Identity and Nation in Iraq

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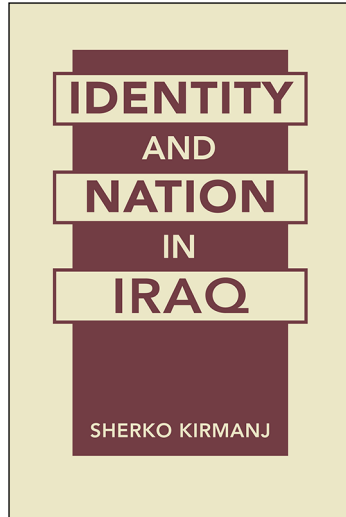
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The Context of Identity in Iraq

A brief historical, geographical, and cultural review of Mesopotamia and the territories that constitute Iraq today provides a useful backdrop from which to approach the question of identity in modern Iraq. Iraq gave rise to the world's earliest civilizations, including Sumer, Akkad, Assyria, and Babylon. After the demise of these civilizations in the sixth century BC, the area became part of the Persian Empire. In 539 BC it was conquered by the Greeks and remained under Greek rule for nearly two centuries. In 224 AD the Persians regained control and dominated the area until Arab Muslims entered the region in the seventh century. After the Muslims defeated the last Persian (Sassanid) Empire, the area was ruled by various Muslim dynasties including the Umayyads and Abbasids. In 762 the Abbasids established Baghdad as the capital of their empire. Under the rule of an Abbasid caliph, Harun al-Rashid (r. 786–809), and his son al-Ma'mun (r. 813–833), Baghdad became a center of rational and philosophical thinking. Although short-lived, the period is remembered as a "golden age" by most Muslims,[1] especially by Sunni Arabs. In 1258 Mongol invasions ended the Abbasid rule. Most of these territories eventually came under the control of the Ottoman Empire (r. 1300–1922) and remained under Ottoman administration until the British occupation in the early twentieth century.

The modern state of Iraq was created early in the twentieth century by the British colonial administration. British interest in Arabian Mesopotamia dates to the nineteenth century.[2] At the outbreak of World War I Britain perceived the Ottoman Empire's siding with Germany as a threat to its interest in the Far East, especially India. Consequently, it sought to establish some control over Mesopotamia to protect its communication routes and the newly discovered oil fields at the head of the Gulf in Kuwait and the province of Khuzestan in Iran. To keep the Ottomans away from the oil fields and routes to India, Britain invaded Basra, located at the head of the Gulf.[3] From there the British launched a campaign to invade the whole of what is now known as Iraq. It accomplished this just before the end of

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World War I. It is from this point in history that we begin our exploration of the development and character of Iraqi identity.

The Geography of Iraq

Iraq, formerly known as Mesopotamia (from the Greek meaning "the land between the two rivers," the Tigris and the Euphrates), shares borders with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to the south, Jordan to the west, Syria to the north-west, Turkey to the north, and Iran to the east. It has a narrow section of coastline at Umm Qasr on the Gulf (see Map 1.1). It occupies 434,924 square kilometers, and in 2012 its population was estimated to be 31,129,225.[4]

The British created Iraq from the former Ottoman provinces of Baghdad, Basra, and Mosul. Under the Ottomans each province was ruled by its own separate administration, and each province had little in common with the other two. Basra enjoyed strong ties to lands throughout the Gulf region.[5] The Arabs in the northern province of Mosul were closer to the Arabs in Syria than to those in the middle and southern parts of Iraq. This was the case even during the first years of the monarchy.[6] In brief, the people of Baghdad knew little about the people of Basra and Mosul, and the people from the latter provinces knew even less about the Baghdadis.[7] The population of the coastal province of Basra was comprised mainly of Shiite Arabs and the central province of Baghdad was dominated by Sunni Arabs, even though it had a large Shiite population. The northern province, centered on Mosul, was predominantly Kurdish, with large pockets of Arabs, Chaldo-Assyrians, and Turkmen.[8]

For administrative purposes the British divided the three Ottoman provinces into fourteen provinces. For political rather than administrative reasons the Baathist regime reorganized several times from 1968 to 1976. Four new provinces were created in the process. By the time the United States and its allies invaded in 2003, Iraq was administratively divided into eighteen provinces: al-Anbar (Rumadi), Basra, Muthanna (Samawa), al-Qadisiya (Diwaniya), Najaf, Erbil, Suleimaniya, Kirkuk (al-Ta'mim), Babil (Hilla), Baghdad, Dohuk, Dhiqar (Nasiriya), Diyala (Ba'quba), Karbala, Maysan (Amara), Ninawa (Mosul), Salah al-Din (Tikrit), and Wasit (Kut) (see Map 1.2).[9] While this division is still in use, the three Kurdish provinces of Dohuk, Erbil, and Suleimaniya and several districts in Mosul, Kirkuk, Diyala, and Salah al-Din provinces are all ruled either directly or indirectly by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

Iraq's economy was almost exclusively based on agriculture until the 1950s. After the 1958 revolution, however, economic development was considerable. Oil revenue nearly quadrupled from 1973 to 1975 due to the nationalization of the oil companies. Until the outbreak of the Iraq-Iran War,

Map 1.1 Iraq in the Middle East

Map 1.2 The Provinces of Iraq

Iraq's economy was dominated by oil production. In recent decades oil production has provided about 95 percent of foreign exchange earnings. Iraq's gross national income (GNP) in 1967 was 745.2 million Iraqi dinars (ID); the gross domestic product (GDP) was 937.7 million ID. By 1982 the GNP and GDP had increased to 12,334.6 and 5,374.5 million ID respectively.[10]

Both oil production and economic development declined after the start of the Iraq-Iran War and the First and Second Gulf Wars.

Consequently, the economy has continued to face serious problems, including a huge foreign debt that has grown since the early 1980s largely due to heavy war expenditures and high military spending. Iraq has some of the world's largest oil reserves, estimated at 143 billion barrels. This does not include the reserves in the Kurdistan region and the western areas of the country.[11] As of March 2012, Iraq was producing about 2.9 million barrels of oil per day (bpd). Iraq's gross domestic product is expected to rise by 9 percent in 2012, mainly driven by oil production.[12]

Ethnic and Religious Diversity of Iraq

Iraq is shaped by a number of religious, cultural, and ethnic forces. A precise statistical breakdown of the population is extremely difficult due to inaccuracies in census data coupled with official manipulations. Most sources estimate that at least 97 percent of the population adheres to some form of Islam. The remaining 3 percent consists of Christians (Chaldo-Assyrians and Armenians),[13] Yazidis (ethnic Kurds), Mandaeans (gnostics), and a small number of Jews.[14] Arabs are the largest ethnic group at 77 percent of the overall Iraqi population. Among Iraqi Arabs, Shiite Muslims make up nearly 75 percent of the population, and they are 60 percent of the total Iraqi population. Although predominantly located in the south, the Shiite Arabs are the majority in Baghdad and have communities in most parts of the country. Sunni Muslims account for nearly 25 percent of the Iraqi Arab population and around 20 percent of Iraq's total population. Geographically the Sunni Arabs are concentrated in the midwest and northwest of the country. There are only two Sunni-dominated provinces: al-Anbar and Salah al-Din. The other provinces in which they are numerically strong are Ninawa (Ninevah), Baghdad, Diyala, and Kirkuk. The Sunni Arabs were the majority in the capital city of Baghdad until the late 1950s when they were overwhelmed by the Shiite Arabs.[15] Though predominantly Arab, the Shiites also include Turkmen and Faili-Kurds. The Kurds, the second-largest ethnic group at approximately 20 percent of Iraq's population, are mostly Sunnis. They reside in the uplands of the northeast of the country. The third-largest ethnic group, the Turkmen, are dispersed throughout the country, especially in the major city centers of Kirkuk, Erbil, and Tala'far (see Map 1.3).[16]

Shiism, one of the main sects of Islam, emerged during the early days

Map 1.3 Iraq's Major Ethnoreligious Groups

of Islam following the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632 AD. The Muslim divide occurred on the issue of the successor to the Prophet, resulting in great disunity and harm to the community. The Sunnis advocate the idea that Muhammad's successor should be an elected member of the Qurayish tribe, the tribe of the Prophet Muhammad. They argue that the Prophet deliberately refrained from appointing a successor and left it to community leaders to decide on his successor based on the concept of *shura* (consultation). Accordingly, they approved the succession of Abu Bakr as the first caliph.

The other group, the Shiites, believe that Muhammad appointed Ali, his cousin and son-in-law, as successor during his last pilgrimage in 632 just before his death. They also advocate the idea that a successor should be a member of Muhammad's family (ahl al-Bayt).[17] The Shiite-Sunni antagonism climaxed after the establishment of the Safavid dynasty (r. 1502–1722) in Iran and its adoption of Shiism as the state religion.

Historically, southern Iraq has been a stronghold of Shiism. The major cities of Basra, Karbala, Najaf, Kufa, and al-Kadhimiya (a suburb in Baghdad today) emerged as Shiite learning and cultural centers. Karbala and Najaf became destinations for Shiite pilgrims because both cities hold major Shiite shrines of Imam Ali and Imam Hussein. Since the disappearance in 764 of the twelfth Shiite Imam, al-Mahdi, the leadership of the Shiite community has been held by religious clerics. This arrangement led to the development of a kind of institution called *marja'iya* (senior religious leadership) that tended to provide a strong sense of cohesion.[18]

Unlike the dominant Shiites, the Sunni religious communal identity is less developed. In Iraq the Sunni Arabs (hereafter the Sunnis), enjoyed supremacy during the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties. This position lasted until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and even after the formation of modern Iraq.

The other large ethnic group to be reckoned with in Iraq is the Kurd, who speak Kurdish, an Indo-European language. The land on which the Kurds now reside was invaded by Arab Muslims in the mid-seventh century. The first wave of Muslim Arabs arrived in the area during the reign of Umer bin Khatab (r. 634–644), and they continued to arrive throughout the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties. In 1514 the Kurdish-populated area was officially divided between the Ottomans and the Safavids. During their respective rules, the Kurds initially enjoyed some degree of autonomy and were able to establish several Kurdish dynasties (principalities) such as Ardalan, Badinan, Baban, Soran, Hakkari, and Badlis.[19] In 1834, when the centralization policies of the Ottomans ended Kurdish self-rule, several rebellions ensued. The Kurds from Iraq were part of Mosul province during the Ottoman rule. After the British invasion in 1926, the province was formally annexed to Iraq when a border dispute between Britain/Iraq and

Turkey was settled. The Kurds currently constitute a majority in the four provinces of Kirkuk, Suleimaniya, Erbil, and Dohuk, and they form a large minority in the provinces of Ninawa and Diyala.

The Question of Identity in Iraq

Compared to the early years of the 2003 occupation by US and allied forces, Iraq has recently experienced an improvement in the security situation and a sharp decline in the levels of violence. In fact, by mid-2007 the fatalities resulting from internal ethnic and sectarian violence had declined by nearly 90 percent.[20] The number of civilian deaths also decreased from an average of 2,300 per month in 2006 to an average of 322 per month by 2011.[21] The Sunni vs. Shiite violence of 2006–2007, normally considered to be quite extreme, has also abated. Due to the leveling off of violence from all sources, the US military withdrew most of its combat forces at the end of 2011. After two rounds of successful elections in the Iraqi National Assembly in 2005, Iraq staged three more relatively successful elections in 2009 and 2010: the provincial elections in January 2009, the elections for the Kurdistan Regional Parliament in July 2009, and the elections for the Iraqi Parliament in March 2010. Contrary to the 2005 elections, where Sunni citizens boycotted the vote, recent elections had strong participation across all ethnic, sectarian, and political groups. In general, the political and economic progress of the last four years has been significant.[22] It should also be acknowledged that al-Qaeda is in retreat, though it retains limited ability to conduct high-profile attacks designed to demonstrate its viability.[23]

Despite the promising picture of progress and recent security gains, Iraq remains in a delicate condition. The longevity and sustainability of the country's progress will likely depend upon Iraq's ability to address a complex set of political issues. Among these are the political reconciliation between different ethnic and religious groups; laws needed to regulate the distribution of revenue gained from the country's natural resources; management of Iraq's oil reserves; resolution of the long-standing territorial dispute between the Kurdistan region and the rest of Iraq, including the fate of the oil-rich areas around Kirkuk; the issue of federalism; and the request for amending the Iraqi constitution, especially the articles concerning Iraq's identity and structure. Although these issues pose the greatest threats to Iraq's stability, no significant practical measures have yet been taken to resolve them.

Iraq remains fragile primarily because the underlying sources of instability have yet to be resolved. Iraq's major power brokers (the Sunni, Shiites, and Kurds) disagree on the nature of the state, its structure, and

identity. The current ethnic and sectarian conflict in Iraq cannot be attributed exclusively to insurgency and terrorism. Indeed, the conflicts and disputes between Iraq's national/ethnic and religious/sectarian groups constitute the most serious part of Iraq's predicament. Iraq is comprised of people from many different backgrounds. Acknowledgment of this diversity and respecting the cultural and national differences of Iraq's diverse groups are the most pressing challenge facing the Iraqi people. This is a challenge that needs to be addressed both constitutionally and institutionally.

Contending Debate on Iraq's Identity

Many scholars suggest that the civil unrest, sectarian violence, and ongoing chaos in Iraq are the result of the US invasion and its failure to impose law and order.[24] Eric Davis blames the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and US policymakers for implementing failed policies such as de-Baathification and the disbanding of the Iraqi army.[25] Others blame the creator of the Iraqi state—that is, Britain—for failing in the process of state-building from the very beginning. Toby Dodge, for example, asserts that "troop numbers" and "inadequate resources" were one of the central problems to undermine the stability and state-building processes in Iraq.[26] The shortcoming of this argument is that it tends to enlarge the role of the state in constructing identity while marginalizing the will and attachment of people to identity and homeland.

Some scholars point out that Iraq remains a fragile political entity due to the fact that it was created in the aftermath of World War I through the involuntary unification of ethnically and religiously diverse groups of the former Ottoman Empire.[27] This understanding is shared neither by prominent scholars in the West nor by many Iraqi intellectuals and academics who emphasize the identity factor, oftentimes described as "Iraqiness." Their notion of Iraqiness rests on the notion that the Iraqi people are the direct descendants of Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Arab peoples.[28] They argue that Iraqi identity is not an invented phenomenon but has evolved naturally, as any national identity does, in the heart of every Iraqi. All one need do is simply try to revive it. Both Matar and al-Janabi maintain that Saddam Hussein destroyed any semblance of Iraq's national identity. Similarly, Ghazi Yawar, the first Iraqi president following the collapse of the regime in 2003, blamed the former president, Hussein (hereafter Saddam) for the destruction of Iraqi identity.[29] Matar and al-Janabi differ, however, on the issue of the Kurds' attachment to Iraqi identity. Matar holds the view that the Iraqi Kurds must discover their true historical roots in order to recapture their lost Iraqi identity, while al-Janabi doubts the Iraqiness of the Kurds altogether.[30]

Others go further and argue that "Iraq has long been a secular country, where a majority of citizens identify with their national identity rather than their ethnic or religious identity."[31] Marquardt argues that since 1921 Iraqi leaders have been able to preserve Iraq's territorial integrity and prevent ethnic fissures from forming. He asserts that the seeds of ethnic violence, and even ethnic cleansing, were never experienced in Iraq on a major scale. Marquardt suggests that Iraq's Sunni and Shiite Arabs share a common identity and that both communities have supported successive Iraqi leaders that have emphasized pan-Arabism. Nevertheless, he believes that the Kurds have never fit into this category. Zakaria asserts that although Iraq's political system might have failed, Iraq is not a failed nation-state due to the fact that "Iraq is already a nation."[32] Likewise, Yaphe argues that Iraq cannot naturally, historically, ethnically, or religiously be divided or separated into three distinct categories.[33] Neither has the cult of personality played a role in Iraq's historical or political traditions, according to Yaphe. She emphasizes that Iraq is not simply an artificial construct. Davis maintains that the Kurds, Sunnis, and Shiites have consistently indicated a desire to remain an integral part of the Iraqi nation-state.[34] These writers use a mixture of modernist and primordial arguments to support their views.

One of the aims of this work is to carefully consider and assess these interpretations because on close inspection these arguments appear to be politically motivated. These claims are not based on a careful analysis of Iraq's modern history. For example, to blame Saddam alone for the destruction of Iraqi identity, to claim that Iraqis are not divided across ethnic and sectarian lines, or to say that the Kurds have never called for independence are all unsubstantiated and dubious claims (see Chapters 2, 6, and 7).

Matar and al-Janabi's claims appear to be based on a belief that Iraq's ancient past can serve as the mythical foundation for the reemergence of a new identity. This understanding also depends on the view that Iraq is as old as ancient Mesopotamia. However, these views fail to take into account the fact that the complex structure of modern Iraq was not built until the early twentieth century. Similarly, Visser argues that the idea of an invented Iraq is distorted because it does not take into account nineteenth-century sources. Visser notes the term "Iraq" was used by scholars from Baghdad and by Persian pilgrims in the nineteenth century.[35] This argument is debatable for the following reasons: first, it is true that the term was used prior to the creation of Iraq. In fact, the term was used even by medieval Muslim scholars (see Chapter 9). But at the time "Iraq" did not connote an identity, describing the land rather than the inhabitants. Second, Iraq, as described before 1921, did not encompass current Iraqi territory. In his seminal work *Al-Ahkam al-Sultania* (The Ordinances of Government), written in 1045–1058, the medieval Muslim scholar Abu al-Hasan al-Mawardi described the land known as Iraq al-Sawad to be the area within a triangular territory stretching from al-Haditah, a city on the Euphrates near the Syrian

border, to Halwan, an ancient city located near current Ba'quba and Abadan, the latter being an Iranian city on the Shatt al-Arab near Basra.[36] Al-Mawardi stated that the area was named "Iraq *li'stiwaa*" due to its levelness and because Iraq's territory is free of mountains.[37] Al-Mawardi's description of Iraq highlights two important points: (1) the area that was designated in his description does not encompass modern-day Iraq because it excludes large sections of what was historically part of not only Iraq but also Mesopotamia, such as Tikrit and Mosul; and (2) the description also demonstrates that the borders of Iraq cease when the Kurdish-populated areas, or the mountains, begin. Visser's reliance on the writings of late-nineteenth-century Baghdadi scholars undermines his argument because, as he and Fattah rightly concede, these scholars excluded large portions of the then Iraqi population from their writings. The Shiites were described by the writers as *rafadha* (rejectionists).[38] In brief, historical descriptions of Iraq either excluded large parts of modern-day Iraqi territory or large portions of its inhabitants. This issue accentuates the crises of identity that this book seeks to clarify.

There are scholars who reject the view that Iraq comprises a consolidated community and instead emphasize the inherent divisions among the people that make up Iraq. Although the Iraqis have lived together for nearly a century, the people are not and never have been united. O'Leary and Eland argue that Iraqis neither come from common stock nor are they united by a common immigrant or assimilationist experience.[39] The three provinces of the Ottoman Empire were never united politically and culturally by feelings or notions of a collective identity. Iraq is not "one nation," and it has never transformed itself into one during the modern era. Gelb and Galbraith assert that the assumption that Iraq's three main communities share a common sense of nationhood is conceptually flawed because each group tends to think primarily in terms of its own ethnic or confessional community and identity.[40] This argument, though merited, is not supported by historical evidence. This book illustrates the process of Iraq's national integration and its process of national disintegration on the basis of a detailed examination of Iraqi history.

Some scholars regard time as an important element in the creation of a sense of cohesion and national integration. For example, Cole believes that we cannot ignore the last eighty-four years that Iraqis have lived together; neither can we ignore their desire to remain in a unitary state.[41] This view, however, fails to account for the ongoing hostility and conflict that permeates Iraq's ethnic groups. Take, for example, the unofficial referendum conducted in the Kurdistan region in 2005 in which more than 98 percent of the population voted to secede from Iraq.[42] Contrary to Cole, Gelb suggests that the complex and traumatic legacy of eighty years of turbulent history has proven difficult to overcome. Iraq was able to resist total disintegration only by applying the most overwhelming and brutal force.[43] Anderson and

Stansfield similarly portray Iraq as an "artificial nation" and agree that the Iraqis are divided along ethnic and sectarian lines.[44]

Concerning ethnic disturbances, scholars differ as to the character and nature of the notorious conflicts and the reasons for the seemingly unceasing internal power struggles. Marr holds that the struggles by both the Shiite and Sunni communities have been for power, not identity.[45] Nakash disagrees and argues that the division between these groups is primarily political rather than ethnically or culturally based.[46] The competition among both groups appears to be centered on the issue of who has the right to rule and to define the meaning of nationalism for the country. Nakash makes this point when he states that the Sunni leadership has adopted a broader concept of Arab nationalism as its main ideology than the Shiites, who have preferred a narrower version of Iraqi patriotism in which the distinctive values and heritage of Iraqi society are stressed. Bengio argues that the Kurdish struggle is marked by the fight for identity as well as for power.[47]

Little has been written on the question of Iraqi identity in general and the process of national integration in particular. One notable exception is the work of Simon, who reviewed the reactions of the Shiite majority and the Jewish minority to the imposition of pan-Arabism as the dominant ideology for the country during the 1920s and 1930s.[48] Considering the events of 1920–1958, Lukitz concludes that despite the close relationship between communal groups (Sunni, Shiite, and Kurds), the central government failed to create an overarching identity that transcended ethnic and sectarian lines.[49] Focusing on Kurdish integration into the Iraqi state, Natali examined Kurdish identity from a constructivist perspective, arguing that the ethnicity of the Kurds as political identity cannot exist prior to some other exclusivist nationalist project.[50] She holds that Kurdish nationalism is a function of political space provided by the succeeding Iraqi political authorities. Similarly, Vali argues that "Kurdish nationalism, precipitated by the denial of Kurdish identity, rests . . . on the suppression of civil society and democratic citizenship," by successive Iraqi regimes.[51] This assertion overlooks the emergence of Kurdish nationalism in its many forms that were demonstrated before the formation of the Iraqi state. It also does not take into account the continuing strength of Kurdish nationalism even during periods of greater inclusivity, such as the monarchy of 1921–1958, Abdul Karim Qasim's era of 1958–1963, and following the removal of Saddam and the emergence of new Iraq. During this period several Kurdish nationalist movements were birthed. There was an outburst of Kurdish rebellion in 1961, and lately the Kurdish secessionist tendency has been gaining strength.

This book examines the assumptions, viewpoints, and interpretations that writers have applied to Iraq, while at the same time providing a diachronic review of Iraq's modern history. The examination starts from the period of the formation of Iraq and covers the ensuing period up to 2012.

This time period, in particular, aids in our understanding of the process and character of Iraq's national integration as well as the formation of its national identity. Most studies cited have either focused on one communal group or the other, or they have been limited to a particular historical period. An exception is the work of Marr and Tripp whose seminal works give less attention to the roles of the Shiites and Kurds than they do to the role of the Sunni Arab elite in shaping Iraqi politics. Natali focused on one communal group, the Kurds,[52] and Simon studied the period from 1921 to 1941.[53] Lukitz covers the 1920–1958 period,[54] Baram from 1968 to 1989,[55] and Bengio the second Baathist regime, 1968–1995.[56] This research is unique in that it offers a balanced examination of the roles of all major communities—the Shiites, the Sunnis, and the Kurds—in relation to the questions of political identity of the modern era in Iraq. This work stresses the political history of Iraq in order to shed light on the internal political dynamics. However, the analysis is not restricted to any particular time period. The other distinguishing feature of this work is that it looks at the processes of the integration and disintegration of Iraq's national identity from Kurdish and Shiite perspectives, in addition to that of the Sunnis that have historically dominated the country. It examines unique Kurdish sources and Iraqi textbooks that, to date, have not been available to Western scholars due to either restrictions imposed during difficult political times or language barriers. In sum, this work focuses on the main idea that behind the seemingly intractable ethnic and sectarian fragmentation in Iraq lie unresolved issues of national identity.

Addressing the question of identity is crucial if one is to understand the stability, or lack thereof, of states. Many postcolonial states experience serious ethnic conflicts as a consequence of the unresolved questions surrounding national identity. Understanding the dynamics of how ethnic conflict can lead to the failure of the nation-state is essential for identifying Iraq's options as it emerges from its quagmire. It also relates to the global war against terrorism[57] because, in addition to weakening states, ethnic and sectarian conflict makes them ungovernable and lawless. Consequently, states with unresolved ethnic conflicts may become havens for terrorist groups. However, the reason national identity is so critical in the case of Iraq is that, instead of consolidating the people that comprise it, it contributes to the propagation of ethnic and sectarian conflict. It is also important because it means that any attempt to forge—or force—a national identity may have political consequences, such as the need to redraw geopolitical boundaries or alter the composition of political regimes and states. National identity is critical because the new world order is basically founded on the formation of nation-states, and identity is the chief definer of individual loyalty and identity.[58] To keep order and peace in the world and to develop loyalty to one's state, it is important for the state to be perceived as legitimate and to be able to develop a sense of belonging among its citizens.

Conceptualization of Identity and Nation

Based on Anthony D. Smith's seminal contributions, the following charac-
teristics of nation-states may be identified: a distinctive shared culture, a
common myth of ancestry (descent) involving a shared history, a strong
sense of group sentiment and loyalty, an association with a specific territo-
ry, territorial contiguity with free mobility throughout, equal citizenship
rights, vertical economic integration, and a common language.[59] There are
two kinds of nation-states: one with boundaries that are co-extensive with
the boundaries of that national population group (e.g., Japan); and what may
be termed the "melting pot" state, which is formed initially from migrant
settlers and is not identified with a particular ethnic or national group (e.g.,
the United States). In an evolutionary process people come to identify with
the state that eventually becomes tantamount to a nation. However, in the
context of postcolonial countries, the nation-state is a "legal transplant" in
which states lack the substance of nationhood due to the fact that colonial
powers have merged divergent and sometimes hostile groups within artifi-
cially drawn boundaries. Some groups residing within the postcolonial or
colonial nation-state also call themselves "nations," but are better known as
nations-without-states. Nations-without-states are territorial communities
that have their own identities and a desire for self-determination but they
are included within the boundaries of one or more states with which they do
not identify (e.g., Catalonians, Kurds, and Scots).

    However, the term "nation" denotes a social group that consciously and
willfully forms a community; shares a common memory, culture, and ances-
try; has a strong attachment to a clearly demarcated territory; owns a sense
of solidarity; has a common project for the future; and claims the right to
self-rule. That self-rule may be independent, autonomous, or understood in
the context of a federation.[60] Here we must distinguish the term "nation"
from "nation-state." In nation-states the citizens of a nation normally coin-
habit the same state and expect to enjoy equal citizenship rights and vertical
economic integration. But the concept of nation shares most of the charac-
teristics of nation-states except that it normally lacks the last two features:
equal citizenship rights and vertical economy. Nevertheless, national identi-
ty is a fluid and dynamic concept that generally refers to a community that
shares a particular set of characteristics while believing that its members are
ancestrally related and possess a shared culture, history, symbols, language,
territory, founding moment, and destiny. It is often applied to citizens of a
nation-state. At times a sense of national identity may be shared by those
who belong to a nation but have no state of their own.[61] The definition of
nationalism probably has the most scholarly consensus as to meaning: an
ideology that serves to liberate, aspire to, or maintain autonomy, and works
to solidify the identity of a social group.[62]

Based on this definitions and what Hroch defines as the essential conditions for the formation of a nation,[63] this work submits for consideration three postulates that must be present for a people to bond as a nation: (1) a memory of a common past; (2) linguistic or cultural ties that enable a higher degree of social communication within the group than that which takes place beyond it; and (3) a conception of equality between members of the group that is organized as a civil society. If a group does not possess these three conditions, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to identify as a people or to bond as a nation. This book investigates the extent to which the Iraqi nation-state possesses or lacks these elements.

This work bases its examinations and analysis on a range of indicators for assessing identity and national integration. The first and most important indicator is *recognition*; this measures the degree to which an ethnic or sectarian group accepts another group and the extent to which the state recognizes other identity-based groups. The second indicator, *exclusivity*, refers to the degree to which either the state or an identity-based group excludes other groups from its discourses, policies, and practices. The third indicator, *primordiality,* concerns the ways in which individuals and groups are deprived of rights due to their primordial identity such as race, place of birth, or ethnicity. The fourth indicator, *status*, may be measured by the availability of facilities provided by the state for identity-based groups to achieve (or restrict) their aims. A fifth set of measures includes *favoritism* and *hostility*, which leads to in-group favoritism and out-group hostility. A sixth indicator is *claims*, which is useful to measure a group's assertion of its rights on matters of fundamental interest to the group including territorial, cultural, religious, and linguistic claims. Finally, *aims* are a measure of the goals and purposes of a specific group or state.[64]

The main actors in identity politics that are considered here for analytical purposes are, first, the state and/or its elite. The state and decision-makers are the primary forces shaping legislation and implementing policies, whether affirmative or discriminatory in nature, regarding ethnic and religious groups. The second group of actors are ethnic or religious groups (in this case the Kurds and the Shiites before the US invasion, and the Sunnis after the invasion). The third group consists of the influential individuals who represent and speak on behalf of identity-based groups. That is why the roles and views of these three groups of players are scrutinized.

Outline of the Chapters

This book addresses the socio-political development of Iraq and has two working themes. The first is that the general and popularly accepted belief that Iraq was a unified and stable nation until the Baath party seized power

in 1968 is unsubstantiated by historical facts. The second theme is that the inability of Iraq to transform itself into a united and integrated nation between 1921 and the subsequent overthrow of the Baathist regime in 2003 and up to the present time are the direct result of ongoing clashes between the different ethno-national and religious groups.

These clashes and conflicts, which took (and take) the form of civil strife, rebellion, and warfare, were/are, for the most part, represented by three competing nationalisms: Iraqi patriotism, Arab or pan-Arab national-ism,[65] and Kurdish nationalism. The conflicts also reflect ethnic and sectari-an divisions representing the Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds, respectively. In sum, the main hypothesis of this work is that the failure of national integra-tion in Iraq is a direct result of the clash of identities and competing nation-alisms, be they ethnic, secular, or religious. The book identifies the major historical causes of ethnic and sectarian conflict in Iraq as well as the major obstacles facing the process of national integration today.

It should be noted that Iraqi society is fraught with other divisions that contribute to the complexity of the situation. Among them are the simmer-ing tensions between the tribal and urban (e.g., intra-Kurdish fight 1966–1998), the religious and secular (e.g., intra-Shiite clash), and the rich and poor (e.g., class struggles). These tensions have evolved across, as well as within, ethnic and sectarian fault lines and they have exacerbated the conflict. While related to the theme of this book, they are not considered in detail because they are outside the main focus of this work. The term "con-flict" rather than "war" is adopted in this book because ethnic hostility is not always manifested in the form of war but is frequently expressed in dis-agreements, tensions, rebellion, and sporadic or continuous violence with-out necessarily culminating in open warfare.

To a large extent the changes in the various political systems define the periods in Iraq's evolving national integration. Each period is presented as a chapter in this book. Each chapter denotes major changes in the ideological current and/or the way the political system was administered. Some periods under investigation do not represent regime change but mark major turning points in the process of national integration. The death of King Faisal I and the 1991 uprising are two examples. Classifications based on historical time periods are important for comparative purposes. Changes in the social struc-ture of Iraqi society should not be underestimated. For example, the large-scale migration from rural areas to urban centers from the 1930s onward led to the emergence of an educated urban class, which would play a vital role in strengthening and/or contributing to the resurgence of such ideological currents as Iraqi patriotism, Kurdish nationalism, socialism, communism, and pan-Arabism. The notion of time is also critical in the way Iraqi com-munities have "imagined" themselves and others. For example, during the monarchy period the "other" for most Iraqi communities and political

groups was the colonial power and/or the ruling elite. However, after the monarchy period, ethnic and sectarian groups became the other for each other.

This book consists of nine chapters. Chapter 1, "The Context of Identity in Iraq," introduces the historical and geographical background of Iraq and its people. It also lays out the problem with national identity in the context of Iraq. The modern history of Iraq is then divided into seven periods, each the focus of a chapter. The first period is considered in Chapter 2, "The Formation of Iraq," where the focus is on the fragmented nature of the Iraqi people and the complexity of Iraqi society in Iraq's pre-formation years. Chapter 3, "Faisal and the Dream of a Nation," examines the role that Faisal, the first king of Iraq, played in creating and unifying the country and appraises his successes and failures in this endeavor. The British role in shaping and sustaining Iraq during Faisal's era is also critically analyzed. The clash between Iraq's major communities after the creation of Iraq is an important theme in this chapter. Chapter 4, "The Emergence of National Integration," investigates the impact of modernization and urbanization processes on national integration. The extent to which the Iraqi people have drawn on modern ideologies to form political organizations is also scrutinized. Chapter 5, "The Failure of National Integration," examines the effects of the removal of the British on the process of national integration. It also traces the effects of these ideologies on different ethnic and sectarian groups. The main reasons for the failure of national integration are also discussed. The role of the Baath party is the subject of Chapter 6, "The Process of National Disintegration." The focus here is on the way in which the Baath party dealt with four main threats: the communists, the Kurds, the Shiites, and the army. The Baathist policies of Arabization, Sunnification, and Saddamization and their respective impacts on national unity are also explored. Chapter 7, "A Disintegrated Nation," discusses two strategies that Saddam used in his quest to maintain power: tribalism and the Faith Campaign. Attention is also given to the socioeconomic effects of the United Nations' sanctions and the subsequent mismanagement by the Iraqi government. Included is an account of the Kurdish movement to build their own state and their corresponding efforts to build their own nation following the establishment of a semi-autonomous Kurdistan region. Chapter 8, "The US Invasion: Opening Pandora's Box," is an analysis of the political developments following the United States–led invasion of Iraq and the subsequent collapse of the regime. The aim is to link the rise of sectarian violence with pre-invasion events. Chapter 9, "The Paradoxes of Nation Formation in Iraq," looks at the systemic deficiencies relating not only to nation-building, but rather to nation formation.

Notes

1. Hamdi and al-Najar, *History of Your Country*, p. 82; Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Education, *The Arab Islamic History*, pp. 76, 84, 93-96.

2. Ireland, *Iraq: A Study in Political Development*, p. 49.

3. Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 22.

4. See Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), "The World Factbook—Iraq," 2012.

5. Walker, "The Making of Modern Iraq," pp. 29-40.

6. Batatu, *The Old Social Classes*, p. 43.

7. Al-Husri, *My Memoir in Iraq*, p. 46.

8. Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, pp. 21-6; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, pp. 40-58.

9. The names in parentheses are the names for the capital city of the province. If only one name is mentioned, the names of the capital and the province are the same. Spellings for Iraqi cities and provinces may differ depending on source.

10. Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, *Iraq Since 1958*, p. 232.

11. Reuters, "Iraq Unveils Oil," 2010.

12. See Kami, "Iraq Economic Growth."

13. While many Christian families fled southern parts of Iraq and headed to the Kurdistan region for safety, recent reports indicate that the overall Christian population may have dropped by as much as 50 percent since the fall of the Saddam regime in 2003.

14. See CIA, "The World Factbook—Iraq," 2012. Most Jews were forcibly relocated to Israel in the early 1950s.

15. See Batatu, "The Shiite of Iraq." The Shiites became a majority in Iraq only during the nineteenth century. At that time most of the country's nomadic Arab tribes settled and began farming around existing major Shiite centers (Nakash, "The Shiites and the Future of Iraq," pp. 17–26; Fattah, "Identity and Difference," pp. 205–216).

16. It is difficult to find accurate figures for the ethnic and religious distribution in Iraq. The last census conducted in Iraq was in 1997. Hence, percentages rather than numbers are used.

17. For more information on the early debates between the Shiites and Sunnis, see Black, *The History of Islamic Political Thought*, pp. 14-16; and Kirmanj, "Islam, Politics, and Government," pp. 49, 50.

18. Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, p. 14.

19. McDowall, *The Modern History of the Kurds*, pp. 21–62.

20. U.S. Department of Defense, "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," (2009a), pp. 1–2; "Measuring Stability and Security," (2009b), p. iv.

21. See Iraq Body Count, "Documented Civilian Deaths."

22. See Kami, "Iraq Economic Growth," 2012; COSIT, *Drop in Unemployment*.

23. U.S. Department of Defense, "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq," (2009a) p. 25.

24. See Pei and Kasper, *Lessons from the Past*; Clark, "Key to Success"; Davis, "Democracy's Prospects;" Montgomery and Rondinelli, "A Path to Reconstruction"; Ricks, *Fiasco*; Pollack, "The Seven Deadly Sins."

25. See Davis, "Democracy's Prospects."

26. Dodge, *Inventing Iraq*, p. xxvii; Dodge, "Iraq: the Contradictions," p. 187.

27. See Terrill, "Nationalism."

28. See Matar, *The Wounded Self; Argumentation of Identities*; al-Janabi, *Iraq and Future Convoying*; al-Janabi, "The Iraqi Identity."

29. See Hoagland, "Restoring Iraqi Identity."

30. See Matar, *The Wounded Self;* Matar, *Dispute of Identities*; al-Janabi, "The Iraqi Identity."

31. See Marquardt, "Reshaping Iraq"; Marquardt, "Division of Iraq."

32. Zakaria, "How to Wage the Peace," pp. 38–49.

33. See Yaphe, "Iraqi Identity"; Yaphe, "The Three-State Solution."

34. Davis, *Memories of State*, p. 276.

35. Visser and Stansfield, *An Iraq of Its Regions*, p. 8–9.

36. Shatt al-Arab was formed by the confluence of the Euphrates and the Tigris rivers in the town of al-Qurnah in the Basra province of Iraq.

37. Al-Mawardi, *The Ordinances of Government*, p. 224.

38. Fattah, "Identity and Difference," p. 206, 212; Visser, *Basra, the Failed Gulf State*, p. 8.

39. O'Leary, "Multi-National Federalism," pp. 2, 8; Eland, *A Way Out*, p. 11.

40. See Gelb and Galbraith, "Confederation of Three Entities."

41. See Cole, "The Three-State Solution?"

42. Berwari and Ambrosio, "Kurdistan Referendum," p. 891.

43. See Gelb, "The Three-State Solution."

44. Anderson and Stansfield, *The Future of Iraq*, pp. 185, 186.

45. Marr, "Iraq's Many Challenges," p. 274.

46. See Nakash, "The Shiites and the Future of Iraq."

47. Bengio, "Nation-Building in Multiethnic Societies," pp. 149–169.

48. See Simon, "The Imposition of Nationalism."

49. See Lukitz, *Iraq: The Search*.

50. See Natali, "Manufacturing Identity."

51. Vali, "The Kurds and their 'Others,'" p. 83.

52. See Natali, "Manufacturing Identity."

53. See Simon, "The Imposition of Nationalism."

54. See Lukitz, *Iraq: The Search*.

55. See Baram, *Culture, History and Ideology.*

56. See Bengio, "Nation-Building in Multiethnic Societies."

57. Rotberg, "The New Nature," p. 85.

58. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, p. 2; Smith, *National Identity*, p. 99.

59. See Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*.

60. Guibernau, "Anthony D. Smith on Nations," p. 132.

61. Seton-Watson, *Nations and States*, p. 1; Guibernau, "Anthony D. Smith on Nations," pp. 131–135.

62. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, p. 73.

63. Hroch, "From National Movement," pp. 78–97.

64. These indicators are predominantly based on indicators suggested by Rawi Abdelal and his colleagues in "Treating Identity as a Variable," pp. 11, 12.

65. Pan-Arabism is a movement for unifying the peoples and countries of the Arab world from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf. It is closely connected to Arab nationalism, which promotes the idea that the Arabs constitute a single nation. "Pan-Arab nationalism," "pan-Arabism," and "Arab nationalism" are terms used to refer to the same ideological current.