The Crises of Political System in Iraq Since 2005

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ABSTRACT: The political system in Iraq post 2005 is unstable due to several reasons; first, the influence of ethno-sectarian, religion, and tribal affiliations on the Iraqi politics. Second, violating the constitution by branches of government in general and executive power in particular. The researcher has utilized the most relevant literature for collecting all the data which are belong to this study in order to investigate the causes and effects behind the crises of political system since-2005. This study has applied instability theory for analyzing data. After analyzing the existing data with results the researcher indicated that there is a strong relation between established literature and findings in this study project. The researcher finds out the importance of this topic to evaluate the political system in Iraq since 2005 and to investigate the causes and effects behind the crises of the political system in Iraq post-2005. The findings of this study will confirms whether the lack of political culture and the dominance of tribal society leads to political instability in Iraq and, how the ongoing interference from foreign states becomes the main challenge towards state-building in Iraq.

Key words: Iraq, regime, Instability, political system, crises.

1. INTRODUCTION

Political system in Iraq has been shifted from the Authoritarianism regime into the Democratic regime since the "Operation for Iraqi Freedom" by the USA in 2003. The Republic of Iraq since its establishment in 1958 goes through political instability and political crises (Tripp,2007). The US administration together with Iraqi politicians after the US invasion in Iraq found the importance of having a parliamentary system and a new constitution to rebuild Iraqi state and bring stability, peace and democracy into Iraq (Bremer and McConnell, 2006). From 2003 to 2005 Iraq went through the Transitional Government for drafting Iraq's constitution and government. In 2005, the government-held for the first time a free election after fifty years of the Ba`ath regime (Tripp,2007). The hegemonic role of executive power over other branches of government from 2006 to 2014 and the instability of executive power led Iraq to go through different issues which are recently escalated into "crises" such as; the conflict between Sunni and Shia, violence and terrorism activities, not allowing the legislative power to function according to Iraq's constitution, allowing the foreign interference, controlling Judiciary power, violating Iraq's constitution, tensions between the central government and the regional government, falling the government in 2019 and the rise of militias groups outside the formation of Iraqi armed forces in Iraq. Therefore, due to the above-mentioned issues that the Iraq' political system has, the author chose "Crisis of political system in Iraq since 2005" as a topic study to investigate the internal and external causes and effects behind the crises of the political system in Iraq at the time of Iraqi constitution.

Research Questions:
- What are the internal and external causes behind the crises of the political system in Iraq since 2005?
- What are the internal and external effects behind the factors of the political system crises in Iraq post-2005?

1.1 Methodology

This study relayed on qualitative data to evaluates the crises of the political system in Iraq post-2005. The qualitative data from the secondary resources have been utilized from the different perspectives of authors, articles,

reports from government, official website, social media, Journals, and analysis from English resources and official languages of Iraq. The advantage behind the available data from the secondary resources is the data are available which would help the researcher to take less time to get valuable findings. The researcher ensured that the data used in this research has validity, reliability, completeness, precession, timeliness, and integrity.

2. Background about Rebuilding the Iraq after 2003 US-Invasion

There are many analysis studies regarding the US intervention and Iraq politics after the fall of Baghdad in 2003. For instance; Bremer and McConnell (2006) dedicated their book to the process of the 'Iraqi Freedom operation' and how the US intervene in Iraq. Bremer himself committed that he did not have a good or enough knowledge about politics in Iraq at the beginning of his career as the US ambassador and Civil Administrator in Baghdad. After a month Bremer who did not have a background in Iraq he became the person who is in charge of Iraq's government and chaired the meeting among seven representatives of Iraqi leaders in Saddam Hussein's palace to establish new institutions and govern Iraq based on democratic principles (Bremer and McConnell, 2006). Bremer and McConnell (2006) further explained that Iraq had been governed by two sets of laws from 2003 to 2005. The first laws were around 100 orders and regulations enforced by Paul Bremer while, Barzani in his interview with MBC channel declared that at the beginning, 113 regulations and orders were suggested by Coalition Provisional Authority, 97 out of the regulations and orders had been rejected by Bremer (Al-Roqi et al., 2020).

2.1 Political System in Iraq post 2003

After US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, a new political system was built from scratch, including a new constitution in 2005. The new constitution came into force in a plebiscite, in which the majority of Iraqi citizens approved Iraqi constitution came into force after approving by the majority of Iraqi citizens in 2005 referendum (Bremer and McConnell,2006). After the fall of Baghdad, the political system in Iraq became the parliamentary system and multi-party system. The agreement among the ethno-sectarian groups in Iraq was made to govern Iraq based on "power-sharing" to preserve the rights of all the components of Iraq. According to Hai (2006), Power sharing can be explained as a type of governance in a democratic system that can be implemented by some states like; Iraq since Iraq is a country of multi nations, religions and has a lot of minorities. The need for 'power-sharing' came to use due to the existence of ethno-sectarian and religious affiliation in Iraq. The power-sharing adopted in Iraq's political system to preserve the rights of all majorities and minorities group in the state and this can be applied in the various state which has experienced the same situation as Iraq (Amir,2013). According to the ethno-sectarian agreement that is made during the Transitional Government regarding the power-sharing of Iraqi politics, the position of Iraqi republic president goes to Kurd and with two deputies; one Sunni and one Shia while, the chairman of executive power belongs to Shia, the Prime Minister has also two deputies' one Sunni the other one Kurd. The President of parliament is Sunni and the deputies must be Kurd and Shia (Tripp,2007). The Iraqi constitution of 2005 also explains how the new administrative structure of Iraqi government works and the branches of government should interact with one another based on the "Separation of power" principle. The hegemonic of central power on the other branches of government can be preserved during al-Maliki government[i]. Dirri (2019) claimed that the Iraqi constitution is only written on paper while when it comes to practice, the executive power had ignored the implementation of Iraqi constitution especially when it comes to governorates and autonomy. Overall, the executive power for the sake of its power violate many articles in the constitution since 2005. The instability inside the executive power since 2014, the political issues behind the formation of Iraqi national armed forces and the interference of foreign states led Iraq to go through instability.

3. Failure of the political System in Iraq

There are some arguments and criticism regarding the failure of the political system post -2005 in Iraq. The issues of political system in Iraq came to existence post 2005 due to different reasons. First, the Iraqi branches of government did not always implement and follow the Iraqi constitution as their main legal and primary source for all the legislations. Secondly, the power vacuum that resulted from the termination of Baathist government since 2003 paved the way for the regional powers to intervene in Iraq. They exercised their power and interference in Iraqi politics as much as they have capability to influence the Iraqi decision makers. Al-Shadeedi and Veen (2020) in their research report criticized the Iraqi political system. Both researchers believed that Iraq is going through adolescent

democracy because it is a new experience for Iraqis and the Shia utilized their power as the majority of the Iraqi population against other minorities such as; Arab Sunni and Kurd in the parliament and executive power. Another argument regarding the failure of the political system post-2005 was raised by Menmy (2019) that the distribution of power among the ethno-sectarian has been failed to bring stability, true democracy, and prosperity to Iraq because there are the continuous anti-government demonstrations in the south and central Iraq (Menmy,2019).

4. The internal causes behind the crises of political system post-2005

4.1 The Lack of Political Culture

The political system post 2005 leads Iraqi society to have political culture which is based on the religious, ethnic, and tribal affiliations[i] (Mohammed, 2010). It also shows that the prospective of Iraqi intellectuals towards politics and power changed towards nepotism, corruption and money(Abo-Haif,2006). The Ba'ath party has an impact on the political culture of Iraq post-2005. As there were one political party and one authoritarian president who built patronage relations with his elites, and did not allow the other political parties to emerge and compete with Ba'ath party. This has impact on the Iraqi politicians also post 2003 that they showed their loyalty to the individuals rather than the state and country (Abo Haif, 2006). Thus, the lack of political culture can be preserved obviously during the national elections that each ethno sectarian groups and religious sects vote for their ethnicity or religious sect's party. It is difficult to observe any changes or progress of political culture after 2003 as the process of democracy, elections, representations are a new experience for Iraqis.

4.1.2 Lack of Trust

The second internal factor behind the crises of the political system in Iraq post-2005 is lack of trust. There is a dilemma and lack of trust since the establishment of Republic Iraq as the state. Neither Iraqis citizens nor the authority in Iraq have trust with its pillars due to the previous factor that we mentioned above the "political culture" and the second reason is the "Rentier State". Iraq was ruled by Sunni from its establishment until 2003. As Iraq is a rentier state and rich with its natural resources, which is Oil, there is always competition from the other rivals who want to replace the regime and control these resources. Hence, the Iraqi state since its establishment used to have various military coups and foreign intervention. The Iraqi state ruled by Sunni until 2003, the other rivals like Shia and Kurds together fought against the regime and want to replace them. After 2005, based on power-sharing among the ethno-sectarian groups to exercise their power in Iraqi politics, the emergence of lack of trust came to existence that none of the ethno-sectarian groups trust each other due to the historical background that they had. It also proves that executive power violated the Iraqi constitution and did not implement the constitution as it is. For instance; neither article 140 which is about the area of the disputes and Kerkuk nor article 119 relate to forming regions have been implemented by the executive power due to the lack of trust. Only during the al-Maliki government from 2010 to 2014, the percentage of Shia in ISF were raised from 55 % to 95% (Powel, 2014). Furthermore, though Iraqi Kurdish forces Peshmerga according to the Iraqi constitution is legal forces and belong to Iraqi armed forces up to date the central power never enacted its budget and rights due to the political issues and mainly trust between the central power and KRI. All in all, lack of trust among the branches of government and KRI as well is shown as one factor behind the crisis of the political system post-2005.

4.1.3 The Importance of Religious, Ethno – Sectarian and Tribal Affiliations

The power sharing brought another problem to Iraqi politics like before when the regime was ruled by Sunni. The positions of three presidential based on power sharing are fixed among the Shia, Sunni and Kurd. The government since 2005 is under the power of executive which is ruled by the Shia. This lead Iraq to have instability. in my opinion, to have balance among the ethno-sectarians, the three presidential positions based on power sharing has to be replaced by the Shia, Sunni and Kurd each four years. The ethno sectarian groups together with tribal did not become a factor to bring stability, prosperity and real democracy into Iraq[i] .   [i]   [i]

4.2 The External Factors Behind the Crises of Political System in Iraq post-2005

4.2 The Interference of International and Regional Actors since 2003

The interference from a foreign state in Iraq can be preserved obviously. After the US intervention, other states find their position in Iraq because of their political agenda and interests. Ottoway (2020) finds that the crisis of the Iraqi political system in Iraq goes back to the problem of various Iraqs, not only one Iraq. As there is American Iraq, Iranian

Iraq, the federal and confederation of Iraq. Among the other states that Ottoway did not mention are Turkey, UK, and Saudi Arabia. Each state has its own roots in Iraq throughout the history of Iraq as state. Therefore, the interference of foreign states and the influence of regional and international actors on the Iraqi decision making plugs Iraq into various crises after the US intervention.

4.3 The Internal Effects of the Crises of Political System in Iraq Post-2005

4.3.1 Lack of National Identity

Lack of National identity is one of the main effects that is emerging in Iraq post-2005. Sunni, Shia, Kurd, and Turkman comes before Iraqi when Iraqi identifies themselves. Politicians also seize the opportunity and establish their parties based on their religious sects, tribe, and ethnicity. As it is shown in the all political parties that they are attached to tribalism, religious sects for gaining more power rather than to rebuild Iraq and strengthen the Iraqi identity in the mentality of Iraqi citizens. The political parties always use the demagogy speech by referring the historical tragedy of Iraq to gain more support and remind their followers to know what other rivals did with them. This leads the Iraqi citizens to not have sympathy and loyalty to Iraq itself and to be proud of being a part of the Iraqi state. Hence, there is no political party based on national identity which can gather and serve all the Iraqi under one motto which is "Iraq is for all Iraqis".

4.3.2 Leadership Crisis

The Iraqi politicians and leaders came from exile in 2003 not to rebuild Iraqi state but with taking the revenge from the previous regime. This can be obvious when the majority of Shia and Kurds passed the law of de-Ba'athification (Alexander, 2018). Furthermore, all the prime ministers who lead Iraqi government up to present were either from exile or outside of Iraq during the Ba'ath era. Most of the Shia politicians went to Iran and more than a decade were not aware of Iraqi politics inside Iraq. Hence, it is normal to see nowadays the influence of those states on the Iraqi leaders who have been accommodated the Iraqi leaders during the exile. Furthermore, the hegemonic role of al-Maliki, al-Abadi package of reform that proposed to the legislative that were in contrast to Iraqi constitutions and laws, not appointing the senior ministers and controlling the political parties by Abdul-Mahdi and bringing the sons of Allawi from UK who did not have background of Iraqi politics to support him in forming the government lead Iraq to have crisis of leadership. many researchers and authors find that there is no Iraqi political leader who can bring all the Iraqi political leaders on one table and discuss their issues without being under the pressure or influence of political parties or foreign states.

4.3.3 Poor Governance and Anti-Government Demonstration

The existence of corruption in Iraq and KRI and the lack of transparency between both of them, lack of public services, the illegal oil trades and contracts, shadow employment, the poor governance which led Iraq to the failure of self-dependence in economy and bring a lot of anti-government demonstrations in the Iraqi streets.

4.3.4 The Kurdistan Independence Referendum

the political competition and tensions between the central power and KRI since 2005 led KRI to utilize the independence referendum card against the central government due to several reasons; first, the central government never grants the region's share of the budget as it is written in the constitution. Second, not considering the rights of Peshmerga forces as a part of the Iraqi armed forces. Third, accusing central power of not implementing various articles in the Iraqi constitution. Finally, cutting the budget of KRI since 2014. The central government together with neighboring states put sanctions on the regional authority as a reaction towards the referendum. The sanctions included closing the borders of the north region and banned international flights through regional airports. The region lost control of disputed areas in the north and lost it is prestige in Baghdad due to the rift of Kurdish political parties (Taha,2020)[i] . Thus, the political competition between Erbil and Baghdad up to date is going on.

4.4 External Effects Behind the Crises of Political System in Iraq since 2005

4.4.1 Sovereignty

The Iraqi constitution aims to keep the sovereignty of Iraq that Iraq can govern itself without being in a position under the pressure or influence from foreign state. The progress of Iran's influence in Iraq is preserved year by year and that led the Iraqis to make anti-government demonstrations and burn the Iranian consulate in Najaf

governorate. The demonstrators under the motto "Out, Out Iran, Baghdad remains free" demonstrated in many Shia governorates in Iraq (Rubin &Hassan,2019). Furthermore, the rise of ISIS in 2014 brought more other actors into Iraq such as PKK who controlled Sinjar and some other territories in the Kurdistan region and claiming that it's their territory. The roots of ISIS up to date still existed inside Iraq. In regards to Turkey, Turkey has its root with Mosul *vilayet* during the Ottoman rule. Turkey also has a military base inside the territory of Iraq and from time to time took anti-terrorism operations against PKK in the Kurdistan region because of its security. Though, Iraqi citizens sometimes in their areas became victims of PKK and anti-terrorism operations. The sovereignty of Iraq can be preserved more in the hand of regional and international actors instead of an Iraqi state. Thus, the external interference and influence since the fall of Baghdad is the main obstacle towards state-building in Iraq.

4.4.2 Internal Instability

The political system post-2005 was not able to bring prosperity, peace, freedom, and stability into Iraq. Hence, the state of Iraq did not meet Hurwitz's approach toward stability due to various reasons; first; violence is in place, second; government is fragile, third; the regime is supposedly based on a constitution but practically the constitution is violated, fourth; structural changes are ongoing due to the fragility of the institutions, fifth; social diversity and civil society play a weak role in the political development. The Iraqi political multi-party system also could not provide a good ground for stability in Iraq as Huntington stated. Moreover, more than hundreds of political parties exist and work based on "spoil system" in the parliament for their interests not for common interests. The influence of tribal leaders and Shia Clerics over the Iraqi government also provides instability in Iraq. According to the World Bank data (2020) out of 195 states Iraq has the lowest value of political stability (-2,56) which came before Libya, Afghanistan, Syria, and Yemen.

4.4.3 Rise of Various Militias Groups

As a result of the weak ISF and the national armed forces, the emergence of ISIS came into existence and easily controlled Mosul within some hours. The Iraqi military forces did not defend and left all their weapons and clothes in the hand of ISIS. Furthermore, many informal militias groups from different tribes, political parties, and religious sects emerged based on the call of Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani. Though in 2018 all those militias groups were decided to be merged with ISF the government never have control over them. The militias groups such as; KH become more powerful than the government and competed with the decision making of the Iraqi government and sometimes threatened the states as they did with Mustafa al-Kadhimi during his visit to the US. Overall, the emergence of those groups of militias and not having a well-organized national military, the history of a political system might be repeated as it happened during the Ba'ath era and Hashemite kingdom. Therefore, the political issue behind the formation of national armed forces might cause Iraq to repeat its history and face some other trickeries or military coups due to the rise of various militias groups, lack of trust with ISF and the Iraqi national army.

5. Conclusion

The internal and external causes and effects behind the crises of the political system post-2005 have been investigated deeply through the perspective of various authors from online data, books, articles, news, social media, and governmental websites.
There is the element of insurgencies, terrorist activities and existence of paramilitary sub-state actors, whom act independently from the legislation. Rise of political instability is clearly seen in 2005-2008 when the Iraqi Insurgency was in its large-scale and small-scale stage and in 2014 when the ISIS succeeded to establish a stronghold in Iraq and used the city of Mosul as a foco, where they established their own state alike prototype. This instability continued and even grew more after the elections of 2018 and void of governance given the mutual exclusive interests of the Iraqi political parties and their failure in forming a government. Nonetheless, a blast came to the sense in October on 2019 when mass strikes started against the government of Iraq. Al-Malik failed to extend the influence of his government to the Sunni predominantly regions and thus failed to secure the monopoly of the legitimate authority. This fiasco also contributed to the rise of the insurances and grievances in a one third of Iraq while already having a hardship in KRI. These grievances did not stay exclusive to KRI and Sunni areas but also spread to Shiite areas considering continuous corruption in Iraq. This study indicates that the internal causes behind the crises of the political system at the time of the Iraqi constitution which include the lack of political culture, the lack of trust, and

the importance of religious ethno-sectarian and tribal groups on Iraqi politics. The finding shows that Iraq has a lack of political culture because of its history and background in pre-2003. Religion and tribes take a vital role in shaping political culture post-2005. As the society of Iraq is identified by tribes and clans, this made Iraqi society to live backward and did not allow them to have a political culture. However, the internal effects that the crises of the political system post-2005 brought into Iraq include; the lack of national identity, the leadership crisis, the poor governance, and anti-government demonstrations, and the Kurdistan Independence referendum. The power sharing among the ethno-sectarians group brought another issue to Iraqi politics as the three presidential are fixed since 2006 and each ethno sects work for its agenda rather than common interests. It also brought corruption, nepotism, poor public services, and poor governance, the anti-government demonstrations since 2005 exist in the streets of Iraqi governorates. The researcher finds out the external causes behind the crises of the political system in Iraq since 2005 is the interference and influence of foreign states on political decision-making. The findings indicate that the external effects include; sovereignty, internal instability, and the rise of various militias groups. This study concludes that the lack of political culture and dominance of tribal society leads to political instability in Iraq and the ongoing external interference since the regime change in 2003 is a main obstacle towards state building in Iraq.

*This article has been written based on the author's MA dissertation.

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