An Analysis of the Patterns of Policymaking in Iraq's National Security During the Period of the Ba'ath Party's Rule

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Abstract

Relying on its partisan principles and values, the Ba'athist regime– the period when Saddam Hussein was in charge in Iraq– sought a powerful government. Not respecting and believing in ethnical and sectarian differences and seeking the realization of national unity, Saddam tried to regulate security policies in a way in which he could assimilate the differing Iraqi society, using the policies of carrot and stick. This project was consisted of two fundamental pillars: (1) positive or carrot assimilation policies; and (2) negative or stick assimilation policies. This article discusses the way in which Saddam's unifying principles were implemented in Iraq during the Ba'athist regime. The research method of the article is qualitative and the data are gathered from various documents and interviews with former and current Iraqi government officials. The questions this paper seeks to answer are: (1) What were the patterns of policymaking in Iraq's national security during the period of the Ba'ath Party's rule? and, (2) Did those patterns help Iraq's national unity and solidarity? The article concludes that because of the specific characteristics of these policies, and considering the sociological, cultural, and historical principles of Iraq, assimilation policies during the Ba'ath Party's rule caused numerous ethnical and sectarian cracks and consequently gave birth to discordant and disharmonious groups in the society.

Keywords: assimilation pattern, Ba'ath Party, carrot and stick policies, ethnic groups, ethnical and eligious diversity.

Introduction

The execution of policies is undoubtedly an outcome of an ideology supported by governments. This ideology may be a product of the government itself. On the other hand, the political regime itself may be evolved based on a specific ideology. The Ba'athist regime was a combination of both of these conditions. Therefore, in order to analyze how Saddam's government used assimilation patterns to form a national unity and strengthen his political power, we must study the ideological framework of the Ba'ath Party.

The Ba'ath Party was born in Syria. To fight against the Ottoman rule over Arab countries, secret societies called Al-Qahtaniyya, al-Fatat, and al `Ahd were formed between 1909 and 1920. As a result of the decision made by San Remo Conference in 1920, Great Britain and France were awarded mandates of the Arab countries in the Middle East. Consequently, the "Arab Independence Party" was formed in Syria, Jordan, and Iraq, pursuing Arab Nationalism ideologies to fight colonialism and resurrect Arab identity ('Aflaq, 1949: 54-60). Yet, in 1939, the Party was abolished as a result of the French infiltration in the Party and the consequent secessions. From the ruins of the "Arab Independence Party", two new parties emerged: the Arab National Party, founded by Zaki al-Arsuzi; and the Arab Revitalization Movement, founded by Michel 'Aflaq and Salah al-Din al-Bitar. The latter Party was renamed "Arab Ba'ath Party" after a few years. In 1941, 'Aflaq formed a Syrian committee to support Rashid Aali al-Gaylani in Iraq. Iraqi Baa'th Party was formed in 1948 and, in 1952, at the time of the Iraqis' protests against the renewal of the government's contract with Iraq Petroleum Company, announced its existence and established activism ('Abd Al-jabār, 2009: 139). Following the weakness of Gamal Abdel Nasser's supporters in Iraq, the Ba'ath Party found the opportunity to expand its activities and begin recruiting members (Abdulghani,

1984: 42-43). Following the Party's 8th National-Regional Congress in 1974, Saddam Hussein gained the leadership position and absolute power in the Party (Āl-e Ebrāhim, 2010).

The most principal problem of the Ba'athist Iraq was lack of "national unity". Ba'athism called for unification of the Arab world into a single state and believed that the borders separating the Arabs were "unnatural and created by imperialism". The Party contended that the Arabs must fight imperialism and its effects in order to destroy these borders, unify, and form a single state. For this fight to continue until the objective is met, "Arab Nationalism" must be the fundamental motivator and driving force (Pārsādust, 1990: 95-103).

The three main ethnical and religious groups in Iraq are the Shiite Arabs, the Sunni Arabs, and the Kurds, each with diverse practices and characteristics. The country, since its establishment, has been ruled by the Sunni Arab minority and this has led to Shiite and Kurd groups to assume a theatrical role in the political power. During the past decades, the minority's rule and the ethnical and religious cracks in Iraq had assisted the central government in maximally utilizing the tools of power and force to maintain the power of the state and sociopolitical solidarity of the country. This increased and expanded the cracks and led to activities by Shiite and Kurd groups who sought political power (Nāzemiān, 2000, 221-222).

A brief study of the policymaking processes in Iraq's national security during the period of the Ba'ath Party's rule shows that violence used to be an essential component of the country's bureaucratic, official, and political system. Iraq's political society was extremely stripped of power against the government and the patterns of policymaking in national security were based on the idea of annihilating the social forces. Therefore, analyzing the patterns of policymaking in national security in a country so socially diverse is of great significance. The analysis

will guide us to study the principles, objectives, and ideologies behind these policies at the internal level and understand the challenges and shortcomings of these patterns. Accordingly, the present study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What were of the patterns of policymaking in Iraq's national security during the period of the Ba'ath Party's rule?

2. Did those patterns help Iraq's national unity and solidarity?

Of the literature regarding this issue, two publications could be mentioned. The first one is a book titled *Future Iraq: US Policy in Reshaping the Middle East* by Geoff Simons. Written in 2003, the book covers the process of state-building in Iraq and the US strategy regarding this process. Simons contends that what the US had done in Iraq up to 2003 was mostly state-building rather than "nation-building". He argues that nation-building in Iraq is actually a form of state-building, and this state-building, due to different reasons, had been unsuccessful until then. Therefore, the book is mostly concerned with explaining the process of state-building in the new Iraq.

Fadhil al-Barak, in a secret document titled "Internal Security Strategy", clearly underlined Iraq's national interests under the Ba'ath Party and argued that the state was facing cultural and social threats by the Kurds and the Shiites. As a result, policymaking in Iraq's national security had to be devised and executed to answer those threats. In fact, the writer accounted the ethnical and religious diversity of Iraq as a threat and not an opportunity that could be managed. This publication seems suitable to be used as a source for analyzing the years between 1968 and 2003.

Assimilation Patterns of Policymaking in National Security

Assimilation has been pursued by governments and elites in

many countries to accomplish different forms of state- and nation-building. They have assumed that the human beings' common identity could be easily manipulated and shaped in a new identity framework. Since the Second World War, the idea has been vastly expanded by the statesmen who have prioritized national governments' interests over any other elements. There are two types of assimilation: "absorption assimilation" and "melting pot assimilation". In the absorption assimilation, the minorities (ethnic, religious, etc.) would adjust themselves with the lifestyle of the host society (Milton, 1987: 321). According to Gordon, absorption assimilation has at least seven levels. More clearly, he believes that an ethnic or religious group would be absorbed by the host lifestyle when it has passed through all these seven stages:

1. Change of cultural patterns to those of the host society (Cultural Assimilation or Acculturation)
2. Large scale entrance into the host's social cliques and institutions (Structural Assimilation)
3. Large scale intermarriage and reproduction (Marital Assimilation)
4. Development of a sense of collective identity based exclusively on the host society (Identification Assimilation)
5. Absence of prejudice (Attitude Reception)
6. Absence of value and power struggles (Civic Assimilation)
7. Absence of Discrimination (Behavior Reception).

In the melting pot assimilation, the involved groups (minorities and the host society) would accept many of each other's attitudes and values. This cultural trade would create a new cultural system which is a combination of diverse attitudes, norms, and values. Melting pot assimilation is fully accomplished when there are a lot of intermarriages and

reproductions across the members of the two groups which lead to one's identification based on the other's cultural values. The United States (the oldest reference of the "melting pot") is one of the few countries in which melting pot assimilation could be observed ('Azodān Lu, 2005: 676-678).

Various prominent cultural studies and ethnology intellectuals divide assimilation policies into two groups of "violent assimilation" and "flexible assimilation". The former exploits genocide, forced immigration, expulsion, physical elimination, and segregation, while the latter seeks cultural amalgamation and minimizing cultural conflicts. Genocide was used by the Nazi Germany during the Second World War to eliminate the Jews.

Most of the liberal political theories support assimilation policies. There existed two perspectives regarding the minorities' rights in the 19th century England: on the one side, there were liberals like John Stewart Mill, who sought a common national identity which was closely related to a racial disamalgamation policy regarding minor national groups. On the other side, there were many liberals in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, such as Lord Acton and Alfred Zimmern, who believed that the minorities' rights are based upon the idea that individual freedom is closely related to the individual's attachment to a national group and specific rights of each group could be equally considered for majorities and minorities (Kymlicka, 1992: 52).

Assimilation is often defined as the effort to transform the values and identities of the minority group into the original trend of the values and characteristics exclusively owned by a national group. Examples of assimilation consist of the cases of Turks in Turkey, Alawites in Syria, Kurds in Iraq, Tutsis in Rwanda, and Serbs in Yugoslavia. Naturally, the ethnic minorities resist assimilation and do not welcome being transformed into the

mainstream cultural trend. This often leads to political and social tensions. In this model, assimilation is considered as a unifying ideal and ultimate objective upon which the government policies and ideologies are shaped, creating a biological, cultural, social, and psychological combination of different and singular ethnic groups in order to form a unified society free of ethnical and sectarian differences. This way, cultural and structural conflicts would be reduced and the outcome would be a homogenous and harmonious society in which there are no ethnical, religious, and racial differences between the different groups.

The effect and outcome of assimilation policy is the reduction of cultural and structural conflicts between ethnic and religious groups. Provided that this policy is fully implemented, a homogenous and harmonious society would emerge, in which there are no religious and cultural differences between the different groups. In this policy, ethnicity and religion would not be effective as a criterion for wealth and power distribution and the citizens would be considered as individuals, not as members of particular communities or ethnic and religious groups; consequently, individuals would not be able to seek any claims against their respective governments.

Assimilation in the Ba'athist Regime

In explaining policymaking in Iraq's national security during the period of the Ba'ath Party's rule, the assimilation policies could be discussed under the two types of positive or carrot assimilation policies and negative or stick assimilation policies.

A) Positive or Carrot Assimilation Policies

1. Reformative and Developmental Actions

Saddam Hussein rose to power at a time when the Iraqi population was amid great crises. Iraq, long before Saddam's government, had been divided between different social, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic groups. The Sunnis were against the Shiites, the Arabs against the Kurds, and the tribal Sheikhs against the civic merchants. Power stability in a country disorganized by political and social conflicts required improving the living standards. Saddam set out to implement economic reconstruction while creating a powerful security apparatus to prevent political coups d'état and social rebellions. Iraq's oil was at the center of this strategy. On June 1st, 1972, Saddam Hussein, began the expropriation of the Western petroleum companies which had monopolized exploitation of Iraq's oil. The next year, following the oil shock of 1973, oil price rose drastically and Saddam, gaining extreme profits, used this opportunity to pursue his own objectives. In order to introduce diversity in a uni-product economy dependent on oil, his regime began to strengthen the Iraq economic infrastructure. This initiative led to many developments in building roads, improving mining industries, and developing non-oil industries.

2. Supporting Sociocultural Development

Saddam initiated and supervised the "National Literacy Movement" and "Free Mandatory Education" programs. He supported the governmental plan to provide free mass education up to the highest educational degrees; in a few years, thousands of people were able to read and write. The government also began supporting the soldiers' families, offered free public health programs, and granted gratuitous loans to farmers. He made extensive efforts in rural areas to generate loyalty to the

Ba'ath Party. After nationalizing the oil industry, Saddam began reconstructing and renovating the rural areas, mechanizing the farming industry, and distributing lands between the farmers.

Saddam, relying upon his executive role (sometimes even down to the most delicate details), introduced himself as the leader of the economic development and welfare programs of the Ba'ath Party and, thus, attracted popularity among different Iraqi populations. He pursued the "carrot and stick" tactics and expanded governmental services to establish a well-founded supporting base for himself among the labor class, the farmers, inside the Party, and throughout the government offices.

3. Granting

The first twelve years of the Ba'athist rule saw great changes in the structure and role of Iraq's armed forces. The country's military power grew from six divisions in the middle of the 1960s to twelve in 1980, and later to 44 divisions. Saddam Hussein, himself an army officer, assumed the role of the Commander in Chief after he became the President of Iraq. The members of the military office of the Ba'ath Party, who were the main figures regarding the issues of the armed forces, were all either noncommissioned officers or regular partisan cadres who did not have special trainings. Since granting high military ranks to these individuals had not followed appropriate procedures, the ranking officers did not have the necessarily obedience and loyalty of the regular Iraqi soldiers (Al-Helāli, 1959: 12-13).

In order to neutralize the negative effects of this approach on the spirit and loyalty of the experienced military officers, Iraqi officials pursued the policy of granting and providing the soldiers with extensive and expensive rewards. This approach could persist while the government's income from the oil was still high.

4. Changing the Nature of the Political System

Saddam initiated significant changes in Iraq's political system. He increased the legal authorities of the president and his cabinet and then pursued actions to solidify and guarantee his power. He first formed a militia, consisted of clerks, bus drivers, and normal citizens associated with the Ba'ath Party; this militia was part of the Party's armed forces and possessed machine guns and bullets. Each one of them was assigned to a specific location and, provided that the country would have faced a coup d'état, a rebellion, or any other problems, they were supposed to take over and control the situation. Relying on these forces, Saddam was able to create a paramilitary besides the Iraqi national army. Saddam then granted high ranks to the people he knew and trusted, even if they were in low positions in the army. He assigned them as commanders of Iraqi military divisions and, practically, assumed complete power and authority in Iraq.

Saddam was careful to grant commandership only to those who were personally loyal to him. Therefore, relatives, like General Adnan Khairallah, Ali Hassan al-Majid, Maher Abd al-Rashid, Hamid Sha'ban al-Tikriti, and Hussein Kamel Hassan al-Majid al-Tikriti, were in priority. Saddam hoped to neutralize any tendency inside the armed forces to act independently and autonomously and also prevent any oppositions or dissents regarding his absolute power and command by relying upon blood relationships and tribal loyalties (Sciolino, 1997: 10). He extremely trusted the Tikritis, who were the most influential in solidifying the power of the Ba'ath Party. In this way, Saddam's relatives and close friends shaped the Presidential Guard and comprehensive security forces who all sought solidifying his power. The next level was a larger group of military and civil individuals whom he trusted; this group mostly consisted of members of the Ba'ath Party ('Ezati, (1381 [2002 A.D]: 344)).

5. Popular Policies

Saddam Hussein sometimes used to appear among people wearing nomad Arabs' clothes, traditional Iraqi farmers' clothes (which he used to wear as a child), or even Kurdish clothes. He also wore Western clothes to present himself as a civic and innovative leader. He would sometimes appear as a religious Muslim and stand to pray toward Qibla in his turban and robe and, on other occasions, he would wear Western clothes, sunglasses, and pose with a gun on his shoulder (Robins, 1990: 94-95).

6. Exploiting Religion as a Tool

After becoming the President, Saddam published and distributed a genealogy in which he claimed being a descendant of the prominent figures of the beginning of Islam. In this way, he could even be considered as the legitimate Islamic Khalifa by the Shiite community (Wiley, (1373 [1994 A.D]): 148).

In order to show its relationship with Islam, the Ba'athist regime, constituted an institution called "Popular Islamic Conference Organization of Iraq" in April 1983 and invited some of the elites and clergies from the Islamic countries. This organization established its supreme executive council with 25 clergies from 13 countries. There were two Shiite clergies among them; Dr. Sayed Musa Musavi from Iran and Sheikh Ali Kashif al-Ghita' from Iraq (Seyf Zādeh, 2000: 77-78).

7. Asserting Identity-Making Mechanisms

Saddam confirmed and supported Iraqi patriotism claiming the determining role the country had played in the history of the Arab world. He often pointed out the Abbasid Dynasty, mainly because during that period, Baghdad was the political, cultural, and economic capital of the Arab world. He also mentioned the

pre-Islamic Iraq and glorified the period as the cradle of the human civilization, praising figures such as Nebuchadnezzar II and Hammurabi. He spent a significant amount of financial resources for archeological projects.

In 1933, Faisal pronounced his concern regarding the formation of a national identity. He argued: "I will say this with great sorrow that there is not yet an Iraqi individual in Iraq, rather, there are a group of people without any feelings toward national values and without any patriotic ideals. They see themselves bounded to the religious traditions and ethnical identities which do not generate any common national unity and, consequently, provide the stage for crises, anarchies, and rebellions against any government" (Al-Helāli, 1959: 43). In 1970s, the Iraqi Ba'ath party had increasingly believed in itself as the only representative of the demands and ambitions of the Arab nation. Nasserism came to an end when Anwar Sadat rose to power in Egypt in 1970 and Syria had long abandoned the radical language of 1950s and 1960s. Amid these developments, a fundamental change occurred, which finally approved the credibility and solidarity of the Ba'athist rule in Iraq: the nationalization of Iraq's multinational consortium in 1972.

Accordingly, Sunni Pan-Arabism would, on the one hand, legitimize the Sunni leaders and, on the other hand, facilitate incorporating the idea of Ba'athist rule over the Arab world.

8. Modifying Ideological Culture

During the Ba'ath period, considering the Ba'athist ideology and Pan-Arabist ideas, there were many efforts to modify the ideological culture in favor of the Ba'athist ideologies by developing different plans and programs. Accordingly, introducing and planting Ba'athist ideology and culture into the society gained significant attention. Cultural renovation and reconstruction of the society was accomplished at different

levels. Firstly, Ba'athism was established in the army. After eliminating non-Ba'athist military members from the Revolutionary Command Council, communists were also deprived of their rights to serve in the military. After the Revolutionary Command Council, the army, and mass media, it was time to modify the culture of the non-governmental organizations and plant the Ba'athist ideology in institutions like the Youth Organization. The motto of the Ba'ath Party's leaders, especially Saddam Hussein, was that "if we overcome the youth, we can dominate the future" (Al-Alāq, 2010).

Noting the Ba'ath regime's emphasize on modifying the ideological culture of the country, there was an effort to prevent the infiltration and implementation of other cultural influences in non-governmental and governmental organizations and offices. There were significant concerns about the dissemination of the cultural components of different ideologies, such as religious or even communist ideas. Accordingly, the ideas and cultural elements of the Shiites, the Kurds, and other cultures/beliefs unrelated to the Pan-Arabist, Ba'athist ideology were severely repressed and it was tried to prevent the introduction of these ideologies to the society (Seyf Zādeh, 2000: 111).

B) Negative or Stick Assimilation Policies

1. Deprivation

One of the basic characteristics of the Ba'athist Iraq was the deprivation of a large group of the country's population, including the Shiites and the Kurds, from political power and economic welfare. This issue, in the framework of "relative deprivation theory" was a fundamental reason in the failure of the nation-building policy in the Ba'athist Iraq. In this period, a large section of the social groups, especially non-Sunni and non-

Ba'athist individuals – essentially the Shiites and Kurds who were not harmonious with the government – "felt" relatively deprived. Considering the centralized structure of power, all the political posts were divided among the Ba'athists and loyalists to Saddam and the Shiites and the Kurds did not possess a proper share (regarding their population) of the political power.

"Economically", considering the governmental economic structure, the uni-product nature of the state, and underdevelopment of the private sector, economic resources and welfare assets of the regime were only devoted to specific classes in the society, including the Ba'athists and Saddam's relatives, while the other social groups generally lived in deprivation and poverty.

2. Dividing the Society into Two Groups of Insiders and Outsiders

The division of elites in Saddam's regime was based on their access to rewards and awards. Power bloc was evolved around the idea of the protégés and the spoil system. For example, while Saddam Hussein was busy expanding his kingdom and granting awards and rewards to his relatives, the opponents were severely repressed and annihilated. Opportunists preferred to be insiders. The Regime tended to simultaneously create a group of loyal elites inside and a group of powerful opponents "outside the power circle". Iraq intelligence organizations were extremely busy infecting the opposition and infiltrating all the outsider groups (Daftar-e Motāle'āt-e siāsi, 2004: 3). Consequently, concluding a political convention among the elites in Iraq was virtually impossible because of the dispersion and lack of solidarity; the opposition leaders who sought power were extremely under control.

3. Forced Migration and Arabization

Arabization policy toward the Kurds and forced migration, removal, and exile policies toward the Shiites and the Kurds were among the most fundamental strategies to pursue the country's assimilation policy. Since the Ba'athist regime refused to informatively and practically accept the social, ethnical, religious, cultural, and lingual diversity of Iraq's society as its sociological principal, the policy of forced migration and Arabization was pursued strictly and severely by the government. It would be supervised with high or low concentration during different times and at different places and conditions (Workman, 1994: 71).

4. Altering and Removing the Population

The other half of the Ba'athist regime's strategy in order to change the religious and ethnic composition of the country was "replacing Iraqi Kurds and Shiites with Sunni Arabs from other countries, especially Egypt". Accordingly, the Iraqi Kurd populations' lands were divided among Iraqi, Egyptian, and North Yemeni Arabs. The new habitants of these lands enjoyed government assistance in the form of services, loans, agricultural equipment, and guns; the kind of assistance which the former owners would not have received. The Ba'athist regime's effort to "change the composition of the strategic city of Kirkuk" is an example of utilizing Arabization strategy to pursue assimilation policy. The 1957 census (prior to Ba'ath Party's rise to power) reported the population of Kirkuk as many as 114000 people which Turkmens constituted 40%, Kurds more than 35%, Arabs 24%, and Christians 1% of the population. This census reports the Kurds population to be more than the Turkmens and Arabs in the province of Al-Ta'mim with 55% of the population (Dehqāni, 2007: 2).

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5. Expulsion

Executing assimilation policy, the Ba'athist regime targeted the opposition by exile, expulsion, and accusing them of possessing anti-Iraqi beliefs. In 1969, after the emergence of tensions between Iran and Iraq and extreme constraints imposed over the Iraqi Shiites by the Ba'ath Party, Iraqi government expelled many of the Shiite population; about 20000 Shiites, accused of "being Iranian", were taken to the border and thrown out of the country. In 1980, the Ba'athist regime, amid the execution of Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr and many other Shiite leaders, expelled large groups of the opposition, accusing them of "being Iranian". Expulsion of these "Iranians" was part of the Ba'athist regime's policy to accuse Iran of destabilizing Iraq. After the assassination attempt on Tariq Aziz by someone who was introduced as an Iranian-Iraqi terrorist, the Ba'athist regime intensified attacks on the "Islamic Call Party", known as "Iran's Fifth Column" (Robins, 1990: 96).

Saddam addressed the expelled announcing their expulsion in the following manner: "Pack your belongings and leave. You came to us barefoot. Now that the country has civilized you through education, you seek reuniting with your Iranian ancestors. You have recalled your past, move quickly. This is our policy in Iraq. The main standard for the Iranians, even if they are natives of Iraq, is that whether they behave according to our national security interests or not, will not grant citizenship. When they misbehave, they are actually reminding us of their past and, consequently, we tell them that you will not be citizens of Iraq. This is the outcome of your actions" (Babakhan, 2004: 183).

6. Cultural Limitations

In order to promote the Ba'athist ideologies, there were significant limitations regarding the dissemination of Shiite

cultural elements and their promotion in the framework of the religious and cultural institutions such as the clergies. Shiite holy days, such as Day of Ashura and Day of Tasu'a, and the Shiite holy symbols and locations were specifically sensitive and the Ba'athist regime tried to bring them under its own regulations. The regime sought to prevent their fundamental establishment, so that they do not pose a threat for the Ba'athist assimilation. In general, the Shiite Islam and, especially, those who sought the existence of Shiite religious and cultural elements and components in Iraq's social and political structure, were extremely repressed due to their introduction of cultural and political elements and frameworks different from those of the Ba'athist ideologies. This repression was specifically more severe when the Shiite movements possessed greater social and political characteristics.

Since 1975, for example, there used to be huge Shiite gatherings to commemorate the tenth day of Muharram. The Islamic Call Party played a significant role in organizing these gatherings. Large groups of people used to walk from Najaf to Karbala. These gatherings were prohibited from 1975 to 1977. This caused severe tensions. In 1977, a large number of people moved from Najaf to Karbala, but, in the middle of the way, they were attacked by Iraqi forces from the air and the ground; 30000 people were arrested and many were executed (Nāzemiān, 2000: 69).

7. Implementing Violent Policies and "*dokhale*" Tradition

Along with the excellent economic development of the Ba'athist Iraq, a large network of medical and educational institutions were established which helped the government claim more boldly the realization of "national governance". Metaphors repeatedly used in the Ba'athist narrative clearly support this idea. In fact, we cannot find a hint of representing the people in

any of these metaphors; nor can we trace the concept of "nation". The realization and projection of both concepts of "nation" and "political leadership", which were usually called "revolution", meant a solid union between these two. This allowed the regime to call anybody who criticized the system as the enemy of the revolution and, accordingly, enemy of the nation. Since nation was a phenomenon constituted of a voluntary force, it could not be its own enemy. Consequently, any hostility related to the nation must have had been rooted in forces outside the nation who had been able to act through some local elements who did not share the national identity. Whenever such an act would have occurred, the Ba'athist ideological apparatus tried restlessly to prove that the actors had been non-Arab adversaries.

Considering these issues, it is clear why the Kurds were so easily repressed, while they only sought recognition of their national rights. This approach, which was not only implemented against the Kurds, but also against all those who were not recognized as members of the ruling family, is rooted in the nomadic tradition of "*dohale*", meaning "aggressive stranger". The tradition is called a situation where an individual, a family, or a tribe (as the *dakheel*) seeks the support of a stronger tribe. Accordingly, the *dakheel* is expected to act as a member of the stronger tribe. Practically, the *dakheel* is always held in contempt because he has turned away from his own nomadic traditions.

8. Repression and Threatening

Repressing and threatening the opposition groups, especially the opposing Iraqi Shiite and Kurd majority, was a widely used method by the Ba'athist regime. Since the establishment of the Ba'athist government in 1968, repressions against the Shiites and their movements had increased. The general approach of the

Iraqi political system in the framework of assimilation policy toward the Shiites and Shiite groups like the Islamic Call Party was increasing the pressure and repression, arresting and executing the opponents, and expelling and banishing many of the Shiite opponents with the excuse and accusation of "being Iranian and supporters of Iran" (Adib, 2007). The assimilation policy, whose objective was to maintain the rule of the Sunni minority or, even, a small fraction of this minority, required a huge amount of force, repression, and threatening on one side, and allurement and enticement on the other.

The repression policy once again began in 1991, after Iraq was defeated in its attack to Kuwait. That year saw the Shiite uprising. Saddam, confident of the fact that the coalition forces were not going to attack Baghdad, sent the Presidential Guard to Karbala and ordered them to aggressively respond to the Shiite movement. Soldiers entered the city and attacked Imam Hussein's holy Shrine. The Ba'athist forces attacked the crowd with cannons, tanks, and howitzers and massacred more than 15000 people in Karbala, heavily damaging the Holy Shrine. In addition to the Shrine, the Presidential Guard attacked a part of Karbala which hosted hotels, malls, exhibitions, and also the city's old bazar (Mo'tazed, 2003: 520).

The Guard simultaneously attacked Basra. Hundreds of thousands of the Shiites, frightened of the regime's terror, escaped to the impassable swamps and deserts or palm groves, but the Presidential Guard found them, executed them, or buried them alive. In the South of Iraq, more than 170000 kids faced the threat of death and extermination. Rebels wandered in the swamps and groves for months. Mass graves, which were discovered in 2003, report the merciless and cruel massacre of the escaped Shiites. Helicopters would pour petroleum over the groves and the Napalm bombs would set fire on the large areas where the Shiites had sheltered, in order to burn them alive.

Conclusions

Implementing the assimilation policy in the Ba'athist Iraq led to numerous ethnical and sectarian cracks in the society and thus gave birth to discordant and disharmonious groups, causing great shortcomings and challenges. This was because of the policy's special nature and characteristics, such as its efforts to culturally, socially, psychologically, and biologically combine diverse ethnic and sectarian groups in the ideological and cultural framework of Pan-Arabism. Although the mentioned challenges and shortcomings were mostly related to the sociological principles of the country, native characteristics of the Ba'athist assimilation and its strategies and executive plans were also influential. Some of the most important challenges and shortcomings of the Ba'athist assimilation policy were: unbalanced economic and political development; social diversity and multiple ethnical and sectarian identities; management deficiencies; and lack of historical bases and experiences.

Regarding unbalanced economic and political developments, it must be noted that severe decrease in oil revenues made economic, social, and political developments very difficult to accomplish. This problem, which took place in 1982 and 1983, began a period of extensive changes in Iraq. Since then, Iraq, which was previously a rentier state relying upon oil revenues, evolved into a country which gained from strategic rents– the money paid by the other states considering Iraq's strategic and regional power to obtain political or security services. Therefore, the policy of attending to people's economic needs gradually and as a result of the poor state of the regime's economic status due to "war" and "sanctions" (1981-1988 and 1991-2003) was replaced by the policy of force and exploiting military and security tools.

The next reason for the shortcomings of the Ba'athist assimilation policy was the fact that the Iraqi leadership was well aware of its structural issues for proving its leadership position in Pan-Arabism Movement. Roughly one-fourth of the

country's population consisted of Kurds who fought for sovereignty and recognition of their national rights and identity. Although most of the Shiites and Sunnis of Iraq were Arabs, since 1960s, the military forces ruling over Iraq had increasingly been considering Arabism as equal to Sunnism. Consequently, pointing out the "Iranian" aspect of Shiism, the regime caused struggles among the large population of the country's Shiites. As a result of these tensions, Iraq, for the second time in its contemporary history, expelled a large group of its population because they were not considered as "real national citizens". In 1970, about 65000 Shiite and Kurds were forced towards Iran. Exploiting concepts like "Iraq" and "Arab Nation" was essential, both in terms of emphasizing the existence of a singular governmental structure, and in terms of protecting the Ba'athist policies from any opposition or intervention by other Arabs. In addition, this process could justify Iraqi leadership's hostile stance toward other Arab countries due to the idea of the "will of the nation."

This particular emphasis on Iraqi identity, if it had not been accompanied by a new interpretation of "real Iraqism", could have been interpreted as an initiative to provide equality and a common identity among the Iraqis. The tensions between Iran and Iraq, which were heightened during the 8-Year War, accelerated the process of this interpretation; a process which, finally, further imposed limitations on a large part of the civic Iraqi society, in general, and Kurds and Shiites, in particular. Therefore, the Ba'athist regime's "Pan-Arabism Ideology" possessed a particular characteristic and, contrary to the Iraqi Arab majority, this definition of Pan-Arabism did not maintain a solid relationship with the religious and cultural characteristics of the Shiite majority. The Ba'athist definition of Pan-Arabism was based on Sunnism, and this was because of two reasons: Iraq's Ba'athist leaders were Sunni; and Sunnis constituted the majority of the Arab world.

Therefore, unharmonious population and social cracks, while at first may be considered as harmful to Iraq's national security, were actually helpful to the government because the "opponent" political elites, while being against the government, could not establish a widespread coalition. Overthrowing Saddam required a widespread coalition and because of the underdevelopment of the civic society, political dissent and opposition in that period was generally spontaneous, dispersed, unorganized, and unfollowed. Kurds and Shiites, who had close historical and cultural relationships with other nations, fought with each other and the Sunnis over power and sociopolitical and economic privileges. In general, the political status of the Ba'athist Iraq had three main characteristics:

1. An extremely centralized and closed political environment;
2. A weak legitimacy basis and widespread opposition;
3. A repression of diverse populations in the country in different periods of time.

Saddam Hussein realized the following actions in favor of his objectives in Iraq:

1. Using the policy of "assimilation and contraction";
2. Changing the regional population by using the policies of "forced migration and forced Arabization"
3. Executing the policies of "carrot and stick, genocide, terror, moral spoil, etc."
4. Pursuing the policy of "land management" in order to develop Sunni lands and keep the Shiite an Kurd lands underdeveloped;
5. Pursuing the Pan-Arabism strategy based on the Ba'athist ideologies and especially influenced by the personal characteristics of the Ba'ath Party's elites, particularly Saddam Hussein
6. Trying to transform the country's regional and local subcultures.

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