

The Role of Political Parties in Parliamentary Systems: Iraqi Parties Case Study

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Abstract: *This research seeks to determine the effect of political parties on parliamentary systems in Iraq; parties play a key role in influencing and shaping decision-making, focusing on the Iraqi situation as a model. The research reviews the challenges facing Iraqi parties, such as the sectarian and ethnic division, which led to their weak ability to interact positively with society. It also indicates that many parties lack clear and effective programs, which negatively affects their ability to achieve the desired change. Parties play a pivotal role in the formation of governments, and corruption and exclusionary practices have a negative impact on the democratic process. At the end of the study, suggestions are made for how to make political parties work better. These include building a stronger sense of national identity and making programs that cover everyone's needs. This will help make the Iraqi parliamentary system more stable and effective.*

Keywords: Parliamentary Systems, Political Parties, Political Pluralism, Elections, Political System

Introduction

In contemporary democracies, political parties exist to minimize transaction costs in election, parliamentary, and governing contexts while also addressing the collective action challenge. In most countries, political parties serve as the primary tool for implementing the constitutional framework of political delegation and responsibility. Public officeholders representing political parties serve as the agents of the extra-parliamentary party organization. To mitigate agency loss, parties utilize internal processes and institutionalize party rights inside public regulations, employing a comprehensive array of ex-ante and ex-post methods, unlike US parties. The influence of the party diminishes as one moves deeper down the delegation hierarchy (Müller, 2000). Political parties are broadly seen as instruments of modern democracies. The incorporation of political parties into the political framework and the presence of competing parties can assist authoritarian regimes in transitioning to democracy and promote the endurance of democratic systems (Kędzia & Hauser, 2011). Nevertheless, there exists some scepticism regarding these organizations – "It is equally apparent that, whereas scholars have repeatedly articulated optimistic expectations for the pivotal functions of parties in a democratic society, they have equally often been bewildered by the complexities of party politics." Certain evaluations extend farther, forecasting the demise of what was formerly termed the "party state." public opinion in most democratic systems is characterized by pervasive dissatisfaction with and distrust of political parties, and there is much debate in academic circles about the obsolescence or decline of parties (Webb et al., 2002)

Parties are fundamental to the structures of political systems in general and parliamentary systems in particular, as they contribute to organizing political life and directing public opinion. These parties play a role in strengthening the electoral process and democracy by representing the interests of citizens. In the Iraqi context, the history of political parties reflects complex developments influenced by the political and social transformations that the country has witnessed over the decades. After 2003, Iraq witnessed the emergence of a number of parties seeking to participate in building a democratic state, which added new dimensions to the parliamentary experience. However, the work of these parties faces multiple challenges, including sectarianism, corruption, and weak institutions, which affect their ability to achieve the pillars

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of stability and contribute to the development process. Therefore, parties in Iraq play an important role in influencing institutions and decision-making in the state, given their direct impact on public, political, and social life. In Iraq, political parties play a crucial role in expressing the aspirations and opinions of the people. However, the party scene is complex due to the country's political and social history, as well as regional and international influences. This raises questions about the effectiveness of these parties in achieving democracy and stability. This research aims to investigate how Iraqi parties influence the decision-making process in Iraq's parliamentary system. This research aims to analyze the role of Iraqi parties in the parliamentary system, explore how they influence decision-making, and examine their role in enhancing political participation. It also seeks to provide a comprehensive vision of the challenges facing these parties and possible ways to enhance their role in building a stable political future for Iraq.

The study will be divided into two parts. The first part will address the concept of parties, their types, and their role in political life. The second part will address the most important Iraqi political parties, their role under the parliamentary system, and their impact on political and social life.

Literature review

Political parties

The Conceptual Framework for Parties and their Role in Political Life

Parties are institutions that form the core of political life in modern societies. They act as a link between citizens and the state, expressing their interests and aspirations and contributing to the formation of public policies. A party is defined as a group of individuals who agree on a set of political principles and goals and work together to achieve them through electoral and democratic processes. The role of parties at the political level goes beyond being part of the electoral process; they work to educate citizens and promote political participation. Parties also contribute to organizing political discussions and developing programs and policies that reflect the needs of society. Parties also play a vital role in forming governments, as they are considered one of the main factors in determining who holds power and implements policies. Thanks to the multiplicity of parties, a balance of power can be achieved, which enhances democracy and limits tyranny. However, the effectiveness of political parties may be affected by several factors, such as corruption, sectarian division, and economic and social challenges. Therefore, studying the role of parties in political life is essential to understanding how to promote democracy and the stability of political systems in different countries.

According to Duverger (2012), political parties are voluntary associations or organized groupings of persons with the same political ideologies seeking to attain political power by constitutional methods while aiming to further the national interest. Political parties are essential for democracy to flourish, as they provide regular constitutional opportunities for changing governing officials and allow the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions (Lipset, 2000). The rise of democracy, universal suffrage, and expanded rights led to the development of political parties. As political councils gained power and independence, members naturally grouped together based on shared interests and goals to work more effectively. The growth of voting further fueled this development, creating a need for organizations to connect voters with candidates and influence their choices. Modern political parties first emerged in representative systems, starting in Great Britain and the United States, and later in 18th-century France, as representatives formally met within councils. The expansion of voting and political participation necessitated the creation of new organizational structures to support this growth (Schlesinger & Schlesinger, 2006). Since parties play a major role in government and authority, they are important indicators of system development, democracy, and their political influence in the state. Therefore, they are among the most important elements that indicate the democratic process and a pillar of its practice. The party is a licensed and legal organization whose members work to reach power or authority through peaceful means, and party candidates generally seek to reach and participate in its management (Nazzal, 2015). A political party is a group of people who share similar ideas about how a country should be governed. They work together to achieve specific goals, such as winning elections and influencing government policies. Parties provide a platform for people to express their political views and engage with the government on matters of public interest. They are essentially organizations that allow individuals to participate in public affairs, notably by nominating candidates for elections (Al-Khalayleh et al., 2020).

The party is a social entity engaged in actions designed to benefit the group, indicating the involvement of individuals striving to fulfil significant roles within their social unit and pursuing a defined objective related to the existence of its members.

Kinds of Political Parties

Parties are divided into two basic types, which are manifested in:

- i. **Framework and cadre parties:** These parties are dominated by groups of active political elites, and they crystallized in Europe and America during the nineteenth century. During that period, only taxpayers and landowners had the right to vote in these countries. Therefore, the political influence of the newly elected was limited, as the influence was confined to a small segment of influential people, and the role of most voters was limited to being spectators only, not actual participants. Liberal and conservative parties dominated European politics in the nineteenth century, as they exercised their power through parliamentary electoral activity that provided moral and material support to candidates during elections, in addition to maintaining continuous contact with elected officials and voters (Al-Khaiqani et al., [2017](#)). These parties still dominate the European political scene, relying on small committees linked to the centre without seeking to expand their membership base or attract large popular groups. Rather, they focus their efforts on gathering and attracting figures and direct their entire activity toward elections and parliamentary arrangements, the management of which remains in the hands of deputies. The framework party is not interested in political problems, as doctrine or ideology plays a weak role within it. Membership depends on benefits and knowledge, and the party benefits from gifts and donations provided by money lenders, merchants, industrial institutions, or banks. This distinguishes the framework party, which usually represents the bourgeois right, from other parties. The framework party does not need to absorb the masses, whether financially or politically because it is based on the elite, financiers, and notables.
- ii. **Mass Parties:** Mass parties emerged in Western countries with the spread of socialism and then communism. Socialist parties were the pioneers in inventing this form of party organization at the beginning of the twentieth century. Later, communist and fascist parties adopted the mass party model with minor modifications to the system. In fact, some conservative, liberal, and Christian parties tried to imitate this model, abandoning the minority party system. As for socialist mass parties, most of them adopted the mass form, as the British Labor Party began accepting direct membership in 1927, which made it consist of two formations: an indirect formation that includes prominent members from unions or associations and a direct formation that includes the public who join the party without the conditions of belonging to a union or a specific affiliation. The reasons for the emergence of mass parties go back to urgent financial motives. Unlike right-wing parties that did not face financial problems due to their members being able to finance them, left-wing parties suffered from a lack of funding. To address this problem, leftist parties sought to attract as many members as possible, paying annual or monthly subscriptions to finance the party treasury, especially since they could not rely on the support of the wealthy, and their candidates were unable to finance election campaigns and cover party expenses. Therefore, these parties found themselves forced to collect small subscriptions from a broad base of ordinary citizens (Luna & Vommaro, 2021)

The Role of Parties in Constitutional Systems

The term "party" refers to pluralism in terms of diversity of ideologies, viewpoints, programs, and methods. A party represents certain opinions and ideas that complement each other in a way that is distinct from interest groups, unions, and civil society groups that focus on narrow interests. Parties compete with each other to gain power (Tahamy, [2012](#)). When parties seek to gain power, they play roles that demonstrate their clear influence on public policy. Additionally, they serve as a primary vehicle for expressing the opinions and aspirations of voters within the institutions that host elections. We can explain the role of parties in shaping and imposing public policy from several angles.

- i. The role of parties in formulating and planning public policy is significant. The legislature is currently one of the most important authorities in the state, as it is responsible for enacting laws and setting general rules binding on individuals. This power is increased when people get involved in politics and

parties. This lets them make decisions, especially about public policies that affect them and society as a whole, by having representatives in elected bodies that look out for their best interests. In general, the emergence of political parties was linked to the emergence of Western ideology and the development of parliamentary democracy, which led to the formation of parliamentary councils according to ideological ideas and the diversity of means to achieve society's goals and gain support. This contributed to the emergence of electoral committees, and as a result, parties became the blocs within parliament (Badawi, [2015](#)). Parliament is an institution that includes members who embody all societal groups through political parties, which thereafter nominate candidates for parliamentary councils. Mahmoud Sabry Issa emphasized that "political parties are responsible for nominating appropriate candidates for parliamentary roles," since legislatures aim to safeguard the social, economic, and cultural interests of individuals and society. As the foundations of democracy strengthen, the legislative authority concurrently intensifies. This renders it an effective instrument for sustaining political regimes and ensuring their legitimacy (Kamel, [1982](#)). It's clear how important political parties are because they make it possible for people from different groups to voice their wants, needs, and beliefs in a well-organized way. This gets the attention of people who make policy and makes sure that these issues are included in the political agenda. Therefore, the parties represented in power must discuss these issues and find solutions for them through the enactment of laws. Generally, one can observe the influence of parties in formulating public policies, whether from within or outside the authoritarian framework. Parties play a fundamental role in society, as they gather and express interests and work to link the government and society with the aim of crystallizing the public issues that are discussed when formulating public policies and raising public opinion about them (Nasouri & Samrah, [2015](#)).

- ii. Parties play crucial roles in shaping power or determining its structure by selecting candidates in elections. The strength and number of parties affect the process of making decisions and policies, but this influence depends on the prevailing political systems. When a political party takes power, it becomes the main focus of policymaking, especially in parliament, where members are forced to vote according to party ideology, such as the Conservative Party winning a parliamentary majority in 2019 in Britain. The party put the issue of Brexit on the agenda for a vote. Parliament has several functions, including the function of enacting laws and legislation, the financial function (financial laws and the budget), and the political function of oversight, questioning the executive authority, and withdrawing confidence from a member. The party bears responsibility for matters of public interest through its programs and positions on political and economic issues, and it cannot blame others for what happens in public policy. Public opinion trends always reflect the party system, so party propaganda is essential to inform the public of the party's position and goals. In the case of the Conservative Party and Brexit, the party was unable to undo the consequences of Brexit on other parties, as mounting pressure led to the resignation of Prime Minister Theresa May in 2019, to be succeeded by Boris Johnson (Al-Iham, [2019](#)).
- iii. The party has a responsibility to address issues of public interest through its programs and positions on political and economic issues, and it cannot blame others for what happens in public policy. Public opinion trends always reflect the party system, so party propaganda is essential to inform the public about the party's position and goals. In the case of the Conservative Party and Brexit, the party was unable to undo the consequences of Britain's exit from the European Union on other parties, as increasing pressure led to the resignation of Prime Minister Theresa May in 2019, to be succeeded by Boris Johnson (Mahna, [2011](#)). The government takes power in democratic countries based on free elections, where the party or parties with a parliamentary majority win. During its term, the government implements its general policy announced in the electoral program on which it was elected, making it a mandate from the people to implement these policies. Democratic systems also seek to achieve equality between individuals and social classes, as the parties that form the government work to do so. The government also seeks to improve living standards in societies to meet the needs of individuals and their children, which requires the availability of adequate economic support. In addition, we find ministers belonging to certain parties seeking, through their positions, to implement their party programs by interpreting the laws. In the absence of a party majority in

parliament, some parties resort to forming coalition governments, which require alliances and compromises to find common interests.

In Iraqi issues, parties play a vital role in the evaluation process of public policies through the various repercussions that result from them, and they also contribute to studying the extent to which these policies were effective or efficient and served the desired goals. Public policy cannot fully and effectively achieve its goals without the "evaluation process," which depends on an objective and realistic understanding of the positive and negative results associated with its implementation. Therefore, parties are considered to be the main parties responsible for evaluating policies, whether within or outside the government, as parties that do not participate in government monitoring the performance of the government, criticizing the ruling party's system, and exposing its mistakes. Although the primary goal of parties is to work to reach positions of power, they provide a significant benefit to citizens by providing information about government activities.

Iraqi Parties and their Political and Social Influence

Parties in Iraq are an essential part of the political and social landscape. After 2003, Iraq witnessed radical transformations in its political system, which provided parties with greater opportunities for political participation. Iraqi parties are diverse in terms of ideologies and interests, reflecting the diversity of Iraqi society. These parties include religious, nationalist, and leftist parties, each of which seeks to achieve its goals by influencing government policies. However, this multi-party system has not been without challenges, as some parties have been linked to sectarian and ethnic conflicts, which have negatively affected national unity. On a social level, parties play a role in expressing citizens' demands and needs and working to organize participation in the political aspect. However, there are criticisms related to corruption and favouritism, as many accuse some parties of preferring their interests over the public interest. The influence of Iraqi parties extends beyond the political level to the social level, as they contribute to shaping social identities and strengthening affiliations. As Iraq continues to face multiple challenges, parties remain a crucial element in shaping the country's future.

The Most Prominent Iraqi Political Parties and their Parliamentary Influence

Parties and powers refer to those entities that participated in political work in Iraq and obtained seats in Parliament, where governments are usually formed from among them. Most of these parties were established before 2003 or were among the opposition to the former Iraqi regime, and they were able to enter Iraq after dropping this regime. Although some of these parties have been formed recently, they are often linked to that tradition. These parties are divided into multiple categories, including religious parties, both Shiite and Sunni, national, radical, and liberal parties, and some of these parties have witnessed changes in designations or splits, which led to the emergence of several small parties, for example, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, which was led by Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, turned after his assassination to the Supreme Islamic Council. Hence, the military wing that was known as the Badr Legion, which became a political movement under the leadership of Mr. Hadi al-Amiri, defected from him and later became the Al-Fateh Alliance. In addition to the stream of wisdom led by Ammar al-Hakim, the Islamic Party and the Kurdish movements saw several splits, such as the movement of change and the new generation. The Islamic Dawa Party also had several wings and leaders. Most of these parties have a lot of experience with political, partisan, and electoral work (Kazem, [2020](#)).

Following 2003, the Iraqi scene saw the emergence of more than 200 parties and political movements, which fall into the following categories (Al-Qaisi, [2013](#)):

- i. The current and religious (Islamic) parties are the Islamic Dawa Party, the Iraqi Islamic Party, the Islamic Supreme Council in Iraq, the Sadrist movement, the Virtue Party, and others.
- ii. National Parties: represented by the Kurdish parties, such as the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the Kurdistan Islamic Union Party, and the movement of change that emerged in the Sulaymaniyah governorate.
- iii. Liberal parties and movements: These encompass a variety of trends, including the Iraqi Al-Wefaq movement, the Iraqi National Congress, the Democratic Party, and the independent democratic gathering.

- iv. Movements and parties representing minorities, including the Assyrian Democratic Party, the Iraqi Turkmen Front, and the Yazidi movement for reform and progress.

The Iraqi parties were against Law 9 of 2020, which dealt with multiple departments because they thought it would spread their votes around and hurt their supporters and base. They also thought that adopting the higher winner in a certain circle would make the former leaders who were relied on fail because every leader would need to speak out. To make sure they can win on their own, some traditional parties have responded to the new law in different ways. For example, they have split their candidates within the same circle so that there isn't more than one candidate in each area. Other parties have worked to divide the areas within the same circle based on where their supporters live. Still, others have tried to secure the support of influential tribal figures to ensure the tribe's vote, nominate women to increase their chances of winning under the women's quota or rely on personalities with societal influence within the circle. The Iraqi parties were against Law 9 of 2020, which dealt with multiple departments because they thought it would spread their votes around and hurt their supporters and base. They also thought that adopting the higher winner in a certain circle would make the former leaders who were relied on fail because every leader would need to speak out. To make sure they can win on their own, some traditional parties have responded to the new law in different ways. For example, they have split their candidates within the same circle so that there isn't more than one candidate in each area. Other parties have worked to divide the areas within the same circle based on where their supporters live. Still, others have tried to support influential tribal figures to get the vote of the tribe, nominate women to increase their chances of winning under the women's quota, or rely on influential figures in society within the circle (Kazem, [2020](#)).

Despite the great decline in the religious forces in Iraq after the political change in 2003, especially after the 2006 elections and what followed, the sharing of power on the basis of sectarian counting did not improve the political democratic process. Rather, it led to the spread of political and financial corruption and the deterioration of the security situation, which negatively affected the Sunni and Shiite religious parties. However, the "Saeron" coalition, supported by the Sadrist movement, which achieved the first position in terms of the number of votes in the 2018 elections, has emerged. This alliance brings together members of the current Iraqi Communist Party and some independents, which helped the Sadrist movement secure a large number of seats thanks to distributing its popular base in most of the electoral districts. While forces such as the Al-Fateh Alliance managed to maintain their existence, the rest of the religious parties may face challenges in obtaining adequate representation.

The Kurdish parties in Iraq are more stable due to several factors, including their autonomy since the mid-1990s and political and economic stability. Kurdish parties have a regional government, parliament, and independent ministries, and they are working to ensure their representation in the Union government and obtain a stake in the public budget. Despite the emergence of new movements such as the change of change and the new generation, the position of the Kurdish parties on the central government remains constant, as the large parties benefit from the multiple circles (The Arab Democratic Center, [2021](#)). As for the new partisan forces after the demonstrations of October 1, 2019, which led to the resignation of the previous government and the formation of a government headed by Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, calls emerged to end the demonstrations and move towards political action. As a result, more than 40 political movements and parties emerged, claiming to represent the demonstrators. Despite their attempts to organize themselves, these forces did not succeed in forming a unified alliance due to the diversity of opinions and the difficulty of reaching consensus. The new electoral law allowed independent candidates to run, which gave some influential figures the opportunity to compete in the elections. Therefore, these new movements and forces represent one of the prominent changes that emerged in the 2021 elections (Kazem, [2020](#)). Parties play an important role at the political level thanks to their outstanding ability to organize society. The importance of these parties increases when they act as a mediator between citizens and the government or authority, especially in stable democratic systems. The Transitional Governing Council was established in July 2003, and the method of its formation reflected the nature of the future stage of Iraq and the political system that would be formed later. Sectarian quotas were the basis for forming the council, followed by the stage of drafting the new Iraqi constitution, which came with many changes, most notably the adoption of the federal system as an appropriate means of managing the state. As for the form of the political system, it combined the parliamentary system and the presidential system to suit the

requirements of the stage that Iraq is going through, which contributed to completing the constitutional and sovereign structure of the country (Al-Jasour, [2005](#)).

Political Parties and their Parliamentary Role After 2003

The various movements participated in the political process that emerged after the US occupation of Iraq in 2003 and agreed on peaceful political action despite their differences in some details. Even though everyone wants Islamic rule, that didn't stop different points of view from emerging. For example, "Hussein Al-Muayyad" emphasized the need to keep one's identity and sense of belonging, and he called for an active Arab role in Iraq for the good of the national project. He also rejected the implementation of consensual democracy, considering it a failed project incapable of building and managing the state. The Iraqi Islamic Party was distinguished from the beginning by its acceptance of negotiations with the Americans, considering that gradual consensus is the way to obtain more gains. This flexibility reflects the party's vision for rebuilding the Iraqi state. According to the party's first political statement issued on March 20, 2003, the party set a set of goals that express its vision of how to rebuild Iraq through full cooperation with the religious and political forces that influence shaping the country's future. The party stressed the importance of ending the occupation and establishing independence, in addition to recognizing the cultural and political rights of the main nationalities, minorities, and other sects in Iraqi society. It also called for the selection of representatives of these components in official and popular councils and stressed that awareness of the importance of the future of the state must be accompanied by a moderate and balanced Islamic awareness that is in line with the values of Islam and the movement of the era, far from isolation and extremism. These principles show the Islamic Party's tendency to participate in the political process from the beginning, trying to have a role in shaping the pillars of the (new Iraqi state), despite the opposition of some Sunni forces to this process and their rejection of the party's participation in it. Both the Islamic Party and the Accord Front view the process of building the Iraqi state by emphasizing the Arab and Islamic identity of Iraq. Both raise an Islamic, nationalist, and patriotic discourse in their quest to rebuild the country. The Will and Change Coalition, headed by Mahmoud Daham Muhajim, a tribal figure from Anbar province, is in line with this trend. This coalition supports Iraq's unity and full sovereignty and thinks the constitution needs to be changed to reflect the will and unity of the Iraqis while addressing the problems caused by sectarian and ethnic quotas. This is similar to what the Accordance Front and the Islamic Party are saying (Salem, [2010](#)).

The Kurdish nationalist movement views the building of the Iraqi state from a federal perspective, taking into account the specificities of the Kurdistan Region. The orientations of this movement revolve around the issue of federalism, as the Kurds insist on a Kurdish federation that includes Kirkuk and other regions. The Kurds' insistence on establishing a federal system is due to nationalist motives aimed at preserving their lands. Some popular groups that are not against Kurdish federalism also support this trend. They are very clear that there needs to be a southern federation or federations to make sure that wealth is shared fairly and that most of southern Iraq's unique features are taken into account (Hussein Shaaban, [2006](#)).

Methodology

This research employed a desk technique. A desk study research design is typically referred to as secondary data collecting. This mostly involves gathering data from existing resources, especially because of its cost-effectiveness relative to field research. This study examined previously published research and publications, as the data was readily available through online journals and libraries.

Conclusion

The passage you provided discusses the role and challenges of political parties in Iraq's parliamentary system. It highlights issues like sectarianism, ethnic divisions, and the negative impact of the quota system on nation-building. It also emphasizes the need for parties to develop comprehensive visions, rebuild trust, and enhance political participation. It doesn't contain any statistics or concrete numbers about different groups. Therefore, I cannot provide statistics based on this text. If you have a different question or provide a different text that includes statistical information, I'll do my best to answer it.

1. Iraqi society has witnessed the emergence of many political parties, where most of the new parties are small and do not have large popular bases. Some of them are also an extension of tribal, sectarian, and ethnic formations.
2. The use of ethnic and sectarian diversity since the adoption of the Iraqi Constitution in 2005 within the framework of sectarianism has transformed the political system into a quota system that powers and parties benefit from to achieve their political goals.
3. The political parties' sectarian quota system doesn't work with the basics of building a modern, developed state. These are giving citizens' rights and freedoms in a fair way and creating a shared identity that goes beyond sectarian, racial, and religious affiliations. This system reinforces societal division at the expense of national ties.
4. The process of building the Iraqi state after 2003 was characterized by weakness as a result of the lack of a clear future vision by political formations to build their new state. Political parties and entities still need to develop a democratic vision that contributes to building a state that adopts a democratic, parliamentary, and federal system.

Increase in the number of parties: The situation in Iraq is considered "explosive," as it has moved from a single-party system to a multi-party system. The number of blocs that participated in the second legislative elections of 2005 was estimated at more than 200 entities, while the number reached more than 300 entities in the first parliamentary elections of 2005–2010. Iraq has exceeded the limits in terms of the number of political parties and forces or freedom of movement, which made it difficult to understand the (Freedom for Iraq) movement so that things seem closer to chaos than to order. Given that a limited number of influential and effective parties have been represented in the Transitional Governing Council and the Iraqi government, most parts of the current world are considered "any paper" designated for strength and solidity, and the weakness of the popular and mass bases is due to their modernity. Additionally, Iraqis are not generally familiar with their leadership, nor do they understand the clarity of their composed frameworks and structures, which makes them more susceptible to the influence of less powerful political forces. Some of them represent extensions of narrow formations (Al-Rasan, [2014](#)).

There is no doubt that the freedom to form parties is one of the basic pillars of democracy. However, the emergence of a large number of parties without a strong popular base contributes to reflecting the weakness present in the political aspect and negatively affects the choices of Iraqi citizens. The presence of this large number of parties and movements within the state and the political system is not considered a correct situation, as it can lead to political practices that conflict with the components of Iraqi society. Political parties in Iraq lack a comprehensive program for the country. The goal of most opposition parties was to work to overthrow the previous regime. This was agreed upon among the ranks of the opposition in Iraq during its first meeting in Beirut in 1991, where it issued a set of decisions related to the democratic process and against the previous regime within the framework of political and democratic warfare. However, this led to disagreements about the nature of the political system in Iraq after 2003, which negatively affected stability, as the goal of some forces and movements shifted to achieving political gains instead of building a modern state. Most of these parties also suffer from a lack of knowledge of political practice under the dome of parliament, as they arose in completely secret circumstances (Fayyad, [2007](#)).

The power struggle in the Iraqi case serves as a model for the ongoing political crisis. This crisis stems from the inability to ensure a fair distribution of wealth and resources, the failure to protect human rights and promote democracy, the impossibility of peaceful power transfer, and the reliance on an exclusionary sectarian ideology, which manifests in the dominance of certain parties over the three authorities. This situation has made the problems between theocratic parties and civil parties that want to build a state with institutions and a constitution even worse. This has caused a major imbalance in the structure of the country, which has set the stage for political chaos and the militarization of society.

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