

Table Of Content

Journal Cover 2

Author[s] Statement 3

Editorial Team 4

Article information 5

 Check this article update (crossmark) 5

 Check this article impact 5

 Cite this article 5

Title page 6

 Article Title 6

 Author information 6

 Abstract 6

Article content 7

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Iraq's Fragmentation and Its Impact on Global Diplomacy

Fragmentasi Irak dan Dampaknya terhadap Diplomasi Global

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Abstract

This study explores how Iraq's internal sectarian and ethnic divisions influence its foreign policy and diplomatic relationships. Focusing on the power dynamics among Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish factions, the research employs qualitative analysis to reveal that these internal conflicts significantly shape Iraq's regional and global engagements. The findings highlight the critical role of domestic political fragmentation in determining the country's foreign policy direction, underscoring the importance of understanding these internal dynamics for international diplomacy and policy-making.

Highlights:

- **Internal Politics:** Iraq's foreign policy is heavily influenced by the interplay of sectarian and ethnic divisions among Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish factions.
- **Diplomatic Challenges:** These internal conflicts shape Iraq's diplomatic engagements, affecting its relations with neighboring countries and global powers.
- **Policy Implications:** Understanding the impact of domestic fragmentation is essential for international diplomacy and strategic foreign policy formulation.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Internal Divisions, Sectarian Conflict, Diplomatic Relations, Political Factions

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Introduction

Iraq was historically and administratively subjugated to the Ottoman Empire from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. The territorial jurisdiction of the Ottoman Empire in Iraq comprised three distinct regions: Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul [1], [2]. After the Ottoman Empire collapsed in 1918, the administration of Iraq was transferred to the British government per the Sykes-Picot agreement, a diplomatic accord jointly formulated by the United Kingdom and France [3], [4]. Iraq obtained its official membership in the League of Nations in 1932, resulting in its recognition as an independent nation. Nevertheless, Iraq's economic and military deficiencies rendered it incapable of safeguarding its sovereignty against external aggression; consequently, the country continued to rely on British financial aid. Therefore, Iraq was effectively governed throughout the British mandate, which lasted from 1918 to 1958.

A revolution occurred in the Iraqi monarchy in July 1958, which was strategically directed by The Free Officers, an underground military faction under the leadership of General Abdul al-Karim Qasim. The event described above marked the end of the British mandate and the start of the inaugural period of the Republic of Iraq [5]. The recently formed republican government swiftly initiated diplomatic ties with the former Soviet Union, France, and the United States, among other Western nations, while maintaining its longstanding ties with the United Kingdom. On February 8, 1963, Colonel Abdul al-Salam Arif orchestrated a coup d'état that resulted in the removal of General Qasim from his position of authority and effectively terminated his regime. Arif's siblings subsequently ruled Iraq between 1963 and July 1968. The individuals in question established strong relationships with Arab nationalists, notably Abdul al-Jamal Nasir, the President of Egypt.

Moreover, Iraq fostered diplomatic ties with the communist bloc, specifically the former Soviet Union, during this particular era [6]. In July 1968, a peaceful coup led to the emergence of General Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr, a senior figure within the Baathist party, as the President of Iraq. In conjunction with al-Bakr, Saddam Hussein, a notable individual affiliated with the Baathist party, was designated vice president [7].

Based on the research conducted by [8], it is evident that Saddam Hussein utilized his expanding authority in 1979 to remove al-Bakr from his position and solidify his control over Iraq, a position he retained until the United States intervened in 2003. During the Iran-Iraq conflict, which lasted from 1980 to 1988, numerous nations, including the United States, Britain, France, and the former Soviet Union, provided substantial military assistance to the autocratic regime led by Saddam [9]. On the other hand, the Baathist regime adeptly forged and sustained robust diplomatic ties with a considerable quantity of Arab countries. Nonetheless, a significant transformation occurred in the character of Iraq's alliances with other countries following its invasion of Kuwait in 1990 [10]. A significant portion of the general public endorsed the stance adopted by the United Nations Security Council through the provision of military, financial, and technological assistance during the subsequent conflict with Iraq. Following this, from 1990 to 2003, the nations above imposed economic sanctions against Iraq [11].

In recent times, the Iraqi population has been subjected to a significant number of violent incidents that are closely intertwined with their ethnic identity. A multinational coalition spearheaded by the United States successfully overthrew the Baathist regime in 2003. After this military intervention, a pressing necessity arose to reconstruct governmental establishments and install a fresh administration in Iraq [12]. The consideration of implementing a federal system was considered a feasible option to address the varied interests that existed in the community, alleviate tensions, attend to ethnic considerations, and preemptively avert the outbreak of a civil war [13]. The Iraqi populace ratified its new Constitution on October 15, 2005, marking the commencement of the country's transition into a federal state. Following over three decades of a dictatorship notorious for its violent tactics and authoritarian regime, one would have anticipated that the Constitution's ratification would facilitate the establishment of a novel federal organization committed to advancing democracy and peace [13].

This paper aims to examine the research's central aim, which is to evaluate the influence of internal divisions on Iraq's foreign policy objectives, alliances, diplomatic efforts, and regional stance. It provides a comprehensive examination, surpassing simplistic evaluations. The imminent inquiry will seek to resolve the subsequent research concerns:

a. Which demographic groups comprise the majority of the Iraqi populace?

b. Which actors are central to Iraq's foreign policy?

In what ways did internal strife influence Iraq's foreign policy?

d. To what extent have these divisions impacted Iraq's foreign policy about adjacent countries and international powers?

L iterature Review

Federalism is a form of governance characterized by the distribution of political authority or power between the central and local administrations. This arrangement grants each entity autonomous domain control [14]. Therefore,

a federation can be conceptualized as a domestic alliance in which the Constitution serves as the nation's highest legal authority, and both central and regional administrations exercise authority and power in a decentralized and reciprocal manner [15], [16].

Federalism's ability to recognize ethnic, religious, linguistic, and other cultural groupings is an advantage, according to various researchers. This recognition supports their desire to be identified as a group with specific concerns. Federalism gives these collectives significant authority, allowing them to self-govern through state, provincial, or regional organizations. Federalism allows federal or national organizations to delegate certain tasks to other communities. A federal constitution that emphasizes self-governance and recognition may protect minority rights, reduce tensions, strengthen democratic institutions, and prevent secessionism. The long-term survival of a federation depends on several elements beyond its federal institutions. These factors include a preference for democratic governance, political bargaining and compromise, constitutional ideals, and legal structures. Genuine federalism requires shared principles, morality, coherence, and institutions [17].

After 2003, Iraq's diverse population and government underwent a major change. Article 4 of the 2004 Law of Administration for the State of Iraq for the Transitional Period (TAL) and Article 1 of the 2005 Permanent Constitution established federalism in Iraq [18]. The 2005 Constitution establishes a federal government in Iraq with national and regional governorates with unique powers. Since there are no other regional governorates, [19] claims that the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) is the only example of the central government-regional governorate relationship. A study of the ethnic-nationalistic movement supports the claim that Kurds have worked harder than other ethnic and religious groups in Iraq to achieve independence, self-governance, and federalism. Describes Iraq as a federation where Kurdish and Arabic minorities are encouraged to integrate and Shiite and Sunni communities remain unified.

Despite its constitutional provisions, it is argued that Iraq has not genuinely undergone federalism, as stated by . Establishing a federal state is the central focus of this viewpoint, which holds that the efficacy of federalism is more dependent on the transitional process than on the particular federal structures. According to , it is evident that the federal solution has been ineffective. Danilovich argues that implementing federalism in Iraq is predominately predicated on institutions imposed externally, devoid of the essential underpinnings of indigenous political customs and cultural endorsement. Due to the Kurds' protracted absence of statehood, the prevalence of fervent nationalist sentiments constitutes a substantial determinant in the current dispute.

As stated by [20], in the early 20th century, significant global powers collaborated to establish Iraq, which remained unified throughout its existence due to the rule of authoritarian regimes. The pursuit of implementing a federal constitution and a democratic system in Iraq following the American invasion has been notably impacted by external actors, most notably the United States government. Nevertheless, additional elements play a role in maintaining Iraq's unity, including the concerns of neighboring nations such as Turkey and Iran, which regard Kurdistan's potential independence as a potential catalyst for armed discord. Hence, it appears likely that Iraq will maintain its status as a cohesive nation; the pivotal inquiry concerns its capacity to institute a functional framework of democratic and federal governance, preventing a regression towards an authoritarian regime.

The national micro-level examination of federalism in Iraq needs to be more coherent. On the other hand, [21] that implementing federalism in Iraq has become a subject of considerable political debate, impacting the interrelationships among the central government, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), and the various Iraqi provinces. The discourse surrounding power-sharing agreements and the extent to which sovereign authority is devolved has endured since the establishment of the state in 2003. Additionally, it is apparent from the discourse of several Kurdish officials, especially those associated with the ruling Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), that their perspectives on their continued integration into Iraq remained ambiguous before the 2017 independence referendum. Indeed, many of these individuals categorically denounce the current state apparatus [22].

Method s

To examine the research inquiries, an assortment of secondary data concerning Iraqi foreign policy after 2003 has been gathered. Additionally, federalism theory is applied to investigate related research topics. Federalism concerns integrating distinct states into a particular union, made possible by a solid institutional and constitutional framework [23]. Forming a federation requires the inclusion of various essential elements, the most significant of which is voluntary membership. States enter into unions of their own accord without external influence or coercion. Furthermore, establishing a federal union requires a legally enforceable agreement and a collective set of values and beliefs that reflect the union's identity in the international political sphere [23]. The oversight of authorities and powers is centralized at the supranational level within the framework of the federal system. A system of government characterized by the distribution of authority among numerous levels of government is known as federalism.

Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that the most basic tier of government possesses limited jurisdiction and powers [23]. Federalism is a system of government in which a single level of authority is vested with the ultimate legal responsibility for governmental decision-making. In legal discourse, "primacy" refers to the legal

superiority of one sovereign power over another in a particular sphere of federal-provincial policymaking [23].

Federalism is a form of governance influenced by particular contextual factors, including but not limited to physical location, population magnitude, and internal linguistic, religious, and ethnic diversity, among others. Hence, advocates of federalism refrain from endorsing its implementation universally, not even in most nations. According to the federalist viewpoint, power and authority are dispersed across numerous tiers. The influence of supranational-level central administrations on a federal nation's foreign and security policy is crucial. As of this moment, Iraq has demonstrated a restricted degree of power centralization, marked by a feeble central governmental authority. The ultimate decision-making authority of the Iraqi government is primarily vested in the three main political blocs. Many issues, including security and external relations, remain susceptible to the sway of these three political blocs. This paper contends that various historical, ethnic, sectarian, and ideological factors have contributed to the substantial political fragmentation and internal discord among Iraq's political groups. The significant capacity of these domestic challenges to impact foreign policy is noteworthy, consequently influencing Iraq's diplomatic interactions with neighboring nations and influential international actors.

Results and Discussion

A. Results

1. Composition of Iraqi Society

A complex relationship exists between multiculturalism and identity politics. Several previously homogeneous societies have experienced the emergence of groups characterized by distinct cultures and traditions. They frequently exhibit noticeable discrepancies in their physical attributes. The occurrences mentioned above have initiated profound discussions and introspection concerning community diversity, integration, citizenship, and adaptation. The contested issues are associated with significant federal knowledge, especially in societies where numerous ethnic groups are present. Federalism encompasses the spatial configuration of the political system and how the fundamental institutions embody the diverse attributes of society.

Iraq has several ethnically diverse groups in its early federalization. A large portion of the population is religiously and linguistically diverse (e.g., Arabic against Kurdish and Sunni versus Shia) despite being ethnically homogeneous or mostly Arabs or Kurds. Kurds make up roughly 15-20% of Iraq's population, and Arabs 75-80%, according to Lockhart [24]. Islamic believers make up 97% of the population. More than 60-65% of this group are Shi'a, whereas 32-37% are Sunni. About 5-3% of the population is Yazidi, Christian, Kaka'i (Yarsani), or Sabeian-Mandean. Some regions of Iraq speak dialects other than Arabic and Kurdish, the official languages.

Effective federalist policymaking requires the smart use of diversity. Diversity is complex. Using centrifugal forces benefits society, especially ethnically divided ones. Diversity comes with costs [25]. Iraq's diversified population has caused many ethnic and sectarian conflicts since its founding. Kurdish intellectuals and political leaders in Iraq have formally embraced federalism and helped create it, but they must be more sincere and determined. They prefer an autonomous Kurdish administration above federalism. The Kurds sought independence from Iraq in a 2016 referendum. Sunni Arabs have opposed federalism in Iraq since the Constitution's creation. Their request focused on rectifying specific components, with federalism being the main concern. Federalism in Iraq could erode Arab identity and fracture the nation. More clarity is needed about the probable marginalization of the Southern and Northern regions, which have abundant income and energy resources. It is acknowledged that their concerns have reduced since Kurdistan became federal. Iraq's dominant Shia faction's internal tensions stand out. Al-Dawa favors a strong, centralized federalism system over a passive and partially decentralized one. Prudence and expanding the central government's influence over regions characterize their approach.

Internally, this party disagrees with federalism. The Sadr movement maintains that federalism will split Iraq. They support federalism in Iraqi Kurdistan, unlike Sunni Arabs. As in the lower house, Iraqi Shia factions support federalism to maintain political balance. The Iraqi government's formal institutions lack power, and the country has been dubbed one of the most dishonest. Lack of unanimity among Kirkuk's several ethnic groups on natural resource management threatens its future. Thus, there is a substantial lack of unanimity on federalism among political factions and the Shia community, which has a unique divide.

2. The Main Actors of Iraq's Foreign Policy

The federation is a form of government distinguished by its just allocation of authority. The governing body comprises a central or federal government and constituent unit governments. By its specific requirements, a distinct distribution of financial resources is allotted to each tier of governance. At times, the municipal level may function independently as a separate form of governance. Federal nations are characterized by the constitutional recognition of a subordinate level of government and a federal or central government, which grants each the authority to carry out its designated responsibilities independently. Likewise, any organization with autonomous governing authority, including the federal government. Unlike other political bodies, the Constitution establishes the boundaries of this jurisdiction [26].

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Federalism originated from insights garnered through political experimentation, which extended beyond the defense realm to encompass various other domains. In addition to overseeing import and export operations, these responsibilities encompass intergovernmental and international commerce, citizenship and immigration, and international diplomacy. The active participation of the national organisation is imperative for addressing these substantial challenges at the national level [27]. The prime minister, the President, the foreign minister, the President of the Iraqi Representatives Council, and various political factions representing the Shia, Sunni, and Kurdish communities are pivotal actors who wield significant influence over Iraq's foreign policy.

Article 110 of the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 states that the authority to determine foreign policy rests with the federal government. The jurisdictions where the federal government possesses supreme authority over the regional governorate are specified in the Constitution. These encompass a wide range of domains, including but not limited to:

- a. Diplomatic affairs, which involves the formulation of foreign policy, facilitation of treaty negotiations, and endorsement of debt policies;
- b. National security enforcement, which entails the command of military forces and the protection of Iraq's borders;
- c. Fiscal and customs policy development encompasses matters about budget management, commercial activities, currency, and customs.

According to Article (78), the prime minister oversees national policies and gives the Iraqi Council of Representatives legislative power. Articles 61/4 and 61/2 regulate foreign treaties and executive performance. The Foreign Ministry also handles Iraqi diplomatic problems daily. It is vital to diplomatic negotiations, international forums, and Iraq's interests. According to Article 67 of the Iraqi Constitution, the president is the country's unifying force and personifies its sovereignty. Constitutional compliance falls to the President. In addition to his symbolic role, the President has executive authority under Article 66. The president can veto legislation or deny approval of a proposal that significantly impacts the economy, domestic affairs, or foreign policy under the Constitution. Iraq's presidency has little impact on foreign policy. However, the president's impact can be measured based on their specialized knowledge, the wise use of constitutional authority, network linkages, political party support, and associations with other significant executive branch figures. They usually mediate to create a less contentious policy.

Article (33) of the Iraqi Council of Representatives (ICR) Rules of Procedures states that the Speaker speaks for the organization. His international diplomacy depends on his efforts and political support. The ICR plays a key role in international relations by administering federal legislation and overseeing executive agencies like the Iraqi Ministry of International Affairs and the foreign minister. Thus, the ICR has legislative power over the executive branch and can authorize, proclaim, or sanction war and a state of emergency if the president and prime minister request it. The Iraqi Parliament can censure or invalidate executive-branch international agreements. Numerous committees are reviewing the agreement (law proposal) for ratification. The Foreign Relations Committee and a regional or agreement-specific committee usually participate in international relations problems.

The ICR and the core executive authorities exert substantial influence over foreign policy. On the contrary, the prime minister exercises supreme authority in devising foreign policy objectives and supervising the diplomatic endeavors of Iraq. The foreign minister executes foreign policy; however, without coordination or a precise, concrete, and comprehensive agenda, his decision-making is influenced by personal and partisan interests. The president participates in specific diplomatic initiatives, albeit with limited authority over foreign policy; his role is predominantly symbolic, shaped by factors such as personal charisma, political backing, and connections on a local and global scale. Although the ICR does not engage in direct policy implementation, its impact can be significant due to its power to remove officials with a majority vote. Inconsistent foreign policy has resulted from the need for more specific information in the recent Iraqi Constitution, the varying interpretations of it, and the officials' limited comprehension of its significance and obligations.

On the other hand, the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime from power constituted a critical juncture in Iraq's diplomatic and historical trajectory. Due to the Baathist regime's demise, a power vacuum ensued, which permitted various political factions to vie for supremacy. The abovementioned alteration established the groundwork for how internal strife would influence Iraq's foreign policy [28].

Iraq's complex political landscape is characterized by numerous factions and parties that wield significant sway over its foreign policy decisions. Political factions often form alliances based on ideological, sectarian, and ethnic differences, and their influence on foreign policy is proportional to the degree of representation they hold in the legislature and executive branch. The influence of several significant Iraqi political factions on foreign policy is detailed below:

- a. The late 1950s-founded Al-Dawa Party is a powerful Shiite political organisation in Iraq. It has greatly influenced Iraq's political landscape since 2003 [29]. The party leadership oversaw Iraq's strategy and diplomacy [30]. lists Da'wa Party prime ministers Ibrahim al-Jaafari, Nouri al Maliki, and Haider al-Abadi from 2005 to 2018.

Baqir and Abdul Aziz al-Hakim created ISCI in Iran in 1982 . July 2017 saw the National Wisdom Movement, created by ISCI's nephew Sayyid A'mmar al-Hakim, become an independent political party. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) organized, funded, and supported the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) in the 1980s, which united Shia resistance to Saddam Hussein. ISCI's military Badr Corps achieved this [31]. The Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) supported Iraq's new political structure and federalism after Saddam Hussein's fall . It has held many government positions since the Iraqi Governing Council's founding. ISCI had a chance to rule the new Iraq. However, their closeness to the occupying forces may have affected the decision [32].

b. Under the leadership of Muqtada al-Sadr, the Sadrist Movement has substantially impacted Iraqi politics. The organization often espouses a nationalistic stance and urges the elimination of foreign military presence in Iraq, impacting foreign policy decisions concerning sovereignty and security .

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) is an organization that champions the interests and demands of the Kurdish populace in Iraq, with a specific focus on the autonomous Kurdistan Region. The foreign policy of Iraq has been profoundly impacted by the existence of Kurdish political factions, specifically its engagements with neighboring countries such as Iran and Turkey .

c. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) is a prominent Kurdish political entity that has exerted influence over Iraq's foreign policy, particularly concerning its dealings with Turkey and Iran [33].

d. Sunni Political Parties: Many Sunni political parties, often represented in the Iraqi Parliament, have significantly influenced foreign policy, particularly concerning regions dominated by Sunnis and the fight against terrorism [34].

The influence exerted by armed organizations on Iraq's foreign policy is a complex and multifaceted issue. These factions, often affiliated with specific political sects or factions, have significantly influenced the development of the country's foreign policies and relations. Armed groups operating in Iraq are not autonomous entities; instead, they are affiliated with particular political factions and receive financial support from them. Shiite militant organizations may maintain affiliations with political parties or factions within the Shiite faith, whereas Sunni militants may minaret with Sunni groups. The political factions' promotion of policies that align with the objectives of the militant groups they affiliate with significantly influences Iraq's foreign policy [35].

3. Incoherent Foreign Policy Towards Neighboring Countries and Global Powers

In the aftermath of Saddam Hussein's regime's fall in 2003, Iraq underwent a political transformation marked by both fragmentation and the installation of a democratic system. Challenges arose in maintaining a unified and consistent approach to international relations due to the proliferation of political factions with divergent foreign policy objectives and interests. On the contrary, the foreign policy of Iraq is impacted by its diverse population, which includes Arabs, Kurds, and believers of various faiths. Iraq's diplomatic relations with neighboring and international countries may be influenced by ethnic and sectarian divides. Furthermore, the activities and interests of regional and international actors impact Iraq's foreign policy developments. Several countries' foreign policies have been impacted by the involvement of the United States, Iran, and other nations in Iraqi affairs [36]. This includes support for various political factions. The presence of three principal actors, who exert influence over both domestic and foreign policies, can be attributed to divisions within the Iraqi populace. Sunni, Shia, and Kurdish constitute the three powers.

4. Iraqi Foreign Policy in the Context of Shia Political Factions

The Shia political groupings and armed groups have had significant influence on Iraqi foreign policy following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship in 2003. Its influence on the Iraqi political landscape has been substantial. The Da'wa Party is a prominent Shiite political party. Local and international opponents of the Da'wa Party accuse it of supporting Iran and of failing to forge alliances with Gulf states on the grounds of sectarian prejudice . Although displaying a degree of empathy towards Iranian goals, the party's collaboration with the United States throughout its occupation has been pragmatic. Pressures reemerged, and diplomatic relations between Iraq and its neighbors (except Iran) advanced minimally during Al-Maliki's second tenure in office. Al-Maliki has leveled against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Qatar in several addresses, alleging that they have interfered in Iraqi affairs and contributed to its instability. Iraq and Turkey's diplomatic ties were also marked by an observable degree of tension. The reconciliation between the Turkish government and the Kurdish Region Government (KRG), along with Turkey's stance on the Syrian Civil War, contributed to this outcome to some extent. Additionally, the sectarian portrayal likely exerted some influence. Recep Tayyip Erdogan and al-Maliki experienced a personal rift that further strained their tenuous relationship .

ISCI is the second Shiite political faction. The party's political power, the former leader's (A'mmar al-Hakim) reputation, and party members in government posts had an impact on foreign issues beyond government channels. Ammar al-Hakim's continuous foreign links show that significant non-governmental actors can establish external linkages in Iraq's shaky state. The Syrian Civil War, Saudi-led conflict in Yemen, and Iraqi instability have put pressure on ISCI leader Ammar al-Hakim to establish diplomatic connections with regional governments. In May 2015, al-Hakim condemned Saudi Arabia's military operation in Yemen as unwise and destructive. He endorsed Assad's, Russia, Iran, and Baghdad's intelligence cooperation in October 2015. The party has always supported

Shia causes and political organisations in the region through its diplomatic activities. However, A'mmar al-Hakim acknowledged the role of the US-led international coalition in fighting Daesh. The Badr Organisation, which opposes U.S. participation in Iraq, disagrees. The Badr Organisation has a closer relationship with the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) without its former commander, Ammar al-Hakim, who leads al-Hikma. Since A'mmar's departure, the party has lost popularity and associated with pro-Iran politicians .

On the contrary, Muqtada al-Sadr directed the Sadrist Movement. Muqtada's father prioritized Iraqi nationalism, Arabism, and tribalism as distinguishing attributes of the Iraqi Shia community; this influence influenced Al-Sadr's family's decision to remain in Iraq. Concerning the Iranian clerics' authority over the Iraqi Shia community and the Hawza in Najaf, Al-Sadr expressed his disappointment. Moreover, Iranian allies in Iraq, including the Da'wa Party and ISCI, were challenged by Muqtada. Iran did not influence the actions of Muqtada, which resulted in violence.

Conversely, they obstructed the advancement of Iran's objectives and concerns in Iraq . Al-Ahrar's 2014 electoral program presented a foreign policy stance that was in contrast to Da'wa and ISCI's. It explicitly supported the notion that Iraq should resist and contest the occupation of the country by foreign nations, including the United States, and the dominance of superpowers while incorporating certain guiding principles from other programs. This position strongly opposes the United States . Throughout the military occupation and beyond, Muqtada has consistently and resolutely expressed his opposition to the United States intervention in Iraq. Iraq's proclaimed foreign policy concerning the United States contrasts this stance. According to Muqtada, a considerable proportion, if not the entirety, of the Iraqi political elites and parties currently support the United States and/or regional powers or intend to do so in the future .

Muqtada initially sympathised with Syrian rebels but eventually stated that their actions were worsening the country's dire position. Assad supported the dictatorship for a while because he opposed the US and Israel. He later forced Assad to resign and abandon power. The rise of Muqtada's pro-Iranian forces in Iraq has affected this attitude. Muqtada categorically opposes Saudi-led intervention in Yemen and the conflict. Muqtada agrees with the Shia-led administration on Yemen. Despite the lack of antagonism between the two nations and Turkey's praise of his May 2018 parliamentary election victory, Muqtada is furious about Turkey's meddling in Iraq. According to , Iraq's rejection of Turkish troops is persistent. Since 2017, Muqtada al-Sadr has visited Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, and Jordan. He met with key leaders from these nations during these tours. These visits attempt to undermine Iranian influence in Iraq and portray him as a unifying figure among Shia leaders in Iraq while boosting ties with the Arab world.

Iran has ties to numerous Shi'a parties in Iraq's new government. It supported various Shi'a militias during the insurgency. Installing a Shi'i-dominated administration in Iraq benefits Iran geopolitically . Iran receives Shi'a support. Iraqi Shia armed groups such as Asab Ahel Alhaq, Badr, and Huzb Allah oppose federal foreign policy. They conduct foreign relations independently while actively realigning foreign policy with their and Iran's goals. Iraqi Shia militias have criticized threats to the US, Turkey, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, encouraging Iran. Pro-Iran Shia militias retain hardline views on international affairs, notwithstanding the federal government and ICR's stance on Turkey. They want to enrage the Sunni Arab Gulf rulers, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, with the US and West. Meanwhile, the pro-Iranian militia leader has endorsed strong cooperation with Russia. Asab Ahel Alhaq (AAH) and Badr leaders support Russian engagement because they believe the U.S. coalition's military effort against Daesh is insufficient. Hezbollah of Lebanon and pro-Iranian Iraqi Shia militias, especially AAH, have created a powerful military alliance in Iraq and Syria to fight Sunni insurgents. This collaboration does not require federal government engagement, according to .

Briefly, the armed and political factions of the Shia are fragile. Divergent interests, such as pursuing government positions, motivate them to unite and separate. Foreign policy cohesion is absent from these factions. Political parties and individuals with the same religious affiliation have been the primary sources of their emergence. On occasion, recent alliances have emerged that transcend ideological and sectarian boundaries, with the principal objective of securing a more significant portion of governmental power and appealing to voters. Political objectives regarding domestic and foreign affairs vary among the coalition's factions. As a result, they oppose and potentially clash over foreign policy perspectives .

5. The Impact of Sunni Political Actions on the Foreign Policy of Iraq

Following 2003, a significant portion of the Iraqi Islamic organization's (IIP) constituents were represented by this prominent Arab Islamic Sunni political organization; as a result, the IIP wielded considerable sway over Iraqi domestic affairs. In contrast to other prominent Shia factions, the IIP maintains an extremely divergent position concerning regional powers in international affairs. In addition to advocating for the establishment of diplomatic relations with Arab nations, the IIP manifesto from November 2005 expressed concern over the expansion of Iranian interference and influence in Iraq. The unilateral responsibility for the decline in Iraq's security and the ensuing instability was placed on the American government. The IIP endeavors to align its foreign policy with the principles of Sunni Islam and places significant emphasis on its relations with the Arab and Islamic communities [37]. Following the United States' disengagement from Iraq, the IIP and several prominent members experienced a significant shift in their perspective concerning the United States. This shift was primarily shaped by al-Maliki's severe repercussions against Sunni leaders. The Iraqi government, which has previously expressed dissent towards the United States, is currently endorsing its continued presence in the country to counter the influence of Shia Iran-

backed militias and combat terrorism. The party's leaders maintain robust alliances with countries with a Sunni majority, such as Qatar and Turkey [38].

The Iraqi National Accord (INA), founded in 1990, is an Iraqi political organization led by Ayad Allawi, an agnostic Shia figure who espouses a platform free from sectarian affiliations. Notwithstanding its adherence to a progressive platform, the party exhibits a bias towards Arab Sunnis. The organization was constituted of secularists, former Ba'ath Party members, and individuals who had tendered their resignations from the military, intelligence, and security forces. Allawi's political platform embraces a strategic approach by addressing Sunni citizens' concerns, which responds to the increasing influence of Shia politics in Iraq. After 2003, Allawi was elected to the Iraqi Governance Council seat. The United States, supported by Allawi, dissolved the cabinet and appointed him interim prime minister. Since its establishment, it has maintained strong diplomatic relations with Western countries, Turkey, and Sunni Arab nations, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Allawi acknowledged Iran's challenges as prime minister. Allawi opposes Hezbollah in Lebanon and its Iranian proxies as threats to regional stability. By avoiding Iran politically, he gained support from the US, Saudi Arabia, and the UK. Allawi's strategy of inviting Arab nations was visible throughout. He asked Iraqis to support the Arab-Islamic alliance. INA collaborated with the CIA and MI6 [39]. Allawi's administration prioritized diplomatic relations, foreign affairs institutions in collaboration with a US-led coalition, foreign investment, engagement with international and regional organizations and nations, and security and military cooperation to end Iraq's isolation. The Iraqi Interim Government planned diplomatic relations. Security, diplomacy, and economics guide Baghdad's foreign policy [39].

Notwithstanding substantial disparities in viewpoints, the Iraqi Arab Sunnis have effectively sustained alliances and diplomatic ties with Turkey and the Arab world. On certain occasions, Sunni factions advocated opposition to the Shia-dominated government at regional and international levels. Over time, a growing cohort of Shia leaders embraced a more inclusive stance, which precipitated the establishment of alliances involving al-Hakim, Muqtada, and Arab Sunni powers.

6. Kurdish Political Factions' Impact on Iraqi Foreign Policy

The KRG established the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFR) in September 2006. KRG representatives cited Article 121 of the Constitution as the legal basis for their authority to undertake the action above. The KRG established the Department of Foreign Relations (DFR) in collaboration with the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs to expand the KRG's international influence. Authorized by Official Order No. 143,42, the DFR comprises seven directorates in different countries responsible for promoting business visits and investments in the KRG and facilitating the travel of foreign delegations. During the period from 2006 to 2013, the DFR participated in a range of initiatives, including supporting the Erbil International Trade Fair, informing Turkish companies about the economic potential of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, advocating for European countries to grant asylum to Iraqi Kurdish individuals, and working in conjunction with neighboring governments to tackle the refugee crisis resulting from the Syrian conflict [40]. Potential conflicts may arise between the responsibilities of the DFR and those of the national authority. For instance, their diplomatic relations are significantly influenced by their economic ties. Therefore, the pursuit of more robust economic ties with international partners by the DFR may indirectly affect its diplomatic relations with other nations. Allegations have been leveled against the DFR because it seeks to bolster the KRG's federal autonomy and elevate its international stature.

B. Discussion

Iraq is perhaps the world's most visible example of diversity and an identity crisis. Shiites, Kurds, and Sunnis are the main players in the political and social fragmentation caused by the presence of multiple power-sharing, religious, and ethnic factions. Iraq is home to two major ethnic groups, the Arabs and the Kurds. There are two main religious groups in the country, the Sunnis and the Shiites. Because of this split, people's sense of national identity collapsed, and even inside a united country, different religious and ethnic groups were unable to integrate. Power struggles have eroded Iraqi communities' and other countries' shared interests, adding fuel to the fire of identity crisis.

Following Saddam Hussein's ouster, Iraq's foreign policy transformed into a complex and multi-layered endeavour. Iraq is undergoing a significant shift, and an increasing number of local and foreign actors are collaborating to shape policy. Our primary objective in doing this inquiry is to identify the influential individuals in Iraqi foreign policy, understand their responsibilities in this arena, and determine the impact they have had on the country's foreign policy choices since 2003. The foreign policy of Iraq is shaped by the various interests of the powerful political factions and elites who control the country's administration and governance. Ineffective and inconsistent foreign policy has resulted from internal political divides in Iraq, including Arab Sunnis, Kurds, and Shia, all of which have been at war with one another and forged agreements with outside groups.

Still, some Iraqi lawmakers defy the government's stated foreign policy stance. Problems of sovereignty, security, Iraqi politics, and national interests are divisive. There is a schism among the coalitions, the big parties, and their respective leaders over foreign policy. The partisan leanings and individual preferences of influential Iraqis shape

the country's foreign policy. The internal strife in Iraq is just as significant as its foreign strategy. Foreign policy preferences might vary across groups, particularly with regard to neighbouring countries. Some regions with a plurality of Shiites may aim to strengthen ties with Iran, while those with a majority of Sunnis may aim to strengthen ties with Arab Gulf states and Turkey. How about the Kurdish territories? Well, they can do what they want with their connections to the outside world and regional alliances. The diplomatic ties of Iraq are greatly affected by the power struggle in surrounding nations, even though it occurs within Iraqi territory.

The Iraqi government's stance towards key international actors lacks coherence, clarity, and strategic direction, making the country's foreign policy towards these entities murky. On the international stage, this makes it more difficult for other nations to grasp Iraq's intentions and aims and frequently causes misunderstandings over Iraq's stance. As it pertains to key international actors, Iraq's foreign policy is complicated for a variety of reasons. Discord inside the company and other internal problems contribute to this. The ethnic and sectarian divisions within Iraq's political landscape pose a threat to the country's foreign policy objectives as various political factions pursue their own agendas or form partnerships with other nations.

Conclusion

The paper examined Iraq's foreign policy after 2003 via a federalist lens. Iraq's three primary religious and ethnic groups became extreme after Saddam's fall. Power, wealth, and an advantage over other Iraqi ethnic and sectarian groupings were their major priorities. Competition was heavily influenced by overseas players. Sunnis' unfounded perception of marginalisation since 2003 has fostered religious and ethnic conflicts in Iraq, which have been fueled by Kurdish and Shiite marginalisation in recent years. Even though it was designed to protect and preserve Iraq's unity, the federalism constitution is splitting the country and undermining it. Federal institutions based on ethnicity and religion threaten national unity and identity.

Iraq is undergoing a major shift, and more local and foreign parties are collaborating on policy. This analysis seeks to identify Iraq's important players, their foreign policy influences, and their effects since 2003. The competing and complementary interests of Iraq's ruling elite and political groupings shape its foreign policy. Iraq's Shia, Arab Sunnis, and Kurds have clashed and created external alliances, making its foreign policy confused and ineffective.

However, numerous Iraqi MPs oppose the government's foreign policies. Politics, sovereignty, interests, and security in Iraq are disputed. Leaders, coalitions, and major parties disagree on foreign policy. Powerful people's tastes and biased political ties impact Iraq's foreign policy. Internal Iraqi divisions affect foreign policy. Different groups may have different foreign policy priorities, especially with neighbours. Some Shiites may want tighter relations with Iran, while Sunnis may want closer ties with Arab Gulf states and Turkey. Kurdish territories can develop regional and international partnerships. Although they happen in Iraq, surrounding countries' power conflicts affect Iraq's diplomatic ties.

A consistent, unambiguous, and strategic approach to major international entities is lacking in the Iraqi government's foreign policy. This makes it tougher for other nations to comprehend Iraq's worldwide aspirations and confounds its position. Iraq's foreign policy towards significant international powers may be complicated for several reasons. Internal concerns and organisational splits contribute. Due to Iraq's ethnic and sectarian divisions, political factions may conflict over foreign policy aims when they pursue their own agendas or form coalitions.

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