam is to be imperiled by the secular ideologies. The spread of Communism instigated the *'ulama'* to combat its threat. The secular ideologies had also undermined the 'ulama's historical position as a powerful religious authority in the public and political life. The steady decline in the *mujtahids'* social and cultural capital drove the *mujtahids* to abandon "quietism" and emerge as a new political player on the Iraqi landscape.

Nevertheless, the Shi'ites, both the masses and the political elite, have not yet developed a political identity. The initial Shi'ite hierarchy activism was more of a religious reaction to the dangers of atheism embodied in Qassim's policies and the rise of Communism. Its goal was to deploy the symbolic capital in the name of "universalizing Islam." The Shi'ite political identity was not crystalized until the *Ba'thists* reached power in 1968 when they implemented

exclusionary and violent policies (Dodge, 2018, 14). It is worth mentioning that the term "quietism"—used interchangeably with apolitical—inaccurately interpreted as the passive behavior of the *mujtahid* towards political affairs. On the contrary, quietism does mean that the Shi'ite' *ulama'* do not engage in political affairs. It implies the '*ulama's* denial of the existing regime's legitimacy, but they do not associate themselves with political activism (Browers,2012, 323-4).

Though the revolution was well received, the clerical class quickly turned against Qassim's government. The schism was widened when Communists, Qassim's main political supporter, challenge the *mujtahids'* authority in their own citadel. The *mujtahids'* endorsement turned to apposition and condemnation. In less than two years of the revolution, several *mujtahids* issued fatwas forbidding Muslims to join ICP. As leading *mujtahid*, al-Hakim was the spearhead of the Shi'ite religious opposition to the communists. He issued a fatwa in 1960, which depleted ICP political and social influence. Qassim's political opponents, Pan-Arabists and *Ba'thists*, utilized the fatwa to foment the public against Qassim and ICP (Al-Qizwini,2005, 270, al-Alawy, 1990, 210). The fatwa reads:

> Membership of the Communist Party is unlawful. Such membership is in the nature of disbelief and infidelity, or it is supportive of disbelief and infidelity. May God preserve you and all Muslims from it. God may strengthen your faith and Islam. May God's peace, compassion and blessing be upon you (Luizard, 2002, 93).

Al-Hakim's fatwa created a schism among the Qassim's Shi'ites supporters. Some of them submitted to the *'ulama' religious leverage* while others adhered to Qassim and his government. Further, the efficacy of the fatwa forced Qassim to abandon his alliance with the communists (Anderson & Stansfield, 2004, 124, al-Alawy,1990, 211).

Qassim's Social Reforms and the *Mujtahids'* Opposition

Qassim's communist-dominated government implemented several economic and social reforms that promoted Qassim's popularity among the disfranchised masses, mainly Shi'ites. Just a few days after the coup of July 14, the government abolished the tribal jurisdiction, submitting the tribal disputes and settlement to a unified jurisdiction. The new reform resulted in destroying the legal basis for feudalism. In August, The Cabinet cemented this reform with a symbolic transmutation in the name of provinces named after tribal confederation provinces. Thus, Munafiq province became Nasiriya, and Dulaim province became Ramadi. These tribal confederations had enjoyed influence in social and economic life (Dann, 1968, 56-7). Qassim conducted massive welfare programs that benefited the underprivileged Iraqis. In terms of housing, Qassim's housing project granted him undisputed popularity among the Shi'ite peasants who escaped the harsh conditions in southern Iraq and lived in mud shacks in eastern and southeastern Baghdad. Qassim exhibited his "Iraq first" agenda when he addressed reserve officers, saying: "if you go and tour any part of the country you will see how widespread are misery, poverty and want in the life of the propel. You will see in the shacks or near the marshes moving skeletons" (Dann, 1968, 63).

Within two years of Qassim's government, the slums turned into a whole new city and named it after the revolution—*Madinat al-Thawra* (The Revolution City). On July 14, 1960, the second anniversary of the revolution, Qassim declared that 25,000 houses had been built and distributed to the poor, and 5,000 houses would be built immediately. Qassim's government had built 300 hospitals and medical facilities during the first three years of its age. The construction boom also abated unemployment rates. Education was also a priority to Qassim's government. *Qassim era witnessed a dramatic increase in spending on education.* It was the first

time the downtrodden peasants, illiterate for generations, were able to attend schools. The number of students in primary and secondary education in 1963 increased three folds since the end of monarchy in 1958. Qassim's petroleum policy, law 80 of 1961, allowed the government to repossess 99.5% of the unexploited concession area by challenging the Iraqi Petroleum Company controlled by foreign capital. Iraq increased its royalty share and expanded its oil production significantly (Dawisha, 2009, 181-2 & Al-Qarawee, 2013, 95). Consequentially, Qassim's reforms made a social and economic transformation, which guaranteed him unchallenged popularity among the underclass Iraqis.

What galvanized the *mujtahids* to oppose the new regime? According to Sluglett, the decline in the financial and human capital of the Shi'ite religious establishment aroused the Shi'ite religious hostility towards the regime. The ample financial contribution to the Shi'ite *marja'ism* drastically decreased in the 1950s. The spread of secular ideologies and education among the urban Shi'ites also expanded their carrier opportunities in government services, making the religious profession less attractive (Sluglett, 1990, 191-93). In 1918, the number of Shi'ite seminarians attending the theological schools (madrasas) in Najaf was about 6,000, but that number declined to 1,954 students in 1957, only 326 of whom were Iraqis. Financially, the Shi'ite 'ulama' depend mainly on the old pieties, as they receive little from the government. The charities that the distinguished Shi'ite 'ulama' used to receive from their co-religionists also drastically decreased (Batatu, 1982, 6). In 1953, the *Marja*' Ayatollah Kashif al-Ghita' (1877-1957) complained:

> In bygone days the people and the chiefs of tribes were virtuous and open-handed. They showed deference to the 'ulama' and came to their aid. The religious schools lived on their gifts and charities…. But since the change in conditions, the shrinking of benevolence, and the corruption of the wealthy…the religious schools have fallen on bad days…. The Ministry of Education sends us every year

> only a small grant-in-aid…and the contribution of the Awqaf Department is even less substantial (Batatu, 1982, 7).

Adopting a similar viewpoint, Falah Abdul-Jabar argues that the clerical class and their lay collaborators opposed the new regime due to "the demise of sheikhly landlordism, the family law, and the mass spread of Marxist." When the revolution succeeded, the new regime rescinded the parliament and the upper house (Majlis al-A 'yan), a stronghold of the tribal sheiks' semi-feudal class, many of them were Shi'ites. Moreover, the new government's agrarian reform abolished the Sheiks' power and wealth in their countryside (Jabar, 2003, 76). Chapter I of the new law restricted the possession of agricultural holdings to approximately 247 acres if the land is irrigated by free flow for by artificial means and to approximately 494 acres if irrigated by rainfall. The new beneficiaries were the practicing farmers who received no less than 7.5 – 15 acres and no less than 15-30 acres, depending on the irrigation method. It also gave about 55-60 percent of the total crop to the peasants (Dann, 1968, 57-8). In return, these measures reduced the landlords' total income tremendously, which impacted a source of handsome *khums* (religious tax) the *mujtahids* used to receive from the sheiks. The governmental measures of confiscating lands caused concern for the clerics' higher stratum over the private property among the propertied class (Jabar, 2003, 75).

The Agrarian Reform Law was not as effective as it was thought to be. Al-Alawi undermines its effectiveness on the financial resources of the *mujtahids*. He accused Qassim's enthusiastic advocates, fomented by the communists, to disseminate the notion that the *mujtahids* opposed Qassim because of the new agrarian reform, which reduced their revenues. They claimed that the *mujtahids*' enmity to Qassim's government was due to a

political and class reason rather than religious. He argues that the actual reason was the enactment of the new Personal Status Law violated Islamic law (Al-alawi, 1990, 211).

Tripp shares similar doubts about the effectiveness of the agrarian reform. Fewer than 3,000 people owned over half of Iraq's cultivable lands. The new law aimed to sequestrate those large landowners' estates and distribute them to smaller and middling landowners. Tripp argues that some factors made the new reform less effective. First, the law set relatively "high limits on individuals' landholdings." Second, it gave a choice to "the landlords concerning the land they could retain." Third, the government paid compensations, which "lessened the measure's radical impact." Forth, the government did not have "appropriate state machinery" to process the new law. Finally, the government faced a "difficulty of establishing rightful ownership in many parts of Iraq." By 1963, the last year in Qassim's government, the government only sequestrated a quarter of the great estates and redistributed less than half of these lands. Moreover, the prime beneficiaries of the redistributed lands were the existing small and middling landowners who were friends or clients to the ruling elites. The clerical class indeed protested against the land reform. However, their protest was not because it impacted its financial resources, but because it violated Islamic law's private property. The clerical class's protest might be a reason behind the government's payment of compensations to landlords as well (Tripp, 2007, 150).

Another reason that stirred the *mujtahids* was the Personal Status Law. Enacting the Personal Status Law was the product of a cultural and social change in Iraqi society. After the monarchy's fall, the clandestine organizations and groups surfaced to practice their activism in the political and social arenas. During this time, the associations for professionals, students, farmers, women started working under the provisional of a democratic regime. ICP domination of those associations was instrumental in enacting the Personal Status Law. In collaboration with

other political and social bodies, the Association of Iraqi Women worked arduously to change the old law inherited from the Ottoman era (Al-Mada Newspaper, Nov.2017). The new reform included several disputed articles such as the equal inheritance rights for women, the imposition of monogamy, and the regulation of other aspects of family life. These reforms set off the alarm bell to the clerical class because they violated the stated Quranic laws.

The Crusade Against Atheism

Under Qassim, the ICP established a substantial social, cultural, and political capital. The challenge Qassim faced from the pan-Arabists and his vulnerability due to his lack of social capital compelled him to ally with the ICP. ICP not only provided Qassim with a social and cultural weight, but it also delivered a coercive capital backed by its militias to balance the pan-Arabists the Iraqi armed forces. The most substantial social capital that ICP enjoyed between 1958-1963 enabled ICP to dominate the political field. In 1958, ICP had 3,000 disciplined party members and 3,000 supporters (Dodge, 2018, p. 13). It won vast support among the poor for its advocacy to fight the evil of social injustice and to work on economic reforms. However, it should be known that to be a communist or communists' sympathizer did not necessarily mean to embrace the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism (Tripp, 2007, 149). The common concept of Communism in Iraq was but an economic understanding that urges to improve the poor's living conditions, dispose of the feudal system, free the fellaheen from its malice, and liberate the economy from the British colonial control (Mansour, ,2011, 178-9).

The ICP was instrumental among the Shi'ite middle, lower-middle, and underclass Shi'ites, who lived in the huts of Baghdad outskirts. Those new immigrants hailed from the overwhelmingly Shi'ite rural districts of Basra, Karbala', Diwaniyya, Hilla, Amara, Nasiriyah, and Kut. These districts accounted for more than 49% of the total rural population of Iraq in

1947. However, they only had 39% of the total religious institutions. The average of religious institutions in some of those rural districts was one institution for every 37000 persons. In others, such as in Kut and Amara, there was no single religious institution. A Shi'ite religious institution can either be a mosque, a religious school, or *hussainyya* (derived from the name of Imam Hussain and where Shi'ite lament the martyrdom of Imam Husain or pray). The religion in those districts was "feebly organized," and Shi'ism, as religious identity, among the rural inhabitants had still not crystallized yet (Batatu, 1982, 4). Later on, these newcomers gave momentum to the 1958 coup, and their support was critical to the coup victory.

Both Qassim and ICP also shared a similar principle of a pluralist vision about the Iraqi national identity and worked together to impose Iraqist definitions on the political field. Qassim utilized Iraqi cultural symbolism to counter his pan-Arabist rivals. The Ministry of Guidance was tasked to supervise cultural and social production to emphasize Iraqist nationalism (Dodge, 2018, 12). Qassim also needed to include intelligentsia in the state to legitimize his regime. The regime included many intellectuals—leftists and communists—in the state apparatus increased their influence on the cultural sphere (Davis, 2005, 110-11). The cultural shift and the leftists' and communists' influence on the Shi'ite religious, social capital instigated the Shi'ite clerical class. The rivalry was not between the Shi'ite hierarchy and Qassim's character but with his strongest ally, ICP. Qassim tried to avoid any collision with the religious establishment. Indeed, he had a decidedly secular outlook, but he was not without religious sentiments. He realized the significance of the religious establishment and its overwhelming social capital (Dann, 1968, 65). Qassim also understood that there were contested political powers standing behind al-Hakim, such as *Ba'thists* and pan-Arabists (Al-Qizwini,2005, 271).

ICP built cultural and social capital among low- and middle-class Iraqis, particularly Shi'ites and Kurds. Communist ideologies reached the holiest Shi'ite cities and threatened the '*ulama's* religious authority. In fact, the domination of Communism on the societal power terrified the conservative Sunni and Shi'ite religious clerics because Marxism, in their eyes, was a threat to Islam and loosen their ties to their religion, especially among the urban Shi'ite laypeople. The *Marja'* Ayatollah Kashif al-Ghita' expressed his bitterness to the British and US ambassadors about the penetration of Communism to the Shi'ite holiest city, asking their collaboration to fight it. Al-Ghita' exclaimed, "how [communism] black propaganda penetrated [to the city even it was] without logic or proof and unassisted by funds or patronage or dignity of rank, so it has wide nests in the fortified city of Najaf" comprising "spirited and ardent young men" (Muhawarah, 1954, 5). The peril that the al-Ghita' and the clerical class sensed became evident in the Shi'ite pilgrims' sharp declination to the holy cities.

The side effects of Communism appeared evidently in the low number ever of pilgrims in 1959 when only a few hundred visited Karbala and Najaf for the procession. Shi'ite Muslims commemorate the 40th day (Marad al-Ras or Arbainiah a local jargon) after the martyrdom of Hussain bin Ali (625-670), the third Shi'ite infallible Imam and the grandson of Prophet Mohamad. The ceremonial procession occurs on the 20th of *Sufar* (the second month of the lunar year in the Islamic calendar), where Shi'ites flow to Karbala, where the mausoleum of Imam Hussain is. That stood in stark comparison to the millions of urban Shi'ite and peasants who joined the trade unions, peasants' associations, youth and students' organizations, and women's federations. Communism also extended to the rank-and-file and non-commission officers in the Iraqi army, mostly Shi'ites (Jabar, 2003, 75-6). The communists and their activism even engulfed Najaf and Karbala, the strongholds of Shi'ism. Al-Hakim himself was once blasted and

ridiculed by the communists. The surge in the ICP social supporters and distancing of the public from the faith was astonishing to the clerics.

The *mujtahids* did not change their position in defending the faith when it came under threat. Their relationship with God determines their reactions to pressing matters. Thus, al-Hakim's stance towards the revolution altered based on the new government's stance to Islam. His response echoed his predecessors' reaction when they announced their support to the Ottoman against the British occupation. However, the Ottoman sectarian policies against the Shi'ites were strident. The *mujtahids* take a response towards a particular matter based on their relationship with God. Therefore, Qassim's reforming policies that benefitted the Shi'ite masses greatly did not immune his government from the *'ulama'* criticism because he supported the ICP (Al-Alawi, 1990, 218). However, the leading *mujtahids* adopted an apolitical approach. In other words, they did not involve directly in political activism, such as founding or sponsoring a Shi'ite political party, but they intensified their social and charitable works.

Qassim faced another fierce political competitor. Neither pan-Arabists nor the *Ba'thists* welcomed Qassim's "Iraq First" policy. After the revolutionary movements that erupted throughout the Arab World in the 1950s and overthrew the pro-West regimes, the widespread sentiments were directed towards the union of the Arab states under the umbrella of Arab nationalism. In Iraq, defining national identity erupted disputes among the communists, *Ba'thists*, and pan-Arabists. Pan-Arabists and *Ba'thists* pushed toward Arab unity, while the communists were pro-Iraqi particularism. Thus, Qassim's abandoning to join the UAR expanded the opposition to his policy and created a rift among officers' corpse. The pan-Arabist officers, led by Abdul Salam' Arif, an admirer of Nassir, were advocates of conservative pan-Arabism. On the other side, Qassim faced the Islamic movements because Communism surged under his

regime. The commonality of their goals united the secular and Islamic opposition to collaborate against Qassim and toppled his government (Alawi,1990, 212-13). The concept of the enemy of my enemy is my friend functioned very well in the relationship between Shi'ite religious authority, *Ba'thists*, and pan-Arabists from one side and Qassim and ICP from another. The Shi'ite clerics found in secularists pan-Arabists and *Ba'thists* an ally against the communists. The *Ba'thist* newspaper*, al-Hurriah*, was publishing extracts from clerics' writing side by side extracts of Michael Aflaq, the co-founder of the *Ba'th* Party. (Al-Alawi, 1990, 218).

The Emergence of al-Da'wa Islamic Party and Defending the Faith

The Shi'ite *'ulama*' and the conservative social groups in Najaf responded to the new challenges in apolitical and political ways. The first response was a pedagogical and philanthropic response by the senior traditional *'ulama*.' Al-Hakim encouraged, but did not sponsor, social and charitable works. During his *marja'ism*, there was a focus on expanding and renewing religious schools and increasing the publications that depleting atheism and propagating conservative Islam. To unify their efforts, the senior *'ulama*, backed by al-Hakim, formed *Jama'at al-'Ulama'* in Najaf in 1958. Ayatollah Sheikh Murtadha al-Yasin, the maternal uncle of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, who later plays a significant role in the political Shi'ism, became the first head of the Society (Jabar, 2003, 76).

The Society conducted religious and social initiatives "to establish bridges between Islam and various segments of the ummah, especially the educated strata and students." In al-Hakim's words, "there are a great number of points in common usage among students and the general public which have no foundation in religion." Thus, fulfilling the state functions, the Society established a number of educational, health, and welfare institutions. It also issued its periodical magazine *Al-Adhwaa al-Islamiya* (Islamic Lights) to promote Islamic thoughts. Junior *'ulama*'

sat on the editorial board, and al-Sadr was the *de facto* editorial manager. He wrote a column under the title *Risalatuna* (Our Message) as the median to argue against Marxism and promote Islamic interpretations.

The second response was of an ideological and political character that "opted for the creation of a universal Islamic ideology to supersede Marxism and the formation of a modern organization to spread it." As a corrective measure to the developing patterns in 1957, the new response was initiated by a group of Najafi junior reforming *'ulama'* and a group of lay Shi'ite activists from mercantile families (Jabar, 2003, 76). The young 'alim, Mohammad Baqir al-Sadr (1931-1980), was the movement's ideologue and primary founder. The founders believed that the Islamic Ummah's failure was due to the absence of Islam's role and that Islam is the solution. Therefore, they named their new party *Hizb al-Da'wa al-Islamiya* (Islamic Call Party). Al-Sadr explained that al-Da'wa's principal mission was "calling people to Islam" and "instructing the largest number of people possible in Islam." He believed that the 'practice of Islam had deviated in the past.' Therefore, it is necessary "to separate religion from the customs and apprise the people of the true nature of religion and its role in life." The *mujtahids* are prepared to correct this "deviation in traditional interpretation and practice" (Wiley, 1992, 31-32).

The history of the clandestine Shi'ite religious activism goes back to the 1940s. The development of Islamic political organizations in Iraq reflected the Islamic Sunni political development that had originated in Egypt and Palestine. In 1945, the Muslim Brotherhood's first cells were organized in Baghdad and Mosul until it publicly appeared in 1954. In 1952, Palestinian and Jordanian teachers in Baghdad founded *Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami*, which was initially founded in Jerusalem in the same year (Al-Ruhaimi, 2002, 149-50). The developments in political Sunnism most likely contributed to the emergence of the political Shi'ism. Therefore,

the Shi'ite community in Najaf, Karbala, and Kadhimiya witnessed the emergence of different organizations such as the *Munadhamet al-Shabab al-Muslim* (The Muslim Youth Organization), *Munadhamet al-Muslimeen al-'Aqa'ideen,* (The Ideological Muslim Organization), and *al-Hizb al-Ja'afari*. Those organizations' common goal was to edify towards an Islamic state and encounter the spread of the secular ideologies, namely Marxism. Nevertheless, all of them fizzled out shortly.

Al-Da'wa's emergence was not a religious revival or an ascendant of Shi'ism, but it was a social and educational necessity to encounter skepticism and even disdain of old faith. Traditional Shi'ism was losing its ground to the growing secular movements, particularly among the disfranchised Shi'ites. The *'ulama'* sensed that the old faith did not match the time, and skepticism and disdain for the old rites were rife among the educated Shi'ites (Batatu, 1982, 6). Al-Da'wa emissaries claim that "the group was an educational, intellectual movement rather than a political organization," but the *Ba'thist* dragged the group to politics (Jabar, 2003, 81). According to al-Da'wa newspaper, *al-Jihad*, the Islamic movement came as a reaction to three reasons: the spread of atheism, imperialism remnants, and distancing from Islam. Therefore, the movement's mission was to disseminate Islamic awareness and culture and nurture a generation of Islamic emissaries (Alawi, 1990, 2016). To propagate its ideas, al-Da'wa activists and devotees used mosques in the holy cities and the ceremonial processions of martyrdom Hussain. (Batatu, 1986, 193-4).

The young *'ulama'* believed that individuals' ethical transformation should precede any ethical transformation of society. Al-Sadr concentrated on the individual identity and attracted the modern, educated young Shi'ite laymen in the university. He believed that with modern education, they could better understand Islamic laws and intellectual identity. Therefore, he

accepted non-seminarians in his classes (Wiley, 1992, 31-32, Jabar, 2003, 76). The significance of al-Da'wa Party lies in the fact of being the first Shi'ite political party of a religious character. However, al-Da'wa had general Islamic political views and did not shift to the Shi'ite communal identity until the *Ba'thists* reached power in 1968, when they applied coercive measures against Islamic movements.

There was an urgent need to move and sustain the brightness of the faith through disseminating the Islamic views. At the time al-Hakim issued his fatwa against ICP, al-Sadr published two of his major works: *Falsafatuna* (Our Philosophy) in 1959 and *Iqtisaduna* (Our Economic System) in 1961. In *Falsafatuna,* al-Sadr's purposed to gives a better understanding and a closer look at Marxism and its terminology. He provides a detailed critique of the materialist philosophy from an Islamic point of view. He argued that Islam is a provider of a superior philosophy to the currents of thoughts, particularly dialectical materialism (Marxism). *Iqtisaduna* consists of three parts. In the first and second parts, al-Sadr presents a critique of the classical socialist and capitalist theories. In the third part, he outlined the Islamic foundations of economic order. Almost a third of *Iqtisaduna* contained a rational rather than a religious counter-argument to refute Marxism dialectical materialism (Sluglett, 1990, 196 & Mallat, 1994, 11). The two works, which were well received by the Shi'ite audience, further depleted the morals of the Communists (Anderson & Stansfield, 2004, 124).

The Maja'ism Under 'Arif's Pan-Arabism

The coup of 1963 set a new equation for the relationship between the state and the Shi'ite religious hierarchy. Qassim's rejection of the pan-Arabists' plan of joining the UAR has a tragic end. On 8 February 1963, Abdulsalam Arif led the pan-Arabist officers and *Ba'thists* in a successful coup and ended Qassim's regime. The SABP became the legitimate representative of

the pan-Arabist trend. The SABP's civil wing dominated by seculars Shi'ite comrades, who played an important role in the Party. On 18 November 1963, 'Arif led another successful coup against the Party civil wing (Luizard, 2002, 93). After the coup, the Shi'ite *Ba'thists* were exposed to selective and harsher purging measures than their Sunni counterparts. Accordingly, the Shi'ite *Ba'thists'* percentage in the SABP fell from 53.8 percent between 1952-1963 to 5.7 percent between 1963-1970. Dismissing a discriminating sectarian interpretation, Batatu argues that the Sunni *Ba'thists* received a favorite treatment by the secret police because the Iraqi security officers hail from the same regions or tribes as those *Ba'thists* (Batatu, 2011, 397). For these measures, no Shi'ite ascended to the SABPs' higher echelons until 1977 when four Shi'ite members were appointed in the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). The rift between the military and civilian *Ba'thists* resulted in losing the modern middle-class Shi'ites to a political space because almost all the *Ba'thists* officers were Sunni, while most of the civilian *Ba'thists* were Shi'ite (Jabar, 2003, 129).

Arif's unionist orientation featured a subtle state strike on the Shi'ites' economic power. The political domination of the pan-Arabist and *Ba'thist* officers and their advocacy for UAR enacted particular policies to meet the UAR project's needs. These changes worked as a catalyst for the surge of communal identities in Iraqi society. In 1964, the government enacted the so-called "socialist" decrees that granted the state the leading role in development and progress at the private sector's expense. The scheme was to pave the way for merging Iraq with the socialist Egypt of Jamal Abdul Nassir to avoid possible social resistance from the propertied class (Jabar, 2003, 132-33). Since Iraqi Shi'ites had limited access to governmental posts during the monarchy, they were encouraged to invest in the private sector, contrary to their Sunni fellow citizens, who were more privileged to access and excel in the public service and military). As a

result, the Iraqi mercantile class grew predominantly Shi'ite, especially after the exodus of the Jews to Israel in the early 1950s (Nakkash, 2002, 24, al-Alawy,1990, 228). Thus, Shi'ite people in business became the victim of the new socialist economic policies, which they conceived in social and sectarian terms:

> An assault by abhorred socialism against sacred, efficient private property and/ or a Sunni onslaught against Shi'ite strongholds, that is a deliberate act to reduce the power of Shi'ite merchant and other upper classes, a further step towards an almost gross exclusion of Shi'ite from political and economic life and total Sunni hegemony. (Jabar, 2003,132-33)

The measures were also accompanied by other implicit and explicit political discriminating sectarian deeds. The pan-Arabism that dominated the Iraqi political sphere under 'Arif created anti-Shi'ite rhetoric. The catalyst behind this rhetoric was the ethnic-nationalist idea embedded in the ethnic purity of Arabs. Dr. Abdul Aziz al-Duri, the president of Baghdad University, authored a book titled *al-Juthur al-tarikhiya lil shu'ubiya* (The Historical Roots of Shu'ubiya), in which he linked the Iraqi Shi'ites to *Shu'ubiay*. The prominent Syrian *Ba'thist*, Jalal al-Sayyid, also wrote the book *Tarkh Hizb al-Ba'th* (The History of *Ba'th* Party), in which he accused the Iraqi Shi'ites of having dual loyalty, divided between Shi'ite Iran and Arabic Iraq.

The accusation of Iraqi Shi'ites with *Shu'ubia* was embedded in the writing of other pan-Arabist pedagogues and politicians. Those publications disseminated the notion that Iraqi Shi'ites are against pan-Arab unity because they fear becoming a minority in the great Sunni-dominated Arab World. Ironically, pan-Arabism became a dividing instead of a unifying trend in Iraq. Though pan-Arabism calls for Arab unity in one great society, it created a rift among the Iraqi Arabs. Pan-Arabism transcended the differences between Muslims and Christians in Syria, and Syrian Christians played a pivotal role in developing pan-Arab ideology. However, the case

was reversed in Iraq. Under ‘Arif, the version of pan-Arabism turned out an instrument to discriminate against the Arab Shi’ites. The pan-Arabists in Iraq “simply put their sectarian bias in a nationalist mould to achieve political ends or were, á la Abdul Salam ‘Arif capable of simultaneously embracing pan-Arabist themes and a clannish/ communal spirit” (Jabar, 2003, 132-34).

The political sectarian discrimination among the Sunni political elites was also evident. In a relevant incident, Hanni al-Fukaiki, a Shi’ite member of the RCC, once related that ‘Arif instructed the cabinet to nominate only Sunni officers to the military scholarship to Egypt because President of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, ‘Arif alleged, refused to receive Shi’ite officers (Jabar, 2003, 132). On a different occasion, Al-Fukaiki also narrated that ‘Arif used to call him and his coreligionist *Ba’thist*, Mohsin al-Shaykh Radhi, *Rawafidh*, a discriminative sectarian term to label Shi’ites (Al-Alawy, 1990, 225). As a social parameter, the clerical class sensed the increasing political sectarian discrimination against the Shi’ites. In March 1964, al-Iman, a pro-*Hawza* magazine, discussed the state indoctrination and sectarianism in its opening article. The writer hoped that President Arif would address the issue. Al-Hakim also addressed the same issue with the Prime Minister, Taher Yahia, when the latter visited him in Kufa on March 19, 1964, saying: “The government must treat all its people equally, without ethnic or communal discrimination.” Al-Hakim expressed his regret to see “the void between the people and the government.” He highlighted the unequal treatment of the people based on their regions. He warrened that the previous disturbances and coups had occurred because the governments had not secured or preserved the people’s rights (Al-Alawy, 1990, 253-4). However, despite the sectarian discrimination, the Shi’ites, whether men of religion or secular, had not yet developed

their communal and political identities. On the contrary, the Shi'ite political protest and demands during the 1960s reflected national rather communal identity.

The political atmosphere and the rise of sectarian rhetoric in the political scene aggravated the sense of injury among the Shi'ite religious and secular numbers. In 1965, the aging Shi'ite figure, Muhammad Ridha al-Shibibi, submitted a memorandum that presents a wider national political horizon. Al-Shibibi was a literary celebrity and a political figure. He played a significant role in the independence movement in the 1920s and became the Minister of Education in the 1940s. Al-Shibibi's memorandum was a reflection of "a prevalent mood at the time among wide sections of the Shi'ites." It touched different economic, social, and political problems that were of concern to all Iraqis. Among the problems he addressed are:

1. Drafting electoral laws and put them before of people to endorse them.
2. There should be a referendum about the Arab unity and federal union.
3. Addressing the issue sectarianism not only by-laws or legislation but by implementations.
4. Iraqi Kurds should be entitled to enjoy their legitimate rights […]in a unified Iraq.

The memorandum also addressed economic issues such as the economic system, oil laws, and trade unions. The memorandum was a polity and civil grievance representing a wide spectrum of the Shi'ites, and it was mindful of different social classes. The new demands fell on a deaf ear, facing the similar fate of the previous ones (Jabar, 2003, 134-37). After the death of 'Arif in a helicopter crash in 1966, his brother Abdul Rahman 'Arif took the helm of the government before the *Ba'thists* toppled him in a bloodless coup in 1968. The *Ba'thist* Iraq inaugurated an unprecedented bloody era for the Shi'ites' political future.

Conclusion

The Iraqi Shi'ites did not have a central political leadership that could work towards their political prosperity. Their most influential leadership is more of a religious character, which was usually reluctant to self-involve of political affairs. As a traditional religious authority, the Shi'ite hierarchy views politics as laymen's work that did not suit clerics. Moreover, in many cases, the Shi'ite secular elites were not bound by their Shi'ite identity or religious authority. Therefore, they identify themselves with their political trends or ideologies. They prioritized their secular political orientation over their religious identity, and they sought reform through national channels, not communal ones.

The Shi'ite hierarchy's invigoration' was because of the surge in the secular ideologies and their dissemination among the Iraqis at Islam's price. Indeed, the Shi'ites have their own communal entity, but they did not demonstrate a unified political identity. Once again, Shi'ite Islamism, represented by the al-Da'wa, came to defend Islam but not form a collective Shi'ite political identity. The Shi'ite *'ulama*'s struggle with Qassim's government was because it violated Islamic laws and empowered ICP. The *'ulama*'s ultimate goal was to sustain the state's Islamic identity and eliminate the atheistic ideologies. The politically sectarian regime of the 'Arifs' brothers and the *Ba'thist* was a key factor in the rise of the Shi'ites' communal political identity in Iraq in the coming years.

Chapter Three

The Shi'ites Under *Ba'th* Party and the Formation of Their Political Identity

Introduction

This chapter covers the development of the political Shi'ism in Iraq during the Arab Social *Ba'th* Party (ASBP) rule (1968-2003). The Iraqi Shi'ite political activism went through three phases: the rise of ASBP to power under President Ahmed Hassan al-Baker (1968-1979), the rise of Saddam Hussain to power, and the breakout of the Iraq-Iran war (1980-1988), and, lasty, the invasion of Kuwait, the Gulf War, and the international sanctions (1991-2003). This period marks the direct collision—internal and external—between the Shi'ite hierarchy and the Shi'ite Islamic movements on one side and the ASBP on another. It also underpins the promotion of multiple dimensions of the Iraqi national identity.

The waning of ICP did not mean that secularization would stop creeping towards the Shi'ite hierarchy and community. It signaled a new phase of struggle during the ASBP's era (1968-2003) when the *Ba'thist* military comrades retook power and implemented secularization policies. The Shi'ites hierarchy felt that the *Ba'th's* secularization policy "was mainly directed at the autonomous Shi'ite religious establishment" and "*Ba'th* state reproduced the ethnic, religious and communal disequilibrium in terms of political representation and participation and the uneven distribution and allocation of economic benefits" (Jabar, 2003, 201). Although Shi'ite *mujtahids* fought to form a pluralist Iraqi national identity—with consideration to Iraqi particularism—during the monarchy, they were striving to protect their Shi'ism from secular ideologies during the republic era. The ASBP's threat to the Shi'ite identity agitated the

sentiments of Shi'ite communal identity. Phebe Marr argues that the Shi'ite identity flourished in the Shi'ite community in southern Iraq was motivated by the Islamic al-Da'wa Party (IDP) activism. The protest was mainly driven by the ASBP's control of education and *Ba'thification*[1] of the state and society.

In the eight-year war between Iraq and Iran, the Shi'ites fought against their Iranian coreligionists. Marr argues that this period signified "an advanced phase in their national identity." However, she claims that the Shi'ites' uprising in 1991 against the *Ba'th* regime indicated their lack of a rooted national identity. She argues that Iraqi Shi'ite fought their Iranian coreligionists because: 1) they wanted to protect the Arab ethnic identity, 2) they were concerned about the regime brutality in case of deserting conscription, and 3) since the war was not justified and that most operations took place in the south, the Shi'ites were compelled to fight back (Marr, 2016, 43-44). Sherko Kirmanj mentions that Iraq had 50,000 Prisoners of War, whose majority were Shi'ites, only after two years of the war. He argues that the high rates of POWs among the Shi'ite rank and file whose many of them joined the Badr Brigade, the military wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), indicates that "the Shiites had a minimal commitment to the war—not because they were uncommitted to defend Iraq but rather because they were against the regime" (Kirmanj, 2013, 145). He estimates Badr Brigades' personals between 10,000 -15,000 fighters, whose majority were Shi'ite POWs. Marr and Kirmanj have conflicting arguments about the Iraqi Shi'ites' stance from the war with Iranian coreligionists. According to Marr, the Shi'ites fought because they were afraid of the *Ba'th*

[1] *Ba'thification* or *tab'ith* is the policy that SAPB adopted to dominate the domestic scene by making "the party dominant in all sectors of society." The principle was to spread out and "indoctrinate the largest possible proportion of the population and turning everyone *Ba'thi* and giving everyone a *Ba'thi* coloration." *Ba'thi* was supposed to be a "synonym" to "Iraqi" (Bengio, 1998, 50).

regime's punishment measures, but Kirmanj argues that the Shi'ites were not committed to the war because of their opposition to the *Ba'th* regime.

First of all, the numbers of the defectors or POWs constitute a small percentage of the Shi'ite service members in the Iraqi armed forces, which was cohesive during the eight-year-old war. The Shi'ite drafted men, as a majority, constituted 85% of the rank and file and 20% of the officers in the roughly one million armed members in 1988 (fifty brigades of 800,000 regulars and 200,000 reserves), excluding the paramilitary units (Al-Zaydi, 1990, 157, Kubba, 1993, 53, Jabar, 2003, 118). It should also be noted that the political awareness of the Shi'ite population was less developed, and the majority of them polarized around the state for different reasons. The Shi'ites also constituted the main rank and file of the ASBP (Kubba, 1993, 49). The secular ideologies, such as Communism, still had a noticeable influence among the Shi'ite population; and such ideologies promoted Iraqi pluralist national identity among the Shi'ite population. Moreover, the Shi'ite Islamic movement in Iraq was brutally oppressed, and its social capital was diminished dramatically to the minimum. Between the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the regime launched a brutal campaign to eliminate the Islamic movements' leadership. This campaign resulted in its leadership and cadre exodus to Iran, Syria, or the Persian Gulf States.

The Hawza Under the first *Ba'th* Regime

When the *Ba'thists* toppled Abdul Rahman' Arif and took over the government in 1968, the tension between the regime and the Shi'ite religious establishment and the Shi'ite Islamic movement was intensified. The *Ba'th* regime exhibited an unprecedented enmity to the Shi'ite religious establishment and treated the men of religion with cruelty. The Shi'ite ulama' confronted a more inimical regime different from the British monarchy or the republic under Qassim and the 'Arif brother. The collaboration between the Shi'ite Islamic activists and the

Ba'thists in fighting against the ICP ended once the ASBP reached power. The period 1968 and 1970 marked the beginning of the collusion between the *Ba'th* regime and *Hawza*, particularly with the supreme *Marja*' Grand Ayatollah al-Hakim. The confrontation ignited when al-Hakim refused to mediate between the Iraqi government and the Iranian government.

The Iraq-Iran dispute in the late 1960s has overshadowed the relationship between the Shi'ites. In 1969, *the Ba'th* regime engaged in a diplomatic contest with the Shah of Iran over the Shatt al-Arab river when Iraq did not allow the Iranian vessels in the river. The borders issue was only one source of alarm to Iran. The Shah had concerns about the Iraqi domestic changes that took place since the 1960s. Among these changes was the rise of pan-Arabism and the UAR, the declaration of the Kurdish autonomy in 1970, and the Soviet-Iraq treaty conclusion. As a reaction, the Shah escalated the border-dispute issue when he abrogated the 1937 treaty, ceased paying tolls to Iraq or flying the Iraqi flag in the Shatt, and supported the Kurd rebels in the north. In 1937 Iran and Iraq signed a treaty to settle down their frontier dispute over Shatt al-Arab. According to Article 2 of the treaty, both States agreed that the left bank of Shatt al-Arab would be the frontier between the two countries, except for an eight-kilometer section in front of Abadan, where the thalweg would be the frontier (Khadduri, 1988, 40). Thus, the escalation resulted in launching the Iraqi government to an anti-Iran and Persian propaganda and further exacerbated by deporting Shi'ites. At the end of April 1969, the regime unleashed deportation waves and expelled 13,000 Iraqi Shi'ites to the borders. Then, approximately 20,000 Iraqi Shi'ites accused of being Iranians were combed out and dumped at the Iranian borders. The regime hoped that the Iranian refugees' flood would pressure the Iranian economy, and the Iraqi government would confiscate the deportees' properties and assets (Luizard, 2002, 97 & Jabar, 2003, 202).

The deportation story has origins in the early censuses shortly after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The inhabitants of mandated Iraq were asked to state their origin. Many Arab Shi'ites in Southern Iraq chose Iranian rather than Ottoman origin. They mistakenly believed that Iranian origin would exempt them from the military conscription or other state obligation. In addition, the Iranian diplomats were encouraging the Arab tribes to choose Iranian origins, particularly the tribes inhabited close to the Iraq-Iran borders. In the modern period, the Iraqi government issued *Shadat al-Jinsiyyah* (certificate of citizenship) to every Iraqi. This official document records the persons' origins: *taba'iyya Uthmaniyya* (Ottoman origin) or *taba'iyya Iranyyah* (Iranian origin). Hence, most Iraqi Shi'ite deportees were *taba'iyya Iranyyh*, but they were Iraqi Arabs or *Fayli* Kurds (Makiya, 1998, 135-6 & al-Alawy, 1990, 275).

The impact of the Iraq-Iran disputes also overshadowed the Shi'ite *Ba'thists*. The ethnic discrimination extended to the *Ba'thist* leadership when the Sunni *Ba'thists* do not hesitate to undermine the Shi'ite comrades. It should be noted here that the use of "Sunni" or "Shi'ite" does not mean "an ideological belief," but it refers to "a communal affiliation." The ASBP's Sunnism was not ideological but rather a communal identity. Besides, the ASBP's principles, such as promoting Arab identity, are more consistent with the Sunni historical narrative than the Shi'ite one (Al-Qarawee, 2012, 112). The discrimination was based on the ethnic distinction between Arabs and *'Ajam*. The lexical meaning of '*Ajam* (singular '*A'jemi*) is the non-Arabs, foreigners, or Persians. However, the everyday use of the term is used to refer to the Persians or Iranians. Ironically, the great majority of the Iraqi Shi'ites are Arabs. The Minister of Planning in President Hassan al-Baker's government, Jawad Hashim, mentioned that prominent leaders in ASBP were circulating an opinion that Iraqis living between south Baghdad and Persian Gulf (where Iraqi Shi'ites heavily concentrate) are *Ajam*. Similarly, some *Ba'thist* figures used to

describe the *Sharikat al-Naft al-Iraqiah* (Iraqi Oil Company) as *Hussainiat al-Naft al-Iraqiah* (Iraqi Oil *Hussiniat*) because its chairman, Sa'doon Hammadi, was a Shi'ite *Ba'thist* (Al-Hamood,2012, 170). Around the same time, the ASBP also propagated the use of "the fifth column" against the deportees and the Shi'ite Islamic opposition. Such anecdotes exhibit how much the political sectarianism was prevailing among the *Ba'thists* of the ruling class, though they were secular individual.

The tension broke out as al-Hakim rejected a governmental proposal to mediate between Iraq and Iran. Al-Baker attempted to persuade Hakim to utilize his religious status and connection with al-Shah, to mediate between the Shah and the Iraqi government; in return, the Iraqi government would stop deporting the Iraqi Shi'ites (of Arab and Iranian origins). Considering it "a fool's deal," al-Hakim rejected the proposal (Luizard, 2002, 97 & Jabar, 2003, 202). Ensued by the deportation, a protest broke out in the holy cities, which compelled the regime to envoy the Minister of Defense, Hardan al-Tikriti, to Hakim on 6 May 1969 to mitigate the situation re-requesting al-Hakim to mediate with Shah over the Shatt al-Arab issue. The government pledged to allow the deportees back to Iraq if Iran reinstalls the treaty of 1937. Al-Tikriti reported:

> Instructions from the president were to negotiate with the *sheikh* [al-Hakim] on the Shatt al-Arab on the following basis: That Sheikh Muhsin al-Hakim should ask the Iranian government to withdraw its military units from Shatt al-Arab, adhere to the old treaty on the waterway; in exchange Iranian detainees would be released and deportation would be halted. We hoped that should the Iranian side decline we would launch a new, more successful propaganda campaign utilizing al-Hakim's great spiritual influence on the Iranian people (Jabar, 2003, 203-4).

On the deportation issue, al-Hakim replayed:

> No war can be won without a strong internal front; if such a condition is met, any government can fight the strongest of other nations. The Iranians in Iraq are not simply a migrant community; they are Iraqis by birth and lineage but deprived of their Iraqi nationality by previous administrations. To deport them is not only a measure running

contrary to any human principles but may also weaken the internal front" (Jabar, 2003, 203-4).

Al-Hakim's position stimulated the *Ba'th* regime to take punitive measures against the Hawza. The demand of the *Ba'th* regime for al-Hakim's mediatory role was provocative. For the supreme *Marja'* like al-Hakim, to interfere in a sensitive political issue was critical for his dignity. According to al-Tikriti, al-Hakim, besides other issues such as releasing about 25,000 detainees, conditioned his mediatory on an official letter signed by the president al-Baker authorizing him to undertake such task. However, president al-Baker refused to give al-Hakim authorization (Jabar, 2003, 203-4). At Khomeini's advice, al-Hakim regarded his mediation as a trap, giving the impression that al-Hakim would be an Iranian agent (Luizard, 2002, 97). The government responded by:

1. arresting and deported Iranian seminarians in Najaf,
2. suspending the Kufa University in Najaf and confiscating its endowment fund,
3. putting more restrictions on the religious establishment and activities,
4. closing Shi'ite religious schools and colleges and removing their publication from circulation, and
5. stopping reciting Quran on the television and radio, and removing the Islamic subject from the school curriculum (Jabar, 2003, 203-4, Wiley, 1992, 46).

The hostility of the *Ba'th* regime was inevitable. The *government* further escalated with the Shi'ite religious authority by detaining and executing members of the Islamic movements. Al-Hakim anticipated that the regime would deal a blow to the Shi'ite *marja'ism* sooner or later, and it would better if the *marja'ism* would receive the blow while it was active rather than quiet. (Al-Qizwini, 2005, 270). At the beginning of June 1969, al-Hakim protested through a motor procession from his residency in Najaf to Kadhimya in Baghdad. IDP was attempted to drag al-

Hakim into its direct conflict with the *Ba'th* regime, which would give the IDP momentum in its political struggle. Securing the support of the highest religious authority would legitimize and solidify its political and religious claim. However, the Shi'ite *marja'ism* itself received a major blow from the regime and weakened its position. The government accused al-Hakim's son of plotting against the regime. The government claimed that it uncovered a conspiracy in which Mahdi al-Hakim collaborated with Kurds and was spying for the CIA. The disclosure of the alleged plot resulted in the executing of Shi'ite political activists, including al-Da'wa sympathizers, in 1970 (Jabar, 2003, 203-204).

The importance of bout al-Hakim's procession was the demands he received. IDP delegation handed al-Hakim a list of demands to communicate them to the government. IDP was blunt about its demands for the Shi'ites. The demands centered on:

1. restoring political freedom,
2. freedom of the press,
3. lifting restrictions imposed on the Hawza,
4. including the *Ja'afari* Shi'ite jurisprudence in the curriculum of state-run religious academies,
5. giving opportunities to the Shi'ites' participation in the government to be opened.

On the other side, al-Hakim and other *mujtahids* made more public demands that did not reflect their emulators' communal identity only. In June 1969, a group of the Shi'ite 'ulama' dispatched several demands to the government in a confidential letter, which included parts of the IDP's demands. The 'ulama's demands were penned to reflect a religious character rather than a communal or sectarian one. They included

1. lifting the censorship on Islamic publications,

2. granting permission to launch an Islamic newspaper,
3. checking confiscation of property, accusations of espionage for political ends, forcibly extracting confessions, and executions,
4. allowing any Muslim, irrespective of his sect, to live in holy places, and
5. No conscription for the seminarians at the Hawza before their graduation.

Though the *'ulama's* demands were apparently religious, they express the mode of the Shi'ites and their sentiments towards the government. The 'ulama' were careful about the direct political confrontation with the government attempting to hint to the government that their demands can represent the Shi'ite community. Nevertheless, their demands fell on deaf ears (Jabar, 2003, 205, Wiley, 1992, 46-7). On the other side, IDP's demands reflect the development and the change in its political orientation from a universalist Islamic movement to a sectarian religious party. The discrepancy in the demands reflects two different behaviors. The Iraqi Shi'ite religious establishment is an independent establishment that does not sponsor a Shi'ite political activism or party.

Testing Power and Escalation

Among the factors that played a key role in the emergence of the Iraqi Shi'ites' political identity was the radicalization of the Shi'ite Islamic movements. Theoretically, IDP called for a universal Islamic movement that should adopt Islam, regardless of Sunni-Shi'ite theological division, as a political and social movement in Iraq and the Islamic world. IDP's theoretical concept of government considered the political, economic, and social issues through an Islamic eye, which raised concerns regarding Western and Easter schools of thought. However, since the ASBP reached power in 1968 and adopted anti-religion rhetoric, a gradual change took place in IDP's universalist Islamic views and pedagogical approach. Having Western ideologies, ASBP

posed an antithetical ideology to Islam the same way the ICP did before. IDP's "universalis language of [...] the early 1960 had been replaced by a language in which Shia terminology was dominant" (Mallat, 1988, 726). IDP's approach shifted from an Islamic pedagogical movement to a militant political trend, which its roots are found in al-Sadr's early works (Mallat, 1988, 726).

IDP's political and social capitals grew due to the changes inside the religious establishment. Since the death of al-Hakim in 1970, the Shi'ite 'ulama' divided into three groups: the traditional *marja'ism* led by the al-Khoi, the co-operated 'ulama' led by Ali Kashif al-Ghata, and Ali al-Sagher, who supported the *Ba'th* regime, and al-Sadr's group which supported the political Shi'ism. The last group attracted the educated young Shi'ites who distanced themselves from the leftist movements. The majority of those youth, who hailed from the countryside, attended schools in the big cities and joined the Islamic movement while they were in the schools (Bishara, 2018, 706). Since his ascendence to *marja'ism*, al-Hakim was balancing between the spiritual-religious leadership and political affairs. Al-Hakim's death and the ascendence of the apolitical Grand Ayatollah Abu al-Qassim al-Khoi as a supreme *Marja'*, gave al-Sadr, who turned a *Marja'* himself, the opportunity to dominate the Shi'ite political activism. Though most al-Hakim's emulators shifted allegiance to al-Khoi, many others paid allegiance to al-Sadr as a source of emulation, which also opened up the opportunity for al-Sadr to become a prominent *mujtahid* (Tripp, 2007, 196). By the late 1970s, the political and communal identity that emerged among the Iraqi Shi'ite became an ominous threat, which needed to be tamed by the Sunni-*Ba'thist*-run state.

The regime took more punitive measures against the growing Islamic movement and its social bases. The measures began in the early 1970s by harassing the *mujtahids* and executing

IDP's leaders and lay members. In 1971, the government banished about 40,000 *Fayli* Kurdi and Arabs of Iranian origins. It imposed tight controls on domestic and foreign trade. Moreover, it closed the Iran-Iraq borders and abolished the old act of exempting the seminarians from conscription, which reduced the number of pilgrims and seminarians and impacted the holy cities' welfare (Jabar, 2003, 204). In 1974, the government executed a prominent IDP's leader, Shaikh Arif al-Basri, and four of his students. The purging campaign against IDP compelled al-Sadr to issue a fatwa forbidding membership in the IDP to protect his students and the lay members (Wiley, 1992, 50). Finally, the government put more economic pressure on the Shi'ite merchants by controlling foreign and domestic trade. The public sector increased its share of the retail and wholesale trade's added value from 21.1% in 1968 to 51% in 1974. The state also had 82% of the foreign trade in less than two years after ASBP reached power, while that percentage was 42% of the foreign trade in 1973 (Jabar, 2003, 204, Anderson & Stansfield, 2004, 125). The punitive measure created tension and frustration to the extent that the situation exploded.

The religious procession and gathering proved an instrumental tool to mobilize the mass and utilize emotions for ideological conclusions. The pilgrims find the religious gatherings, particularly of *Arbainiay,* a means to protest against the oppression and injustice. On this occasion, the Shi'ite commemorate Imam Hussain's martyrdom with his family in his revolution in 680. The pilgrims recite rhythmed emotional chants that express their agony and condemn the murderers. These emotionally-loaded practices usually drive the collective-mind of pilgrims to react against any symbol of oppression and injustice. Therefore, successive Iraqi governments were attempting to either ban or control such gatherings, especially when there was discord between the government and the Shi'ite community. Hence, the Islamic Shi'ite movement did not spare any effort to employ this religious occasion for a political end.

For the first time, the *Ba'th* regime had to face Shi'ite popular anger. The first angry political protest erupted in 1974. It was the first test of IDP's power, but it was not as significant and violent as the *Suffer Intifadha* in 1977. The *Sufar Intifadha* or *Mard al-Ras* upheaval, in IDP's jargon, erupted in Karbala and extended to Najaf. The pilgrims and the public reacted spontaneously to the *Ba'th* policies, and the outraged crowd stormed a police station chanting against vice president Saddam Hussain rhythmically: "*Saddam shil idak, Sha'b al-Iraq ma yurdak!"* (Saddam, remove your hand! The people of Iraq do not want you!) (Batatu, 1982, 8). The upheaval did not last long, and about 2,000 pilgrims were arrested. *The Ba'th* Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) formed a special court with three senior members of ASBP: Dr. Izzat Mustafa, Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, Flayih Hassan al-Jassim, Minister of State, and Hasan Ali al-Amiri, Minister of Commerce, to try the agitators and other protesters. In addition to the eight death sentences for the plotters, 15 others received life sentences, including Ayatollah al-Hakim's son, Mohammad Baqir, who later became the Supreme Council's chairman for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). The agitators, twelve enthusiastic Najafi young men in their twenties, were either sentenced to death or died under torture (Jabar, 2003, 213 & Tripp, 2007, 208). Four accumulated reasons stimulated the pilgrims to protest:

1. Farmers, who form a significant portion of the Shi'ite population, lost massive lands because of the drought, which raised their resentment against the government.
2. The heavy casualty war with the Iraqi Kurds in the north, where the Iraqi army lost 15 thousand soldiers, mostly were Shi'ites.
3. The *Ba'thification* of the colleges and universities also encouraged college students to participate in the protest.

4. The *Ba'th* regime had imposed restrictions on the holy cities and the pilgrim's movement and the economic consequences of these restrictions on those cities (Jabar, 2003, 209).

Though it failed, the upheaval created an ideological rift in the RCC. The *Ba'th* regime also realized the Shi'ite religious hierarchy's instrumental role in the Shi'ites' political and social lives. Saddam Hussain considered "the verdict […] extremely lenient." Therefore, RCC dismissed Dr. Izzat Mustafa and Flayih Hassan al-Jassim from their party and government duties accusing them of "defeatism, weakness, inability to shoulder party duties and responsibilities and a lack of faith in the 'principles of the revolutions." The *Ba'th* party newspaper justified the expulsions by claiming that it was to "protect the revolutionary purity of the party" (Jabar, 2003, 213-14). In the same year, Saddam Hussain delivered a speech in which he outlined the relationship between the state and religion. He stated that *Ba'th* has a belief, but it is not a religious party, and it should not be so. He accused "certain reactionary oppositional forces" to use religion for political ends. Undercover of religious rituals, these forces seek to isolate the party from its masses through provoking the regime apparatuses to interfere in sensitive religious matters in an "undisciplined and insensitive" manner. They aim to throw the party into "the situation of interpenetrating trenches…where it becomes difficult to distinguish between friend and foe." He warned that those who politicize religion or use religion as a cover for politics will incur "stern punishment" and will be under "the iron fist of the revolution" (Batatu, 1982, 5-6).

The *ASBP's* applied "*tarhib wa-targhib*" strategy (terrorizing and enticing) or stick and carrot policy with the Shi'ites by beating the Shi'ite religious establishment and political opposition with a large stick and simultaneously dangling carrots in front of the excluded Shi'ite public. It integrated more Shi'ite members in the ASBP higher leadership by introducing them into RCC for the first time. Shi'ite representation in the ASBP was 30% under the Party military

leadership between 1958-1968. This percentage decreased to 21% in 1977. However, the number of Shi'ite members in the upper and lower levels among the regime ruling elite was noticeably increased (Jabar, 2003, 213-14). ASBP also recruited more Shi'ites into the party to established a supportive social ground for the regime, but most of the recruited Shi'ites "appeared to be impelled more by material interests than conviction" (Batatu, 1982, 11).

Economically, the *Ba'th* regime narrowed the gulf between rich and poor, who were mostly Shi'ites, by adopting incentive policies that benefited the poor. The average cash income of an industrial worker jumped from $800 in 1967 to $3,100 in 1979, and the consumer price index rose an average of 7% each year of that period. Around the same time, the regime introduced many social welfare programs to the poor classes that covered housing, education, and medical services. It also enacted legislation that benefited the low and middle classes on social security, minimum wages, and pension rights (Dawisha, 1981, 142-3). Therefore, when the war with Iran broke out, the internal front was strong, and the Shi'ite public adhered to defend the country against external assaulters.

The regime also toned-down secularization and antireligious orientation and integrated the Shi'ite religious symbolism to reach the Shi'ite social capital. Hussain acted like a patron to Shi'ites and lavished funds on the Shi'ite holy shrines, mosques, *hussainats*, and other religious institutions. He also announced Imam' Ali's birthday, the fourth Muslim caliphate, and the Shi'ite legitimate caliphate as a holiday. President al-Baker first and Hussain later claimed a noble blood lineage to Imam Ali. Saddam Hussain made frequent visits to the holy shrines. During the Iraq-Iran war, he named long-range missiles, which he fired at Tehran, after the Shi'ite Imams--Hussain and Abbas (Jabar, 2003, 215, Davis, 2005, 191).

On the other side, the ASBP followed a new strategy to control the Shi'ites. First, it put the Shi'ite religious establishment under the security apparatus's watchful eye and adopted a divide-bloc policy by raising ethnic issues between the Arabs and Persians within the religious establishment. Also, it deprived the religious establishment of its social and financial capital by controlling or destroying that wealth. In 1978, it put the Shi'ite shrine's money under the government's control and surveyed all the industrial, mercantile, and properties by Shi'ite individuals. In 1974, the *Ba'th* regime executed five IDP's members, and in 1977, eight others received death sentences. In 1979, al-Sadr and thousands of the Shi'ite Islamists were arrested. Al-Sard was freed after his supporters from Thawara City took over the streets in Baghdad (Jabar, 2003, 215, Batatu, 1986, 195).

One Nation, Multiple Identities

ASBP realized the ethnic and sectarian schism in the Iraqi society, which pushed toward shaping the course of pan-Arabism definition and focusing on the "Iraq first" policy. By 1974, ASBP redefined pan-Arabism by giving Iraq a unique identity within the vast Arab world, and it championed the pan-Arabism but with a focus on internal development. This shift from pan-Arabism to Iraqiness was accompanied by "social engineering" to create an entirely new national identity. Therefore, the ASBP vastly invested in the glories of the ancient history of Mesopotamia to forge the new national identity. The provinces now are named after ancient cities such as Mosul became Nineveh, and Hilla became Babylon. Mesopotamian heroes began to appear on banknotes, and the military divisions of the Republican Guards, elite units of the Iraqi army, were also named after the ancient kings—Hammurabi and Nebuchadnezzar. Cultural and ethnic diversity was celebrated rather than denied in the public realm through festivals and actives across the country (Anderson & Stansfield, 2004, 75-76).

The overlapping identities and loyalties gave the ASBP elite to define and redefine the Iraqi national identity in accordance with its political interest or to survive political challenges. If the years between 1958 to 1979 marked the clash of the ethnic identity (Arabism) and Iraqi particularism to define an Iraqi national identity, the ASBP added the Islamic and tribal dominations between 1980 and 2003 to mobilize people and survive the wars. Though overlapping, emphasizing one identity happens at the expense of the other identities, or they compete against each other. Since he ascended to power in 1979, Hussain wanted to be seen as "the final arbiter of power, the ultimate dispenser of justice, and the sole formulator of policy" (Dawisha, 1999, 554-556). Hussain redefined Iraqi identity to meet political ends. His emphasis on a particular identity was conditioned by the political status quo. The Shi'ites were the main target of these shifts in the national identity to guarantee their loyalty.

Radicalization of the Islamic Movement

The state's discriminative and coercive measures radicalized the Shi'ite political movement and provoked religious sentiments. The 'Arifs' pan-Arabist and *Ba'thist* regimes were the leading contributors to the rise of the Shi'ite militancy and communal identity. The Shi'ite political entity representing this trend was the *Mondhamat al-Amal al Islami* (The Islamic Action Organization). IAO was founded to defend the traditions of the Shi'ite religious establishment against the secularizing ASBP's policies. It was a clerical-led organization founded in the 1970s by the two prominent clerical Karbalai families of Al-Shirazi and al-Mudarsi. The founders were the two brother Ayatollahs Hassan and Hussain al-Shirazi, and their nephews Ayatollahs Mohamad Taqi al-Mudarisi, and his younger brother Ayatollah Hadi Taqi al-Mudarisi (Jabar, 2003, 216-217).

The IAO emergence signaled the transformation in the political behavior of the Shi'ite political Islamist movements in Iraq from a universalist to a particularist model. While the IDP emerged as a movement to counter the rising secular ideologies and their spread among the public, the IAO emerged as a communal particularist organization. Its goal was to counter the government sectarian and secular practices and defend the Iraqi Shi'ites (Jabar, 2003, 216-217). IAO radicalized the struggle and authorized using violence against the *Ba'th* regime. Moreover, they rejected al-Sadr's theory of the Islamic government, and they advocated al-Khomeini's' absolute governance of *Wilayat al-Faqih* (Bishara, 2018, 706 & 712).

IAO was an advocate of the traditional behavior of the religious institution. It views that an organization should be headed by a supreme leader, Grand Ayatollah, who takes the final decision and is followed by the emulators. This view was a main theological difference with the IDP, which adopts the modern party structure in which the cadre takes the lead of the political movement. Ayatollah Hassan al-Shirazi underlines three responses, which had already been attempted, for Islamic revival since the demise of the Ottoman Empire. First, he thinks that individual attempts by Islamic reformers fade away once that reformer leaves this world. He uses the example of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, who initiated a reforming movement in the late 19th century. Second, he does not believe in the Western political parties' structure that the Muslim Brotherhood Society (MBS) and IDP adopted because it leads to un-Islamic practices. In al-Shirazi's interpretation, Islam abhors parties, and there had been on political parties in Islam. Last, he believes that the *mujtahids* succeeded in guiding the political movement and inspired the laymen. Al-Shirazi refers to his grandfather Grand Ayatollah Mirza Shirazi, who led the Tobacco Revolt in Qajar Iran in the late 19th century. Al-Shirazi dismisses the first two options and champions the last as the only solution by placing *Faqih (doctor of religion)* at the organization's

top. Al-Shirazi's argument echoes Khomeini's *Wilayat al-Faqih* theory in which *al-Faqih* combines the religious and political authorities. He rejects Islamic parties' notion because they, he believes, lack the guidance of *Faqih* and replaces his religious authority. He also urges for more political involvement of the clerical class in the political life, from which Shi'ite traditional clerics usually refrain. (Jabar, 2003, 217-223). While al-Shirazi's camp "was defined by the slogan: *La lil hizbiya! Na'am lil marja'iya*! ("No to partisanship, yes to the *Marja'*!") The IDP raised the banner of partisanship in the service of *marja'ism"* (Jabar, 2003, 220).

The One-Way Road and the Confrontation

The Iranian revolution boosted confidence in the religious opposition and expanded its organizational base from Najaf to the other cities in Iraq. Al-Sadr sent the emissaries to different areas, formed a special committee for the purpose, issued a fatwa forbidding praying by imams unless he has a proper mandate from a *Marja*' in Najaf. He also established formal ties and delegated his closest disciple, Mahmud Hahimi Shahrudi, to represent him in Tehran. It is claimed that al-Sadr issued a fatwa forbidding Muslims from joining ASBP, but the fatwa was not issued publicly. As a reflection of the enmity between IDP and the ASBP, inventions were circled among the public Shi'ite that al-Sadr had said, "If my figure were a *Ba'thist*, I would chop it off." The authorities arrested al-Sadr on 20 June 1979 for being alleged responsible for the riot in Najaf and Karbala that erupted after the government prevented him "to lead a procession to Iran to congratulate Khomeini." Al-Sadr's arrest triggered a strong reaction in Najaf, where his sister Amina, known as Bint al-Huda, led rallied protesters in his defense (Mallat, 1988, 726).

The Iranian revolution's success instigated several accidents and events that accelerated the confrontation between the regime and the Shi'ite political activists and religious devotees. On

16 July 1979, President al-Baker resigned or was forced to resign, and Saddam Hussain replaced him. Hussain became head of the most important insinuations in the state: The Presidency, the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), the Regional Command (RC) of ASBP, and the army. The first thing he did was to solidify ASBP's enteral front by accusing his opponents of plotting against the party and the *Ba'th* revolution. So, he liquidated them. Hussain had an excuse to turn to religious Shi'ite opponents and purge their Islamist movement. On 1 April 1980, an Islamist loner and member of the IAO hurled a grenade at Tariq Aziz, a member in the RCC, the RC, and one of Hussain's closest aides. Aziz escaped with minor injuries, but several students were killed in addition to the attacker. Four days later, the students' funeral procession was attacked by a spray of bullets and a hand grenade, and some mourners were killed (Jabar, 2003, 233, Mallat, 1988, 728). Hussain threatened that "the sacred blood hemorrhaged in al-Mustansiriya University shall not go unpunished" (Al-Arabiya, 2020). On the same day, al-Sadr and his sister Bint al-Huda were arrested, and on 8 April 1980, they were executed. Thousands of IDP's supporters were arrested as well, tortured, and hundreds were executed. On 21 April 1980, the RCC enacted law no 461 and applied it retroactively, considering the membership in IDP or any type of cooperation with it treachery punishable by the death penalty. The new law caused the death of thousands of suspects (Bishara, 2018, 706 & Al-Qarawee, 2012, 119). On 22 September 1980, Iraqi military units launched an offense against Iran, calling the Arabs of Iraq to recreate the "Battle of Qaddisiya" (Mallat, 1988, 728, Dawisha, 1981, 134).

Al-Sadr was in the process of founding the social bases to establish an Islamic state in Iraq. Since founding IDP, al-Sadr worked systematically to establish support among the Shi'ite grass-roots. Like the Muslim Brotherhood Society, IDP followed the traditional hierarchy of four stages of its struggle to establish an Islamic state. They start with:

1. *Al-marhala Fikriya* (ideological), as a clandestine intellectual movement to form and spread their ideology,
2. *Al-marhala Siyasiya* (political), which either is an open or clandestine movement to weaken the regime,
3. *Al-marhala Thawriya* (Assuming power) to unseat the un-Islamic ruler, and
4. *Al-marhala Hukmiya* (Building polity) to construct Islamic rule and ideal Islamic society (Jabar, 2003, 82).

Therefore, al-Sadr' cheered the Islamic revolution because it served a similar purpose of his own, and he considered its leader a supreme *Marja*' to all Muslims.

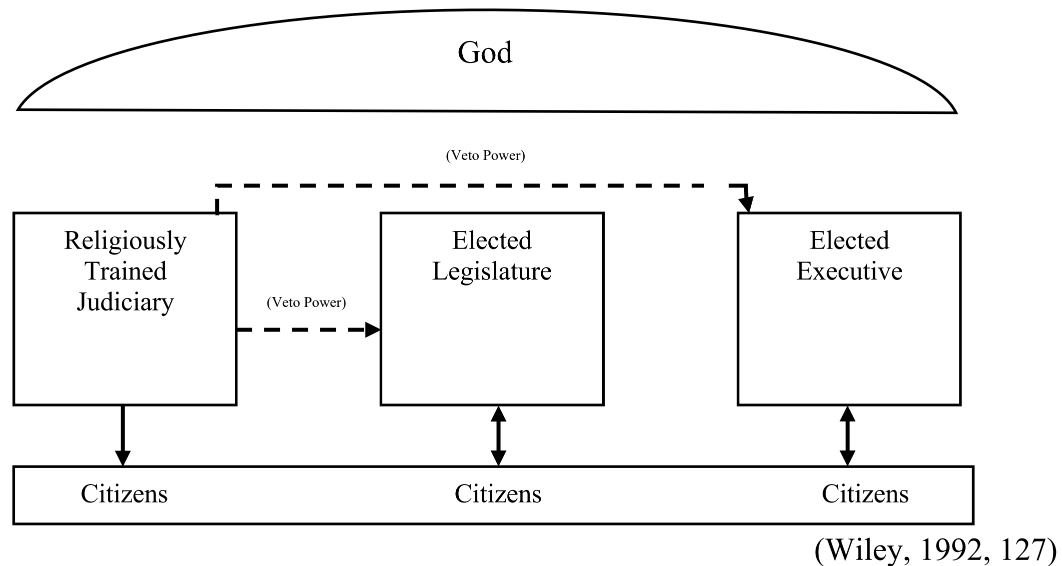
> The only thing I have sought in my life is to make the establishment of an Islamic government on earth possible. Since it has been formed in Iran under the leadership of Imam [Khomeini] it makes no difference to me whether I am alive or dead because the dream I wanted to attain and the hope I wanted to achieve have come true, thanks to God. (Aziz, 1993, 217).

Both al-Sadr and al-Khomeini certainly have given Shi'ism a contemporary political perspective; however, al-Sadr's theory of Islamic governance differs from al-Khomaini's *Wilayat al-Faqih*. Al-Sadr demanded a democratic government that derived from the jurisprudence of the *Ummah,* and it should be adherent to the Islamic laws. The Islamic government should be overseen by a constitutional court that guarantees no conflict between Islamic laws and legislated laws. Al-Sadr shifted from the jurist's absolute authority to the human's authority with the jurists' supervision. In other words, he called for civil governance with Islamic supervision (Bishara, 2018, 706 & 712). In his theory, al-Sadr delineates the political authority into three branches under the absolute sovereignty of God. The system grants veto power to the jurists on the Legislative and Executive branches. People have the right to elect the Legislative and Executive branches; however, the Judiciary selection is not clear. al-Sadr did not reveal the relationship between the Legislative and Executive branches as well. Moreover, al-

Sadr rejects the majority rule because he deems that “majority rule entail[s] human submission to humans” (Wiley, 1992, 127).

Identity is another aspect of al-Sadr’s theory that raised confusion. Al-Sadr does solve the puzzlement of the discrepancy between the Islamic transnational identity and the territorial state identity. Identity adherence was not explicit for the Iraqi Shi’ites, and al-Sadr’s interpretation turned problematic and challenging. It was also unclear whether the Iraqi Shi’ites adhere to their religious identity, which they share with the Shi’ites across the region, or adhere to the territorial identity. However, the behavior of the Shi’ite Islamism proved to be more of an Iraqi movement rather than an interstate one (Al-Qarawee, 2012, 105).

Figure 1. Al-Sadr’s formula of Political Authority:



(Wiley, 1992, 127)

However, Hussain aborted al-Sadr’s plan when he declared war on Iran. He read the Iranian revolution as a threat to the Arab Nation, announcing that “the success that the Arab Nation has achieved by its free will is endangered now by situations that it [the Arab Nation] did not create, but Iran imposes it” (Al-Arabiya, 2020). The *Ba’th* regime was convinced that the

Iranian scenario would be replicated in Iraq. In February 1980, Saddam Hussain expressed his concerns about the possible outcomes such scenario: "[U]nless Iraq's inhabitants demonstrated their loyalty to a specifically Iraqi state, the country would be divided into three 'mini-state': one Arab Sunni, one Arab Shi'ite and one Kurdish" (Jabar, 2003, 226). Especially, Iran and Iraq have similarities since both regimes are based on a single-party rule (Rastakhiz and *Ba'th*), both countries have an oil rentier economy, both regimes have a mutinous religious establishment, and both states have Kurdish and leftist movements in the north. Moreover, as Hussain expressed to the Egyptian President, the ideological influence coming from Iran, Husni Mubarak, is more imminent than Israel (Jabar, 2003, 226).

The war with Iran served two purposes for the *Ba'th* regime. The first was to hold the internal front by giving the majority Arab Shi'ites a war, using their Arab ethnicity to mobilize them against the Persian Shi'ites. The second was to prevent the zealous Iranian revolutionists from exporting their revolution to the rest of the region. What strengthened the *Ba'thists'* claim to mobilize the Shi'ites was the Islamist movement's alignment with the Iranians. The Iraqi Shi'ite resistance groups in exile fought shoulder to shoulder with the Iranians against the Iraqis. They placed Iraqi nationalism a second to the universal Islamic and Shi'ite identity. Some of them adopted al-Khomeini's Islamic political views. This strategy granted the *Ba'thist* a momentum to vilify the Shi'ite political oppositions and their cause. Therefore, the great majority of the Shi'ite public did not sympathize with their Shi'ite political movement regardless of their cause of defending their communal identity. They looked to their Iranian co-religionists through the lenses of the different national and ethnic identity. Especially, al-Khomeini advocated Iranian nationalism when he initiated his political career (Jabar, 2003, 267). Most

importantly, the *Hawza* and the leading *mujtahids* in Najaf had a theological disagreement with al-Khomeini's political views (Bishara, 2018, 711).

Traditionally, Shi'ism inclines to political quietism, and the emergence of *Wilayat al-Faqih* has created a theological struggle within the Shi'ite hierarchy. The quietist Shi'ism believes that the political authority was vested in the Hidden Imam, who is in a state of occultation for centuries now. The Hidden Imam will return as a messianic figure to spread justice in the universe. Therefore, he represents the legitimate political and religious authority that can establish the Islamic state, and the Shi'ites need to wait for him. Al-Khomeini came to challenge this belief and created a Shi'ite political system in the Hidden Imam's absence. Some oppressed Shi'ites across the Middle East looked at their Iranian coreligionists for guidance. Iraqi Shi'ite political movements looked their coreligionists for guidance as well; however, the Shi'ite population was still adherent to political quietism, which their spiritual leadership in Najaf take a core tenet of the faith. (Helfont,2018, 3).

One Religious Identity, One Political Destiny

The beginning of the Iranian revolution in 1978 and its success in 1979 stimulated the Iraqi Shi'ite political movement to shift from a clandestine educational movement to an open mass political struggle and urban guerrilla warfare. Al-Sadr and the Islamist devotees engaged in several catastrophic activities to the Shi'ite political movement in Iraq. After the success of Iran's revolution, al-Sadr celebrated al-Khomeini's triumph and declared a three-day holiday in *Hawza* (Jabar, 2003, 227). On the same day, there was a peaceful procession of the *Hawza* students where al-Khomeini's images were hoisted aloft. Upon al-Khomeini's declaring the Islamic Republic in Iran, al-Sadr sent him a telegram on March 1979 stating:

While we look forward to more decisive victories, we put our whole being [literally *wujuduna*, i.e. life or efforts] at the service of our great prominence, many the sublime Lord preserve your shadow to achieve our expectations under your authority [*marja'iyatkum*] and eldership (Jabar, 2003, 228).

When the Ayatollah Mutahhari, a prominent militant religious figure in the Iranian revolution, was assassinated on 1 May 1979, al-Sadr held a religious ceremony to commemorate Mutahhri's death in Najaf. The authorities requested al-Sadr to stop the ceremony since Mutahhari was "an Iranian official rather than a religious colleague." The last straw was al-Khomeini's message to al-Sadr in late May 1979. When al-Khomeini was informed that al-Sadr intended to leave Iraq, the Arabic Service in Radio Tehran broadcasted a short telegram from Khomeini to al-Sadr advising him not to leave Iraq:

> Samahat [you Grace] Hujjat al-Islam Muhammad Baqir al-Sar: we have been informed that your holiness has decided to leave Iraq because of some events [hawadith, i.e. disturbances]. I do not see good [min al-Saleh] coming from your leaving the holy city of Najaf, the center of Islamic learning, and I am worried about this matter. I hope, God willing, that the concerns of your holiness shall vanish. May peace and Go's mercy be upon you. (Jabar, 2003, 229).

On 22 May 1979, Al-Sadr's religious representative and the cadre of IDP wanted to exhibit muscle to the *Ba'th regime*, and they were in a vying to mobilize more supporters. They initiated the *Mubaya'a* movement and instructed the supporters and emulators to head to al-Sadr's house in Najaf and pay him homage. Al-Sadr was irritated by this movement and considered it "unnecessary and detrimental." Some of the contingents of supporters, who descended from most of the Shi'ite dominated areas, were chanting:

> In the name of al-Khomeini and al-Sadr
> Islam will always be victorious

Others were using standard Arabic:

> O our lord the faqih of our time,
> O the father of Ja'far, our leader
> We always are your faithful soldiers

And you shall remain a pioneering genius (Jabar, 2003, 230).

The internal changes within the ASBP's leadership overshadowed the relationship between the regime and the Islamic movement. The *Ba'th* leadership polarized around two figures: President al-Baker and his vice-president Hussain. Al-Baker was supported by the Shi'ite RC and RCC members, who represent the flexible wing and who did not have an influence in the security apparatuses and military bureau. Al-Baker's wing was more diplomatic in dealing with al-Sadr and IDPs. Once al-Baker stepped down in June 1979, Hussain executed twenty-two members of al-Baker's wing. Hussain gained indisputable authority to pursue his domestic and regional security policies (Jabar, 2003, 232). He waged a full-scale purging campaign against IDP's social networks. The majority of al-Sadr's representatives were detained, and nineteen of them were executed. Four to five thousand of the IDP's devotees were rounded up, and 200-260 were either executed or died under torture. The new measures depleted and weakened IDP's social capital that it could not organize a significant action.

MAI was in a better position because its members received training in Lebanon and Syria. However, their radical reaction was also individual and not organized to make political unrest. Even the radical and terrorist reactions were more of revengeful nature by desperate individuals than a political and strategic decision. Since Hussain's rise to power, the Islamic Shi'ism in Iraq has lost heavily in its confrontation with the politically experienced and violent *Ba'th* regime.

> Islamic Shi'ite militancy in Iraq paid dearly for its euphoria at the success of the Iranian Revolution. The militants had suddenly discovered the decisive important of mass agitation in the street and jumped at an overestimated conception of their ability to reproduced it. They were driven into exile under the Iranian umbrella or into sporadic, limited clandestine activity. Paradoxically, this accelerated their transformation into political parties proper, but detached them from their political habitat. (Jabar, 2003, 232-4).

Arabism and The Iraq-Iran War

The *Ba'th* regime believed that Arab identity would be a potent weapon to encounter the Persian Ayatollahs who tacitly appealed to their co-religionists through provoking the Shi'ites' sectarian identity. It emphasized the Arab identity of the Shi'ites in fighting the covetous forces. Thus, the Iraqi Shi'ites became a playball in international conflict. The regime named the war "Battle of *Qaddisiya*," reviving the battle of *Qaddisiya* when Moslems of the Arabian Peninsula defeated the Sassanid Persia and captured Ctesiphon of south Baghdad in A.D. 637 and liberated Iraq from the Persian hold. In Najaf, the capital of Shi'ism, the authorities mounted a banner in the entrance of the Imam Ali tomb declaring, "We take pride at the presence here of our great father Ali, because he is a leader of Islam, because he is the son-in-law of the Prophet, and because he is an Arab" (Dawisha, 1981, 134 &142). The *Ba'th* propaganda machine added the ethnicity dimension depicting al-Khomeini's Islamism as a Persian heresy that was "developed to infiltrate and undermine the Arab spirit of true Islam." The focus was to highlight the need "to demonstrate that elements vindictive toward the Arab Nation, especially the fire-worshiping Persians, are attempting to distort the values of Islam and Arabism, and especially its Arab character" (Helfont,2018, 3). Therefore, the *Ba'th* regime extolled the Arab identity as a mobilizing tool for the Iraqi Shi'ites for the war. Overlooking the ethnic identity of the Iraqi Kurds, the main target of promoting Arabism was the majority Arab Shi'ites; particularly, they make the majority in the armed forces. They form 80% of the rank and file and 20% of the officer's corps of the military, active units. Thus, securing the Shi'ites' support to the regime during the war was crucial. Hussain criticized using religion and invoked the ethnic distinction between Arabs and Persians to guarantee Shi'ite support. On December 17, 1980, annulling the 1979 Iran-Iraq treaty, Hussain said:

> The ruling clique in Iran persists in using the face of religion to foment sedition and division among the ranks of the Arab nation despite the difficult circumstances through which the Arab nation is passing. The face of religion is only a mask to cover Persian racism and a buried resentment for the Arabs. The clique in Iran is trying to instigate fanaticism, resentment and division among the peoples of this area. (Dawisha, 1981, 146).

The Arab regimes realized that al-Khomeini's rhetoric was jeopardizing their regimes. Although al-Khomeini did not use the Shi'ite sectarian tone to provoke the Arab Shi'ites across the Middle East, the Arab regimes anticipated the dire consequences if the Iranian' revolution succeeded. Simultaneously, the Iranians tried to export their ideologies. In September 1979, al-Khomeini called for annexing Bahrain and promised to export the revolution to the Persian Gulf state. Thus, there were calls from the Iranians to the Shi'ite in Iraq and the Gulf monarchies to revolt against their potentate (Dawisha, 1981, 145-6). In Iraq, al-Khomeini used religion to appeal to the Iraqi Shi'ites during the war in 1980. Though he addressed the Iraqi Muslims in general, it was evident he addressed the Shi'ite since Basra, Najaf, and Karbala are predominantly Shi'ite cities:

> You the zealous inhabitant of Basra, welcome your faithful brothers and cut short the oppressive hands of the blasphemous *Ba'thist* from your land. You the respectable inhabitant of the holy shrines of Najaf and Karbala-you zealous youths who have attacked these filthy ones at every opportunity, use the opportunity offered to you by God and rise up in a manly manner and fulfill your own destiny (Dawish, 1999, 558).

Even before the war, al-Khomeini's statement in April 1980 directed to the Iraqi Shi'ites had a catastrophic impact on the Shi'ite *marja'ism* and the Shi'ite political movements. It stimulated the *Ba'th* regime to further tighten its iron grip over the Shi'ite population. The coercive security measures annihilated the Shi'ite political Shi'ism and its social foundations and left the Shi'ite political space vacuum. The majority of the Iraqi Shi'ites were left under the influence of the previous leftist movements, which opposed the clerical rule in Iraq (Bishara, 2018, 706).

Why Khomeini's call did not instigate the Shi'ite to revolt against the *Ba'th* regime? The common reasons that scholars highlight in this regard are the rise in the sense of the Iraqi Shi'ites' national identity and the surge in patriotism during the war, and their ethnic difference from their Iranian coreligionists. However, these two reasons reveal a part of the story. Different factors played an important that deterred the Shi'ites make a move. The *Hawza* in Najaf and the leading *mujtahids* had a more conservative line of thought and did not support political activism (i.e., the doctrine of *Wilayat al-Faqih*). The zealous Iranian revolutionists were eager to export their revolution, which opposes the political concepts of sovereignty, state, and nationalism. Iraqi secular Shi'ites also had an antithetical political project that did not match the Iranian revolution. Politically, Iraq's regime received regional and international support to counter and contain al-Khomeini's revolution, made it difficult for Shi'ites to uprise. Since his ascendence to the presidency, Hussain and the security apparatuses were too violent and used extremely oppressive measures. Thus, they had a tight grip on the Iraqis. The regime had already waged a draconian campaign against the Shi'ite Islamists, which weakened their social bases and forced their leadership to flee the country. Iraq was emptied from any political rivals. At the same time, The ASBP had established a vast network by recruiting Shi'ite members. The economic boom and distribution of the oil revenues benefited the different social classes of the Shi'ites, whose numbers grew in the public sector. The Shi'ites' improvement in their social and economic situation promoted a sense of pragmatism among them, and they identified themselves with an "imagined national identity." Those Shi'ites who occupied high and low positions in the public service were worried that the rise of al-Khomeini and the Iranian invasion would disturb their lives and deprive them of their economic benefits. Therefore, a large segment of the Iraqi Shi'ites did not support the Iranian theocracy though they disapproved of the *Ba'thist* regime (Bishara,

2018, 711, Blaydes, 2018, 85 & Al-Qarawee, 2012, 119). Thus, al-Khomeini's messages fell on deaf ears and did not have a significant influence among the Iraqi Shi'ites.

In fact, the Iraqi Shi'ites carried the heaviest burden of the war in comparison to other Iraqis, and the Shi'ite soldiers fought honorably for the Iraqi nation. The following table shows the distribution of the war casualties in the Iraqi provinces by October 1984.

Table no. 1: Number of causalities in the Iraqi armed forces by October 1984 in the Iraq-Iran war.

Location	Killed	POW and MIA	Killed per 1,000	POW and MIA per 1, 000
Baghdad	10, 314	18,182	2.8	5.0
South				
Basra	5,252	6,294	5.7	6.9
Dhi Qar	4,003	5,832	5.9	5.1
Maysan	1,742	2,177	3.9	4.8
Wasit	3,064	2,616	5.9	5.1
Euphrates				
Muthanna	1,275	1,563	4.5	5.5
Qadisiyya	2,471	3,230	4.8	6.3
Najaf	1,663	3,435	3.2	6.5
Karbala	2,255	2,958	5.6	7.3
Babil	4,929	5,110	5.3	5.4
Central				
Anbar	1934	2,433	2.7	3.5
Salah al-Din	1,454	1,666	3.0	3.4
Diyala	937	963	1.5	1.5
North				
Ninawa	5,012	4,344	3.7	3.2
Ta'mim	1,576	1,372	2.8	2.4
Erbil	315	306	0.5	0.4

(Blaydes, 2018, 95).

The second and the third columns show the individuals killed in action and the prisoners of war and individuals missed in action, respectively. The last two columns show the percentage per 1,000 persons killed, prisoners of war, and missing in action, respectively. The figures indicate that the predominantly Shi'ite provinces of the South and Euphrates suffered the heaviest casualties than the predominantly Sunni and Kurdish provinces in the middle and northern

provinces. These numbers tell that the Shi'ites defended their nation vigorously and suffered grave consequences though they disapproved of the *Ba'th* regime.

Across the Borders Islamist Opposition

Iran had publicly expressed its will to have a Shi'ite dominated regime in Iraq, and it formed and sponsored *al-Majlis al-'Ala Lil Thawra al-Islamiya fil Iraq* (Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq) on 17 November 1982 under the leadership of Mohamad Baqir al-Hakim, Grand Ayatollah al-Hakim's sone, as a representative to the Shi'ite oppositions. SAIRI has adopted *Wilayat- al-Faqih* as a political and religious doctrine. It established a military wing—*Badr* Corps—of the Iraqi prisoners of war to assist in the warfare against the Iraqi army (Bishara, 2018, 713). SAIRI was an umbrella for the extremely divided Shi'ite opposition factions which were unable to unite. The major factions—IDP and MAI—had antithetical political Islamic views that "lacked any mechanisms for pan-Shi'ite, let alone pan-Iraq, cooperation and representations; they were mostly led on a pan-Islamic rather than an Iraqi national basis" (Jabar, 2003, 235). SAIRI was the third phase in development in the political Shi'itism. It represented the Shi'ite ideological-Islamist model. It contrasted the IDP modernizing universalist-cultural model of 1959-60 when IDP was a universalist Islamic educational movement. It also contrasts the particularist model of the 1960s and 1970s, when communal identity dominated the language of political Shi'ism (Jabar, 2003, 235).

Being a part of the Iranian war machine and prioritizing the religious identity over the national identity, SAIRI and its allies had several repercussions. First, with the rise of Iraqi popular patriotism during wartime and its merger with Arabism, SAIRI lost connection with its social bases in Iraq. The new situation provided a protective shield to the *Ba'th* regime during the wartime and alienated the Islamist groups from their social roots. Second, the SAIRI's

universal Islamism deepened the rupture between the Shi'ite opposition groups in Iran and their habitat. The Iranian Shi'ism was the leading national force for the Iranians with a secondary international dimension. In contrast, the Iraqi political Shi'ite movement acted as an international movement of a secondary national dimension. The Iranians integrated into the Iranian nationalism, but the Iraqi Shi'ite clerical groups were immersed in the Islamist internationalism. Third, the Shi'ite Islamists' political strategy was utterly dependent on the Iranian military machine, and they had a marginal role in their own affairs. Third, because of their dependence on the war's pending victory and ideological anti-secularism, the Islamist groups were aloof from any political collaboration with other non-religious movements. Fourth, due to the severe restriction and surveillance of the *Ba'th* security apparatus, the Shi'ite Islamists, like most opposition groups, were disconnected, physically, politically, and culturally from their national habitat (Jabar, 2003, 237 & 254-5).

Withering Arabism and Reviving Shi'ism

Iraq emerged from the eight-year war as a mighty military power in the region, but it was burdened with heavy debts. Saddam Hussain decided to endeavor a new military adventure for fast, economic gains by invading the oil-rich tiny neighboring Kuwait. On 2 August 1990, Iraqi troops crossed the borders, and within hours Kuwait became the Iraqi "province number nineteenth." Under the UN resolution, the United States led a coalition in January 1991 to drive the Iraqi troops out of Kuwait. The Iraqi land troops were helpless under the intensive airstrikes. The retreating humiliated men of the Iraqi army triggered the Shi'ite population to a spontaneously uprise. On the last day of February 1991, the Shi'ites revolted in Basra, where people stormed government symbols: mayor offices, *Ba'th* party headquarters, secrete police buildings, prisons, and city garrisons. Within only one week, only all the southern provinces

were vacuumed of any governmental presence (Jabar, 1992, 8). The uprising indicates the erosion in the Iraqi national identity and that Iraqis are no longer subscribing to the official narratives of that identity. The uprising started as a spontaneous military mutiny without any consequential organizational process, reflecting its lack of organizing political efforts.

The Shi'ite uprising became a victim of its own weakness. Because it was spontaneous reactions, it did not have a command or control system. The military units and the people revolted for the revolting sake. The military was bereft of any political instincts and bred apolitical attitudes. The organized Shi'ite opposition of SAIRI and other Shi'ite groups could not sustain its momentum, and the revolutionary euphoria faded within two weeks. Lacking the national sense, some groups were chanting divisive sectarian slogans demanding Shi'ite rule—*Maku wali ila Ali, anrid qa'id ja'fari* (No custodian only Ali, we want a Shi'ite commander). Their hoisting aloft al-Khomeini's images distanced potential social and oppositional groups. The middle-class secularists did not express enthusiasm for the increasing Islamic discourse, and others adhered to their Arab identity rather than sectarian identity. Many other Shi'ites were public servants, and they did not want to jeopardize their economic benefits. Moreover, the uprising was mainly a city-based event, and it extended to the rural area in a limited manner. The Shi'ite rural population was still adherent to elements of the tribal culture, which made them less Shi'ite and Islamists in comparison to the Shi'ite population in the urban areas. Hence, the Shi'ite tribes did not involve effectively in the uprising. The revolutionists and the mobs used horrific violence against *Ba'thists* and government officials. In addition, the regime's loyal and robust units of the Republican Guards crushed the unorganized poorly-armed revolutionists. Promoted anti-Shi'ite slogans such as "no Shi'ites anymore," they committed atrocities drowned the Shi'ite predominated areas in blood. The uprising was isolated regionally and internationally

and did not receive any support (Jabar, 2003, 270-1 & Al-Qarawee, 2012, 129-30). Most importantly, the *Hawza* was led by the quietest conservative al-Khoi, who preferred the minimalist political involvement. Al-Khoi issued two fatwas during the uprising. In the first, he instructed, "people to maintain security and order, to avoid damaging public institutions, and to avoid acts of revenge." In the second, he instructed to establish a committee of clerics in the holy city of Najaf to fulfill the mentioned principles. However, because of the lack of modern communication, al-Khoi's fatwas were effective only within the borders of the holy city of Najaf (Al-Qarawee, 2012, 129-30). The Shi'ite uprising left tens of thousands of deaths and refugees. It was a watershed in the relationship between the Shi'ites and the state. It put an end to the exhausting Arab identity and revived religion as a reference to social organization.

With the diminishing Arabism identity, the *Ba'th* regime resorted to promoting the religious identity. During the war with Iran, the regime had promoted religious identity as the second dimension of Iraqi nationalism. The regime focused on glorifying the Shi'ite religious symbolism to appeal to the Shi'ites. As religious propaganda, Saddam Hussain contrived a sacred family tree linking himself to Prophet Mohammad. He also named the Scud missiles launched at Iranian cities after the Shi'ite Imams Imam Hussain and his half-brother Imam 'Abbas. However, exploiting religion remained a secondary dimension for Iraqi nationalism, while Arabism occupied the main space.

After the Gulf War, the regime turned the formula upside down. Religion occupied the main space of the regime's official identity, while Arabism became a secondary dimension. On the eve of the Gulf War, the phrase "God is Great" was inscribed on the Iraq flag. Saddam Hussain used the Islamic rhetoric to counter the Christian troops invading and profaning the Muslims' holy land. They "have not only challenged the Arab and Muslim nations but continued

... to challenge God when they put the Mecca of the Muslims and the tomb of Prophet Mohammed under the spears of the foreigner" (Helfont,2014,359). Since then, Saddam Hussain began to speak publicly about religion. In 1993, the regime launched *al-Hamlah al-Imaniah* (The Faith Campaign). The regime wanted to control the religious landscape by keeping the religious men under the security apparatuses. Hundred grand mosques in Baghdad were built, hijab was encouraged, bars were closed in some places, and other pan-religion practices were promoted (Jabar, 2003, 271-2). As a result, the Shi'ite religious establishment was also relieved from restrictions, and Shi'ite clerics were released from prisons. Among the released clerics was Mohammad Sadiq al-Sadr (Sader II).

The emergence of al-Sadr II inaugurated the rise of religious movement once again. In the 1990s, the religious sentiments surged in Iraq as an alternative choice for secular identity, which failed to provide a convincing narrative. Religion became more appealing to the new generation and turned out to be a sanctuary under a drastically declining economic situation. The Shi'ites resorted to their religious establishment, seeking protection and guidance. Through the charitable work, the *Hawza* was mitigating the consequences of the sanctioned economy. At this time, Al-Sadr II was able to fill the void caused by the elimination of his cousin, Sadr I, and the Shi'ite Islamic movement. He could rematerialize the Shi'ite identity through re-establishing a vast network of the different social classes, particularly the lower classes in shantytowns. He could reorganize constituencies that had been destroyed by the *Ba'th* during the 1970s and the 1980s. While al-Sadr I approached the public through educational movement, al-Sadr II' tactic depended on mobilizing the public through conducting the Friday prayers. While IDP and SAIRI have ideologized the Shi'ite identity, that it was severed from its national habitat, during the Iraq-Iran war, al-Sadr II institutionalized the Shi'ite identity during the sanction period, in which

religion, charity, and communal identity were mingled as one. Al-Sadr II did not "embed this identity in a fundamentalist ideological system" (Jabar, 2003, 273 & Al-Qarawee, 2012, 135-6). He voiced his criticism of the apolitical conservative *mujtahids* making a distinction between *al-Hawza al-Natiqa* (The Vocal Hawza) and *al-Hawza al-Samita* (The Silent Hawza). He argues that *marja'ism* should reach out to the public and address their concerns. Al-Sadr II also grew in his stingy criticism of the government, which the regime did not tolerate. In 1999, the secrete security assassinated Sadr II and his two oldest sons. The political Shi'ism space was left void until the *Ba'th* regime's fall in 2003 to be filled by the Islamic movements that grew up in diasporas.

Conclusion

The Iraqi Shi'ite political identity was formed and developed under the *Ba'th* rule. The *Ba'th* regime' use of coercive power yielded a persistent Shi'ite religious apposition that Ayatollah al-Hakim was its spread head. Al-Hakim held the delicate balancing thread that separates religion and politics. As supreme *Marja'*, al-Hakim attempted to shield and preserve the Shi'ite religious establishment's independence from the ASBP' aggressive secularizing process. Al-Hakim's death in 1970 and the ascendance of the apolitical Ayatollah al-Khoi as a supreme *Marja'* marked an evolution in the political Shi'ism as social, religious power. Ayatollah al-Sadr had a chance to emerge as a religious-political authority. This time, the universalist version of Shi'ite Islamism was replaced by the particularist sectarian identity. The *Ba'th* early attempts to control and eliminate the political Shi'ism and the Iranian revolution's success emboldened and radicalized the Shi'ite political movements.

The First and the Gulf Wars were determining events in the rise of the collision between the national and communal identity of the Iraqi Shi'ites. The Shi'ite public did not have an

alternative political project that would replace the entrenched *Ba'thist* system. Their communal identity was still not as prominent as their national identity. The Shi'ite Islamists embraced the Iranian revolution and attempted to clone it in Iraq. Their strategy had catastrophic consequences by distancing them from their habitat physically and ideologically. Most of the Shi'ite public defended their country bravely in war, though they did oppose the *Ba'th* regime. They did not sympathize with the Shi'ite opposition groups and encountered them on the battlefield. The Islamist movement could not build a vast social network among the Shi'ite grass-roots. Their social capital was limited to urban Shi'ites.

The Gulf War was the last straw that cut the relationship between the state version of national identity and the Shi'ites. The bitter loss in the absurd war blew up a popular unplanned violent uprising in 1991, which sank the Shi'ite predominated cities in a blood bath. The Islamist opposition groups were not prepared and did not have a political vision for a state. Their unpreparedness partially interprets their failure to control and maintain the uprising in the Shi'ite provinces in 1991. The Gulf War consequences exhausted the official identity of the regime and deepened the schism between the Shi'ite and the state. Living under the sanctions and the watchful eye of the security apparatus, the Shi'ites again resorted to the religious establishment for guidance. The rise of Ayatollah Sadr II voicing his criticism of the regime revived a new form of internal political Shi'ism whose legitimacy depended on its domestic support. Al-Sadr II established a vast social capital of emulators, especially among the underprivileged Shi'ites. However, his assassination dealt another blow to the Shi'ite Islamism. The 1990s witnessed a surge in the Shi'ite communal and political identity, which was intensified by the Shi'ite Islamist groups' arrival after 2003.

Conclusion

Since the foundation of the modern Iraqi state in 1921, the communal and political identities of the Iraqi Arab Shi'ites developed gradually. The development is related to changes within the Shi'ite religious establishment, regional development, and Iraq politics. The study concluded that the Iraqi Shi'ites are a heterogeneous group with different political orientations.

After examining and evaluating evidence, the study found that throughout the monarchy Iraqi Shi'ites were divided into different classes: tribal, urban, mercantile, and clerical. Politically, they were acting differently based on these two divisions. The study also found that Shi'ism and Shi'ite political identity were more evident in urbanized areas and their suburbs. The Shi'ite religious establishment and tribalism were the main tributaries of this identity. Accordingly, they were the major players in the militant and political struggle against the British and the monarchy governments. The Shi'ite religious hierarchy enjoyed significant leverage on the Shi'ite public. It is the primary driver of the Shi'ite political activism where the *mujtahid*, directly and indirectly, led the national movement in the early 1920s to establish the Iraqi state. However, their political power diminished when the Iraqi state restricted their political activism. As for the Shi'ite population, most of them, like most Iraqis, lived in the margins where they were preyed on by ignorance and poverty. The sense of Shi'ite communal and political identities decreases the further the area is from the city centers. Therefore, the components of the Iraqi Shi'ite population did not have a unified and cohesive identity that they have today. Many Shi'ite tribes were more attached to their primordial traditions. These findings suggest that "Shi'ite political identity" existed during the monarchy era but in a limited manner. During the monarchy, the Shi'ites' loyalties were generally divided among the Shi'ite communal identity, tribal traditions, and the new state.

The decline of the *mujtahids'* power and the *Hawza's* role in the political life was accompanied by the emergence and spread of the secular ideologies among the urban Shi'ites. Communism, pan-Arabism, and *Ba'thism* found their way among the Shi'ite public. The Shi'ites' political elite, activists, and sympathizers affiliated with these ideologies and behaved according to these ideologies rather than their communal or political identity—Shi'ism. The Shi'ites—religious and secularist, urban and peasants—welcomed overthrowing the monarchy and establishing the new system. The new era gave momentum to the secular ideologies to dominate the political scene. Accordingly, secular ideologies widely spread in the Iraqi society and crept towards the religious centers, which stimulated the Shi'ite clerical class. The 1950s and 1960s witnessed the first emergence of Shi'ite Islamism. Like the contemporary Islamist movement in the Arab world, some young Iraq Shi'ite clerics, namely Mohammad Baqir al-Sard, developed a pre-existing Islamic state theory. However, like pan-Arabism, the new theory was not clear about the Islamic state's official identity. The Shi'ite Islamic movement emerged as a reaction to the spread of secularism among the Shi'ite population. The clerical class's retroaction to secularism was embedded in two different ways: philanthropic and ideological. The philanthropic approach focused on social and charitable works, while the ideological approach was responsible for seeding the ground for the rise of the Shi'ite communal and political identities.

During the first and second republics (1958-1968), Shi'ites were mainly divided into Islamists and secularists; and the latter included the communists, leftists, and *Ba'thists*. The Shi'ite political and communal identities were not crystallized yet. They did not have a political organization that could serve their political aspiration. The Shi'ite political elite subscribed to different political ideologies, and they behaved according to these ideologies. The study

concluded that the Shi'ites were politically affiliated with different political ideologies. Consequently, this finding suggests that the political behavior of Shi'ite political class cannot be encompassed under one umbrella of a Shi'ite political identity.

The Shi'ite identity became evident when the *Ba'thists* took power and used coercive measures against the Shi'ite Islamic centers. During this period, the Islamist movements shifted their focus from a universalist Islamic approach to a particularist Shi'ite one, and the Shi'ite political and communal identities received wider recognition among the public. The more coercive and purging measures used against the Shi'ite Islamist movement, the higher the communal and sectarian identities soared among the Shi'ite public. However, Shi'ism, as a religious and political identity, did not develop into an inter-state identity.

The Iraq-Iran war proved that the Shi'ites' communal identity did not surpass their national identity. The Iraqi Shi'ites adhered to their Iraqi national identity during the war and fought against their Shi'ite co-religionist. However, some Shi'ite Islamist movements and groups adopted or supported the al-Khomeini's *Wilayat al-Faqih* doctrine. This shows a schism between these Islamic movements and the Shi'ite population. The sense of political and communal identities rose again after the Gulf War. When the official national identity was exhausted, many Shi'ites rebelled against the state. Though many Shi'ites participated in the uprising in 1991, many other segments, especially the tribal society, were reluctant to involve. The uprising of 1991 was an Islamist-led uprising, and it did not meet the national aspiration of many Shi'ites. However, the uprising was a watershed in Iraqi Shi'ites' modern history. The relationship between the state and the Shi'ites was either driven by private interests or the *Ba'th* coercive measure.

Under the *Ba'th* regime, the Shi'ite political and communal identities became recognized among a wider section of the Iraqi Shi'ites. These identities received a boost from Iran's revolution. Though the Shi'ite political and communal identities took shape during this period, they were not appealing to most Shi'ites. However, the *Ba'th* regimes' coercive and discriminative measures and the rise of the religious movement during the 1990s boosted these identities. Nevertheless, the Shi'ite political identity did not encircle all Iraq Shi'ites under one identity. The Iraqi Shi'ites remained various social and political groups during the last researched historical era of the study. This finding echoes the aforementioned findings derived from the first and second discussed historical political periods. Shi'ite people primarily affiliated with their community once, with their national symbols, and with their political Shi'ite identity at another time.

In summary, the findings confirm the plurality of Shi'ite sub-identities. The outcome of this study shows how these sub-identities evolved. Unlike several scholars who suggested the Iraqi Shi'ites' homogeneity such as Nakash and Kirmanj, this research suggests the absence of a unifying term to embrace Shi'ites' political behavior. Different factors have contributed to the emergence of Shi'ites' multifarious identities, and this explains the plurality of today's activism of Shi'ites in Iraqi politics and how it has originated. Historical events and the emergence of charismatic religious figures played a critical role in the development of the Shi'ite political identities since the founding of the modern state in Iraq: the British occupation to Iraq in 1914, the revolution of the 1920, the fall of the monarchy in 1958 and rise of communism, emergence of Mohamad Baqir al-Sadr and the Islamic movements, the rise of *Ba'thism* and reaching power, Iran's Islamic revolution and the Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf War and the uprising of 1991, and finally the economic sanctions and the rise of Mohamad Sadiq al-Sadr.

Though the Shi'ite Islamist parties and groups have dominated the political scene in Iraq since 2005, their political discourse did not meet their constituents' national aspiration. The schism between them and their Shi'ite social capital keeps widening. In other words, these Shi'ite Islamist groups do not represent various segments of the Shi'ite population. Thus, the terminology "Shi'ite" or "Shi'ites" should not be generalized to encompass to these political groups and the Shi'ite population altogether. What we learn from this research that the term "Shi'ites" is a religious category, and it embeds a religious identity. It encompasses different political, religious, and social activism. It should not be used exclusively to label some Shi'ite political or militant activism in today's Iraq and generalize its use to the rest of the Iraqi Shi'ites various divisions. Future studies can focus more on the development of Shi'ites' political identity after 2003 and depicts the political behavior of different Shi'ite political parties and groups.

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