

IIST IRAQ SURVEY Report - 2012

Opinions and Trends in the Kurdistan Region & Kirkuk

Executive Summary

The following report is derived from a late-October 2011 survey conducted by IIST teams on the ground in seven Iraqi cities. From those, the focus is on three strategic cities, namely Erbil, Sulaymaniya, and Kirkuk, and their constituent's attitudes revolving around (I) political orientation, (II) social identity, and (III) the priority of major issues. As this is the first survey in the Kurdistan Region, it serves as a marker for comparative analysis for future surveys.

Survey Methodology

The survey size included 650 respondents throughout Iraq (50 in Erbil, 50 in Sulaymaniya, and 55 in Kirkuk). In terms of survey design, a questionnaire asked (I) who will you vote for in the coming national elections, (II) which social identity do you best associate with, and (III) what are the most important problems/issues requiring attention? The sample was organized along gender (male and female), age group (18-27, 28-37, 38-47, 48-57, and 58+), class (lower, middle, and upper); and in the case of Kirkuk, along ethnicity and religion/sect (Arab Sunni, Arab Shi'a, Kurd, Turkman, and Christian).

Participant Demographics

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Cities | Erbil Sulaymaniya Kirkuk Mosul Baghdad Najaf Basra |
| Gender | Male: 72% Female: 28% |
| Class | Upper: 7% Middle: 38% Lower: 55% |
| Age | 18-27: 45% 28-37: 31% 38-47: 14% 48-57: 6% 58+: 4% |
| Ethnicity | Arab Sunni: 19% Arab Shi'a: 44% Kurd: 20% Christian: 12% Turkoman: 3% Other: 3% |

I. Who Will You Vote For in the Next National Election?

- i. *Al-Dawa*
- ii. The Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq
- iii. *Al-Iraqiya*
- iv. The Kurdistan Alliance

- v. Other (Party, Organization – specify)
- vi. I will not vote
- vii. I do not know

The political orientation of the respondents draws several important considerations. Above all, the Kurdistan Alliance (KA) enjoys a majority in all three cities, although Iyad Allawi's *al-Iraqiya* is relatively strong in Kirkuk. The KA maintains support by more women (60%) than by men (46%). Most striking with the class category is that 47% of the upper class will not vote and that 63% of the lower class prefers the Kurdistan List. It seems the older the age, the more the favorability sides with the KA. 18-27 has the greatest spread across the board and the least support, relatively, for the KA.

II. Which social identity do you best associate with?

- i. Arab
- ii. Iraqi
- iii. Kurdish
- iv. Islamic
- v. Liberal
- vi. Tribal

With which ethnicity or nationality does the citizenry identify most? As expected, the Kurdish identity (iii) holds the strongest in this group, however to a slightly lesser extent in Kirkuk. Females are more likely to identify themselves as Kurdish than men, and the 18-37 age group holds the strongest sense of Kurdish identity.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, the tribal identity (vi) faces the largest opposition (although there is slight uncertainty in Kirkuk). The lower class has some sympathy to tribal identifications, and the greatest resistance is found in the 18-27 age group.

In terms of Arab nationalism (i), respondents in Erbil and Sulaymaniya disagree with it, however in Kirkuk, the identity is strong. Most of those that identify with Arab nationalism come from the upper class. Along the same trend, the Iraqi identity (ii) is rejected in Erbil and Sulaymaniya, but strongly established in Kirkuk. Again, the upper

class is more likely to agree with Iraqi nationalism, and those aged 38+ hold greater Iraqi sentiments (50%+), whereas the 18-37 age group mainly disagree.

The final two categories maintain an array of trends. Identifying with liberal thoughts (v), those in Erbil mainly agree with it, whereas Sulaymaniya respondents disagree and those in Kirkuk are unsure. Slightly more men hold liberal tendencies than women, and the upper and middle classes favor liberalism more than the lower class. The Islamic identity (iv) is unfavorable in Erbil, but strongly preferred in Sulaymaniya, and divided in Kirkuk. The lower classes are more likely to agree, and the greatest disassociation with the Islamic identity falls in the 58+ age group (75%).

III. What are the Most Important Problems/Issues Requiring Attention

- i. Promoting National Unity
- ii. Establishing Federal Decentralization
- iii. Eliminating Financial and Administrative Corruption
- iv. Resolving the Problems between the Central Government and the KRG
- v. Achieving National Reconciliation
- vi. Ensuring Complete Withdrawal of US Troops
- vii. Eliminating the Sectarian Confrontation
- viii. Proving Social Welfare and Insurance
- ix. Ensuring Non-Political Interference by Religious Authorities
- x. Ensuring Non-Political Interference by Tribal Leaders
- xi. Ensuring Non-Political Interference by Neighboring Countries
- xii. Reconstructing within the Framework of a Free-Market Economy

In this section, the question asks the respondent to prioritize which issue is identified as important, or in other words, which issue requires immediate addressing. The highest ranking problem, in terms of perceived importance in all three cities, is corruption (iii) – the level of importance is strongest in Sulaymaniya. Considering income level, the significance of corruption, as held by the citizens in the three cities, decreases slightly for the upper class. Along that line, corruption is of relatively increased importance for those aged 28-57.

The center-periphery problem (iv), that is, between the KRG and Baghdad, is also seen as very important in all three cities. More men than women, however, prioritize this problem.

Then come several issues also considered important, albeit to a lesser extent than the two above. Removal of the sectarian confrontation (vii) is held as significant in all three cities, and increasingly so with the 38+ age group. The problem of social welfare (viii), perceived as very important in all three cities, is of most relative importance for the lower and middle classes. National unity (i) is also seen as significant, least so in Sulaymaniya, and the matter is of greater importance in the older age groups. Then, the problem of political interference, by either religious authorities (ix), tribal leaders (x), or neighboring countries (xi), are generally seen as very important in Sulaymaniya and Kirkuk, but the consensus in Erbil is mixed. The latter two have a comparative higher perceived importance by males, and are considered less important by the lower class.

Finally, making the bottom of the list in terms of perceived essentialness includes economic reconstruction within a free-market economy (xii), which maintains slight hesitations in terms of importance in Erbil, and is seen as more important by the upper class. The question of national reconciliation (v), however, enjoys highest priority in Erbil. Within that, males express more emphasis and this issue resonates higher with the lower class. US troop withdrawal (vi), still relevant at the time of this survey, is considered fairly important, particularly in Erbil. Women give this problem slightly greater weight. It is also most important for the lower class.

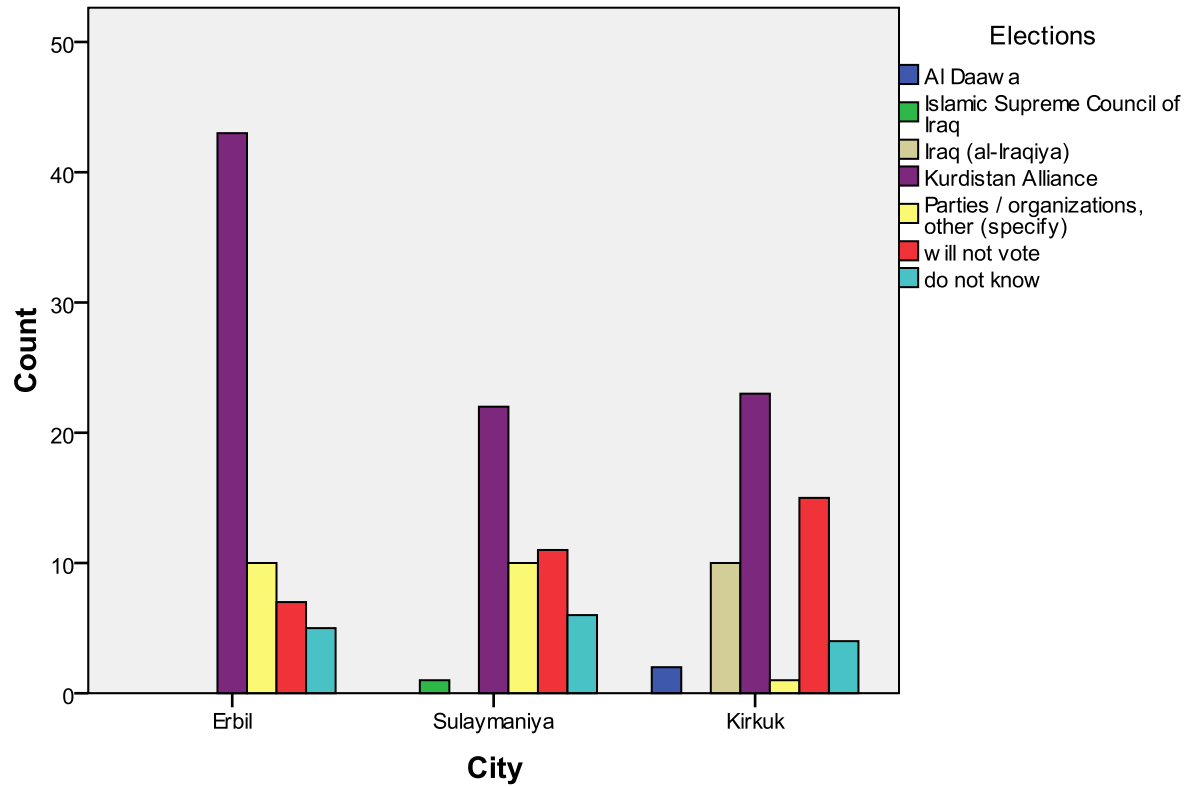
Preliminary Conclusions

This is the first survey conducted in the Kurdistan Region that gauges public opinion and trends as held by citizens in the three major cities. The importance, then, lies in the next step of conducting a follow-up survey (planned for October 2012) to analyze changes in attitude and outlook – allowing for comparative analysis that may lead to concrete findings important for policy-making.

APPENDIX A: Charts

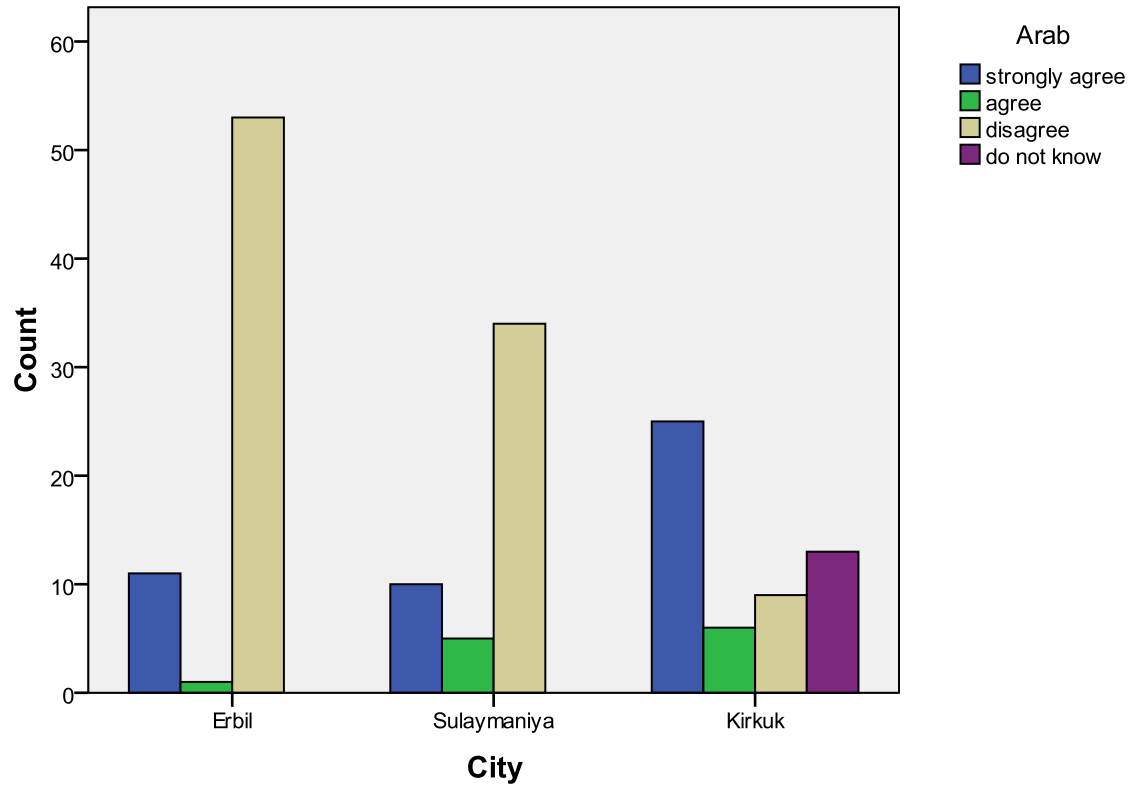
I. Who Will You Vote For in the Coming National Elections?

Bar Chart

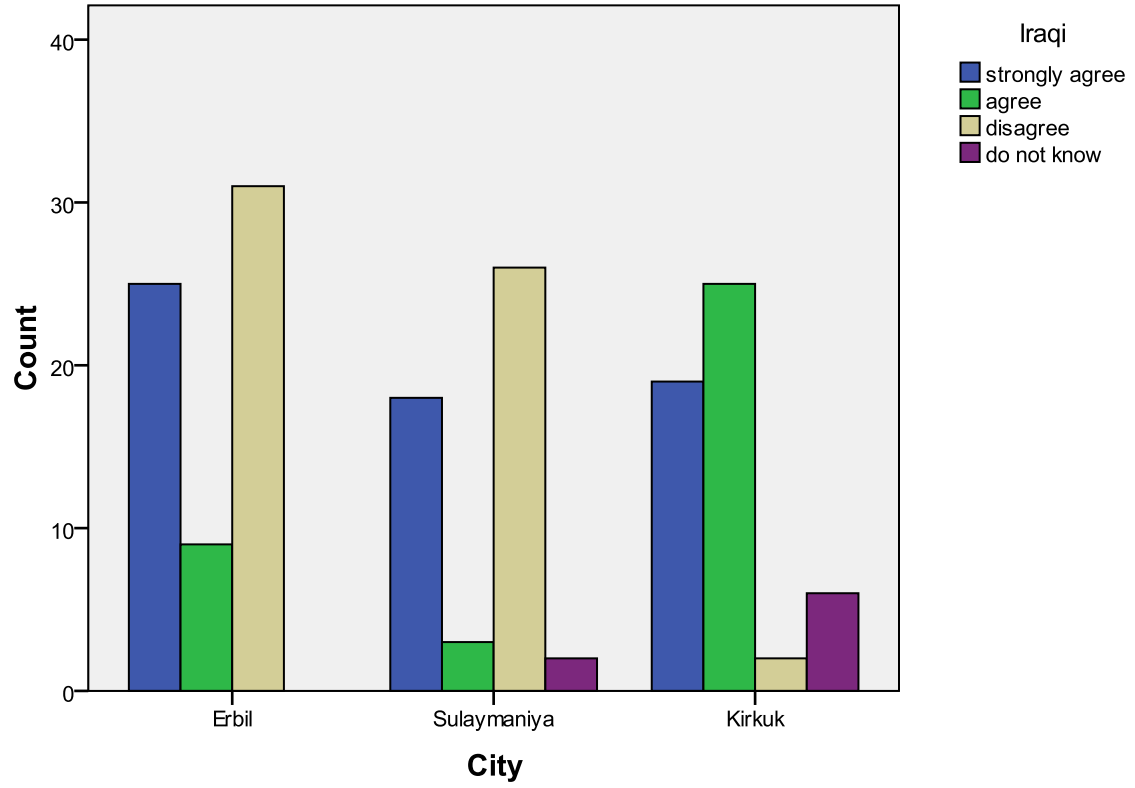


II. Which Social Identity Do You Best Associate With?

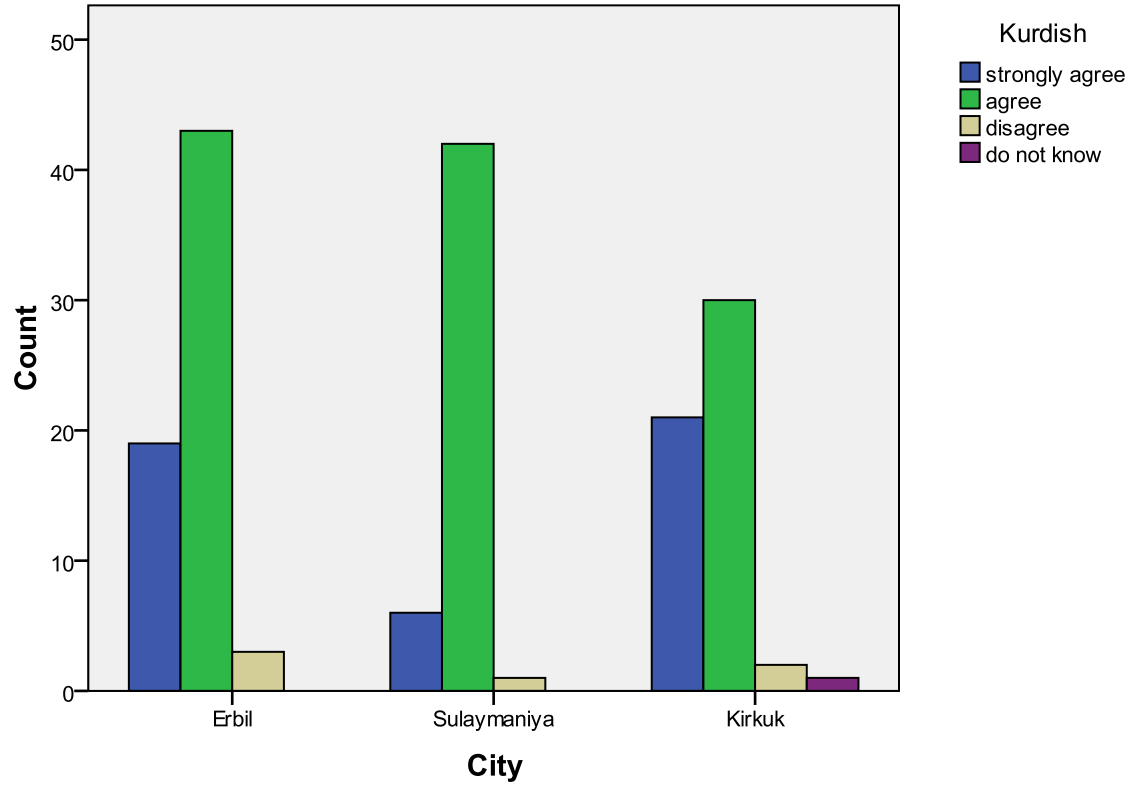
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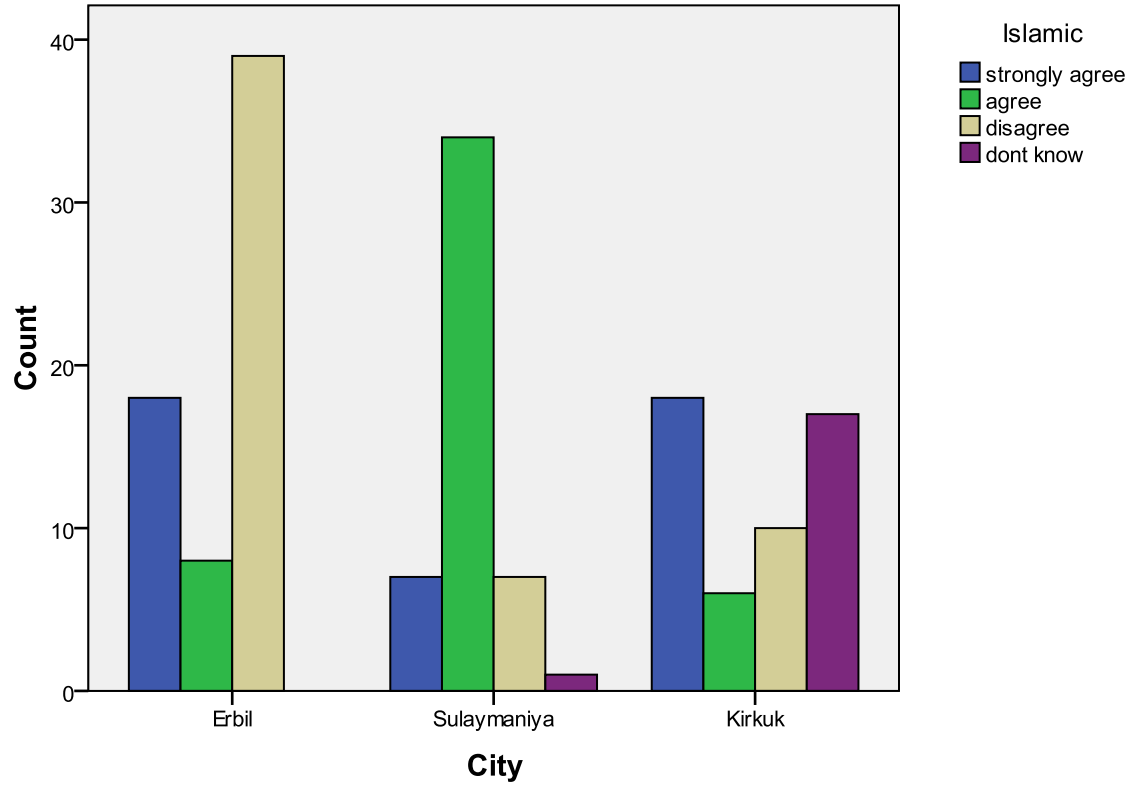
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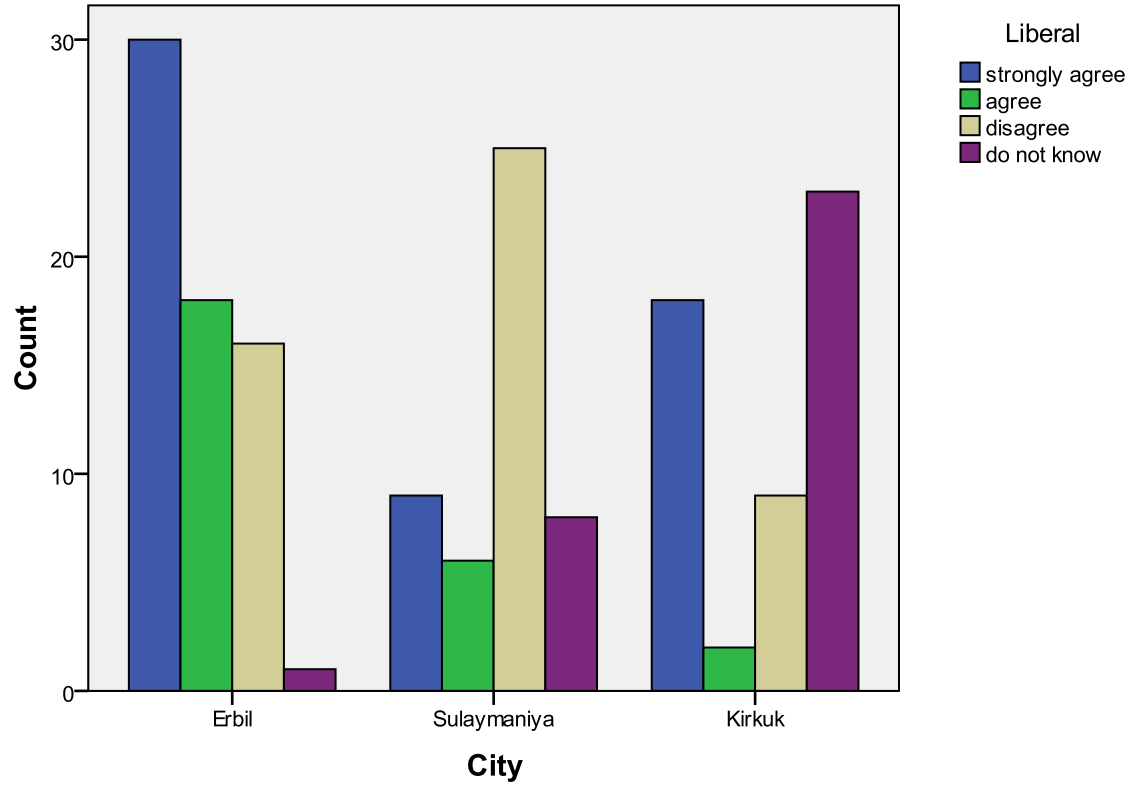
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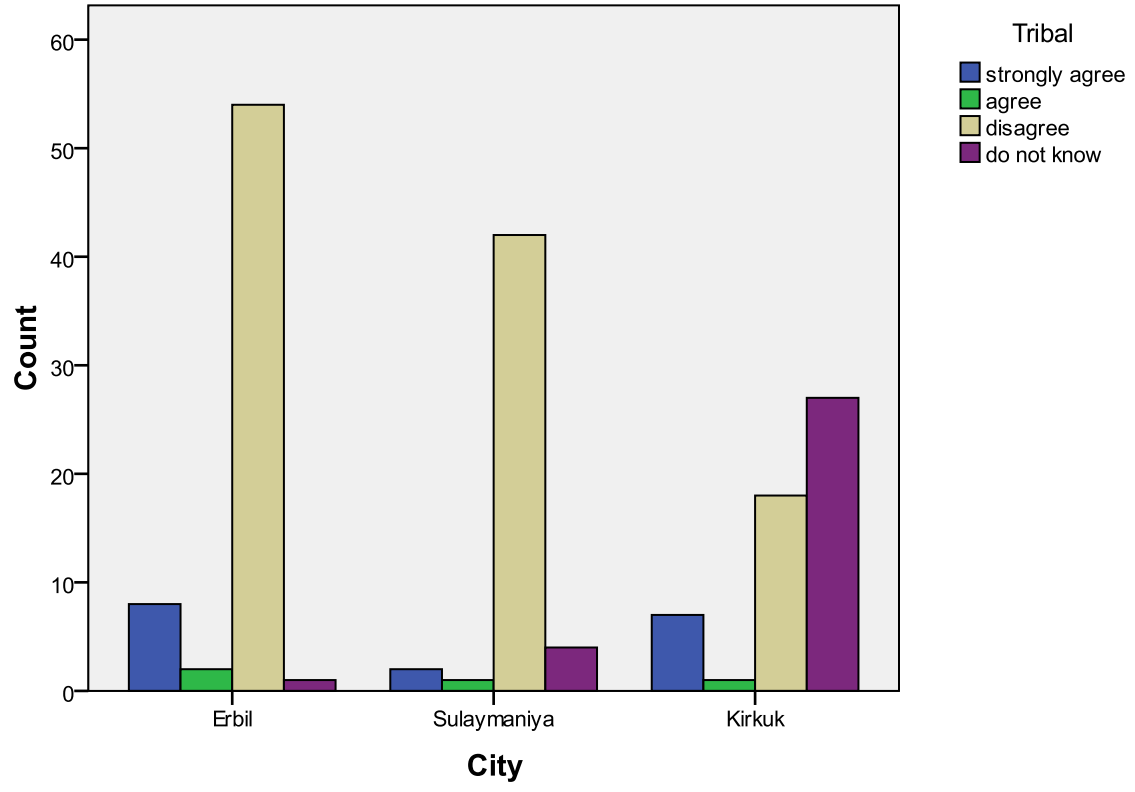
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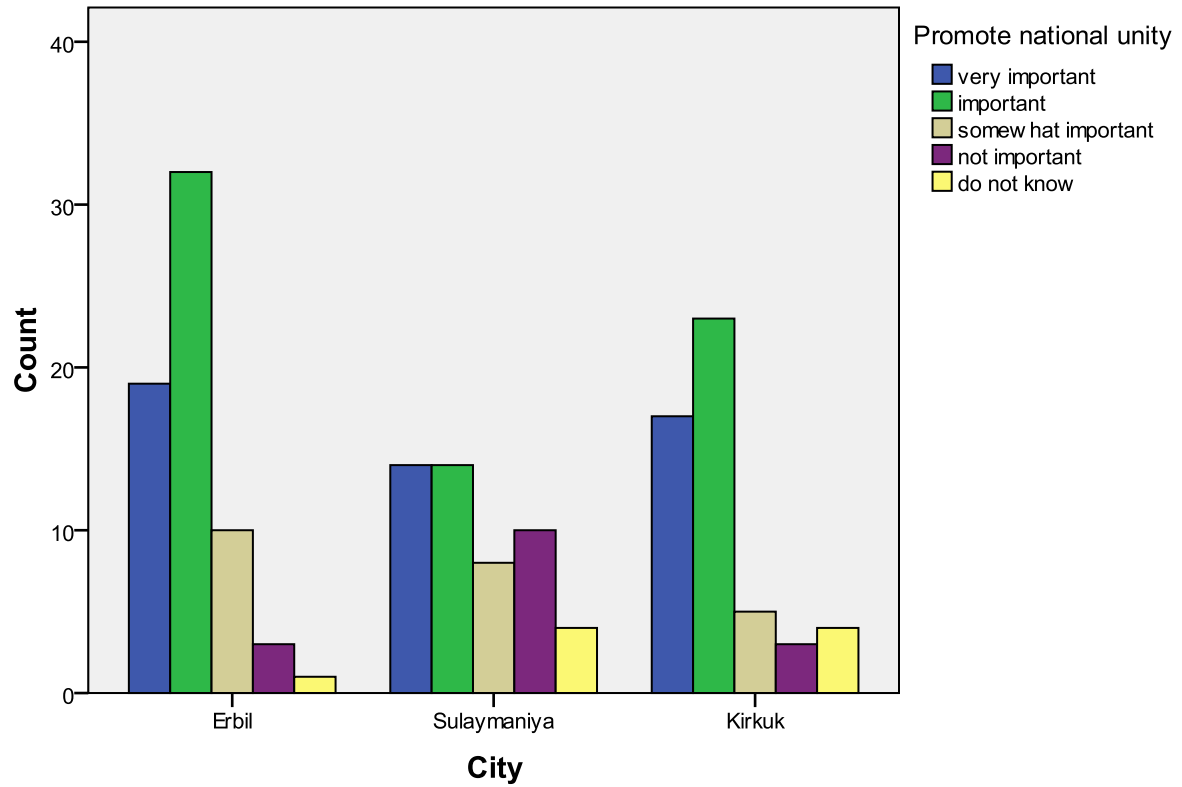


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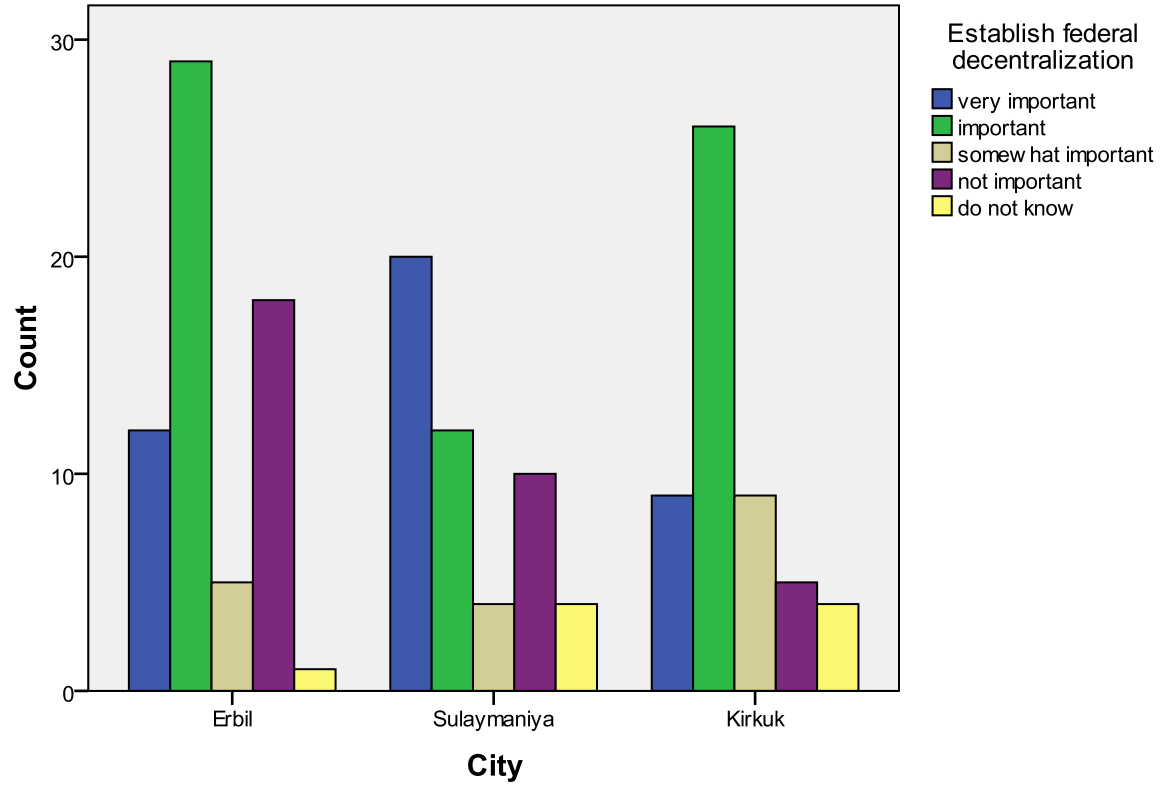


III. What Are the Most Important Problems/Issues Requiring Attention?

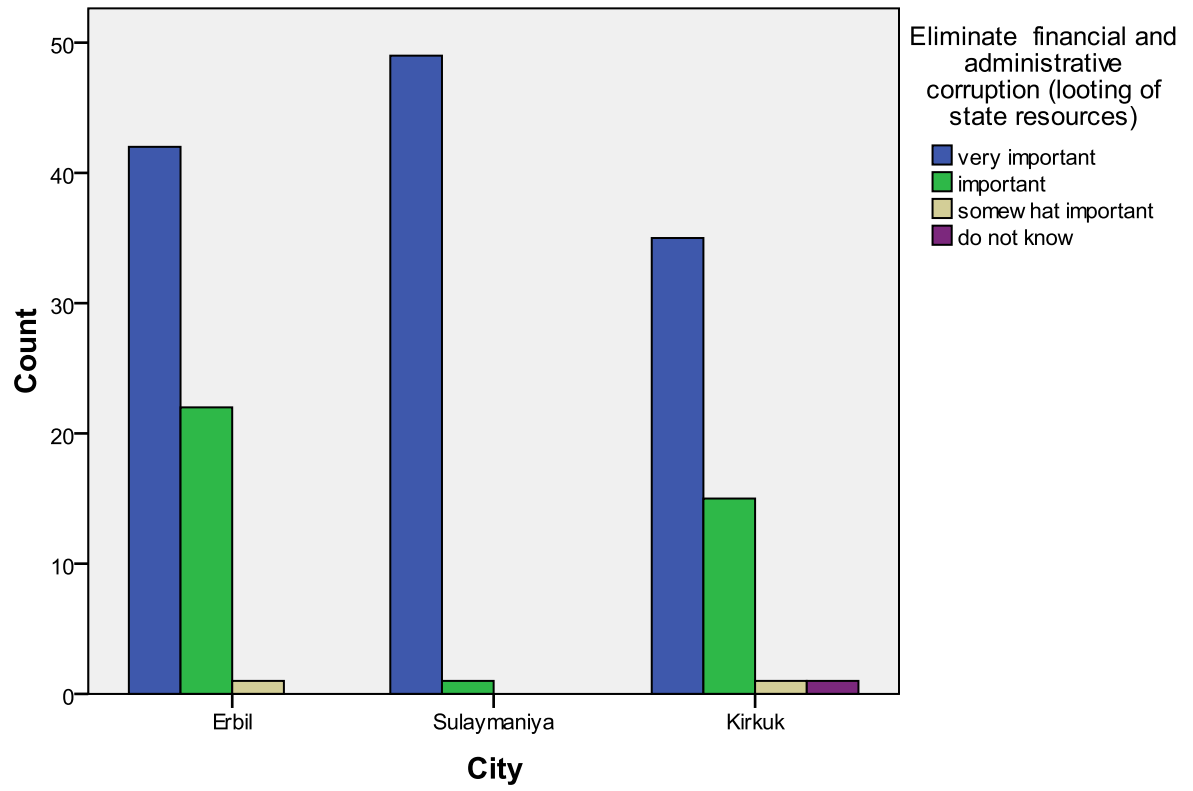
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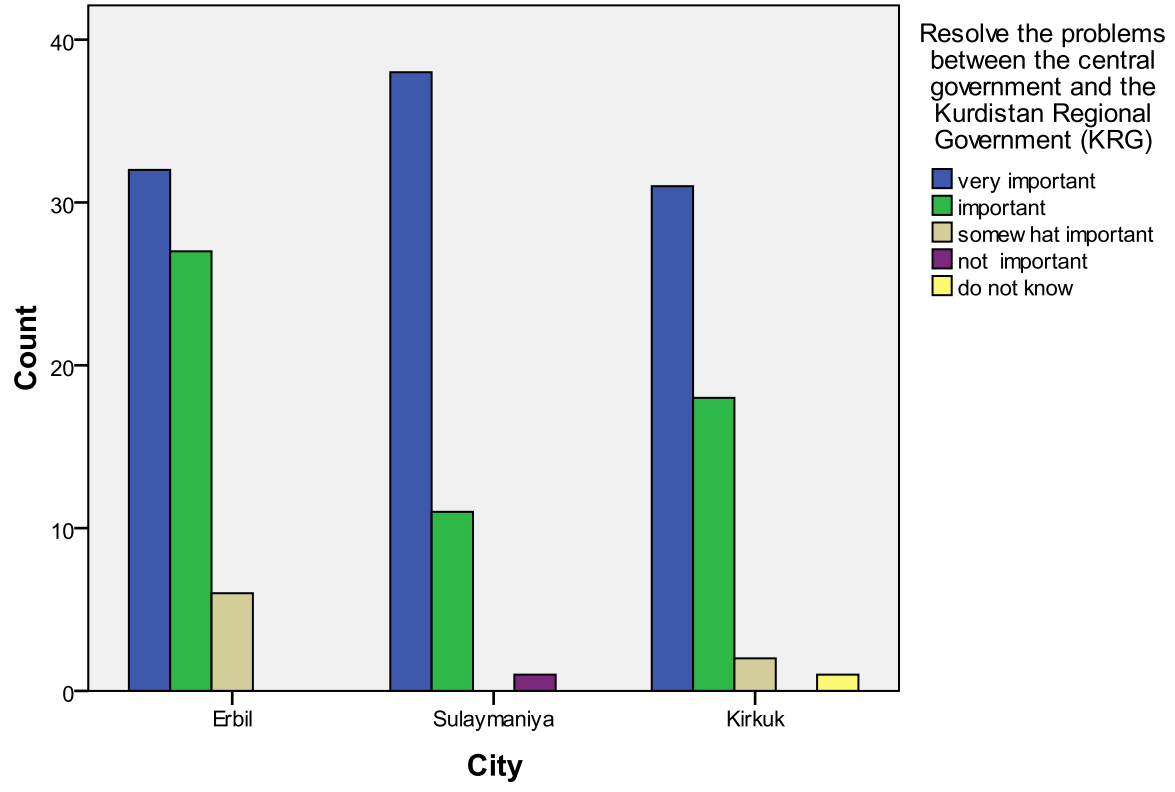
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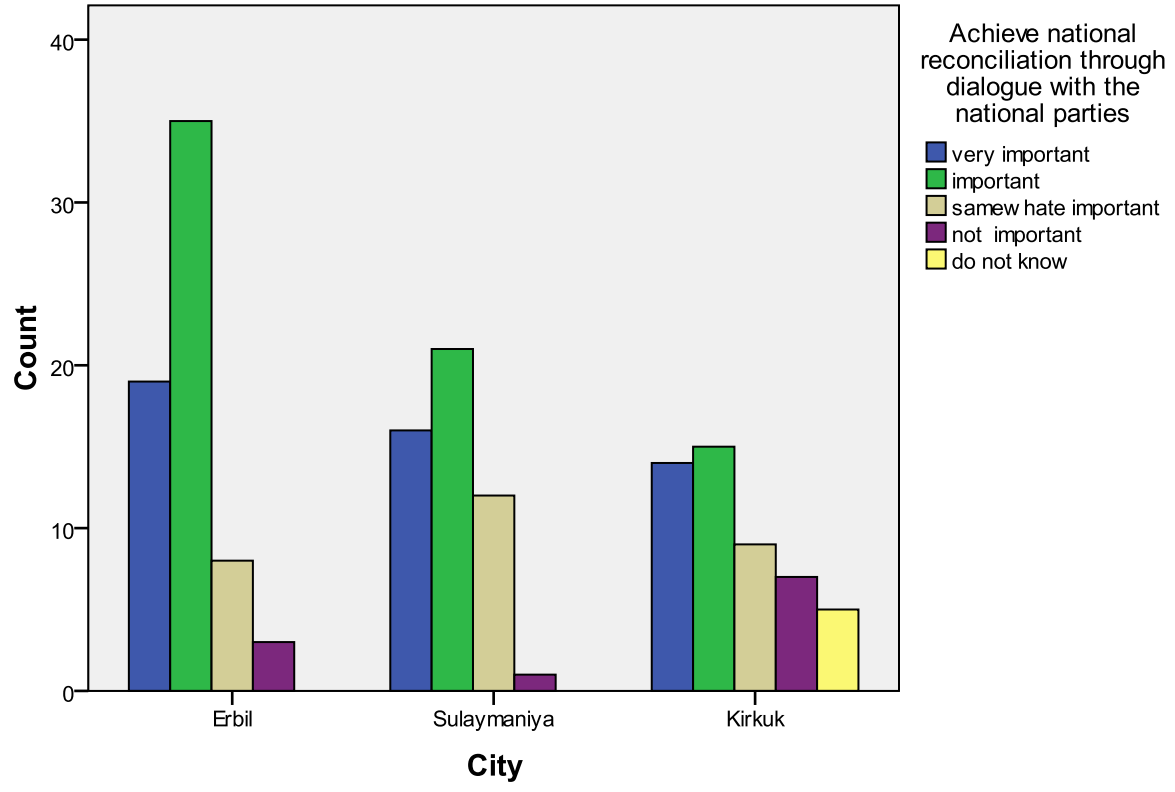
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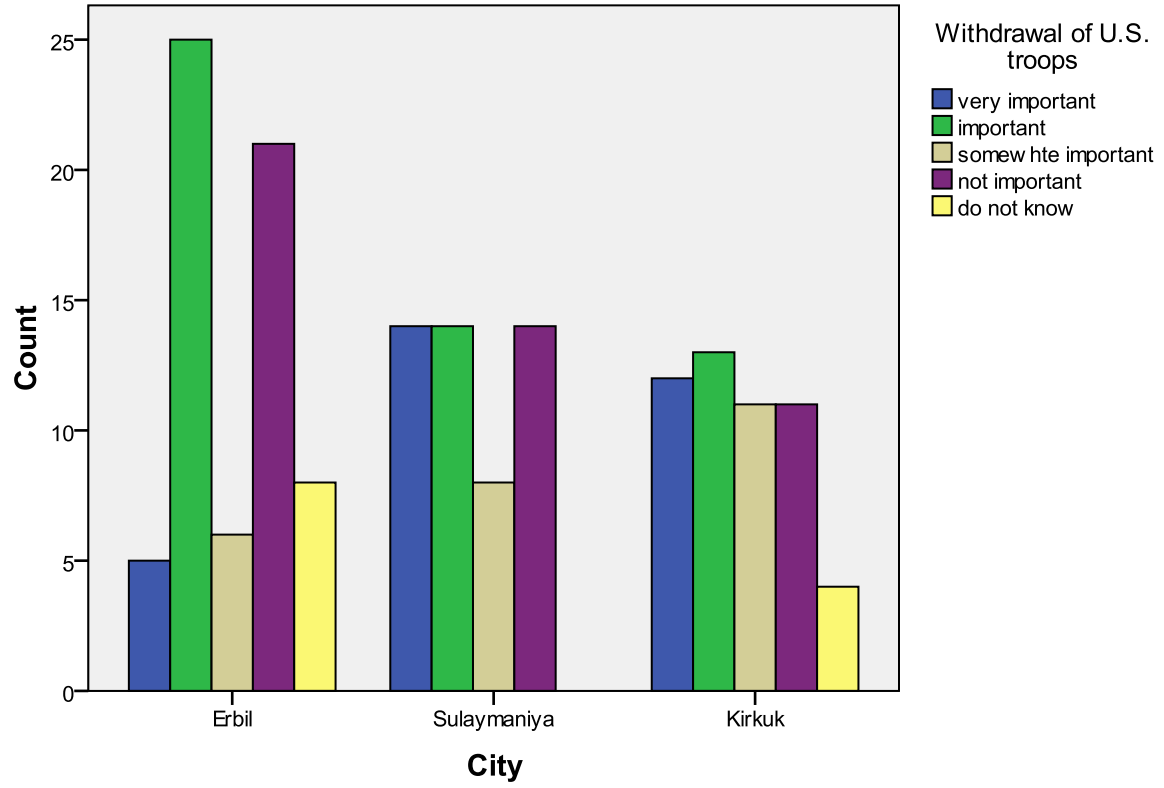
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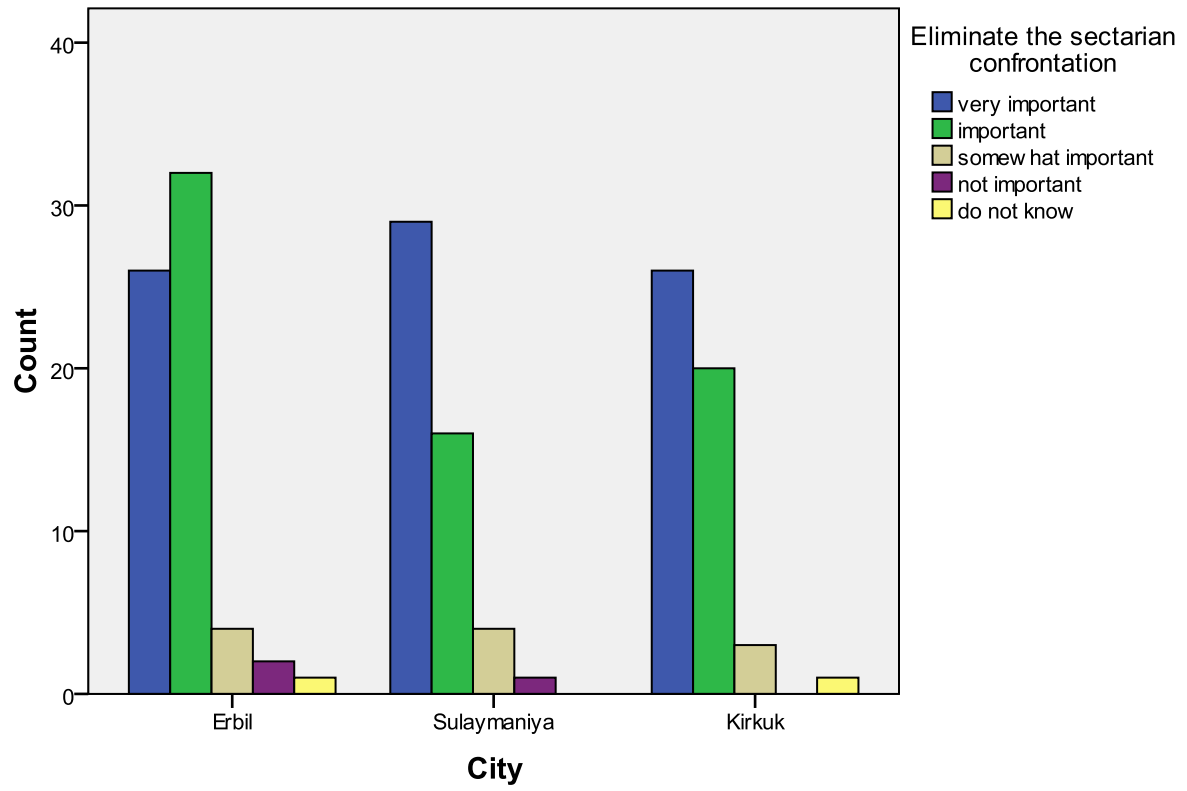
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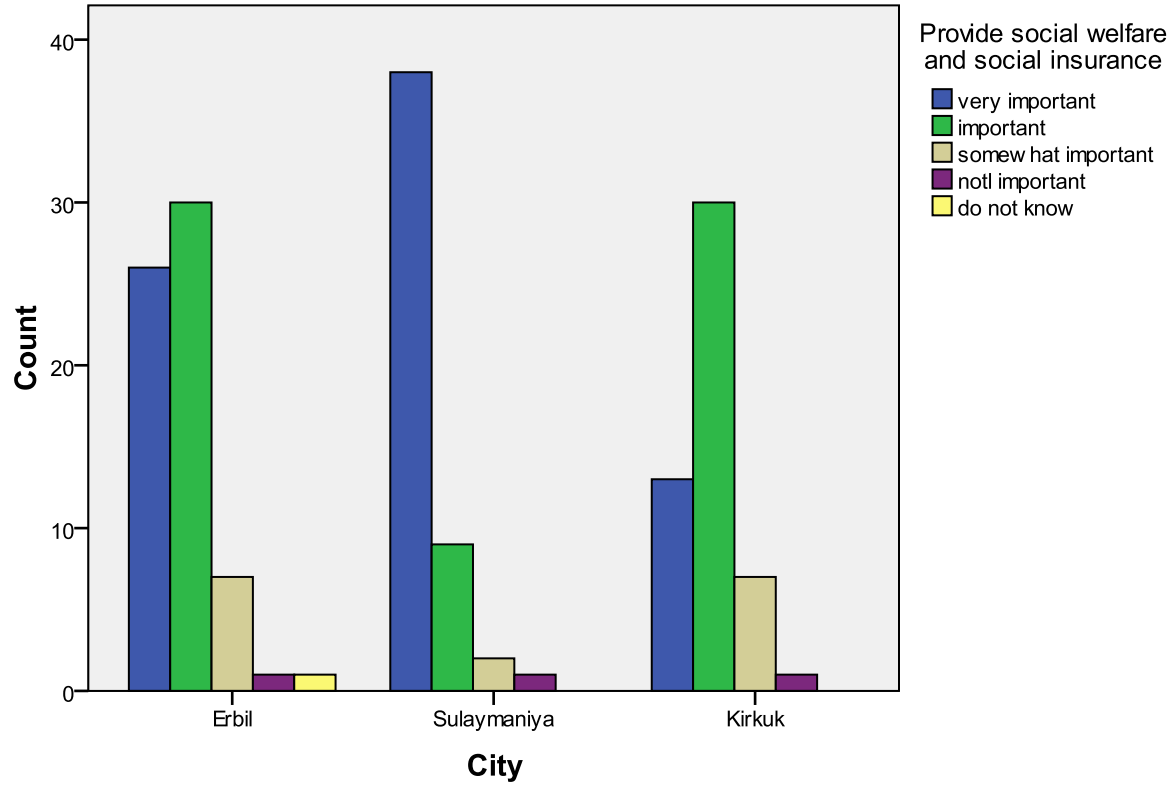
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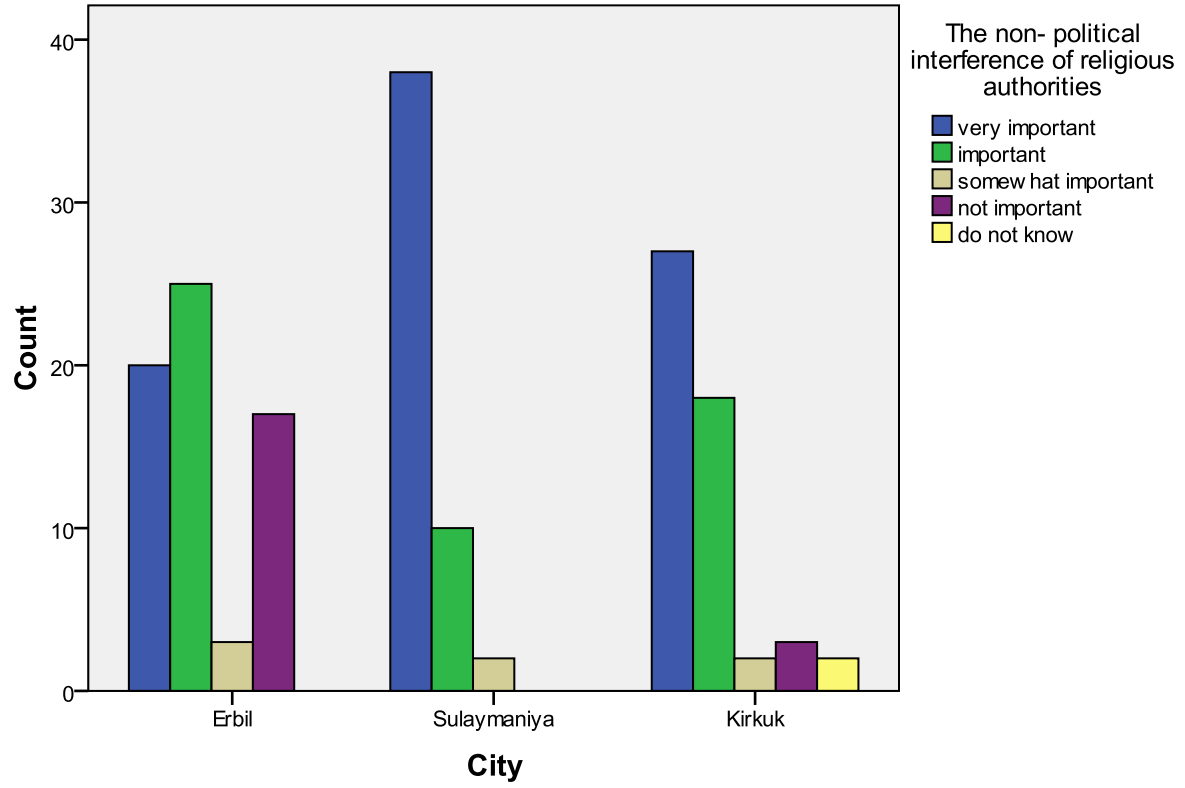
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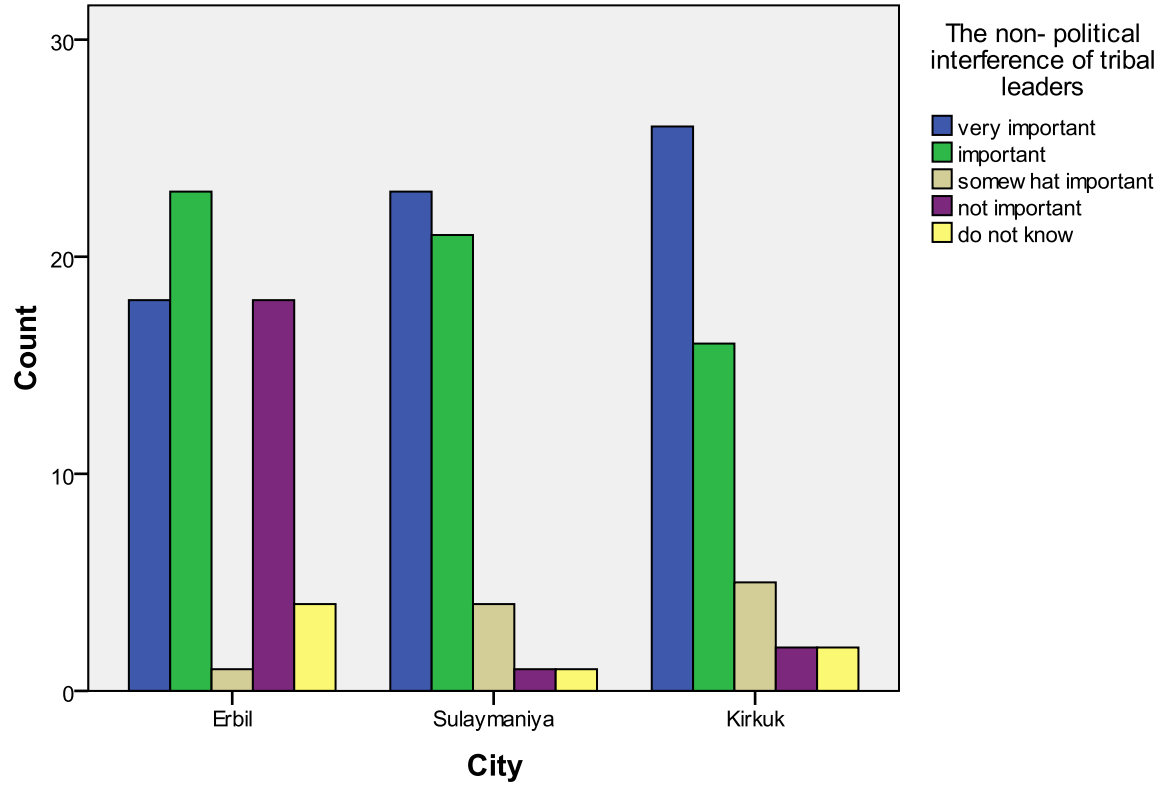
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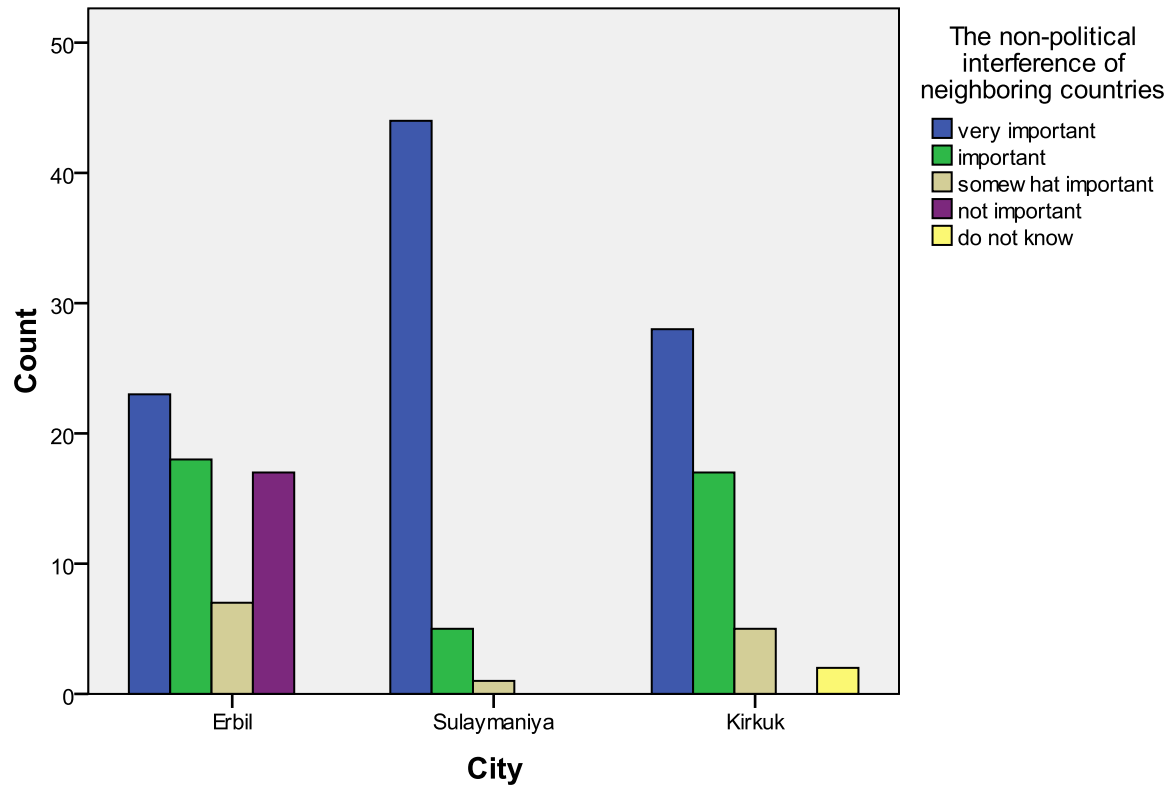
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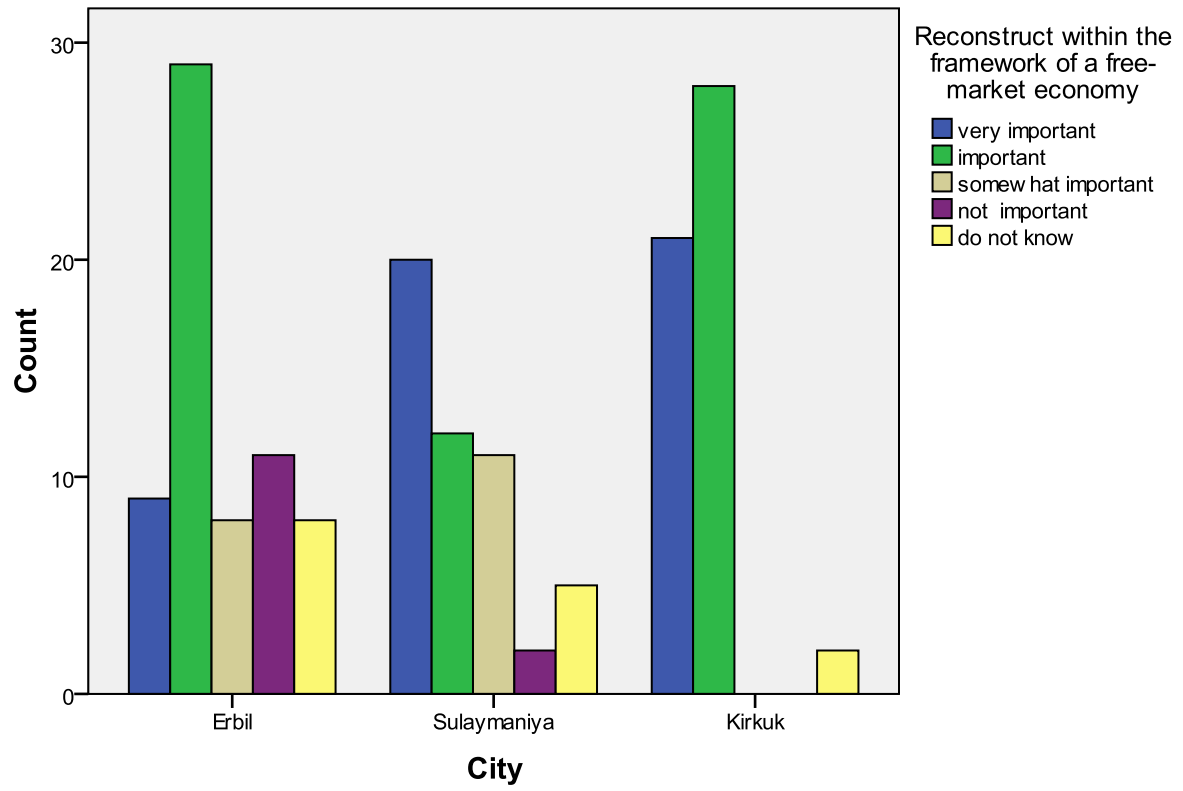
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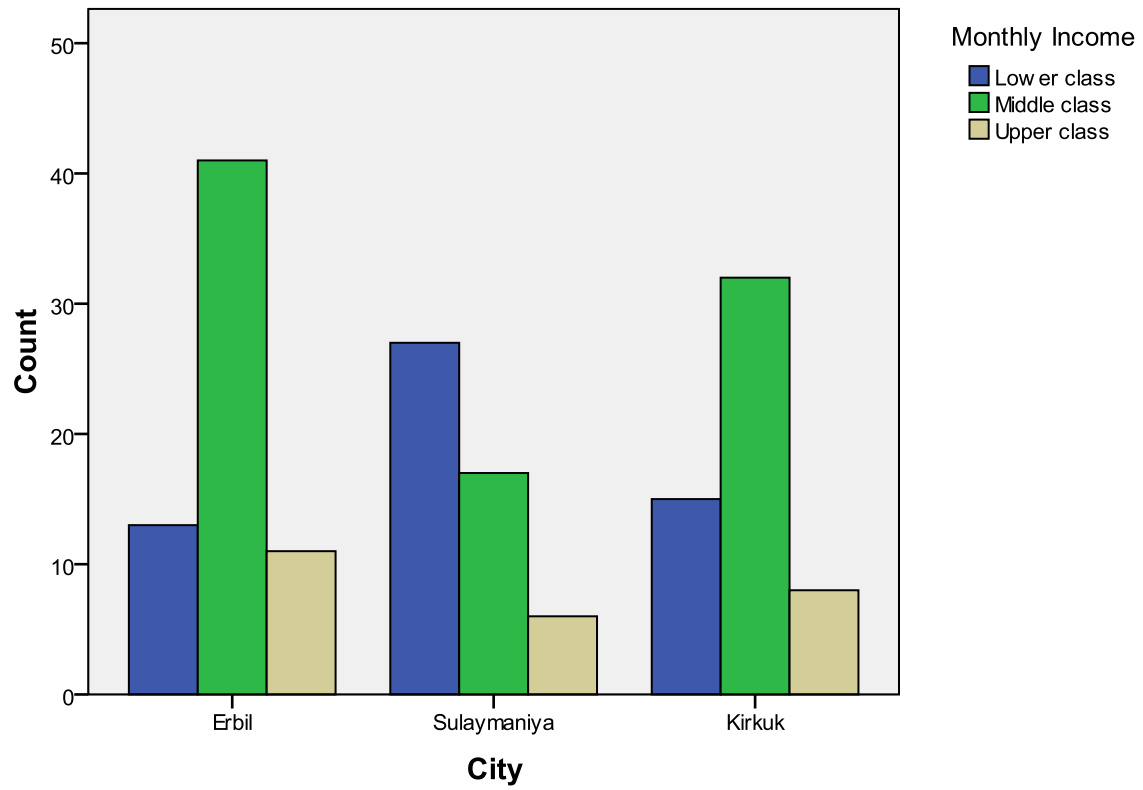


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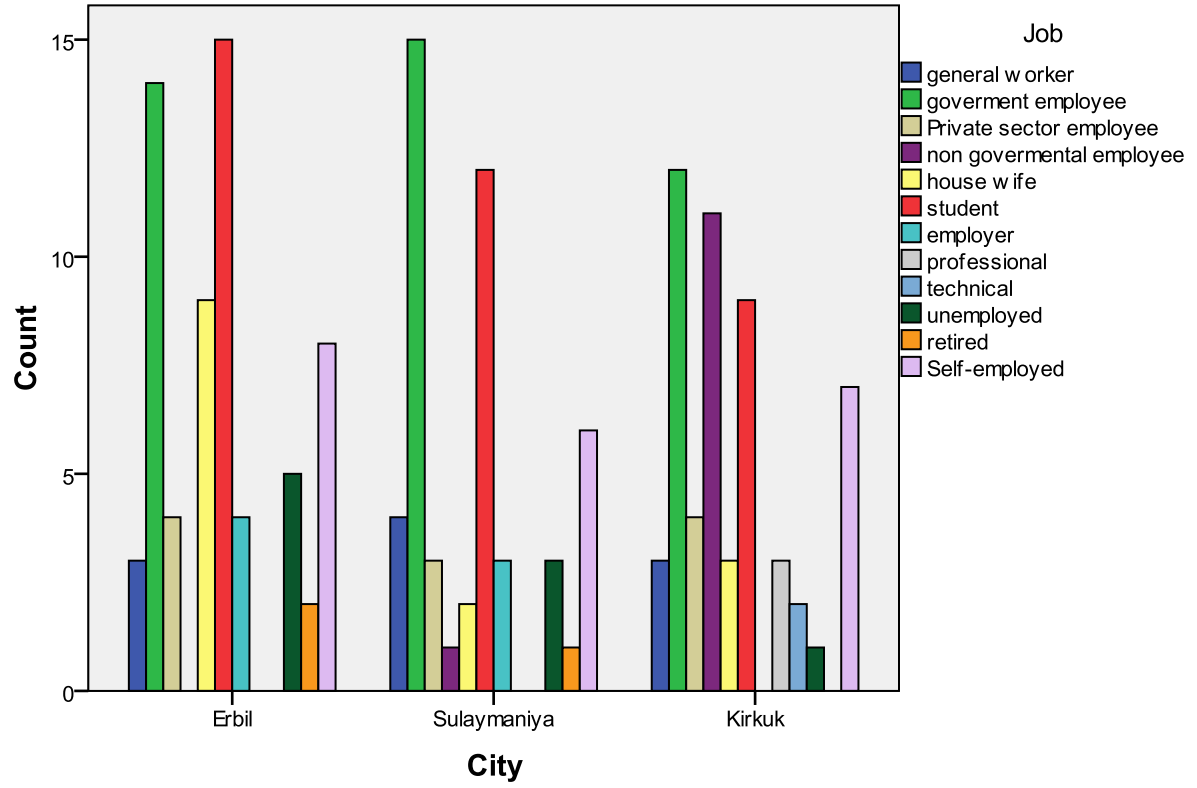


APPENDIX B: Demographic Charts (of respondents)

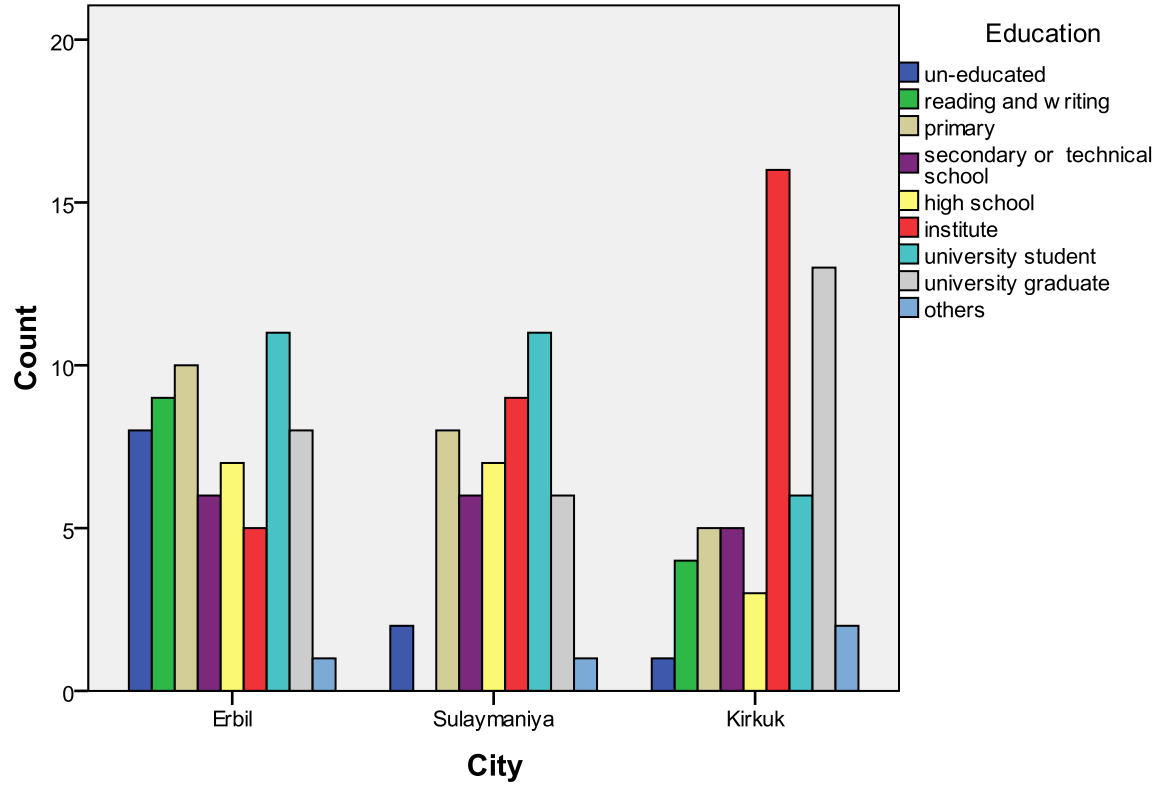
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