



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***CONFLICTS BETWEEN KURDISTAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT AND
IRAQI CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND THEIR EFFECTS ON POLITICAL
STABILITY***

BRYAR ESMAIL MHAMAD KARIM

FEM 2016 6



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By

BRYAR ESMAIL MHAMAD KARIM

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, University Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

June 2016

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DEDICATION

This thesis is especially dedicated to my father and mother who illuminated the way to my soul despite their illiteracy and to my brothers and my sister, who have always encouraged me to continue education and wish me success. I dedicate it to my wife Sajidah and my son Mohamad, to my respectful teacher and guide Dr.Youns and hope to see them all successful in their lives.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Science

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By

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June 2016

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Iraq is a multi-religion and multi-ethnic country, with Arabs and Kurds being the two major ethnic groups. As far as the Kurd-Arab relationship was concerned historically, it had witnessed many rebellions and uprisings. After Iraq invasion, still there were conflicts and disagreements in the relations of Iraqi central government and Kurdistan regional government within the frame of one country and in their cooperation after 2003. Conflicts between the Kurdistan regional government and Iraqi central government caused instability and threatened the unity of Iraq. While various reasons increased the conflicts between them, only a few scholars have identified the effective causes of these conflicts. But they did not explain how these causes affected the relationship of the two governments and led to the political instability. This research aims to study the relationship between Kurdistan regional government and the Iraqi central government in terms of power-sharing democracy. The objectives of the research are: to identify the causes of the conflicts between Kurdistan regional government and the Iraqi central government from 2003 to 2013 then to determine the effects of these conflicts on the political stability in Iraq. In this study, the researcher employed qualitative approach to understand the subject. Researcher collected the data by using in-depth and semi-structured interviews. The process of data analysis was based on three steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings of this study identify that the essential causes of the conflicts related to Kirkuk and oil sector. There are two levels of factors in the case of oil: Internal factors external factors of the conflict which are divided to multiple interpretations for the constitution articles, disagreement over distributing and managing the oil and intervention of foreign countries. Findings show that political process in Iraq failed to address the conflicts due to lack of consensus as well as the absence of coalition between political elites and declining of the political participation. Findings also confirm the conflicts obstructed the performance of the government and crippled the parliamentary legislation. Iraqi government fails to establish a national army. Declining legitimacy of political system that negatively affected the political stability of Iraq from 2003-2013. Extending the conflicts between two sides is a serious threat over political stability. The chaos in the absence

of the application of laws would bring ethnic war between Kurd and Arab. Moreover, future research might seek for other information and data related to the research topic and complete the findings of this study which were limited to some extent by the difficult time when the data was being collected. While the scope of this study covered the period from 2003 until 2013, future study could investigate the case over a longer period for more accurate and comprehensive results. Some recommendations of this study are to rebuild the national military that would be loyal to Iraq instead of specific ethnic or sect in order to achieve political stability.

Keywords: Kurdistan Regional Government, Iraqi Central Government, political stability, conflict, power sharing democracy.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**KONFLIK DI ANTARA WILAYAH KERAJAAN KURDISTAN DAN
KERAJAAN PUSAT IRAQ DAN MEREKA KESAN KEATAS POLITIK
KESTABILAN**

By

BRYAR ESMAIL MHAMAD KARIM

Jun 2016

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Iraq merupakan sebuah negara yang terdiri daripada masyarakat berbilang kaum dan agama. Kaum arab dan Kurdi adalah dua kumpulan etnik utama di negara ini. Sepanjang sejarahnya, hubungan antara etnik Kurdi dan Arab telah menyaksikan banyak pemberontakan dan kebangkitan. Selepas pencerobohan di Iraq, masih terjadi konflik dan perselisihan antara hubungan Kerajaan Pusat Iraq dan Kerajaan Wilayah Kurdistan, dalam kerangka satu negara dan kerjasama mereka selepas 2003. Konflik antara Kerajaan Wilayah Kurdistan dan Kerajaan Pusat Iraq telah menyebabkan ketidakstabilan dan mengancam perpaduan masyarakat di Iraq. Walaupun pelbagai punca telah meningkatkan konflik antara kerajaan wilayah Kurdistan dan kerajaan pusat Iraq, hanya beberapa ulama sahaja yang telah mengenal pasti punca konflik ini berlaku. Walau bagaimanapun, mereka tidak menjelaskan bagaimana punca konflik ini telah menjejaskan hubungan antara kedua-dua kerajaan dan menyebabkan ketidakstabilan politik. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji hubungan antara Kerajaan Wilayah Kurdistan dan Kerajaan Pusat Iraq dari segi perkongsian kuasa demokrasi. Objektif kajian ini pula adalah untuk mengenal pasti punca-punca konflik antara Kerajaan Wilayah Kurdistan dan Kerajaan Pusat Iraq dari tahun 2003 hingga 2013 dan untuk menentukan kesan-kesan konflik ini terhadap kestabilan politik di Iraq. Dalam kajian ini, pengkaji menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif untuk memahami subjek ini. Penyelidik mengumpul data dengan menggunakan temu bual yang mendalam dan separa berstruktur. Proses analisis data adalah berdasarkan kepada tiga langkah iaitu pengurangan data, paparan data, dan pembinaan kesimpulan. Hasil kajian ini adalah untuk mengenal pasti konflik utama berkaitan dengan Kirkuk dan sektor minyak. Terdapat dua jenis faktor dalam kes minyak: konflik faktor dalaman dan faktor luaran yang dibahagikan kepada pelbagai tafsiran seperti artikel perlembagaan, perselisihan mengedar dan menguruskan minyak serta campur tangan negara-negara asing. Hasil kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa proses politik di Iraq gagal menangani konflik kerana kekurangan konsensus serta ketiadaan gabungan di antara golongan elit politik dan penurunan penyertaan dalam politik. Kajian ini juga mengesahkan bahawa konflik terhalang disebabkan prestasi kerajaan dan lumpuhnya undang-undang parlimen. Kerajaan Iraq juga gagal untuk

mewujudkan tentera negara. Penurunan kesahihan sistem politik menyebabkan kestabilan politik Iraq pada 2003-2013 terjejas. Melanjutkan konflik di antara kedua-dua pihak adalah satu ancaman yang serius terhadap kestabilan politik. Keadaan huru-hara yang disebabkan ketiadaan pemakaian undang-undang akan membawa perang etnik di antara Kurd dan Arab. Selain itu, kajian di masa akan datang mungkin dapat memberikan maklumat dan data yang lebih mendalam dan terperinci berkaitan dengan topik penyelidikan dan dapat melengkapkan hasil kajian yang terhad ini kerana masa yang tidak mencukupi apabila data dikumpul. Walaupun skop kajian ini hanya meliputi tempoh dari tahun 2003 hingga 2013, kajian di masa depan boleh dilakukan bagi tempoh masa yang lebih lama untuk mendapatkan hasil yang lebih tepat dan menyeluruh. Sebahagian daripada cadangan kajian ini adalah untuk membina semula tentera negara yang setia berkhidmat untuk Iraq dan bukannya khusus kepada etnik atau mazhab dalam usaha untuk mencapai kestabilan politik.

Kata kunci: Kerajaan Wilayah Kurdistan, Kerajaan Pusat Iraq, kestabilan politik, konflik, demokrasi perkongsian kuasa.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of University Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
ICG	Iraqi Central Government
US	United States (of America)
UNAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
TAL	Transitional Administration Law
PR	Proportional Representative
ISF	Iraqi Security Force
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
PDK	Kurdistan Democratic Party
EU	European Union
SOMO	State Organization for Marketing of Oil

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe the relationship between the Kurds in the north and the Iraqi authorities from the establishment of the modern Iraqi state to find a way to improve the relationship between them. This chapter offers the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, significance of the study, scope of the study, and finally the organization of the thesis.

1.2 Background of the Study

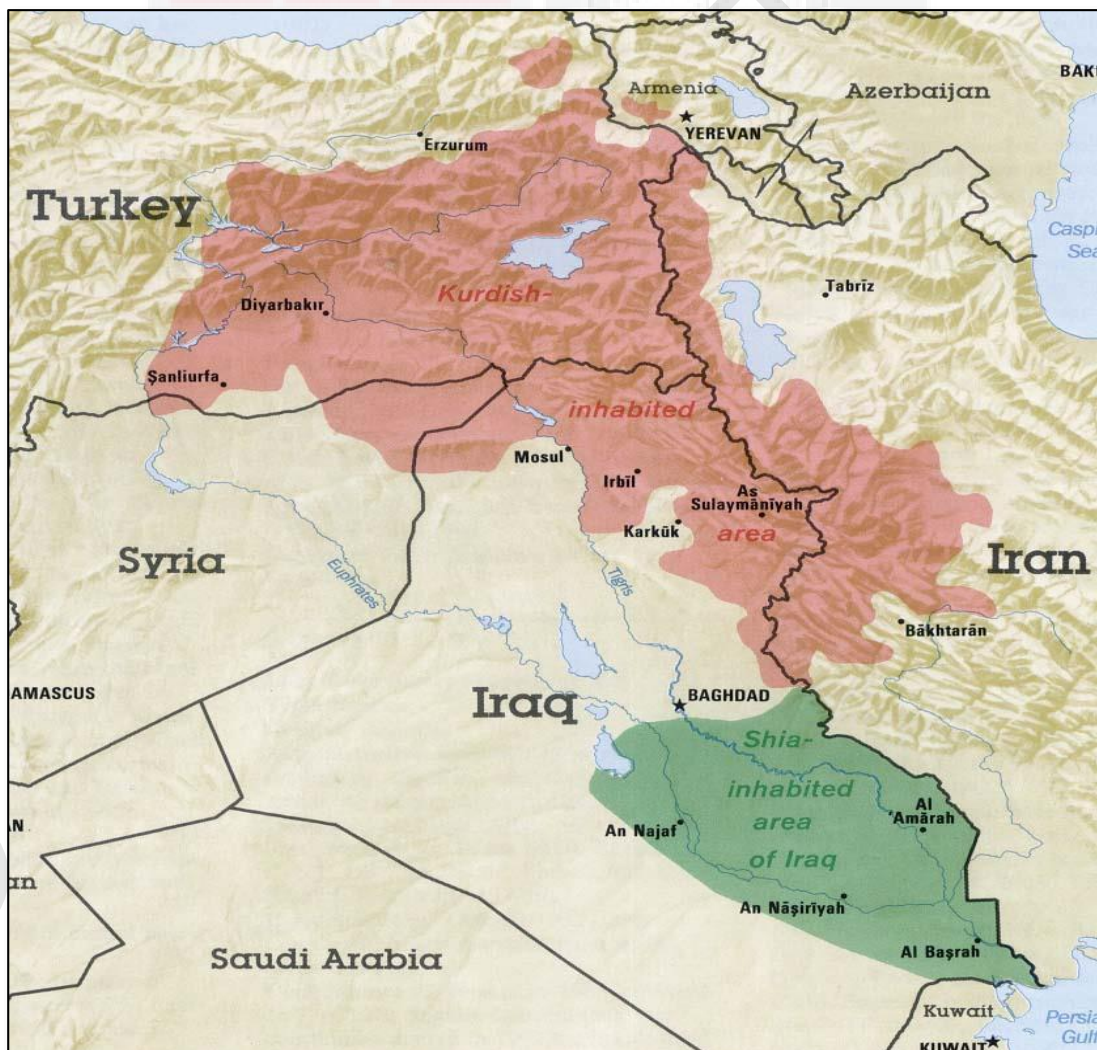
The modern Iraqi state, like many of its Middle Eastern neighbors, finds its history in an artificial, random creation by European imperialist powers such as Great Britain as part of an undertaking to control its natural resources (Bellini, 2012, p. 19). Furthermore, Iraq consists of multi-ethnic groups (Arab, Kurd and Turcoman) as well as multi-religions (Islam, Christianity, Yazidism and Mandaism) and multi-cultural. In the absence of formal census by Iraqi government, (CIA) Central Intelligence Agency and some academic literatures, declare that, the majority of the population of Iraq around 60% consider themselves (Hoffman, 2014; J. E. Kelly, 2015; Sherko, 2013) Arab Shiites, 20% Arab Sunnis and 17% present are Kurd while majority of them are Sunni.

Even though the ethnic diversity does not automatically lead to conflict and violence but the major challenge to Iraqi state reconstruction is ethno religious conflicts between the Sunnis and the Shiites as well as the Kurdish query that have emerged since the establishment of Iraq in 1921 (Dodge, 2007). The previous regimes' policy of discrimination against the Shiites of Iraq have made every Shiites believes that he or she is targeted because of their Shiites sects and for no other reason (Cordesman & Khazai, 2012).

The Sunnis, who comprise around 20% of Iraq's population, are far from a monolithic group. The majority of them are ethnically Arabs but there are also Turcoman, Kurds, and other minorities who contain both Sunnis and Shiites. They share different political goals as well; some secular, highly nationalistic (ex-Baathists) support restoring a strong centralized state. These include members of the insurgency and those understanding the insurgents' goals, if not, they use their violent methods. Others are more religious parochial and motivated by tribal interests (Cordesman & Khazai, 2012, p. 59). Moreover, not all the Sunnis Arabs support the Sunnis-led insurgency but nearly all agree Iraq should remain a unified state (Katzman, 2008, p. 13).

The Kurds are an ancient Indo-European people (McDowall & Short, 1996, p. 3). In the absence of a proper census it is estimated that the total Kurds population is around 40 million with over 22 million in Turkey, over eight million in Iran, over six million in Iraq and nearly two million in Syria (L. D. Anderson & Stansfield, 2004, p. 155). Map 1 shows the Kurdish area. The main area they reside is about 230,000 square miles which is equal to German and Britain combined. They are the largest ethnic group in the world without a state . The term “Kurdistan” is mostly used in Iraq to refer to the Kurdish area of northern Iraq and in Iran to refer to the Kurdish area of northwest Iran. Turkey and Syria avoid using this term for political reasons. Even though, during the Ottomans’ Rule the name (Kurdistan) was widely used. Iraqi Kurds were clearly a minority under the Saddam Hussein regime who took numerous measures to repress them. Until the 1980s, the Kurds made up some 25% of Iraq’s population, living mainly in the northern part of the country (Sherko, 2013, p. 21).

Map 1: Kurdish Lands (Kurdistan)



Source: Smith, B. (2007). Land and Rebellion: Kurdish Separatism in Comparative Perspective. *Department of Political Science University of Florida Box 117325*(Department of Political Science University of Florida p.1.

After World War I and the breakup of the Ottoman, winner countries of the war promised to let Kurds have their own country under the terms of the 1920 Treaty of Sevres¹ but that agreement abolished by the following Treaty of Lausanne² in 1923 (Sherko, 2013). The relationship between Kurds and Iraqi governments has witnessed a number of rebellions and revolutions. Therefore, gradually the cleansing of the Kurds started (Joffe, 2000), first under British occupation and then in the independent Iraq in 1932. A decade of fighting in the 1960s led to the establishment of the Kurdistan Region in 1970 (M. J. Kelly, 2010). In the same year, there was an attempt to reach an agreement between the Kurds and the Baghdad authority on giving the Kurds their autonomy. Nonetheless, it was not successful because it was not on a geographical basis. After 1974 the situation deteriorated again and led the Kurds into another rebellion while Mullah Mustafa (Kurdish leader until 1979) was again increasing his demands by asking to include Kirkuk to the Kurdish autonomy (Bengio, 2005, p. 173). Extending bad relationship between Kurds and Iraqi government led to the mass genocide of Kurdish civilians in order to end the revolt in the north of the country.

The conflicts between the Iraqi central government and Kurds in the north of Iraq increased. During the Anfal³ operation, 1,200 villages were destroyed (Fischer-Tahir, 2012). More than 180,000 persons were missing and presumed to be dead (C. A. O'Leary, 2002). Then, the best-known chemical attack occurred in Halabja in March 1988 (Black, 1993, p. 102). This town is located in the mountains near Sulaymaniyah about 11 kilometers away from the Iranian borders. The town and its surrounding district were attacked for three days with chemical bombs and artillery fire. They used chemicals including mustard gas and the nerve agents. At least 5,000 people died immediately as a result of the chemical attack.

The ethnic cleansing plan against the Kurds was not only done through the Anfal operations and the use of chemical weapons but also demographic change of the populated areas was another process in this plan. Statistics in October 2000 show the scale of displacements that occurred according to Benon Sevan executive director of the United Nations' Oil-for-Food Program, 805,000 persons were displaced in the North of Iraq. This number representing 23% of the total Kurdish population of the

¹ The Treaty of Sevres (10 August 1920) was the peace treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Allies, when World War I ended. The document resulting from the Paris Peace Conference and maps related with its idea of Kurdistan were symbolic in recognizing the Kurds as people with a right to own a homeland.

² The Conference of Lausanne was a conference held in Lausanne, Switzerland during 1922 and 1923. Its purpose was the negotiation of a treaty to replace the Treaty of Sevres, which, under the new government of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was no longer recognized by Turkey.

³ The Anfal was part of a larger campaign undertaken by Saddam (President of Iraq from 1979-2003) throughout his authority (Sherko, 2013). Now, many regard this operation as proof of genocide against Iraqi Kurds in all phases of the ethnic cleansing program, which began when the Baath Party first seized power in 1963 and culminated in the Anfal operation, it is estimated that more than 4,000 villages in rural Kurdistan were destroyed and perhaps 300,000 people perished.

autonomous zones (Romano, 2005). The repressive policy was not only against the Kurdish race but it was against all Iraqis living in Iraq.

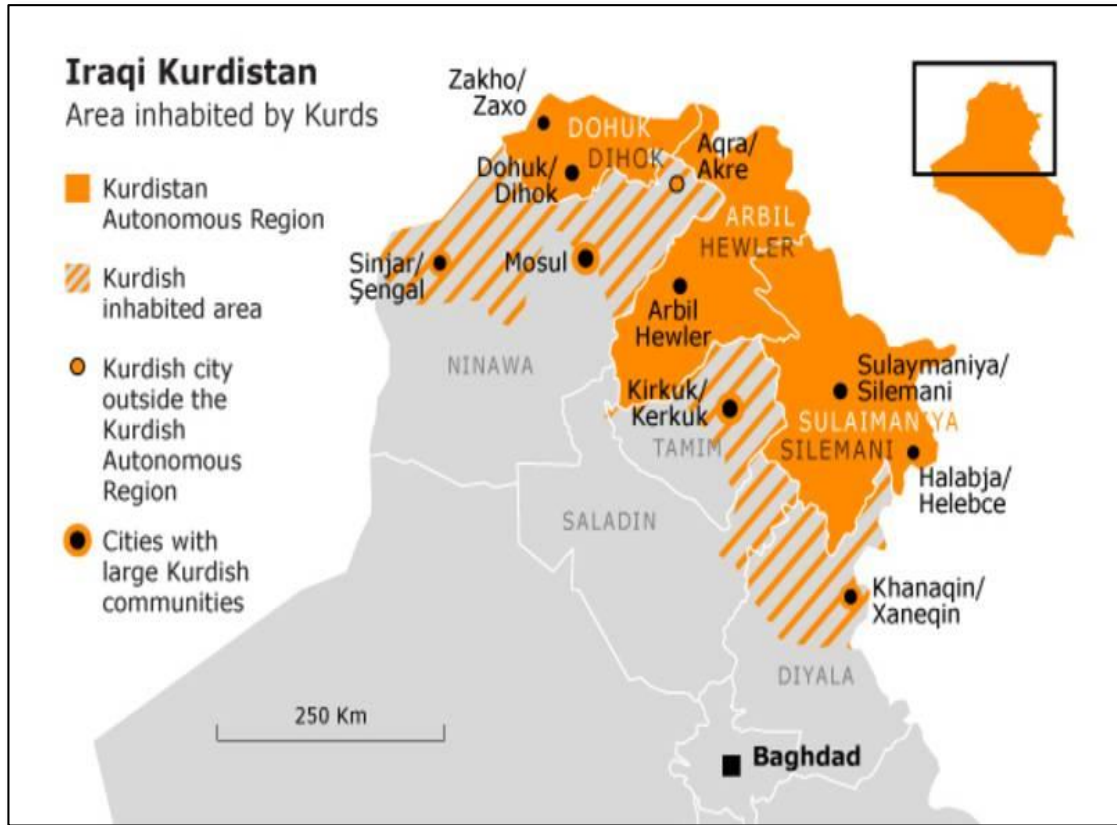
The successive regime in Iraq, especially the Baath party regime was a totalitarian regime in the sense it did not recognize the rights of minorities and their right to political participation and to exercise their cultural activities. In short, Baath controlled every aspect of life in Iraq. Kurds struggled against injustice which was seen in northern Iraq continuously since the foundation of the Iraqi state. The Kurdistan Democratic Party (PDK) was founded in 1945 (Rogg & Rimscha, 2007a) under the leadership of Mullah Mustafa Barzani, to reunite the Kurds against injustice and ethnic cleansing and next, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) was founded in 1975 (Rafaat, 2007a, p. 275).

There were lots of battles between the forces of these two parties, and Iraqi forces did not want the Kurdish areas entirely stable. Anfal operations and the use of a chemical weapon in the north Iraq encouraged Kurds to the uprising against the Baath regime in 1991. After the Gulf War in 1991 Kurdistan governed itself as de facto under the aegis of an international enforced no-fly zone, it was announced by the United States, United Kingdom, and France after the Gulf War of 1991 to keep the Kurds in northern Iraq and Shiites Muslims in the south (Goldstein, 1992, p. 12). At that time, Iraqi aircraft were forbidden from flying inside these zones. In other words, Kurdistan had an autonomous region at that time until 2003 Kurdish areas were in permanent conflict with the successive Iraqi governments since the establishment of the Iraqi state.

Minorities in Iraq did not have any political, cultural or social rights, because they were considered as a threat to the Iraqi state. Subsequently, the researcher aims to show the history of Kurd in Iraq including its conflicts, uprising and internal battles. Observing this history of Kurd clarifies their relation with the consecutive Iraqi governments in one hand and the Kurdish demands and their position in the north of Iraq on the other hand. The 2003 invasion of Iraq continued from 19 March 2003 to 1 May 2003 and signaled the start of the conflict that later came to be known as the Iraq War which was launched under the pretext of Iraq's possession of WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction). The military action was dubbed operation of "Iraqi Freedom" by the United States to focus on "the Kurdish issue" and more specifically on the relationship between a projected autonomous Kurdistan and the rest of Iraq as a unitary state. Nevertheless, after the fall of the Baath regime there were three groups, Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds.

Kurds strongly supported the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) (Fox, 2004). This law was specially established to govern the affairs of Iraq during the transitional period until a duly elected government (2005) operating under a permanent and legitimate constitution achieving full democracy that enshrines 'federalism' as Iraq's system of future government.

Map 1: North of Iraq (KRG)



Source: UK Border, A. (2009). Kurdistan Regional Government area of Iraq p.7.

The TAL recognized Kurdish cultural identity (Phillips, 2004). It was adopted on 8th March, 2004. It introduced the Kurdish language as official in Iraq and required the use of this language in "federal institutions and agencies" in the Kurdistan region since the U.S. invasion the Iraqi political system has undergone an enormous transformation. Until March 2003, Iraq was ruled by a dictator renowned for his brutal repression with the improbable approval of all of the electorate and turnout rates near or at 100%, respectively. The few opponents of the regime who dared to express themselves faced exile, torture and often death. In pre-2003 Iraq, there was no proportional representation. Also, there was no guarantee of the rights of minorities and there was not a coalition government to collect all the ethnic groups. Compared to this scenario, the new political system is a political improvement of the situation in the field of political participation of the components of Iraq. Today, Iraq has a new constitution and has held multiple rounds of elections. Citizens enjoy civic, political and religious liberties that were unimaginable in the past. Also, there are many democratic institutions which are established according to the new Iraqi constitution of Power-Sharing arrangement.

1.3 Problem Statement

Sectarian conflict is becoming entrenched in Iraq. The growing tensions between Kurds and Arabs could reshape the future of the country and pose a threat to its peace, stability and security. The U.S. strategy in Iraq after 2003 focused on transitioning Iraq into a unified democratic nation state with the majority and minority leaders working towards common goals (Merritt, 2007, p. 79). Those who were in the Iraqi political circles, the Iraqi media, the U.S. administration, and the United Nations shared the assumption that the constitutional democracy would be a prominent feature in post-Saddam Iraq. Going back to the Kurds' history, Kurds have achieved far-reaching self-rule in Iraq after decades of fighting and suffering (Franck, 2003). With Such a history of conflicts and alliances between the Kurds and their counterparts in Iraq and beyond its borders, the region faces an uncertain future because major issues like the future status of Kirkuk that is directly related to Kurds, remain unsolved (Rogg & Rimscha, 2007a). After Iraq invasion, again the disagreements and conflicts between the Kurdistan regional government and Iraqi central government caused instability and threatened the unity of Iraq. Lack of security had negative effect on improving human rights and citizenship (Heacock, 2010b; Hurwitz, 1973; Sherko, 2013).

Moreover, conflicts have harmed the potential power perspective between Kurdistan regional government and Iraqi central government (Ollivant, 2012, p. 2). This is due to the fact that the disagreements among both governments on the oil sector and division of wealth have created conflicts instead of being a vital source of prosperity and stability like any other country around the world (Gunter, 2004). In fact, lack of national institutions responsible for collecting and distributing the oil revenue is part of the weakness in the oil management process. Besides, disability to establish a national army would be one of the effect on instability (Hanauer, Martini, & Al-Shahery, 2011). There are three reasons which make this study crucial to be conducted:

Firstly, understanding the factors contributing to the conflicts between KRG and ICG is essential to address in order to help deepen the understanding on this problem. Although Iraq has designed and established a new constitutional structure which embraces principles that democracy and basic democratic institutions are established in accordance with Iraqi constitution such as a multi-party system, coalition government, proportional representation form of electoral system and existing autonomy in the Kurdistan regional government that have great challenges, yet Iraq is unstable and the democratic groundwork has not been set up fully (Dodge, 2007). As the Consociational democracy has not been settled up till now, this has led the relationship between Kurdistan regional government and Iraqi central government increasingly deteriorated. Still, there were conflicts and disagreements concerning the Iraqi central government and Kurdistan regional government's relations within the framework of one country and their cooperation after 2003.

Secondly, according to U.S. government officials, the greatest potential threat to Iraq's stability is prospect of Arab-Kurdish conflict over oil-rich Kirkuk and other disputed

territories. In late July 2009, the commander of US forces in Iraq, General Ray Odierno, supported this by telling the reporters that those tensions between Arabs and Kurds are the Number one driver of instability in Iraq (Cordesman, Mausner, & Derby, 2010). Furthermore, the UN representative in Iraq Staffan de Mistura claimed that this issue had and it has infected almost every aspect of the political scene. Iraq not only has a long history of internal conflict but also has been involved in large-scale internal wars between two Arab sects, Sunnis and Shiites. That is why it has been one of the dangerous countries of the world and is still one of the most dangerous, unsteady and corrupted nations in the world (Jawad, 2013, p. 22). Meanwhile, conflicts over disputed territories and oil were the dominant features throughout these ten years from 2003 to 2013 and might transfer to internal war between Kurds and Arabs (Burak Özpek, 2012).

Thirdly, having a politically stable and a loyal government has become inevitably impossible due to the ethnic violence and conflicts. On the other hand lack of political balance and security has subsequently led to political violence across the country. There are various reasons escalated the conflicts between the two governments, yet only a few scholars have identified the causes of these conflicts, leaving some gaps in their studies. They did not mention the details of how these factors affected the Kurdistan regional government's relationship. In addition, Iraq stability in general and the relation between the ICG and KRG in particular, is concerned with solving mentioned conflicts (Stansfield & Anderson, 2009). Moreover, the effects of these conflicts on political stability in Iraq as a whole have not been determined. Even though the sectarian conflicts between Shiites and Sunnis have obvious effects on political stability but there are not enough knowledge about how the conflicts between Kurdistan regional government and Iraqi central government effected on political stability of the county.

Researcher could see that some gaps existed in the study of the political conflict which needed to be filled and this research has obviously paid attention to some research questions related to the causes of the conflicts between Kurdistan regional government and Iraqi central government under study. For these reasons understanding these factors would help the researcher to fill up the gap which may be useful in finding solutions to the problems.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the causes of the conflicts between Kurdistan regional government and Iraq central government from 2003 to 2013?
2. How do the conflicts between Kurdistan Regional Government and Iraqi central government affect the political stability in Iraq?

1.5 Objectives of the Research

This research aims to study the relationship between Kurdistan regional government and the Iraqi central government in terms of power-sharing democracy. The objectives of this research are:

1. To identify the causes of the conflicts between Kurdistan regional government and the Iraqi central government from 2003 to 2013.
2. To determine the effects of the conflicts between Kurdistan regional government and Iraqi central government on the political stability in Iraq.

1.6 Significance of the Research

The significance of this study is to clarify and analyze the relationship between the Iraqi central government and Kurdistan regional government and their conflicts which have caused lack of political stability in Iraq. Political stability in Iraq had been the big challenge before 2003. Moreover, this study will be useful for parliament members, ministers, and academicians to design better ways to help in establishing a stable government in Iraq and to find a way to solve conflicts as well.

This study is very significant to discuss the political stability which has been a serious matter upsetting both Kurdistan and central governments. This study is going to provide necessary facts about good policies and the role that each of Iraqi central government and Kurdistan regional government would play in putting firm conduct and programs to be practiced to promote political stability in the country.

The instable situation has extended even to the post-invasion Iraq. Identifying the importance of the main factors that affected political stability will provide a specific understanding in this field. Previously academics paid little attention to political stability until the second half of the 20th century then it started to be a significant phenomenon. Now it is one of the modern phenomena in the study of political science. Political stability is a difficult and ambiguous term which cannot be objectively quantified (Ake, 1975). Empirical studies often depend on indicators like the number of coups or political revolutions to understand the implications of political instability.

In fact, after the war of Saddam Hussein's removal from power in 2003, the relationship of Kurdistan regional government and Iraqi central government gradually became more vital in the Middle East and even in national policies, because Kurds sit on a great deal of the Middle East's oil (Gunter, 2004). Though, drawing a link between the cause of the oil conflict and other issues will be helpful to the academic knowledge in terms of relationship between the central government and the local government because Kurds are today living in other countries as well, such as Turkey, Iran and Syria.

This new experience of Kurds within the federal government framework is important because as long as KRG and ICG represent different ethnics, their conflicts remains theoretically significant to be studied, and its potential contribution to the knowledge of ethnic management. The study is significant because it provides a basis for making adjustments to ethnic conflicts in Iraq and probably for the other divided nations in other parts of the world, which are concerned with building stability and national unity. Moreover, political arrangements and the tensions between the segments of a plural society can be accommodated within a single sovereign state, because they aim at the maintenance of the political and territorial integrity of the plural society (Lijphart, 1979).

1.7 Scope of the Research

The present study covered ten years from the American military occupation of Iraq and the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003 (Roth, 2004) till the end of the second round of elections in 2013. Formal relationship between the two sides (the Kurdistan regional government and the central government) started in 2003. This period is crucial because it is the beginning of a legal and factual subscription for the Kurds within the Law (TAL) in the federal state, which admits the rights of the people of Kurdistan. Therefore, this period was identified until 2013. Because of that, in 2005, the first free and democratic elections were held, which the people of all nationalities and minorities in Iraq participated in. The second election was held in 2010, which will be the end of the second session at the end of 2013. This means that in this period there were two sessions of ministerial formation and the division of power between the sides. In this period very important things occurred, which threatened to split the state and ignite a civil war between Kurds and Arabs.

1.8 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis includes the following chapters. Every chapter of this research covers a specific part of the research. Chapter one, discusses the introductory issues of the research, including the basic and at the same time important parts such as the statement of the problem and research objective, while the second chapter is a review of the available literature focused on the previous studies on politics in the field of KRG relationship with ICG and its effects on political stability. The third chapter discusses the methodology used in this research.

The next section involves the research approach and design, which play a critical role in the construction of the work, based on the last section's discussion. Then, the researcher discussed theoretical framework based on Lijphart's model of power-sharing democracy. The rest of the chapter debates the method of the data collection, data analysis, and findings. Chapter Four discusses the KRG-ICG conflicts and the causes of the conflicts between the two parties, based on the scope of the research. It determines the effect of these conflicts on the political stability in Iraq. The chapter verifies the possibility of whether these conflicts between the two mentioned sides, affected the political stability or not. The final chapter includes the summary of the

findings and conclusion. The research finally recommends some further studies and measures to improve the KRG problem in Iraq.

Conclusion

This chapter consists of brief information about Iraqi society, general background of the conflicts in Iraq between Kurds and the Iraqi government, including the major event related to the scope of the research later. Moreover, this chapter included the scope and significance of the research. The next chapter will cover the Literature Review, in order to understand what has been done by other researchers in relation to the research topic. The next chapter is going to discuss the available literatures about the topic of the study and to find out the gap within them in order to fill it through answering the research questions.



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