

2016

# A Middle East Quandary: A Comparative Analysis of State Creation and Political Regime Formation in Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon

Laura Cianciolo

Connecticut College, [laurabcianciolo@gmail.com](mailto:laurabcianciolo@gmail.com)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/govhp>



Part of the [Comparative Politics Commons](#), and the [Near and Middle Eastern Studies Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Cianciolo, Laura, "A Middle East Quandary: A Comparative Analysis of State Creation and Political Regime Formation in Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon" (2016). *Government and International Relations Honors Papers*. 47.  
<https://digitalcommons.conncoll.edu/govhp/47>

This Honors Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Government and International Relations Department at Digital Commons @ Connecticut College. It has been accepted for inclusion in Government and International Relations Honors Papers by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Connecticut College. For more information, please contact [bpancier@conncoll.edu](mailto:bpancier@conncoll.edu).

The views expressed in this paper are solely those of the author.

A MIDDLE EAST QUANDARY:  
A Comparative Analysis of State Creation and Political Regime Formation  
in Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon

An Honors Thesis  
Presented By

Laura Cianciolo

To the Department of Government and International Relations  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
Honors in the Major Field

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE  
NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT  
MAY 5, 2016

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgments.....	v
Introduction.....	1
The Puzzle.....	1
Literature Review.....	3
Chapter I: Egypt.....	15
Introduction.....	15
Pre-Colonial Egypt: 641-1517.....	15
Ottoman Egypt: 1517-1882.....	25
British Egypt: 1882-1922.....	39
Egypt in Transition: 1922-1952.....	48
Independent Statehood: 1952-Present.....	58
Exploratory Conclusions.....	75
Chapter II: Iraq.....	77
Introduction.....	77
Pre-Colonial Iraq: 633-1534.....	77
Ottoman Iraq: 1534-1918.....	80
British Iraq: 1918-1932.....	89
Iraq in Transition: 1932-1963.....	102
Independent Statehood: 1963-Present.....	123
Exploratory Conclusions.....	152
Chapter III: Lebanon.....	155
Introduction.....	155
Pre-Colonial Lebanon: 632-1516.....	155
Ottoman Lebanon: 1516-1923.....	159
French Lebanon: 1923-1943.....	174
Postcolonial Statehood: 1943-Present.....	185
Exploratory Conclusions.....	212
Chapter IV: A Comparative Analysis of Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon.....	215
Conclusions.....	228
Appendix.....	243
Appendix A.....	243
Appendix B.....	244
Bibliography.....	245

## ABSTRACT

Democracy is at a crossroad. At the start of the twenty-first century analysts noted that though in the 1920s only a very small number of sovereign states were led by regimes that had the basic components necessary to qualify as a democracy, by 1990 that number had increased to 69, and by 2012 to 117. Between the years 2005 and 2013, however, political rights and civil liberties underwent substantial setbacks. Of no less significance, hopes that Middle Eastern states would begin their transitions toward democracy as a result of the spring revolts of 2011 experienced a very short lifespan.

My study is guided by three interrelated objectives. My immediate goal is to explain why Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon have not been able to create legitimate states and stable democratic regimes. To explain their failures, I conduct two separate analyses for each country. I start with an examination of each state's history, beginning shortly after the Arab Conquests in AD 632, and ending at present day. After documenting the historical trajectory of each state, I propose that the colonial history, ethnic and religious diversity, population composition, and the presence or absence of natural resources have distinctly undermined the capacity of Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon to create legitimate states and stable democratic regimes.

My second and related objective is to evaluate the viability of existing theories of state creation and democratization and to propose alternative arguments through a comparative analysis. The Egyptian case is unique because of the three states examined the presence of a highly homogeneous society should have made it the most likely to create a democratic regime. And yet it did not. I attribute Egypt's failure to the fact that

throughout much of its history it was dominated by a foreign power. This nearly uninterrupted period of foreign domination resulted in the creation of a political culture that continues to value stability in the form of an authoritarian regime over the creation of a democratic regime. The Iraqi case likewise highlights this correlation, but also demonstrates that foreign powers cannot export democracy, nor can democracy be imposed on a divided population without an extensive process of reconciliation. Lebanon's troubled experience with consociational democracy, in turn, underscores the difficulty of developing a democratic regime that engages the separate factions of society, but does not trend toward political deadlock.

My third objective is loftier and not immediately attainable. The comparative analysis of the states mentioned above provides important insights that could ultimately help produce a generalized theory of democracy for the Middle East. These generalizations could help lay the foundation for the examination of other Middle Eastern cases and enable future analysts to determine the extent to which the generalizations drawn in this study are applicable to other cases.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A sincere thank you goes first, and foremost, to Professor Alex Hybel, my thesis advisor and my faculty advisor. Without Professor Hybel's tireless encouragement and guidance this project would not exist in its final form. Since my freshman year he has placed immense faith in me as a student, a researcher, and an analyst, and has never failed to remind me of this when I doubt my abilities. I am beyond grateful for the time and energy that Professor Hybel has invested in me as student and in this project.

Second, I would like to thank Professor Caroleen Sayej, who, in addition to serving as my reader, taught my first courses on the Middle East. Her unparalleled intelligence and passion for teaching inspired me to take the subjects I learned in her classes and formulate them into a thesis. Professor Sayej also placed sincere confidence in me as a student, and offered both intellectual and emotional guidance throughout this project. Thanks as well goes to the entire Government and International Relations Department faculty who have deepened my education and supported me throughout my four years. I would also like to extend an earnest thank you to Professor David Patton who taught my first Government class at Connecticut College.

Special mention goes to Cheryl Banker and Noel Garrett. Thanks also to my Shain Third Floor companions, with whom I shared many late nights and early mornings. And, of course, thanks goes to my parents, Kathy Brennan and Jerry Cianciolo, who have supported me and my education since day one. Finally, thanks to my friends for their constant support and the home they have helped me create here at Connecticut College.

## INTRODUCTION

### The Puzzle

At the start of the second decade of the twenty-first century a wide range of analysts suggested that democracy was at a crossroad. They noted that though in the 1920s only a very small number of sovereign states were led by regimes that had the basic components necessary to qualify as a democracy, by 1990 that number had increased to 69, and by 2012 to 117. Between the years 2005 and 2013, however, political rights and civil liberties underwent substantial setbacks. Of no less significance, hopes that Middle Eastern states would begin their transitions toward democracy as a result of the spring revolts of 2011 experienced a very short lifespan.

This study has two objectives in mind. Its immediate goal is to identify the multiple and diverse obstacles Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon have faced throughout their respective troubled histories and the impact those impediments have had on their processes of state and regime creation. Specifically, I intend to argue that the colonial history, ethnic and religious diversity, population composition, and the presence or absence of natural resources have undermined measurably the capacity of any of those states to create stable democratic regimes. The political, economic, social, and historical diversity among Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon is key to understanding why none of these states has created a democratic regime. Although Lebanon ranks significantly higher than either Egypt or Iraq in terms of various democracy indicators, the current political regime cannot be classified as a democracy. To substantiate the above argument, I conduct two separate analyses for each country. I begin the historical analysis of each state shortly

after the Arab Conquest, which began in 632, and end at present day. In order to fully ascertain the historical and structural transformations that occurred over a period of nearly 1,400 years, I divide the historical analyses into four distinct periods: (1) pre-colonial, (2) colonial, (3) transition, and (4) independent statehood.<sup>1</sup> After documenting the historical trajectory of each state, I offer a political analysis that discusses why democracy has failed to take root. I move period by period and discuss the political, economic, and social legacies left by various regimes, rulers, and historical events. Then, I posit my own theoretical generalizations through a comparative analysis of the three countries I have examined.

This study's second objective is loftier and not immediately attainable. A comparative analysis of the aforementioned states should provide important insights that should ultimately help derive a generalized theory of democracy for the Middle East. Such theory does not exist at this time, and it would be imprudent to claim that an analysis of those three countries is sufficient to derive one. The generalizations derived from their analysis, however, should help set the foundation for the investigation of other Middle Eastern cases. More to the point, it should enable future analysts to determine the extent to which the generalizations I derive in this study are applicable to other cases.

---

<sup>1</sup> Because Lebanon did not undergo a substantial transition period following independence I will separate Chapter III into only five sections with the period of postcolonial statehood beginning in 1943. I also do not refer to Lebanon as an independent state, but as a postcolonial state as I noted above, as various state and non-state actors have challenged its independence since 1948.



## Literature Review

Most of the literature on state creation and democratization focuses in Europe, Latin America, and to a lesser extent postcolonial Africa. There exists theoretical literature on the Middle East but it is limited. For this reason I will discuss general theories of state creation and democratization first, but it is important to keep in mind that most stem from scholarship on post-Enlightenment Europe. Nevertheless, such theories are essential to any study of democracy, and their conclusions are useful for deriving broader generalizations. I will then discuss the literature specifically concerning the Middle East, paying close attention to the colonial legacy of the region and the extent that authoritarianism hindered democratization.

Salient theories of state creation and democratization operate within an analytical framework based on a number of fundamental axioms. Before democracy can take root, a state must consolidate and legitimize its power. It is essential to note, however, that processes of consolidation and legitimization are never complete, such processes are constant and ongoing as states continually adapt to changing political, economic, and social conditions. Furthermore, although the consolidation and legitimization of a state's power are the fundamental prerequisites for democratization, they are not the only necessary conditions. One must also pay close attention to the international environment, as external conditions can both facilitate and derail the process of democratization. Finally, it is important to emphasize that Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon entered the arena of nation-states after the end of the First World War. Worldwide political and economic instability played a major role in the regime formation of each country. Similarly, as latecomers, the three countries were not only "late in achieving sovereign status, they

were left with only a minimum amount of time to build up their institutions before they were faced with disruptive pressures from the outside as well as the inside.”<sup>2</sup> Now that I have outlined the maxims implicit to formal principles of state creation and democratization, I will discuss the state creation scholarship of three theoreticians: Charles Tilly, Stein Rokkan, and Jorge Domínguez.

**Theories of state creation.** Charles Tilly posits a comprehensive definition of the modern state. According to Tilly, a territory is by definition a state if and only if it meets four requirements: (1) it is clearly distinguished from other institutions within the same region, (2) it is autonomous, (3) it is centralized, and (4) its divisions are in formal coordination with each other. Further, Tilly notes that a set of seven conditions helped Europe achieve the above four requirements. The capability of a certain territory in Europe to transform into a state was determined primarily by whether it:

- (1) Possessed extractible resources
- (2) Was vulnerable to military conquest for an extended period of time
- (3) Had capable political leaders
- (4) Boasted a powerful and successful army
- (5) Ruled over a homogenous population
- (6) Enjoyed unification and centralization at the elite level

---

<sup>2</sup> Flora, Peter, Stein Kuhnle, and Derek Urwin, eds. *State Formation, Nation-Building, and Mass Politics in Europe: The Theory of Stein Rokkan*. New York: Oxford University, 1999. Print. Comparative European Politics.

(7) Was positioned advantageously in the international arena.<sup>3</sup>

A number of Tilly's conditions are especially relevant to the discussion of state creation and regime formation in the Middle East. They are: the presence of oil (condition one), the high degree of heterogeneity in religion and ethnicity (condition five), and the history of colonialism and imperialism (condition seven). Tilly's other four conditions are also significant, but the above three have played the largest role in shaping the region.

Stein Rokkan's scholarship is also key to an analysis of state creation and regime formation. He argues that state creation can be divided into four distinct stages. First, similar to Tilly's sixth condition, the elites must unify politically, economically, and culturally. Unification enables the elites to erect institutions of statehood and establish the requisite infrastructure. Second, the elites at the center expand their network to the peripheries to draw the population into the fledgling political system. Third, increased channels of contact enable mass participation via political parties and opposition groups. Finally, agencies of redistribution emerge to meet the demands of an expanded populace.<sup>4</sup>

Jorge Dominguez's conception of state creation differs slightly from both Tilly's and Rokkan's.<sup>5</sup> Dominguez contends that a state "is a set of institutions with claim to a legitimate monopoly of force over a certain territory and an ability to exercise it..."<sup>6</sup> In this regard a state must have the capacity to exert authority over a given population.

Similarly, the state must also possess an authority that it is clearly differentiated from

---

<sup>3</sup> Tilly, Charles. *Coercion, Capital and European States, A.D. 990 - 1992*. Revised Edition ed. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992. Print.

<sup>4</sup> Rokkan, Stein. "Dimensions of State Formation and Nation-Building: A Possible Paradigm for Research on Variations within Europe." (1975): 572. Print.

<sup>5</sup> Dominguez, Jorge, and Anthony Jones, eds. *The Construction of Democracy: Lessons from Practice and Research*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2007. Print. Democratic Transition and Consolidation.

<sup>6</sup> Hybel, Alex Roberto. *State Creation and Democratization in the Americas*. 2015. Print.

other organizations in the same territory. Tilly concurs that this condition is critical. The major difference between Dominguez and the other two scholars is that Dominguez underscores that state control over a population is a “function of the state’s claim to the monopoly of force.”<sup>7</sup>

Before I discuss theories of democracy I would like to examine three other general theories relevant to the present analysis. The resource curse, or the paradox of plenty, is pertinent to both Egypt and Iraq. The theory claims that newly formed states rich in natural resources tend to have lower levels of economic growth, development, and democracy. Although there exist various explanations as to why this is the case, the paradox usually emerges because leaders of mineral-rich states encourage only limited investment and development in other areas of the economy.<sup>8</sup> An additional theory relevant to the present analysis is the predatory pursuit or rush for spoils theory, which aims to explain the emergence of patrimonial and clientelist politics in postcolonial states. The theory contends that during the colonial period European administrators staffed government positions with either colonial officers or local authorities.<sup>9</sup> This tendency spawned widespread corruption that only became further entrenched when the colonial period ended and native authorities retained their privileged positions. Following the departure of European colonialists, these local authorities relied on patronage to garner support and maintain patrimonial authority. Ultimately, corruption persists, as leaders tend to consume state resources. The final theory important to consider was developed to explain state creation in postcolonial Africa, but is applicable to postcolonial Middle Eastern states as well. The theory suggests that African states remain

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

weak because European colonial authorities did not solidify institutions of self-governance during the period of tutelage. As a result, power-hungry local authorities assumed control after the departure of the Europeans or the state reverted to pre-colonial patterns of patron-client relationships.<sup>10</sup>

**Theories of democratization.** Robert Dahl, Wolfgang Merkel, Juan Linz, and Alfred Stepan have produced some of the most comprehensive and relevant scholarship on democratization primarily in Europe and Latin America. Dahl emphasizes the necessity of a responsive political system that both encourages and enables citizens to voice their preferences. In order to meet these requirements, the political regime must issue the following guarantees:

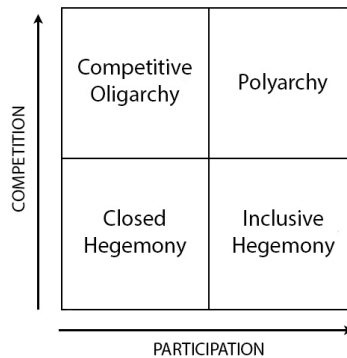
- 1) Freedom of association
- 2) Freedom of expression
- 3) The right to vote
- 4) The ability to run for public office (barring reasonable restrictions)
- 5) The right of politicians to campaign and compete for votes
- 6) Multiple sources of information
- 7) Free and fair elections
- 8) Institutions to develop policy based on voter preference.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>11</sup> Dahl, Robert A. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1971. Print.

According to Dahl, the presence or absence of any number of these guarantees determines whether a regime is a polyarchy, competitive oligarchy, inclusive hegemony, or closed hegemony. These four types of regimes are derived from two dimensions: public contestation (or competition) and participation.<sup>12</sup> Dahl's theory is illustrated clearly by a diagram:



Polyarchies represent the optimal type of regime because they impose the fewest restrictions on freedom and provide outlets for political parties and opposition groups through representative government. Competitive oligarchies boast high levels of public contestation, but restrict the number of participants. Inclusive hegemonies impose few restrictions on participation, but participation is rendered meaningless because access to outlets with legitimate power to oppose the government is limited. Finally, closed hegemonies rank the lowest on both dimensions because they ban all forms of expression, organization, and representation. These types of regimes do not tolerate opposition.<sup>13</sup>

Wolfgang Merkel's scholarship on democracy differs significantly from Dahl's. Merkel argues that modern liberal democracies consist of five partial regimes that are contingently interconnected. Liberal democracies possess: (1) electoral regimes that

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

permit free, fair, and regular elections, (2) freedoms of speech and association, (3) protection of civil rights and liberties, (4) separation of powers between executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and (5) protection against nonelected groups that wish to overrule or overthrow the government.<sup>14</sup>

Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan offer yet another theory of democratization that posits five requisite conditions for democratic consolidation. Similar to Merkel's five partial regimes, Linz and Stepan's conditions are also interconnected. The two scholars concur with the notion that the consolidation of the state is not a sufficient condition for democratization. In order to democratize a state must have (1) an active civil society, (2) an independent political society, (3) legal protection of individual freedoms and collective rights, (4) a functioning bureaucracy, and (5) an institutionalized economic system.<sup>15</sup>

I would like to end with an important caveat: a regime is either democratic or it is not. It is both false and counterproductive to claim that some democracies are more or less democratic than others. For instance, a regime that prohibits competitive elections cannot be considered democratic even if it satisfies other conditions of democracy. The terms "illiberal democracy" or "partial democracy" are as useless as they are counterintuitive.

**Middle East theories of state creation and democratization.** In order to present a comprehensive picture of theories formulated to describe state creation and

---

<sup>14</sup> Merkel, Wolfgang. "Embedded and Defective Democracies." *Democratization* 11.5 (2004): 33-58. Web.

<sup>15</sup> Linz, Juan J., and Alfred Stepan. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. Print.

democratization in the Middle East, I divide this section into two separate discussions: state types, and authoritarianism and democracy.

*State types.* Beverly-Milton Edwards asserts that the primacy of the nation-state in the Middle East is a direct result of the Allied defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War and the subsequent system of League of Nations Mandates and Protectorates.<sup>16</sup> This model had its evolution in European society and “reflected the prevailing philosophical saliency in post-Enlightenment Europe of concepts of sovereignty, democracy, liberalism and secularism, as well as the change in economic modes of production from agrarian to industrialized societies.”<sup>17</sup> Yet the development of the nation-state in the Middle East did not stem from a period of European-style Enlightenment intellectualism but from the concurrent processes of decolonization, revolution, and ongoing intervention by foreign powers.<sup>18</sup> The artificiality of the nation-state and its top down imposition following the end of the First World War has largely served to suppress the diversity of identities in the region. For instance, in Iraq, the Baathist ideology that rose to prominence in the 1960s actively suppressed non-Arab and non-Sunni Muslim identities. Saddam Hussein then capitalized on such a foundation to advocate his vision of Iraq as a “nation without difference.”<sup>19</sup> The effect of coercive homogenization has been, ironically, the fracturing of ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Milton-Edwards, Beverly. *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*. Malden: Polity: Blackwell, 2000. Print.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 11.



Roger Owen, working within the framework of the nation-state, identifies three categories of regimes common to the Middle East. The colonial state, which characterizes the post-First World War states of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, possesses remnants of European colonialism in its central administration, its policies, and in its external relations.<sup>21</sup> The second type of state Owen documents is the immediate post-independent state, which installed socialist or distinctly non-Western regimes following the departure of European colonialists. Finally, the authoritarian state typifies regimes that lack participatory democracy. These states are characterized by one-party rule and strong military involvement in government.<sup>22</sup>

Giacomo Luciani posits similar arguments to Owen's, and has identified a number of important features of many Arab states.<sup>23</sup> He contends that majority of countries in the region are ruled by elites and bloated bureaucracies. Although large middle classes exist, they wield only limited political power. Additionally, many governments utilize processes of social engineering that impose strict control and regulation over the population. Significantly, Luciani dispels the orientalist notion that either the Arab or Islamic character of the region has produced these conditions.<sup>24</sup>

Ramsay Harik suggests a theory that differs significantly from both Owen and Luciani. He contends that contemporary Arab states are not colonial designs but are products of the region itself.<sup>25</sup> To substantiate his claim, Harik delineates five patterns of politics that originated prior to the colonial period and have persisted throughout the

---

<sup>21</sup> Owen, Roger. *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*. London: Routledge, 1992. Print.

<sup>22</sup> Milton-Edwards, Contemporary Politics in the Middle East, 10.

<sup>23</sup> Luciani, Giacomo, ed. *Politics of the Middle East: The Arab State*. Routledge Library Editions ed. London: Routledge, 2015. Print.

<sup>24</sup> Milton-Edwards, Contemporary Politics in the Middle East, 12.

<sup>25</sup> Harik, Illiya, and Louis Cantori, eds. *Local Politics and Development in the Middle East*. Boulder: Westview, 1984. Print. Westview Special Studies on the Middle East.

region's history. Among these five, the two most important are the traditional secular system and the bureaucratic-military oligarchy.<sup>26</sup>

Nazih Ayubi takes a different approach to explaining the idiosyncrasies of Middle Eastern states. In the Middle East, he notes, there are two different types of states: the revolutionary state, which utilizes radical ideologies and fanatical nationalism, and the wealth-based state that relies on extensive networks of patronage and kinship.<sup>27</sup>

Simon Bromley advances a different sort of model that relies heavily on economic theory. His model focuses on the impact of oil on the external relations of various Middle Eastern states, and the ways in which either the presence or absence of oil affects a state's relationship with the West. Through this conceptualization, Bromley aims to dispute the essentialist arguments surrounding Arabic and Islamic culture.<sup>28</sup> More generally, most analysts attempt to classify Middle Eastern regimes into one of five categories: radical, populist regimes, kin-based monarchies, socialist republics, constitutional monarchies, and one-party regimes.<sup>29</sup>

***Authoritarianism and democracy.*** Authoritarianism is a persistent obstacle to democracy in many Middle Eastern countries. Some scholars attribute despotic regimes to the region's legacy of colonialism and the imposition of artificial nation-states. Beverly Milton-Edwards subscribes to this view. She argues that "the legacy of European domination created an impetus for the expansion of post-independence state institutions, [and] in turn, state expansion acted to concentrate resources and... power in the hands of

---

<sup>26</sup> Milton-Edwards, *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*, 12.

<sup>27</sup> Ayubi, Nazih. *Overstating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*. New York: I. B. Tauris, 1995. Print.

<sup>28</sup> Bromley, Simon. *Rethinking Middle East Politics*. Austin: U of Texas, 1994. Print.

<sup>29</sup> Milton-Edwards *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*, 13-14.

the regimes that controlled the state.”<sup>30</sup> Thus, authoritarianism was inevitable. Other scholars acknowledge the significance of the colonial period but approach the issue from an economic standpoint. They contend that the incorporation of Middle Eastern states into the global capitalist network, and their resultant subordination, facilitated the development of authoritarianism.<sup>31</sup> Economics played an increasingly important role in the process of regime formation in the latter half of the twentieth century as Middle Eastern states faced the challenge of economic modernization. Most states approached the issue by initiating the nationalization of various industries and by increased involvement in the economy.

Ayubi’s approach to dissecting the authoritarian tradition centers on the existence of corporatist regimes. These regimes enable political elites to coopt citizens through the offering of various socioeconomic and welfare benefits in the early post-colonial period.<sup>32</sup> Initially, many scholars believed that elite groups would then secure mass consent through the implementation of democratic reforms, but no such transition has taken place.<sup>33</sup> The failure of democratization still baffles many scholars because “authoritarianism continues to exist as a hegemonic system despite the existence of objective economic factors that would appear to undermine authoritarianism...”<sup>34</sup> The continued ascendancy of authoritarian regimes remains somewhat of a paradox, and deconstructing such systems is a complex hindrance to democracy.

Initially, following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, many observers believed that the “new world order” would inevitably produce democracy in the Middle

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>31</sup> Pratt, Nicola. *Democracy & Authoritarianism in the Arab World*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007. Print.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 8.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 8-9.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

East.<sup>35</sup> This view was substantiated by the fact that many prerequisites were, in fact, in place. A number of Middle Eastern states possessed fledging civil societies, free and fair elections, and parliamentary politics.<sup>36</sup> Since the 1990s, however, some of these states have faltered, as state-society relations began to deteriorate. Nevertheless, a limited number of Middle Eastern states, including Lebanon, have initiated a democratic transition through a process of give-and-take between multiple competing groups and institutions.<sup>37</sup> These processes, however, are gradual, and many scholars remain pessimistic about democracy's future in the Middle East.

The brief discussion of the various theories of state creation and democratization, and their application to a range of states across the global system, including those in the Middle East, erects the foundation upon which I intend to conduct my empirical analysis. In the chapters that follow I will discuss independently the state creation and regime formation experiences of Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon and derive a tentative theoretical argument for each one as to why democracy remains an elusive reality.

---

<sup>35</sup> Kamrava, Mehran. *The Modern Middle East: A Political History Since the First World War*. Second ed. Berkeley: U of California, 2011. Print.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 345.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 355.

# **CHAPTER I**

## **Egypt: The State that Could Have Become a Democracy but Did Not**

### **Introduction**

On February 11, 2011, Hosni Mubarak, who had served as Egypt's president since 1981, resigned after eighteen days of popular demonstrations. Two rounds of presidential elections were held the following year, the first one in May and the second in June. The Muslim Brotherhood's candidate, Mohamed Morsi, emerged victorious after the second round. He was sworn in as president near the end of June 2012. His tenure as president was short-lived—the Egyptian military ousted him in July 2013. Attempts by protesters to reverse the action failed. A year later, the leader of the military coup, General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, was voted president in an election that was boycotted by most political parties, and in which he faced only one opponent. Since assuming power, Sisi has ruled Egypt as an autocrat. Egypt's reversal of fortune in 2013 was to be expected. In this chapter I will justify my contention. To do so, I must first divide Egypt's troubled past into distinct epochs. At the end of each summary description in which I highlight the major events within the each era, I identify and explain the ways in which Egypt's political, economic and social systems were transformed.

### **Pre-Colonial Egypt: 641 – 1517**

On November 28, 641, the Byzantine Empire formally surrendered Egypt to the Arab conquerors, which had invaded in December of 639 and quickly overcame minimal resistance. The Arabs' swift victory in Egypt can in part be attributed to the apathy and even hostility the native Egyptian people felt toward the Byzantines. The substantial

geographical distance between Egypt and Constantinople, the Byzantine Empire's capital, bred indifference among the Egyptian forces, as the natives foresaw no possibility of either local or imperial support.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the Coptic population, which constituted a religious majority in Egypt during this period, held a deep-seated hatred toward the Melkite Byzantines, which had intensified following a series of religious persecutions in the period preceding the Arab invasion.<sup>2</sup> The Copts welcomed the Arab Conquest, as they believed that Arabs would be more religiously tolerant than the Byzantines and would impose a lesser tax burden.<sup>3</sup>

After the Byzantine Empire's formal surrender, the Arab leaders moved the capital of Egypt from Alexandria to Fustat, a territory near the fortress of Babylon. Fustat soon flourished, and native Egyptians held great faith in their new Arab rulers. Under the Muslim system, "Christians and Jews were *dhimmis* (protected ones), which in practical terms meant that they would largely be left alone as long as they paid their taxes..."<sup>4</sup> Initially, the Christian and Jewish populations welcomed this change, as years of Byzantine insistence on religious orthodoxy had provoked a number of sectarian rebellions. However, the Christian and Jewish populations soon learned that toleration did not mean equality – Christians were prohibited from serving in the military and barred from state offices.<sup>5</sup> "Arabized" Christians retained their administrative positions, especially in the area of financial administration, but shortly thereafter, Christian persecution increased as the Coptic population became targets of violence. Although many Christians converted to Islam in order to avoid conflict and secure a position within

---

<sup>1</sup> Thompson, Jason. *A History of Egypt*. Cairo: American U in Cairo, 2008. Print.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 166.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Sayyid Marsot, Afaf Lutfi. *A Short History of Modern Egypt*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1985. Print.

<sup>4</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 168.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

the administration, the majority did not, and many actively worked to preserve their own language.<sup>6</sup> As a result, the large-scale processes of Arabization and Islamization did not occur during this period.<sup>7</sup>

Optimism among the native Egyptians began to diminish as the pattern of isolation between rulers and ruled continued under the Arab leaders. The rulers of Egypt spoke a different language, worshipped a different God, and were aliens to the native population.<sup>8</sup> While differences in language and religion were apparent, the Arab Muslims retained some of the Byzantine administrative structure. As I noted above, the “financial and fiscal system of the Arab administration, as adopted from the Roman and Byzantine periods in Egypt, did not effect substantial changes in the living standards of the Egyptians.”<sup>9</sup> However, the Arab conquerors altered the geographical arrangement of various Egyptian territories. The new rulers divided the country into provinces each ruled by a provincial governor that reported to a control governor located in the capital.<sup>10</sup>

Under Egypt’s first Arab governor, administrative centralization began and both land production and irrigation increased. Subsequent rulers, however, implemented measures that aggravated religious tensions, prompting large numbers of Christians to convert to Islam. Increased Arab migration into Egypt bolstered the ongoing processes of Arabization, as this development produced a surge in intermarriage.<sup>11</sup>

Further processes of Arabization began with the advent of the Umayyad dynasty (661-750). Under Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, a number of organizational changes took

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 169.

<sup>7</sup> Marsot, A Short History of Egypt, 2.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Mukhtar, Abd Al-Munim. "On the Survival of the Byzantine Administration in Egypt during the First Century of Arab Rule." *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 27.3 (1973): Web.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 309.

<sup>11</sup> Marsot, A Short History of Egypt, 5.

place. The language of administrative and official business was changed from Coptic to Arabic, which disenfranchised most Copts unless they learned Arabic.<sup>12</sup> This measure was accompanied by a change in coinage to a purely Islamic currency minted at Damascus, the empire's new capital. The process of Arabization that took place in the late seventh century in part explains the disappearance of the Coptic majority and the Coptic language, which is now a liturgical language known only to priests and monks.<sup>13</sup> Additionally, conflicts between Christians, Jews, and Muslims were largely replaced with conflicts among the different Muslim sects.

The Umayyad dynasts' neglect of social issues heightened sectarian, political, and financial tension. The dynasts avoided reconciliation with the natives and instead preferred the use of repressive military measures to detract attention away from increasingly pressing social needs.<sup>14</sup> The rulers' continued neglect of societal problems spawned a period of decline, as governmental and military institutions deteriorated. During the Umayyad decline, pockets of opposition developed, and in 747, the Abbasid family slaughtered nearly every member of the Umayyad family to become the ruling family.<sup>15</sup> Under the new rulers, Egypt fared significantly worse, as Abbasid dynasts exploited the population and extracted money from the previous empire's reserves. Continued Abbasid abuse engendered a measure of independence among the provincial governors. They began to amass authority through the establishment of miniature independent familial empires. Increased independence of the provincial governors

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> The Copts now form only about 10 percent of the Egyptian population.

<sup>14</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 6.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.



manifested in the rise of two gubernatorial dynasties, the Tulunids (868-905) and the Ikhshidids (935-969).<sup>16</sup>

In 834, Egypt granted military tenure to the Turkish oligarchy, and the governors of Egypt changed from Arabs to Turks, marking another alteration in ethnicity, language, and religion. However, this change brought Ahmad ibn Tulun to power, and he effectively transformed Egypt into an independent state, only nominally subservient to the Abbasids. Under Tulun, agriculture and commerce flourished, which introduced a measure of economic stability. Tulun's death in 884 marked the end of the period of stability and fairness, as his successors plundered the treasury and competed violently for various dominions of authority.<sup>17</sup>

Tulun's descendants did not respect the Egyptians and treated them like a conquered people.<sup>18</sup> For the next thirty years, Baghdad retained control over Egypt through various military commanders.<sup>19</sup> This system produced a more advanced degree of corruption and extortion than the one the Egyptians witnessed even under Tulun's immediate successors. The continued profligacy of the rulers manifested in a drive toward independence from the Abbasids. In name Egypt, was still an Abbasid province, but the dynasty possessed only nominal influence over it.

In 969 the Fatimid dynasty of North Africa invaded Fustat, conquered Egypt, and installed a new ruler. The Fatimid dynasty was established by a group of anti-Abbasid Ismailis,<sup>20</sup> emigrants from Syria who settled permanently in present-day Tunisia.<sup>21</sup> For

---

<sup>16</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 171.

<sup>17</sup> Marsot, A Short History of Egypt 9.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 172.

<sup>20</sup> The Ismailis are a branch of Shiite Islam.

<sup>21</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 173.

the next few centuries the Fatimid Empire expanded across two continents, but Egypt remained the seat of administrative power.<sup>22</sup> Although the Fatimids initiated public works programs and alleviated many of Fustat's social issues, the ruling dynasts were Shiite, espousing a different conception of Islam than the native Sunni population.<sup>23</sup> The Sunnis and Shiites were acquiescent until a Fatimid ruler imposed indefensible laws on the population and enlarged the presence of foreign soldiers. Famine, revolt, and incompetent rulers characterized the subsequent and final years of Egypt under the Fatimid dynasty. The persistent ineptitude of Fatimid rulers produced a power vacuum that allowed the entrance of the Crusaders in 1117.<sup>24</sup>

The Egyptian viziers initially welcomed the Christian crusaders, but regretted their openness shortly after the massacre of some seventy thousand peaceful Muslims in Jerusalem.<sup>25</sup> The Fatimid dynasty ended in 1171 with the death of the Fatimid caliph, and Salah al-Din, leader of the Muslim opposition to the European Crusaders, became the first sultan and founder of the Ayyubid dynasty. With Fustat in decline, Cairo flourished as a massive wave of urbanization drew the population inward.<sup>26</sup> During this period, the Ayyubids began to recruit slave-soldiers, known as Mamluks, from Crimea, Circassia, and Georgia. The Mamluks proved invaluable to the Ayyubids during the later Crusades.

---

<sup>22</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 14.

<sup>23</sup> Prophet Muhammad died in 632 AD, but did not assign a successor to lead the Muslim community. A schism emerged when some Muslims believed that a new leader should be chosen by consensus, while another group believed that only the prophet's descendants should become caliph. Abu Bakr, Muhammad's aide, became caliph, but many believed that the title should have gone to the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, Ali. Ali eventually became caliph after Bakr's two successors were assassinated. The group of Muslims that believed Ali should have become caliph immediately after Muhammad's death became known as Shiites, and the group that regarded the first three caliphs before Ali as legitimate became known as Sunnis. Today, the major difference between the two sects is that Shiites consider Ali and the leaders who came before him *imams*, and value martyrdom and sacrifice. Sunnis on the other hand highlight God's power in the physical world, which extends to both the public and political realm.

<sup>24</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 14.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 20.

<sup>26</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 185.

The Mamluks defeated the Crusader army, which marked the beginning of centuries of Mamluk rule in Egypt. The age of the Mamluks, which spanned from 1250 to 1516, was another period where, again, Egypt was dominated by rulers alien in ethnicity and in language.

Mamluk rule reached an apex under Al Mansur Qalawun (1279-1290), who ruled benevolently, reformed the army, and built the first hospitals, schools, and libraries. Qalawun's successors, however, were not as benevolent. The Mamluk period reached a second zenith under al-Nasir Muhammad, who lightened the heavy tax burden that previous rulers had imposed. Nasir's rule also coincided with an artistic and intellectual revival. The second period of Mamluk rule began in 1382 with the ascension of the Burgi Mamluks, and persisted until 1517, when Egypt became part of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>27</sup>

**Analysis.** Prior to the Ottoman conquest, Egypt had developed a foundation that would influence the entirety of its history. The major themes that characterize the pre-Ottoman period also play an important role when considering the country's undemocratic trajectory. One of the most markedly important themes in Egypt's history is the alienation between rulers and ruled in terms of geographical distance, and differences in language, culture, and religion. Major cultural differences between the Egyptian natives and their various rulers provoked intense religious conflict, which influenced the nation's political, social, and economic development. Even before the arrival of the Ottomans, Egypt had experienced its share of authoritarian rulers, corruption, and economic instability. Authoritarianism and continued repression had important consequences for pre-Ottoman Egypt.

---

<sup>27</sup> Marsot, A Short History of Egypt, 30-31.

In the period immediately preceding Arab Conquest in 636 and the arrival of the Ottomans in 1517, the ethnic and religious character of Egypt's rulers changed five times.<sup>28</sup> Before Arabs arrived in Egypt, foreign Melkite Christian Byzantines ruled the country, and clashes between the Byzantines and the native Coptic Christians were frequent and bloody. The arrival of Arabs brought Islam and the Arabic language to the country, and in less than a century, the native Coptic language was entirely replaced by Arabic. Initially, facing persecution by the new Arab leaders, a small number of Copts converted to Islam in order to retain their jobs within the administration. Most Copts, however, did not convert to Islam until a couple years later when the Arab rulers changed the official language of the country to Arabic and altered the coinage to reflect Islamic influences. Furthermore, the new rulers began to allow increased Arab migration into Egypt, and as the new immigrants intermarried with the native Copts, Coptic as both a language and a religion began to diminish.<sup>29</sup>

Increased Arabization of Egypt paralleled processes of political reorganization. The most significant change the Arab leaders imposed was the reorganization of the territory into provinces each ruled by a provincial governor reporting to a central governor located in Fustat. This reorganization brought hierarchy and a measure of uniformity to Egyptian politics, and allowed the Arab rulers to begin consolidating the administration. However, subsequent Arab leaders subverted these initial processes toward centralization because they frequently neglected pressing economic and social conflicts. These later rulers introduced a measure of authoritarianism into the

---

<sup>28</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 207.

<sup>29</sup> Mukhtar, *On the Survival of the Byzantine Administration in Egypt during the First Century of Arab Rule*, 316.

administration, and utilized repressive tactics and military intimidation to maintain control.

This period also produced the rise of opposition groups that resented the growing despotic and profligate nature of the administration. These opposition movements, however, were limited to Egypt's political and social elite. Nevertheless, provincial governors began to seek independence from Egypt's corrupt rulers. Administrative decline only aided the drive toward independence, and soon the ruling families were in only nominal control of the country. Administrative decline and the uncoordinated nature of the independence movements gave rise to conflict among Egypt's religious and sectarian groups. Insurrection between different Muslim sects erupted in conjunction with conflict between these Muslim groups and the minority Coptic population.<sup>30</sup>

In 834, the Abbasid dynasty granted military tenure to the Turkish oligarchy, and this transition marked yet another change in language and culture, as Turks replaced Arab governors.<sup>31</sup> With the Turkish rulers came members of the oligarchy's military. However, the arrival of Turkish rulers did not initiate a similar process of Turkification because the new governors did not attempt to incorporate Egypt into the Turkish oligarchy. Initially, Turkish rule proved advantageous to Egypt's interests, as the early governors introduced a measure of economic stability, and for the first time in the country's history, economic prosperity and benevolent rule existed simultaneously.<sup>32</sup> However, the majority of Turkish governors were actually subservient to the oligarchy's soldiers, who demanded increased pay and financial privileges. In response, many governors were forced to extort monies from the population and direct the funds to the soldiers and military commanders.

---

<sup>30</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 6.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, 10.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

Growing Egyptian opposition to Turkish rule forced many governors to rely on repressive policies and use the military presence to intimidate the population. Again, the increased authoritarianism of the administration bolstered an elite-based drive toward independence from the Abbasid caliphate, which had granted tenure to Turks. Legally, the Turkish military remained in control of Egypt, but most provincial governors began to establish their own ruling dynasties in the provinces.<sup>33</sup>

Anti-Abbasid opposition continued to ferment during this period, and in 969, the Fatimid dynasty of Northern Africa invaded Egypt and ousted the Abbasids. The rulers, though Muslim, were Shiite, which, because the majority of Egyptians were Sunni, provoked intermittent conflict. The Fatimids established a highly organized bureaucracy with a caliph in full control of the government.<sup>34</sup> Bureaucratic centralization allowed the Fatimids to direct significant funds to strengthening the economic and commercial foundations of Egypt. However, the Fatimid system that vested almost total control in the hands of the caliph proved to be the dynasty's downfall, as increasingly authoritarian rulers assumed power in Egypt, deriving extensive authority from the political system. Opposition arose and conditions within Egypt began to worsen, as contention for absolute control of the government forced many aspirants to rely on ruthless tactics. Competition among various contenders produced a power vacuum, enabling the Crusader invasion and the subsequent massacre of thousands of innocent Egyptians.<sup>35</sup> Because the political system remained particularly centralized, the government was effectively nonexistent without a caliph in power. Administrative disorganization and continued violence

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>34</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 176-178.

<sup>35</sup> Marsot, A Short History of Egypt, 20.

provoked infighting and schismatic struggles as the Fatimids unsuccessfully attempted to simultaneously repel the Crusaders and reestablish political order.<sup>36</sup>

With a new dynasty in power amidst the ongoing Crusader invasions, the rulers in Egypt began to rely on Mamluks, skilled foreign slave-soldiers brought from the Caucasus region. After the Mamluk defeat of the Crusader army, the slave-soldiers assumed control over Egypt, marking yet another period where Egypt was dominated by rulers alien in ethnicity and language. The Mamluks retained the Fatimid's centralized administration and installed a single authoritative sovereign at its head.

Initially, Mamluk rule proved advantageous, as the sultan embarked on a program of fiscal, legal, and social reform. Though the Mamluks advanced an extensive reform program, they were heavily reliant on their own military strength, and as technology began to advance rapidly, the Mamluks refused to adapt to the changing nature of warfare.<sup>37</sup> The growing gap between perceived and actual military ability began to widen, which provoked disorder and disaffection among the soldiers.<sup>38</sup> Riots erupted across Egypt, jeopardizing public safety in Egypt's two most populous cities, Cairo and Fustat. Chaos within the military combined with economic decline—attributed to recurring epidemics of the plague and deteriorating agricultural conditions—hastened the ultimate breakdown of Mamluk rule.

### **Ottoman Egypt: 1517 – 1882**

While Egypt came under the provision of the Ottoman Empire in 1517, the Mamluks retained an influential role the Egyptian administration. During the early

---

<sup>36</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 180.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 193.

<sup>38</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 39.

Ottoman years, the Mamluks held the highest offices of government, and due to the nature of decentralized rule, they existed as Egypt's de facto leaders.<sup>39</sup> While the Mamluks retained positions of authority, Egypt was again "relegated to the status of a mere province within a larger empire, an empire that was similar in religion but different in language and ethnicity."<sup>40</sup> Ottoman control ushered in another period of alienation between rulers and ruled.

The Ottomans altered the administrative system imposed by previous regimes. Under the leadership of Sultan Suleiman I, Egypt was divided into fourteen provinces with each province administered by a government agent responsible to the viceroy, or *wali*. However, in Upper Egypt, administrative power lay with Arab tribal sheikhs.

After reaching its zenith in the sixteenth century, the Ottoman Empire entered a period of economic decline as the flow of cheap silver from the New World produced runaway inflation. Poor economic conditions proved most detrimental to Ottoman soldiers whose salaries were rendered almost worthless. In response to increased inflation, members of the army and the administration resorted to extralegal financial tactics.<sup>41</sup> As a result, corruption within the army and the administration produced a period of chaos within Egypt.

Egypt remained in a state of anarchy until the arrival of Ibrahim Pasha, an Ottoman statesman determined to restore order. Ibrahim Pasha allied himself with the Mamluks and by the middle of the seventeenth century he had reduced the viceroys to mere figureheads.

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 41.



Shortly thereafter, the Mamluks returned to power and installed the “beylicate,” a system of Mamluk rule that lasted until the French occupation in 1798.<sup>42</sup> Order in Egypt was finally restored under Ali Bey who established a central administration. Under Ali Bey, Egypt underwent a period bureaucratization, which significantly altered the structure of the administration. In order to establish a bureaucratic hierarchy, Ali Bey embarked on a campaign to discredit the tribal sheikhs that controlled significant territory and resources in Upper Egypt.<sup>43</sup> He also worked to control trade and commerce to further ensure his supremacy. Yet soon after he assumed office his drastic actions aroused opposition and his adversaries drove him from Cairo. The downfall of Ali Bey, however, did not produce circumstances favorable to Egypt, as factional strife among the Beys resumed. None of the Beys vying for power possessed a local power base, and thus in turn, they relied primarily on personal and patronage-based militias.<sup>44</sup>

Political confusion and the absence of a strong leader enabled the French, commanded by Napoleon Bonaparte, to invade Egypt in 1798. Shortly after the French Revolution, Napoleon had launched a number of major military operations throughout Europe and the Middle East “to gain the upper hand in the imperial contest [with Britain] by hitting directly at English economic and strategic interests...”<sup>45</sup> In Egypt, Napoleon initiated administrative and bureaucratic reforms.<sup>46</sup> The French also worked to educate Egyptians about the ideals of the French Revolution and secular ideology. Similarly, the French allegedly purported to familiarize Egyptians with representative government,

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 49.

<sup>45</sup> Vatikiotis, PJ. *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*. 4th ed. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1991. 38. Print.

<sup>46</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 189.

including a civil and penal judiciary. During the occupation the French also established the Institute of Egypt, an organization that promoted academic advancement. The Institute conducted studies on Egyptian raw goods, agriculture, education, and civil jurisdiction.<sup>47</sup> However, France's invasion of Egypt was not a benevolent attempt to reform the country's administration, as imperial concerns remained the major impetus behind the incursion.

Growing resentment toward the French prompted the Ottoman Sultan Selim III to declare war on France, thereby dispelling any notion that Napoleon was protecting Ottoman interests in Egypt. Although the French leader crushed the Ottoman forces, he saw no further prospects in Egypt and abandoned French troops in the hands of one of his generals, Jacques-François de Menou. It was not long before the combined British and Ottoman forces defeated Menou's troops outside of Alexandria in March 1801.

After the failed French occupation, Muhammad Ali became the governor of Egypt in 1805. Through the founding of a new dynasty, Muhammad Ali initiated a process of modernization and economic development.<sup>48</sup> He worked to destroy the power of the Mamluk Beys, and sought to detach Egypt from the Ottoman capital in Constantinople. In fact, Muhammad Ali was largely independent from the Ottoman Empire and thus had a free hand to implement widespread political and economic reforms. In return, he paid tribute to the Ottoman treasury.<sup>49</sup>

Under Muhammad Ali's rule, Egypt developed the foundations of modern statehood. The governor initiated education, agriculture, and administrative reform, and under Muhammad Ali, a fledgling manufacturing and production infrastructure allowed

---

<sup>47</sup> Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 38-45.

<sup>48</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 53.

<sup>49</sup> Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 65.

the country to begin industrialization.<sup>50</sup> Significantly, Muhammad Ali was Egypt's first ruler who understood the connection between industrialization and state creation. By the end of his tenure commerce had increased almost six-fold, an educated class had begun to coalesce, and Egypt continued to remain largely independent from the Ottoman Empire.

However, the European powers, which had gained a foothold in Egypt following Napoleon's invasion, impeded Muhammad Ali's efforts and sought to undercut the industrial state complex he had built. The Europeans, and especially the British, encouraged the production of raw materials in Egypt in order to facilitate industrial expansion at home.<sup>51</sup> In the face of European economic pressure, Egypt's economy became export-oriented, a factor that would hamper the country's social and political development and determine its relationship with Britain for the next century.<sup>52</sup>

After Muhammad Ali's death in 1849, three different pashas ruled Egypt until the ascension of Ismail as the new pasha in 1863.<sup>53</sup> However, in between the rule of Muhammad Ali and Ismail, one of the most significant events in Egyptian history occurred: the construction of the Suez Canal. In the late 1700s, Napoleon Bonaparte had attempted to build such a canal in order to thwart British trade in the region as part of his larger imperial project, but a miscalculation forced him to abandon the project. Interest in a canal piqued again in the mid-1800s, and Ferdinand de Lesseps, a French diplomat and engineer, persuaded Said Pasha to support its construction. Said, unlike his predecessor

---

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 59.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 62.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 63.

<sup>53</sup> Ibrahim Pasha (March 1848 – November 1848), Abbas I (1848 – 1854), and Said Pasha (1854 – 1863).

Abbas, was not anti-European or even anti-imperial, and his favorable relationship with Europe would influence Egypt's dealings with the West for years to come.<sup>54</sup>

Under Said, the European powers became entrenched in Egypt, as the pasha doled out concessions at a rate far greater than had either Abbas or Muhammad Ali. While Said remained largely culpable for the increased European presence and growing financial distress, he faced intense pressure from avaricious Europeans who sought to exploit Egypt's powerless position. During this period European influence was also augmented through the capitulations, the arrangements that gave Europeans extraterritorial rights in Egypt. Europeans living in Egypt also managed to secure extralegal privileges through their own consular representatives, thus remaining unaccountable to the native Egyptian government.<sup>55</sup>

Lesseps viewed Said's complicity in Europe's growing influence in Egypt as the perfect opportunity to finally construct the canal. Lesseps presented Said with an argument for the canal: "A canal in Egypt would guarantee Egypt's independence...[and] the states of Europe would guarantee the security of a neutral party, and that meant that Said would never have to fear a European invasion."<sup>56</sup> However, construction of the canal required European capital and engineering, and Said's official concession was akin to a blank check. After Said's allowance, the Suez Canal Company, composed largely of French envoys, was formed and given rights to begin the construction of the canal. This

---

<sup>54</sup> Karabell, Zachary. *Parting the Desert: The Creation of the Suez Canal*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. Print.)

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 68-69.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 74.

company would retain control over the canal for ninety-nine years after its official opening.<sup>57</sup>

Ismail assumed his post as pasha in 1863 with an ambitious program of reform. He worked to establish schools, increase land productivity, construct roads, bridges, railways, and waterworks, and institute a postal service. These changes also coincided with the formation of an urban middle class that diminished the power of traditional authorities, such as the *ulama*. However, Ismail's ambitious reform program required financial assistance from Europe, and he too became dependent on European banks.<sup>58</sup> Such dependence hastened a period of decline.

By the mid-1870s, Egypt was bankrupt. In 1875, only six years after the Suez Canal had opened, Ismail was forced to sell his canal shares to Britain, a concession valued at nearly \$4 million.<sup>59</sup> Yet even this drastic measure could not lift Egypt out of bankruptcy, as Ismail's total debt stood at about \$100 million. Facing increased pressure from the European powers, Ismail consented to the formation of a European-led debt-management commission. The resulting agency, the *Caisse de la Dette Publique*, was established in May 1876.<sup>60</sup> Further control was relinquished to the European powers with the founding of Dual Control in 1878, which gave France and Britain de facto control over the Egyptian administration.

The French and British instituted austerity measures that resulted in social hardship, which in turn provoked bitter resentment toward the European powers.<sup>61</sup> Under the European Commission and Dual Control, Ismail held only nominal power in Egypt,

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 79.

<sup>58</sup> Marsot, A Short History of Egypt, 67.

<sup>59</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 248.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 249.

and his attempt to dismiss Dual Control and propagate a new constitution resulted in his ousting. On June 25, 1879, Ismail received two telegrams from the Ottoman capital, one addressed to “Ismail, ex-Khedive of Egypt” and another addressed to “His Highness Khedive Tawfiq,” Ismail’s 27-year-old son.<sup>62</sup>

Ismail’s removal and the ascension of Tawfiq as the new khedive signaled the end of the period of relative autonomy that Muhammad Ali had initiated years prior.<sup>63</sup> Under the new leader, Dual Control was reestablished and a new agency, the International Commission of Liquidation, was formed. To the dismay of the native population, the European powers resumed the austerity program.<sup>64</sup>

In response to strict austerity measures and increasing European control, a number of disaffected Egyptians began to form opposition groups. Most resistance emanated from students and peasants who had experienced the severest economic misfortune following the European-imposed austerity measures. Three different opposition groups unified under the leadership of Colonel Ahmad Urabi and launched a nationalist revolt. In September 1881, Urabi and his supporters issued demands for a constitution and a change in government.<sup>65</sup> Tawfiq acquiesced, as Urabi possessed backing from the Egyptian military. Subsequently, the Assembly of Delegates asserted control over Egypt’s financial affairs, a feat unacceptable to the European powers. In response, the British and French dispatched a joint fleet to intimidate the Assembly of Delegates, but this show of power reinforced Urabi’s position and sparked violent anti-European riots.<sup>66</sup> The Egyptian cabinet declared war on Britain, but British forces swiftly defeated Urabi at Tal al-Kabir

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 251.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 250.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 72.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 73.

in September 1882. Khedive Tawfiq was restored to power, at which time the official British occupation of Egypt commenced.<sup>67</sup>

**Analysis.** When the Ottomans arrived in Egypt in 1517 they encountered an unstable political and economic system. Throughout the pre-Ottoman period there was no continuity between the constantly evolving familial dynasties or the ruling governors. Following each transition in rule, Egypt was forced to readjust to new languages and religions. The absence of continuity between the rulers compelled many of them to rely on authoritarian tactics in order to subdue the population, centralize the administration, and establish a semblance of order.<sup>68</sup> The pattern of authoritarianism entrenched itself early, and the opposition groups that materialized among the elite classes would return during the Ottoman period to oppose foreign rule. By 1517 the Coptic population that had once constituted a majority in Egypt had been almost entirely wiped out through waves of conversion and violent persecution. Although the processes of Arabization and Islamization were nearly complete upon the arrival of the Ottomans, the pattern of alienation between rulers and ruled would prevail, as the Ottomans incorporated Egypt into its vast territorial network that spanned nearly 2,300 miles across Northern Africa, the Middle East, and the Balkans.

When the Ottomans initially invaded in 1517 they offered no major readjustments to the political and administrative system, except for the installation of a viceroy that would report to the Ottoman Porte. However, the Ottomans soon altered the organization of the country to promote centralization and bureaucratization, and they split Egypt into

---

<sup>67</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 251.

<sup>68</sup> Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 31-36.

fourteen provinces each with a provincial governor responsible to the viceroy.<sup>69</sup> The restructured administration also established a representative system, which required the viceroy to hold councils with representatives from local religious and commercial leaders, and citizen representatives from each of the provinces. This representative system promoted peace within the country for nearly sixty years.

Although the Ottomans effected a number of administrative changes within Egypt, they did not impart significant cultural changes to the country. Unlike the arrival of the Arab conquerors, which prompted a process of Arabization, the Turkish rulers did not attempt the Turkification of Egypt. In some respects, such as manners and dress, Turkish influence was apparent, but the Egyptian population continued to speak Arabic and retain other aspects of its culture. Furthermore, because the official religion of the Ottoman Empire was Islam, there existed no religious transformation, as majority of Egyptians were Muslim. Turkish influence in Egypt was also limited because very few Turks actually lived in Egypt, and those who did reside within the country were accepted as components of society.

While relations between the Egyptians and the Ottomans were relatively peaceful for the first sixty years, they became tumultuous when economic misfortune, engendered by the increasingly cheap flow of silver from the United States and Latin America, beset the Ottoman Empire. The subsequent rise in inflation most severely affected the Ottoman troops stationed in Egypt. Members of the army demanded adjusted salaries, and when the administration could not provide compensation, the soldiers resorted to extra-legal means to achieve their goals.<sup>70</sup> Economic decline and the requisite currency devaluation

---

<sup>69</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 208.

<sup>70</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 41.



also produced corruption within the administration, and governors began to rely once again on the military might of the Mamluks in order to retain their authority. For the next thirty years, political and economic control of Egypt oscillated between the Mamluks and the Ottoman viceroys, underscoring the perpetual absence of continuity between ruling administrations.<sup>71</sup>

Though the Mamluks finally overpowered the viceroys, they established the Beylicate, an administrative system that was to last until the French occupation of 1798. However, the establishment of the Beylicate did not produce prosperity in Egypt. While a number of different Mamluks aspired for absolute control of Egypt, none of them possessed a local power base. And in the absence of strong leadership, administrative corruption and profligacy surged until one Mamluk, Ali Bey, managed to impose his authority.<sup>72</sup> Yet the ascension of Ali Bey only institutionalized authoritarian rule in the Ottoman period. Ali Bey further bureaucratized and centralized the administration, diluting accountability and rendering obsolete the representative councils. He also exploited the economy and assumed total control over commerce and agriculture, inevitably directing much of Egypt's revenue toward himself. Ali Bey's repressive policies and opposition to mounting taxation soon effected his deposal, but he was not replaced, and factional strife between different Mamluks resumed until Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798.<sup>73</sup>

Many historians and political theorists argue that the French invasion of Egypt inaugurated a period of modernization, industrialization, and state creation within the country. But it is important to emphasize that the French invasion of Egypt was part of a

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 44.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>73</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 218.

larger imperialist game within Europe aimed at establishing strategic colonies throughout the Middle East. The modernizing reforms that the French did implement were imposed largely to establish a foundation for future colonial control. Nevertheless, a number of these reforms did transform the Egyptian state and its political system.

The French reintroduced the representative councils abolished by the Mamluks and strengthened the country's transportation infrastructure. Additionally, the French worked with the population to establish an Arabic printing press that eventually published an official political journal. Technical schools and systems of higher education emerged throughout the country, and Egypt began to focus on scientific instruction.<sup>74</sup>

However, in order to finance these extensive reforms, the French exploited the taxation system, and placed a heavy burden on Egypt's lowest classes. Resultant opposition mounted and eventually the French were ousted from Egypt. Although the French failed militarily, their invasion produced a number of social changes within Egypt, solidified a precedent for future European intervention, and oriented the country toward Paris and London.<sup>75</sup>

Amidst the extensive reform program emerged an educated and urban middle class that demanded an enlarged share of power. Calls for political representation became increasingly pronounced under Muhammad Ali, who, although he continued the program of reform, ruled as a blatant autocrat.<sup>76</sup> He attempted to separate Egypt from the Ottoman Empire and worked to emulate Europe. In order to achieve these goals, he encouraged European immigration to Egypt and welcomed their financial support. With the Ottoman system in decline, the Europeans intervened to undercut most of Muhammad Ali's

---

<sup>74</sup> Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 38-45.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 41.

<sup>76</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 229-232.

reforms. By the time of his death, the Europeans had gained almost total access to Egypt's markets and had placed control of the country firmly in the hands of politicians in London and Paris.<sup>77</sup>

In the 1850s, under Said, Egypt entered into a partnership with the French to construct the Suez Canal. The Suez Canal Company began work in April 1859, and the massive financial reserves that its construction required forced Egypt to seek further European capital.<sup>78</sup> I will return to a discussion of the importance of the Suez Canal to Egypt's foreign relations later in my analysis.

Yet even with Europe in de facto control of Egypt, a formalized state system began to emerge at the elite level. Egypt's upper classes issued calls for more than just political representation in various councils—they demanded limited rule, accountability, and a constitutional form of government. Although Egypt was a virtually independent province within the Ottoman Empire, under the leadership of Ismail Pasha, the first Legislative Assembly met in 1866 to demand greater sovereignty. As Egypt continued to distance itself from the empire's capital, it continued its emulation of Europe with Haussmann-style reforms in Cairo. And under Ismail, a new elite had acquired influential positions in governmental, financial, and educational institutions.<sup>79</sup>

However, by the mid-1870s Ismail's extensive reform program had forced Egypt into bankruptcy. In order to alleviate the economic crisis, Ismail sold Egypt's canal shares to Britain. Egypt's insolvency provided a strategic opening to the European powers, which by then held almost all of the Suez Canal shares. Egypt was forced to relinquish almost total economic control under the *Caisse de la Dette Publique*,

---

<sup>77</sup> Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 70-71.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 78.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, 70-89.

established in May 1876.<sup>80</sup> The *Caisse*, founded to supervise the payment of Egypt's debt to European governments, complemented the establishment of Dual Control only two years later, which institutionalized European economic control over Egypt. However, the French and the British were less concerned with alleviating the social problems caused by Egypt's declining economy, and more interested in increasing revenues from the canal. In order to accomplish this goal, the European powers instituted austerity measures, such as cuts in subsidies for basic necessities that only further provoked anti-European sentiment among the population. With the Europeans comfortably situated in influential positions within Egypt's government and administration, Ismail's real power as khedive declined rapidly.<sup>81</sup>

Ismail's official deposal in June 1879 rendered Egypt wholly dependent on Europe. Dual Control was reestablished along with a slew of other agencies designed to implement austerity measures and to police the increasingly disaffected native population.<sup>82</sup> The combination of economic distress and superficial reform designed only to increase Suez Canal profits sparked the formation of dozens of opposition groups. Three groups coalesced to form a unified nationalist front led by Colonel Ahmad Urabi.<sup>83</sup> Urabi and his compatriots demanded a constitution and a change in government, two reforms that had been shelved as foreign intervention and influence increased. As a respected officer, Urabi had support from the Egyptian military, and with such reinforcement, he and his allies were able to assert their demands. They attained control over Egypt's finances, adjourning both the *Caisse* and Dual Control. Angered by Urabi's

---

<sup>80</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 241.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 241-251.

<sup>82</sup> Vatikiotis, The History of Modern Egypt, 635.

<sup>83</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 250.

actions, the British and French governments responded with military action and ultimately defeated the Urabists in 1882. The nationalist defeat marked the official commencement of the British occupation of Egypt that lasted until the 1950s.<sup>84</sup>

### **British Egypt: 1882 – 1922**

British presence in Egypt following the Urabi revolt was intended to be short-lived. To restore order, Tawfiq invited the British into Egypt, believing that once his authority was reestablished, the British would evacuate.<sup>85</sup> However, the strategic importance of the Suez Canal ensured that British authority would persist until 1954.

Gradually, British advisors assumed positions in key ministries, initiating what was in essence a “Veiled Protectorate.”<sup>86</sup> The Veiled Protectorate afforded Egyptian ministers minimal authority, as they served as merely rubber stamps for their British counterparts. The British did little to aid the development and modernization of Egypt. In fact, they largely obstructed industrialization, preferring that the country’s economy remain primarily agricultural. In conjunction, the British discouraged Egyptian manufacture and assumed control of the country’s major businesses, preventing significant commercial development. First Consul-General of Egypt, Evelyn Baring, also known as Lord Cromer, impeded the formation of representative institutions, as he believed that Egyptians were incapable of handling their own affairs.<sup>87</sup>

Tawfiq died in 1892 and was succeeded by Abbas Hilmy II, his seventeen-year-old son. As the British would soon discover, Abbas was not nearly as quiescent as his

---

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 250-251.

<sup>85</sup> Marsot, A Short History of Egypt, 74.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>87</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 257.

father, and he was keen on expelling the British from Egypt. Under Abbas, various nationalist and anti-imperial movements unified. Mustafa Kamil, an eighteen-year-old student, became their leader.<sup>88</sup> The nationalist movement received a boost in the years following the British-led Egyptian invasion of Sudan. During this period an increasingly autocratic Lord Cromer created the Anglo-Egyptian Civil Service, which only further entrenched British rule, as it marginalized hundreds of Egyptian officers and ministers. By this point, British withdrawal appeared unlikely.<sup>89</sup>

Resentment between the British and the Egyptian nationalists came to a head in June 1906 when a group of British officers went hunting for pigeons near the village of Dinshawi, unaware that pigeons were sacred to the inhabitants. A small skirmish erupted, and a British officer killed a Dinshawi woman, prompting a larger armed conflict between the officers and the villagers. One British officer managed to escape, and fled on foot but collapsed due to heatstroke. A Dinshawi villager came across the officer and attempted to assist him, but when the other British soldiers discovered the villager with the collapsed officer, they assumed he had killed the officer. In retaliation, the British soldiers killed the villager.<sup>90</sup> A special court was set up to try the villagers, and many received severe punishments, including life sentences and execution.<sup>91</sup> The Dinshawi incident provoked immense outrage among the Egyptian people. The nationalists, led by Mustafa Kamil, subsequently achieved significant popular and khedival support. The

---

<sup>88</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 77.

<sup>89</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 265.

<sup>90</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 79.

<sup>91</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 267.

incident also proved to the majority of Egyptians that as long as foreigners ruled, there would be no justice.<sup>92</sup>

Lord Cromer resigned in 1907 after the election of a Liberal government in Britain. In response, Egyptian nationalists pushed for greater autonomy in administrative affairs. Within months of Lord Cromer's resignation, the Egyptians elected a national assembly. Kamil's death in 1908 briefly destabilized the nationalist cause but shortly thereafter a new leader, Saad Zaghlul, joined the revolutionary movement. However, the beginning of the First World War in August 1914 halted progress, as the Ottoman Empire allied with Germany, effectively becoming Britain's declared enemy. The British declared martial law, adjourned the Legislative Assembly, imposed strict censorship, and clamped down on dissidents, essentially suspending all political activities. The British also announced a Protectorate over Egypt in December 1914 and deposed Abbas.<sup>93</sup>

Throughout the war, many Egyptian officers and politicians began to contemplate the future of their country. Some Egyptians believed that independence was forthcoming, especially after United States President Woodrow Wilson announced his Fourteen Points in 1918. A group of politicians formed a delegation, or a *wafd*, in order to secure the country's independence after the war ended. The group met with the British High Commissioner, Sir Reginald Wingate, in 1918 to request an invitation to the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>94</sup> The British initially refused the *wafd*'s request, but after nationalist agitation and violence had enveloped Egypt, Wingate allowed the delegation to proceed.

At the conference, the British cabinet did not offer the nationalists any concessions, which prompted violence across Egypt that raged until the new British High

---

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 267-269.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 270.

<sup>94</sup> Marsot, A Short History of Egypt, 80.

Commissioner, Lord Allenby, convinced the British government to negotiate. After an impasse between the British and Zaghlul, Allenby recommended that Britain bequest a unilateral grant of independence.<sup>95</sup> The British cabinet approved, and the Protectorate was abolished in February 1922. However, the British cabinet reserved four points for future negotiations concerning the defense of Egypt, the Suez Canal, the protection of foreign interests, and the status of Sudan.

**Analysis.** The surge of nationalism and the subsequent public demonstrations, many of which turned violent in the mid-to-late 1800s, actually provided a pretext for the European powers to establish and institutionalize their influence in Egypt. In many ways, the British predetermined Egypt's trajectory as a state even before the turn of the twentieth century.

Since the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869, the British had regarded Egypt as a highly strategic and geographically pertinent possession, especially because the canal provided a direct route to India, Britain's "crown jewel."<sup>96</sup> Britain's colonial objectives in India were twofold: primarily, the British aimed to ensure "not only that India's neighbors complied with British interests...but also that the shortest maritime route to India for the British navy, through the Suez Canal, remained under British control."<sup>97</sup> Britain's interest in protecting its route to India via the canal would dictate British policy in Egypt and in the entire region until the mid-twentieth century.

The policies that the British enacted in Egypt were entirely self-serving. Most of the policies were highly antithetical toward democracy and representative government,

---

<sup>95</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 268.

<sup>96</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 38.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*



and although the British did install a parliament, it was largely a façade, as the British retained control over the ministries. They preserved the Ottoman khedive's position but stripped it of authority and installed a British consul-general that would wield power. By this point, the British had inaugurated a "Veiled Protectorate" over Egypt, a status that the League of Nations would confirm after the end of the First World War.<sup>98</sup> The British did not offer tutelage and installed few institutions of self-governance because they believed the Egyptians were incapable of autonomy. British indifference toward the Egyptian population produced among many natives a fear that the occupation would continue indefinitely.

As the occupation progressed it became increasingly obvious that the British viewed their subjects as uncivilized and backward, and this conception dictated much of their policy. For instance, most colonial administrators refused to learn Arabic, which at the most fundamental level produced severe antagonism between the British and the Egyptians.<sup>99</sup> Many colonial officers also encouraged separation from the natives, and those officers who did interact with the natives spawned divisiveness among the different groups, as "some classes or groups of Egyptians were always more privileged than others."<sup>100</sup> The British also failed to implement much-needed education reform, and with Lord Cromer unwilling to divert any funds to education, the literacy rate throughout this period remained largely stagnant.<sup>101</sup>

Throughout the occupation the British directed significant attention to Egypt's economy. But as I noted above, the British intentionally hindered industrialization and

---

<sup>98</sup> Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 174.

<sup>99</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 259.

<sup>100</sup> Milton-Edwards, *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*, 32.

<sup>101</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 50.

modernization, instead choosing to encourage economic backwardness for the purpose of exploitation. Under the Protectorate, Egypt became heavily dependent on cotton production, as the British worked to transform the country's economy into a monoculture by discouraging local industry.<sup>102</sup> In many sectors of the economy, Egypt was deliberately allowed to fall behind.<sup>103</sup> Britain's failure to offer tutelage can largely be attributed to Lord Cromer who "never seriously considered minimizing Egypt's economic dependence exclusively on agriculture and particularly cotton by encouraging some diversification via industrial development."<sup>104</sup> And although Egypt had become an export-oriented economy, Britain retained majority of the profits, and the money that did circulate benefited only a small portion of wealthy landowners.<sup>105</sup> Throughout this period, Egypt's rural peasants, the *fellahin*, experienced unprecedented levels of poverty, as food prices rose in response to Britain's economic policy. The few reforms that the British did implement, including improved transportation infrastructure, did not benefit Egypt's lower classes.<sup>106</sup>

Throughout the early 1890s, public opposition to the British presence remained limited, as most Egyptians believed that at the turn of the century the British would withdraw. However, following Abbas's ascent to power in 1892, a nationalist fervor emerged. An anti-British politician, Abbas extended financial support to groups vying for independence, and he lent protection to various nationalist organizations. Initially, the drive for independence interested only Egypt's more affluent classes, but as Abbas continued to provide support, the movement began to appeal to the middle and lower

---

<sup>102</sup> Milton-Edwards, *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*, 32.

<sup>103</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 258.

<sup>104</sup> Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 212.

<sup>105</sup> Milton-Edwards, *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*, 32.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

classes. The movement also gained in popularity as nationalist agitators commissioned newspapers and magazines, many of which actually received financial support from the khedive. The groups used public platforms to demand a constitutional form of government run by Egyptians for Egyptians.<sup>107</sup>

As nationalist fervor increased at the turn of the century, Lord Cromer attempted to reinforce Britain's control over Egypt. The *Entente Cordiale* of 1904, an agreement negotiated between Britain and France, stipulated that the "French would retain a free hand in the Ottoman colony of Morocco in exchange for giving Britain free rein in Egypt."<sup>108</sup> For Britain, the *Entente Cordiale* was an important strategic concession, as the French had previously expressed sympathy for Egypt's nationalist cause. However, the agreement only provoked another rush of public support in favor of the nationalist cause, and served as a catalyst for the realization that political representation and justice could never be achieved under foreign rule.

Increasingly dire conditions spurred the formation of additional political parties. Although the new parties sought social reform, liberalization, and most importantly independence, they each professed different methods to secure British withdrawal.<sup>109</sup> The most populous of the new parties was the *Hizb al-Umma*, or the Umma Party. Though large in number and liberal, the party primarily attracted Egypt's more affluent classes, including landowners, educators, senior civil servants, ministers, and writers.<sup>110</sup> The party demanded representative institutions and economic self-sufficiency, but advocated

---

<sup>107</sup> Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 158.

<sup>108</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 40.

<sup>109</sup> Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 225.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

cooperation with the British.<sup>111</sup> The National Party, led by Mustafa Kamil, organized shortly after the Umma Party and captured a wider constituency that included students, urban masses, and peasants.<sup>112</sup> Like the Umma Party, the National Party demanded independence from the British, but advocated the use of violent mass political action. Although the Umma Party possessed a more concrete platform, the National Party garnered significantly more support because it provided apathetic Egyptians with an outlet to comprehend the possibility of independence. A third party, the Constitutional Reform Party, emerged during this period but it did not garner mass support largely because it existed to defend the khedive.<sup>113</sup>

The victory of the liberal government in England in 1907 broke the impasse between the British and the nationalists. With Lord Cromer no longer present, the new government proclaimed that it would establish institutions of self-governance in Egypt, and begin to push for greater Egyptian autonomy within the colonial administration. Furthermore, the new Consul-General, Sir Eldon Gorst, spoke fluent Arabic and quickly conceded significant authority to the defiant nationalists. Subsequently, Gorst authorized the enlargement of Egypt's Legislative Council and General Assembly and conferred to both bodies considerable authority over local education and labor policies. Additionally, the Council and Assembly became elective.<sup>114</sup>

These reforms, though significant, failed to fulfill the nationalists desire for a proper constitution. However, by 1907 the nationalist movement had splintered, and each faction demanded different reforms. One group advocated cooperation with the khedive

---

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 225.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, 228.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 210.

and the British, while another group demanded the immediate expulsion of the British and the establishment of parliamentary democracy and a formal constitution. An extreme nationalist group promoted terrorism and violent revolution but it did not garner significant support.<sup>115</sup> The groups became increasingly fractured and Kamil's death in 1908 spelled an end to nationalist activism until Saad Zaghlul, Minister of Education, joined the revolutionary movement. As a moderate, he attracted significant support and utilized the public platform to demand political independence and parliamentary democracy. Nationalist demonstrations swelled and in response the British replaced Gorst in 1911 with Herbert Kitchener. Kitchener quelled the chaos and promulgated the Organic Law of 1913, which replaced the Legislative Council and General Assembly with a new, expanded Legislative Assembly. The act enlarged the proportion of elected members and gave increased authority to the body over issues of taxation. Kitchener's reforms brought Zaghlul to the Legislative Assembly, and he and his supporters used the body to advocate independence.

The onset of the First World War in 1914, however, immobilized Zaghlul and the nationalists, especially when the Ottoman Empire allied with Germany. Britain used the decision to declare Egypt a Protectorate and to impose martial law. The Suez Canal became increasingly important to Britain during the war years, and the strict policies that it implemented reflected Egypt's economic significance.<sup>116</sup> For instance, shortly after the Ottoman Empire allied with Germany, Britain adjourned the Legislative Assembly, imposed censorship, and placed dissidents under house arrest. Britain also dispatched a number of troops to the Canal Zone.

---

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 213.

<sup>116</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 48.

Britain's enlarged military presence only fueled the nationalist cause, and following the war's end in 1918, Zaghlul and the nationalists formed a delegation, or *wafd*, to formally demand independence at the Paris Peace Conference. Britain did not accept the demand. The refusal sparked agitation and produced a unified nationalist front composed of students, lawyers, and government officials.<sup>117</sup> One year later in 1919 the League of Nations formally recognized Britain's Protectorate over Egypt. Nationalist violence and agitation continued for three years until the British High Commissioner recommended a unilateral grant of independence.<sup>118</sup> On February 28, 1922, Britain ended its Protectorate over Egypt, and unilaterally declared the country's independence. However, the abolishment of the Protectorate did not sever Egypt's relationship with Britain, and as noted above, the four reserved points legalized future intervention in Egypt and sanctified British presence in the Canal Zone.

### **Egypt in Transition: 1922 – 1952**

Shortly after Britain abolished the Protectorate, Egypt's leaders drafted a new constitution, which established a constitutional monarchy and a bicameral legislature.<sup>119</sup> The first parliamentary elections were held in January 1924, and the Wafd, now a formal political party, won nearly 90 percent of the seats and Zaghlul was appointed prime minister. Zaghlul's primary objective as prime minister was to negotiate an Anglo-Egyptian treaty that would free Egypt from British interference. However, Zaghlul's

---

<sup>117</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 274.

<sup>118</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 45.

<sup>119</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 275.

narrow vision prevented him from addressing from pressing social issues and much-needed reforms in sanitation, public health, land productivity, and industry.<sup>120</sup>

After Zaghlul failed to achieve his objective during a visit to London, he altered course and began to support public demonstrations against the British, a number of which were led by terrorist organizations. Zaghlul's increased radicalization combined with the assassination of Sir Lee Stack, the British commander-in-chief of the Egyptian army, prompted Lord Allenby to demand Zaghlul's resignation. Mustafa al-Nahhas succeeded Zaghlul, but in 1930 King Fuad ousted him, dissolved parliament, and promulgated a new constitution that conferred significant power to the monarch. The unpopular Fuad ruled from 1930 to 1935, and widespread public demonstrations forced him to restore the 1923 constitution.

Shortly thereafter, the British began negotiations with the Egyptians, and in August 1936 the two parties signed the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty. The agreement established a twenty-year alliance between the two countries, reduced British military presence in the Canal Zone, and abolished the office of the high commissioner. The treaty also stated that the British would support Egyptian membership in the League of Nations. In reality, the accord did not significantly alter relations between the two countries, but most Egyptians supported it because it broke the political impasse.<sup>121</sup> With the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty secured, Egypt began to confront previously neglected social issues, such as rampant poverty and disease, and a rate of population growth that threatened to destabilize the country.

---

<sup>120</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 84.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

The beginning of the Second World War highlighted the treaty's significant shortcomings. As the war progressed it proved increasingly expensive for the Egyptian government, which according to the 1936 agreement had to provide facilities for the British army.<sup>122</sup> Economic woe paralleled political disillusionment, as the ruling Wafd Party had grown increasingly more corrupt and inefficient. In response, opposition parties formed, and the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928 by the elementary school teacher Sheikh Hasan al-Banna, began to gain momentum.<sup>123</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood, though certainly intent on securing complete independence, chose to advocate the expansion of Islam throughout the government and administration.<sup>124</sup> The turn toward political Islam during this period provided assurance to many Egyptians that its culture would not disappear in the face of continued foreign domination.<sup>125</sup>

The end of the Second World War reopened Anglo-Egyptian negotiations in the United Nations, but these talks paused when the British dissolved the Palestinian Mandate in May 1948. Prior to 1948, the rise of Zionism in Europe coupled with the horrors of the Holocaust had prompted massive waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine. The growing proliferation of Zionist ideologies in Palestine ignited a violent confrontation between the inhabitants and the immigrants. In response, the British referred the Palestinian question to the United Nations, and on November 27, the General Assembly called for the partition of the country into separate Jewish and Palestinian states. Following this declaration, the British dissolved the Palestinian Mandate, and

---

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>123</sup> Thomson, A History of Egypt, 286.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 287.

<sup>125</sup> Marsot, A Short History of Egypt, 89.



David Ben-Gurion, leader of the World Zionist Organization, announced the creation of Israel.

The Arab League declared war on Israel almost immediately after Ben-Gurion's pronouncement. Egypt joined the war effort but was quickly overpowered along with the other warring Arab states. Negotiations between the Arab countries and the Israelis began after months of fighting, but the talks only achieved a cessation in hostilities, as the Arab states refused to recognize Israel. By this point, the Egyptian monarchy had lost its credibility, and strikes against it and the government intensified.<sup>126</sup>

A major turning point in Anglo-Egyptian relations came in 1950 when the Wafd Party returned to power under Prime Minister Nahhas. Nahhas continued negotiations with the British, but another impasse prompted him to unilaterally abrogate the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty. Following the repeal of the treaty, a number of Egyptian nationalist groups launched guerilla attacks in the British-occupied Canal Zone and on British clubs, businesses, and institutions. The nullification of the treaty and the subsequent burning of some 750 buildings throughout Cairo marked the end of the liberal experiment in Egypt. A new era began on July 23, 1952, when a coup d'état led by Lieutenant Colonel Gamal Abd al-Nasser and the Free Officers overthrew the monarchy and suspended the parliamentary system. The Free Officers declared Egypt a republic and Muhammad Naguib emerged as Egypt's first president.<sup>127</sup>

---

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 73-103.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 104-110.

**Analysis.** Following the establishment of the constitutional monarchy in 1922, a political tug of war among King Fuad, the parliament, and the British emerged.<sup>128</sup> Although the constitution created a bicameral legislature, the document also delegated substantial power to the monarch. King Fuad was given legislative authority, the ability to appoint the prime minister, and the power to dismiss the cabinet and dissolve parliament at will. Fuad utilized his authority and swiftly dismissed parliament, and subsequently ruled by decree.<sup>129</sup> Fuad's authoritarian rule largely prevented a multiparty political system from taking root. The one political party that did emerge amidst the dictatorial environment was the Wafd Party, officially founded in 1919. The party boasted grassroots backing among wealthy landowners and industrialists, but it failed to appeal to the masses.<sup>130</sup> Nevertheless, the party won the country's first parliamentary elections in 1924, and the Wafd's victory brought Zaghlul to the premiership.

The longer Zaghlul held the premiership, the more authoritarian he became, as he began to rely heavily on patronage networks, which alienated potential allies and angered the public. His preoccupation with securing an Anglo-Egyptian treaty diverted his attention from pressing social issues, and Zaghlul's ultimate failure to negotiate such a treaty became especially problematic after Sir Lloyd George, a fervent imperialist, assumed the premiership in Britain. Nevertheless, Zaghlul's rule proved advantageous to Egypt in two regards: he had resisted British intervention and served as a counterweight to King Fuad. Following Zaghlul's death in 1927, the Wafd Party temporarily

---

<sup>128</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 275.

<sup>129</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 76-77.

<sup>130</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 276.

disappeared from the political scene, which enabled Fuad to rule essentially unopposed, as no other party possessed enough public support to challenge him.<sup>131</sup>

Diminished political activity paralleled an economic downturn, resulting in a period of depression that lasted until 1933. The British, who had restructured the Egyptian agricultural economy into a monoculture, were culpable for the slump. Across the globe, countries also experienced a depression caused by the 1929 crash. In Egypt, the economic downturn most severely affected the *fellahin*, a group that made up nearly 82 percent of the population.<sup>132</sup> Because landowning elites dominated parliament, there were few structural remedies in place for the peasant population. The depression also highlighted the mal-distribution of land in Egypt whereby “half the land was owned by 22,016 large landowners, that is, half the land was controlled by 2 percent of the population...”<sup>133</sup> The depression underscored the convenient relationship that existed between the large Egyptian landowners and the British, who were dependent on Egyptian cotton grown on land controlled by these wealthy landowners.

Economic depression, repressive government, and continued British domination produced disaffection among the middle and lower classes. Such conditions gave rise to a number of opposition groups, many of which worked to garner support from those most severely affected by the despair. As I noted earlier, one of those groups was the Muslim Brotherhood, which offered an alternative to foreign domination and the authoritarian regime. The group addressed pressing social issues and even inaugurated a welfare system for its supporters.<sup>134</sup> The group highlighted the lack of trade or labor unions, the

---

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 276-280.

<sup>132</sup> Marsot, A Short History of Egypt, 86.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>134</sup> Kamrava, The Modern Middle East, 92.

absence of social welfare and public assistance, and the ongoing exploitation of the lower classes. The organization worked to aid the working and peasant classes through community associations, traditional Islamic schooling, and self-help associations that provided jobs for the unemployed.<sup>135</sup> Its followers blamed poor social, political, and economic conditions on the Europeans, “who had introduced foreign elements into Egypt and alienated Egyptians from their traditional ways of life in order to dominate and exploit them.”<sup>136</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood revived Islamic ideals as an alternative to European-imposed secular rule.<sup>137</sup>

The Muslim Brotherhood quickly received considerable support from the urban poor and the middle classes, who took full advantage of the safety nets that the organization offered. By 1930 the Muslim Brotherhood had garnered almost as much grassroots support as the more affluent Wafd Party. Other opposition groups, such as Young Egypt, attempted to achieve the same objectives as the Muslim Brotherhood but instead of advocating political Islam, they mimicked the fascist and communist movements taking root worldwide. These opposition groups, which had captured a significant portion of society, emphasized the inefficacy of Egyptian politics. Political parties, Young Egypt argued, represented nothing more than their own personal interests.

The formation of opposition groups, the growing momentum of nationalism, and the revival of Islam as a method of resistance finally forced the British in 1936 to begin negotiations with the Egyptians. Improvements to education also aided the drives toward independence because they increased political agitation against the British occupation and spawned student riots that emphasized the alienation of young and progressive

---

<sup>135</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 89.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>137</sup> Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 319.

intellectuals. The increasingly frequent public demonstrations against the occupation ultimately prompted the negotiations that ended Britain's legal occupation. However, like the reserved points in 1922, the British retained their positions along the Suez Canal. Although the British did to some extent diminish their presence in the country, the onset of the Second World War highlighted the continued importance of Egypt to Britain's strategic goals.

In accordance with the provisions of the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, Egypt declared martial law and severed diplomatic ties with Germany. However, the British officers feared Egypt's rumored sympathy toward the Axis Powers. Nationalists and German propagandists exploited this alleged sympathy, and warned that adherence to the Allied Powers would prove detrimental to the Egyptian cause. Radio and print campaigns reminded Egyptians of Britain's repressive policies during the First World War, engendering anxiety and resentment among the middle and lower classes. These fears were heightened as increasing numbers of British officers and troops poured into Egypt and initiated similarly repressive policies. As the war progressed, many Egyptians began to see the problems inherent in the 1936 treaty. For instance, the war enabled Britain to justify its security system, a major point of contention between Britain and Egypt. The British also designated Cairo as the Middle East supply center headquarters, which put Egypt in the direct crossfire of Axis military maneuvers.<sup>138</sup>

By 1941, wartime conditions had put tremendous strain on the Egyptian economy. The growing scarcity of basic commodities and foodstuffs produced a rise in the cost of living, and as a result, the Egyptian black market assumed a proactive role.<sup>139</sup> Worsening

---

<sup>138</sup> Milton-Edwards, *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*, 62.

<sup>139</sup> Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 349.

conditions provoked bread riots across Cairo, and the insurrections only intensified as inflation continued to increase. Political and economic chaos climaxed in the February Fourth Incident of 1942. King Faruq tapped Mahir for the premiership, but Mahir, a known Axis sympathizer, proved unacceptable to the British, especially as Rommel's German forces continued to gain territory. The British issued an ultimatum to King Faruq and surrounded his palace with military tanks and troops. A humiliated Faruq faced two options: to invite the Wafd Party to form a government or to abdicate. Unwilling to relinquish his power Faruq appointed a Wafdist government, which "emphasized Britain's control over Egyptian domestic affairs and infuriated nationalist sympathizers."<sup>140</sup>

The February Fourth Incident ultimately aided in the disintegration of Egypt's parliamentary system. Not only did the incident undercut the electoral and representative system, but it also wholly discredited the Wafd Party, as it underscored that the organization accepted political power even at the expense of continued foreign domination. The party had acted similarly in 1936 when it signed the treaty that prolonged British military presence in the Canal Zone.<sup>141</sup> The Wafd's cooptation only contributed to the political instability that characterized the postwar years. With Egypt's largest party discredited, a power vacuum emerged, allowing extra-parliamentary groups to assume control.<sup>142</sup>

Although the Second World War largely destroyed Egypt's political system, it forced the country's leaders to industrialize in order to remedy food and commodity shortages. In fact, by the end of the war, Egypt had achieved economic self-sufficiency

---

<sup>140</sup> Cleveland, William L. *History of the Modern Middle East*. 3rd ed. Boulder: Westview, 2004. Print.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*

and boasted a competitive manufacturing industry. Industrialization also helped reduce the unemployment rate that had been steadily rising since the interwar years. Throughout the war, more than 200,000 previously unemployed citizens were hired to staff war-related industries and enterprises.<sup>143</sup> The labor trade union movement also experienced substantial growth in the postwar period.<sup>144</sup>

Shortly after the war's end, Egypt gained entry into the United Nations, but nationalist celebrations came to an abrupt end following the dissolution of the Palestinian Mandate in 1948. David Ben-Gurion declared Israeli sovereignty over the entire Palestinian territory, which provoked a war between the new Israeli state and the Arab League. The war ended in an Arab defeat, but it had profound consequences for nationalism in Egypt: "Arab nationalism now assumed a new manifestation, articulated by young, restless Arabs yearning to emerge out of the shadows of their defeated leaders."<sup>145</sup> Egyptian nationalists championed pan-Arabism and expressed solidarity with their Arab kin in Palestine.<sup>146</sup>

With the Egyptian political system in near total disrepair, the Wafd Party returned to power with Nahhas as prime minister. Nahhas shifted attention from the pan-Arab cause to the abrogation of the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, which the Second World War had proven untenable. The nullification of the treaty engendered guerilla warfare throughout the Canal Zone and across Cairo. Egypt's liberal experiment came to a close on July 23, 1952 following the Free Officer coup. The constitutional monarchy—largely discredited by this point—was abolished, and Nasser, with support from the Free

---

<sup>143</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 285.

<sup>144</sup> Cleveland, *History of the Modern Middle East*, 203.

<sup>145</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 91.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

Officers, installed a republic with Muhammad Naguib as president. The leaders of the coup established the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) and suspended parliamentary life indefinitely.

### **Independent Statehood: 1952 – Present**

For the first time in their history, following the establishment of the republic, the Egyptian people could identify with their rulers. They finally shared the same religion, language, and ethnicity. The Free Officers created the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) and announced a three-year transitional period in order to determine the appropriate regime to rule Egypt.<sup>147</sup> Conflict soon erupted between Nasser and Naguib, and Naguib was placed under house arrest. Nasser assumed the presidency, which led many Egyptians to believe that a return to parliamentary life was imminent. Within a month of Nasser's ascent, however, all political activity had been suspended.<sup>148</sup>

Nasser quickly reopened negotiations with the British, and an agreement reached in 1954 required the British to evacuate the Canal Zone by June 1956.<sup>149</sup> The accord stipulated that Egypt would assume full responsibility for the protection of the canal. Nasser then worked to secure weapons from the Western powers in order to modernize the Egyptian military and meet the demands of the agreement. Negotiations with the United States proved inconclusive, which forced Nasser to begin negotiations with Chou En-Lai, the Chinese premier. Through Chou En-Lai, Egypt secured an arms deal with the Soviet Union.<sup>150</sup> A number of months later, Nasser petitioned the West for aid to

---

<sup>147</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 109.

<sup>148</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 294.

<sup>149</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 110.

<sup>150</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 296.



construct a high dam at Aswan. The president's goal was to increase Egypt's agricultural productivity and set a foundation for industrial expansion. Initially, the United States agreed to finance the high dam, but Washington expressed reservation after Egypt signed an arms deal with the Soviet Union. Shortly thereafter, the Eisenhower administration, with the backing of the United States Congress, withdrew the offer. In response, on July 26, 1956, Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal in order to generate profits to fund the high dam.<sup>151</sup>

Following the nationalization, Britain, France, and Israel organized a secret attack on Egypt to seize control of the canal. On October 29, Israel invaded Egypt, and one day later Britain and France issued a preconceived ultimatum to both Israel and Egypt to withdraw from the Canal Zone. Egypt refused, and Britain and France launched a surprise military campaign that received immediate condemnation from both the United Nations and the United States.<sup>152</sup> The attack also engendered fervent disapproval among the British population, and Anthony Eden, Britain's prime minister, was forced to terminate aggression and resign. Nasser, who had defied the combined strength of three imperial powers, emerged from the crisis as the symbolic leader of the Arab world.<sup>153</sup>

A period of peace following the crisis allowed the RCC to draft the long-awaited constitution. Although the document ensured suffrage and representation, the resulting system remained undemocratic because the representative assembly was consultative, not legislative. Furthermore, political parties were still banned, and in 1956 Nasser won the presidential election with 99.9 percent of the vote.

---

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, 297.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, 299.

<sup>153</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 116.

Though he was an authoritarian ruler, Nasser established a number of social welfare provisions, such as a minimum wage, expanded health care, and subsidized housing for Egypt's lower classes.<sup>154</sup> Literacy rates increased as primary and secondary school enrollment tripled. A failed union with Syria forced Nasser to contend with Egypt's economic underdevelopment, and he nationalized nearly all of Egypt's facilities, including banks, newspapers, and broadcast media. By 1963, almost 600 Egyptian businesses had come under state control.<sup>155</sup>

Although Nasser ruled as an autocrat he began to fear the increasing power of the army. To quell his concern he inaugurated an intelligence apparatus, the *mukhabarat*, to spy on citizens and disloyal soldiers. The *mukhabarat* launched a campaign of arrests against the Muslim Brotherhood, communists, and other opposition groups. The apparatus created an "atmosphere of mutual suspicion and distrust" that would outlive Nasser.<sup>156</sup>

The president's power gradually began to decline, as economic conditions had only worsened following Nasser's reorganization and nationalization program. The June 1967 war with Israel further hastened his decline, as Egypt had lost significant territory, including the Sinai, to Israel. Considerable casualties and damage to the country's air force only reaffirmed the notion that Nasser was losing his grasp.<sup>157</sup> For the next few years, Egypt's economy continued to decline, and on September 28, 1970 Nasser suffered a fatal heart attack. An outpouring of grief followed the news, as nearly four million

---

<sup>154</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 301.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, 306.

<sup>156</sup> Marsot, A Short History of Egypt, 123.

<sup>157</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 313.

people crowded into Cairo to mourn “the first truly native Egyptian ruler of Egypt in more than two thousand years.”<sup>158</sup>

Anwar Sadat, an original member of the Free Officers, succeeded Nasser, and his first move as president was to address the mistrustful atmosphere that Nasser had created by dismantling his regime.<sup>159</sup> On October 6, 1973, three years after Sadat assumed power, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel, and within a few hours the joint forces had overrun Israeli defense positions in the Golan Heights and the Sinai. By October 9, however, the war had shifted in Israel’s favor, which resulted in Egypt and Syria’s ultimate defeat. Although a military failure, the war conferred upon Sadat significant prestige, dispelling the notion that he was simply a “yes-man.”<sup>160</sup>

After the war Sadat began to liberalize the economy. He sought Western capital and tutelary assistance, and together, Egypt and the Western powers, initiated the *infitah*, or opening of the economy. Although Sadat’s liberal policies attracted significant foreign investment, most of the revenue was not reinvested in social welfare programs. In many ways, the *infitah* actually damaged the native industry as it encouraged the import of foreign-made products, which were sold at prices cheaper than local goods. By 1977, Egypt had lost control over its economy, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) imposed strict austerity measures that provoked riots in Cairo and Alexandria.<sup>161</sup>

In the midst of Egypt’s economic downturn, Sadat paid a visit to Jerusalem. In 1978 he and Israel’s prime minister, Menachem Begin, signed the Camp David accords. The majority of Arabs in Egypt and across the region resented both the accords and

---

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 316.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 318.

<sup>160</sup> Marsot, A Short History of Egypt, 134.

<sup>161</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 326.

Sadat, whose pro-Western policies had damaged Egypt's economic system and political credibility. Antagonism persisted, especially as the *infitah* produced rampant inflation and widespread hardship across Egypt. Radical opposition groups galvanized and during a military parade on October 6, 1981 Sadat was assassinated. When he was laid to rest, the streets of Cairo were empty.

Hosni Mubarak, nominated by the National Assembly and confirmed via an election, succeeded Sadat. Mubarak's primary concern was security, and immediately after he took office he declared a state of emergency. This action enabled him to rule by decree and try dissidents in military tribunals. He also worked to reestablish relations with Egypt's Arab neighbors, and in 1988 the country was readmitted into the Arab League and the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries. By 1990 Mubarak had restored diplomatic relations with all Arab nations.<sup>162</sup>

Under Mubarak, however, Egypt's economy continued to plummet. The country faced a severe recession in 1986, as both Suez Canal and oil revenues had decreased considerably. Inflation surged to 25 percent, and Egypt was again forced to consult the IMF and the World Bank. In 1991, the two financial organizations demanded the implementation of the Economic Reform and Structural Adjustment Program, which eliminated consumer subsidies, price controls, import restrictions, and established higher taxes, privatization programs, and pro-business labor policies.<sup>163</sup> The austerity reforms reduced state expenditures on social services, including education, housing, transportation, and healthcare. The program disenfranchised Egypt's poorer classes but

---

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 342-345.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 346.

created a new business elite and a burgeoning middle class that quickly coopted the reforms.<sup>164</sup>

Throughout the 1990s, Mubarak had to contend with Muslim Brotherhood, which had secured a number of seats in the People's Assembly. Many of the organization's members had also come to hold influential positions in various civil and professional networks. In the early 1990s, Mubarak's government curtailed the Muslim Brotherhood's activities through a series of legislative measures designed to strip the organization's financial resources. For instance, in 1993 the People's Assembly passed a law that banned fundraising, which hindered the Brotherhood's ability to provide its costly welfare programs.<sup>165</sup> Two years later on November 23, 1995, Egypt's Supreme Military Court sentenced fifty-four leading members of the organization to prison. And between November 1995 and December 1996, nearly 1,400 Muslim campaign workers, supporters, and poll watchers were arrested. Repressive measures continued throughout the 1990s, but they largely failed to damage the organization's popularity.

The Muslim Brotherhood's recalcitrance provoked Mubarak to reinstate a number of the political constraints that Sadat had liberalized in the 1970s. His government restricted the ability of all political parties to campaign, which diminished the already low levels of political contestation.<sup>166</sup>

Mubarak's increasingly authoritarian policies throughout the 1990s and early 2000s sparked widespread labor and youth unrest across Egypt. In 2006, textile workers in el-Mahalla, an industrial and agricultural hub, protested Mubarak's regime and

---

<sup>164</sup> Shehata, Dina. "The Fall of the Pharaoh: How Hosni Mubarak's Reign Came to an End." *Foreign Affairs* 90.3 (2011): Web.

<sup>165</sup> Campagna, Joel. "From Accommodation to Confrontation: The Muslim Brotherhood in the Mubarak Years." *Journal of International Affairs* 50.1 (1996): Web.

<sup>166</sup> Shehata, The Fall of the Pharaoh: How Hosni Mubarak's Reign Came to an End, 29.

demanded higher wages and better living conditions, and in 2008 protests erupted in Cairo in response to skyrocketing food prices. Riots continued on and off throughout the late 2000s but exploded in 2010 with the death of Khaled Said, an Egyptian citizen from Alexandria, who many alleged was actually beaten to death by the Egyptian security forces.<sup>167</sup>

Amidst continuing protests, the People's Assembly held elections in November 2010. The incumbent National Democratic Party (NDP) won 420 of the 518 seats, which prompted questions about the validity of the election.<sup>168</sup> In the days following the vote, evidence proved that Mubarak had tampered with the elections in order to ensure a parliamentary majority, effectively marginalizing Egypt's political opposition groups.<sup>169</sup>

One month later, on December 18, 2010, the protests in Egypt received international attention after a young man in Tunisia set himself on fire in protest of the Tunisian police state. The event sparked the Tunisian Revolution and the wider Arab Spring revolts. On January 25, 2011, an organized Egyptian opposition poured into Tahrir Square to demonstrate against Mubarak's regime, economic disenfranchisement, political marginalization, rising unemployment, corruption, and a host of other social issues. The protestors also demanded Mubarak's resignation, the dissolution of the People's Assembly, and the enactment of a new constitution. On January 28 Mubarak partially acquiesced, declared a new government, and appointed Omar Suleiman, his former Intelligence Chief, to the vice presidency (a position that had been vacant since 1981). Mubarak's concessions did not satisfy the protestors. Violent clashes continued

---

<sup>167</sup> El-Bendary, Mohamed. *The Egyptian Revolution: Between Hope to Despair, Mubarak to Morsi*. New York: Algora, 2013. Print.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>169</sup> Shehata, *The Fall of the Pharaoh: How Hosni Mubarak's Reign Came to an End*, 29.

until the president declared his resignation on February 11. Egypt's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) assumed temporary power, and subsequently dissolved parliament, suspended all political activity, and appointed an eight-member panel to amend the constitution. The SCAF set a date for a constitutional referendum and scheduled elections for both the People's Assembly and the presidency.

The panel promulgated the amended constitution on February 29, and on March 19 Egypt held a referendum in which the level of voter turnout reached 42 percent—the highest turnout in years. Majority of the voters accepted the new amendments, and parliamentary elections began shortly thereafter. The Muslim Brotherhood, running as the Freedom and Justice Party, won 47 percent of the seats, and the Salafist al-Nour Party, an ultra-conservative political organization, won 24 percent.<sup>170</sup> In the early months of 2012, the country held its first post-revolt presidential elections, and on June 24, Mohamed Morsi, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, gained the presidency with 52 percent of the vote. He became Egypt's fifth president.<sup>171</sup> However, less than a year after Morsi's inauguration, thousands of Egyptian citizens called for his resignation, as he had failed to quell high levels of political, economic, and social instability.<sup>172</sup> Morsi refused, and on July 3, 2013, Egypt's army chief General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi launched a coup that removed Morsi from power. Sisi suspended the constitution, installed an interim president, and called for a new election. Most political parties boycotted the political event, enabling Sisi to win 93 percent of the vote in May 2014.<sup>173</sup>

---

<sup>170</sup> El-Bendary, *The Egyptian Revolution: Between Hope to Despair, Mubarak to Morsi*, 153.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>172</sup> Maqbool, Aleem. "Egypt Crisis: Mass Protests over Morsi Grip Cities." *BBC News*. 1 July 2013. Web.

<sup>173</sup> Guerin, Orla. "Egypt Election: Sisi Secures Landslide Win." *BBC News*. 29 May 2014. Web.

**Analysis.** Although Nasser significantly restructured the Egyptian political, economic, and social system, he failed to establish meaningful institutions that would outlive his rule. Nasser emerged from the Free Officers, a group that initially did not profess socialism but demanded the withdrawal of British forces from Egypt. In fact, “the core group of Free Officers [possessed] no predetermined views on political organization or ideological orientation . . . they were motivated by a patriotic desire to end the British occupation and by vague notions of reform and social justice.”<sup>174</sup>

Though eventually Nasser developed his own formulation of socialism, he installed an authoritarian regime. Following the coup, he suspended parliament and organized the arrest and imprisonment of dozens of policies and opposition factions.<sup>175</sup> Despite his repeated claims that his government was responsive to a plurality of interests, he was generally more concerned with determining the popular will than responding to it.<sup>176</sup> And significantly, a closer examination reveals that Egyptian society was hardly pluralistic, largely because Nasser had imprisoned most of his opposition shortly after taking office. Political parties were nearly nonexistent, as Egypt’s largest party, the Wafd, had been discredited following the February Fourth Incident. Egypt’s smaller parties possessed only limited grassroots following and financial resources.<sup>177</sup>

The new constitution inaugurated in 1956 created a democratic façade, for it invested only nominal power in the elected, 350-member national assembly.<sup>178</sup> The constitution emphasized the abolition of imperialism and the establishment of liberal democracy, but after its promulgation, the regime imposed stringent requirements for

---

<sup>174</sup> Cleveland, *History of the Modern Middle East*, 305.

<sup>175</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 108.

<sup>176</sup> Cleveland, *History of the Modern Middle East*, 308.

<sup>177</sup> Mansfield, Peter. *The British in Egypt*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972. Print.

<sup>178</sup> Cleveland, *History of the Modern Middle East*, 308.



parliamentary candidates. All potential candidates had to undergo a screening process headed by Nasser himself. The regime did introduce a few measures that liberalized political participation, such as a broadened electorate (which for the first time included women), but with each subsequent parliamentary election, the system trended toward one-party domination and authoritarian rule.<sup>179</sup>

Nevertheless, Nasser received considerable domestic and regional support. Following the Suez Canal Crisis, he and his small cadre of associates became the symbolic leaders of the Arab world. His willingness to defy imperial powers ascribed to him the role of a “Third World Hero.”<sup>180</sup> For many Middle Eastern countries, Nasser exemplified the anti-colonial imagination.

Pan-Arabism, “the process whereby the Arab nation sought to transcend artificial, colonially drawn borders and to become one,” emerged initially in an alternate form at the close of the First World War.<sup>181</sup> The concept reemerged as a powerful force after the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956. Nasser, who had defied the combined powers of Britain, France and Israel, transformed Egypt’s military defeat into a political triumph. He had preserved Egyptian sovereignty and regained possession of the Suez Canal. Following the final expulsion of the British from the Canal Zone—Nasser’s ultimate objective—“the phenomenon of Pan-Arabism . . . moved beyond the realm of academia and intellectual fancy and into the realm of diplomacy and practice.”<sup>182</sup> The new constitution, drafted in 1956 referred to Egypt as a central player in the Arab world.<sup>183</sup>

---

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 110.

<sup>181</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 97.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>183</sup> Cleveland, *History of the Modern Middle East*, 318.

Nasser became the spokesperson of this movement, and the chief architect behind Egypt's union with Syria in 1958. This union, termed the United Arab Republic (UAR), installed Nasser as its president and Arabs across the region "celebrated the birth of the UAR as a powerful synthesis of [p]an-Arab ideals, and other leaders elsewhere . . . sought to forge similar alliances."<sup>184</sup> Although a resolute display of pan-Arab unity, the UAR proved itself a major misadventure for Egypt, as Syria withdrew from the union three years later, fearing the increasingly authoritarian nature of Nasser's regime. Despite the fact that the union was dissolved, Egypt maintained the title United Arab Republic until the early 1970s, which highlighted Nasser's commitment to pan-Arab ideology.

On Egypt's domestic front, Nasser and the Free Officers implemented a number of popular policies, many of which aided Egypt's consistently underprivileged classes. In September 1952, the RCC enacted the Agrarian Reform Law, which redistributed a significant portion of Egypt's land. The regime abolished civil titles such as pasha and bey, a move that aimed to address the power hierarchy among Egyptian citizens.<sup>185</sup> Following the dissolution of the UAR a number of years later, Nasser and his associates advocated socialism to remedy the Egyptian economy's many defects.<sup>186</sup> Shortly thereafter the regime formally adopted socialism as its political and economic ideology, and the Arab Socialist Union replaced the National Union Party as Egypt's sole party. The Arab Socialist Union purported to expand mass participation, but Nasser ultimately

---

<sup>184</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 99.

<sup>185</sup> Cleveland, *History of the Modern Middle East*, 308.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 316.

refused to relinquish autonomy to Egypt's citizens. Instead, he issued the National Charter, a program of nationalization and agrarian and constitutional reform.<sup>187</sup>

Moreover, the fundamental long-term effect of the Arab Socialist Union was negative. It severely undercut Egyptian economic prosperity, because in order to generate the revenue to implement the reforms, the state had to become heavily involved in the economy.<sup>188</sup> Economic restructuring, which included the nationalization of hundreds of industries, necessitated the construction of a massive bureaucracy, an institution that continued to expand throughout Nasser's tenure. In 1952 the Egyptian bureaucracy employed 250,000 citizens, but by 1970 that number had surged to 1.2 million.<sup>189</sup>

Nasser successfully modernized Egypt's industrial infrastructure, and by the time of his death, Egypt possessed competitive markets in textiles, processed food, and small appliances. However, in order to fund his reforms, Nasser implemented import substitution industrialization (ISI) policies, which replaced most Egyptian imports with domestically produced consumables.<sup>190</sup> The government also established a foundation for the future development of an iron and steel complex. These reforms, though extensive, largely failed to achieve the regime's alleged socialist goals. The exploitation of Egypt's lowest classes continued, as laborers and peasants reaped only nominal benefits because the elites quickly coopted the reforms.

Underlying the regime's democratic and socialist façade was the *mukhabarat*, an intelligence network that Nasser used to monitor, wiretap, and arrest the regime's dissidents. The *mukhabarat* ensured Nasser's monopoly on power, and in many ways

---

<sup>187</sup> Ginat, Rami. *Egypt's Incomplete Revolution: Lutfi Al-Khuli and Nasser's Socialism in the 1960s*. London: Routledge, 1997. Print.

<sup>188</sup> Cleveland, History of the Modern Middle East, 316.

<sup>189</sup> Kamrava, The Modern Middle East, 301.

<sup>190</sup> Marsot, A Short History of Egypt, 120.

transformed Nasser's Egypt into a police state, as the regime had curtailed almost all civil rights and liberties. Members of the *mukhabarat* received extralegal privileges, and by the time Sadat came to power the apparatus had become so institutionalized that many Egyptians failed to question its legality.<sup>191</sup>

The *mukhabarat* and the cult of personality that had formed around Nasser could not halt his declining power following Egypt's military defeat in the 1967 war.<sup>192</sup> And although he received a massive outpouring of grief following his death, he had left Egypt's political and economic system in shambles, and imparted an authoritarian legacy that would persist until present day.

Immediately following Nasser's death in September 1970, Anwar Sadat began the process of de-Nasserization, which primarily involved dismantling the *mukhabarat*. Initially, Sadat also began to disassemble Nasser's authoritarian regime through the implementation of liberal policies. Throughout Sadat's tenure, however, violence and instability remained persistent, and his de-Nasserization process had only unleashed factions that had been suppressed under Nasser's authoritarian system. Sadat, who could not quell either violence or instability, soon became an authoritarian leader himself. He reestablished the *mukhabarat*, but continued to dismantle Nasser's political and economic regime, namely, his failed state socialism. Sadat shifted away from pan-Arabism, and this transformation would affect Egypt's relations with its neighbors, especially following the 1973 war with Israel and Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977. Sadat's move away from

---

<sup>191</sup> Mansfield, *The British in Egypt*, 676.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid*, 686.

pan-Arabism paralleled his attempt to establish close relations with non-regional powers, such as the Soviet Union and eventually the United States and Europe.<sup>193</sup>

To deconstruct Nasser's economic regime Sadat initiated the *infitah*, which reflected the Western turn toward neoliberal economics in the 1970s. The *infitah* opened Egypt's economy, which reestablished Western influence in the country, a force that Nasser had worked tirelessly to eradicate. Neoliberal policies such as privatization and fiscal austerity provoked intense antipathy among Egypt's middle and lower classes who resented the return of Western influence in Egyptian affairs. Resentment only increased when the *infitah* failed, forcing the IMF and the World Bank to intervene.

A number of years later in 1977 Sadat paid a visit to Jerusalem to negotiate a treaty with Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin.<sup>194</sup> Although Sadat demanded that Israel recognize Palestine's right to self-determination, he ultimately signed the Camp David Accords, which drew immense condemnation from most Arab countries because it appeased both the United States and Israel. Many Egyptians expressed "strongman nostalgia" for Nasser, who had used historical Western interference to justify his authoritarian policies. Sadat's programs also garnered severe condemnation from Arab countries across the region; both the Arab League and the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries nullified Egypt's membership. For many Egyptians and Arabs, Sadat was nothing more than a traitor who had undermined Nasser's anti-imperial project. Intense antagonism between Sadat and the Egyptians resulted in his assassination in 1981 during a military parade. Sadat's death did not receive the same outpouring of grief that Nasser's had eleven years prior. In fact, many Egyptians were happy to see his

---

<sup>193</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 320.

<sup>194</sup> Marsot, A Short History of Egypt, 134.

rule end, for his pro-Western policies and Israeli appeasement had alienated almost every Arab in the region. Sadat's major achievement, the *infitah*, had rendered the country nearly bankrupt and once again dependent on foreign powers. Only two decades after Egypt had finally expelled Britain from the Canal Zone and ended European domination, Sadat had invited foreign influence once again.<sup>195</sup>

Shortly after Sadat's assassination, Hosni Mubarak assumed the presidency, inheriting a broken economic system, a resentful public, and a power-hungry West. Mubarak used these circumstances to justify a number of his authoritarian policies. He immediately declared a national state of emergency and quickly reassembled the *mukhabarat*. He curbed Western influence, which allowed him to reestablish diplomatic relations with neighboring Arab countries and he restored Egypt's membership in both the Arab League and the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries.

Sadat's pro-Western policies had engendered a resentful public, which had manifested in powerful opposition groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Under Sadat, these groups quickly "demonstrated the ability to offer emotional and often material support during times of increasing economic and social stress."<sup>196</sup> And following Sadat's assassination, these groups only continued to galvanize in response to remaining Western influence. The popularization of Islam and the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood had begun to infiltrate the People's Assembly posed a significant threat to the legitimacy of Mubarak's regime. Throughout the 1980s the Muslim Brotherhood continued to attain political power through its liaisons with various liberal and socialist parties. The organization exploited Mubarak's declining legitimacy and began to "focus its efforts on

---

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 326.

establishing a presence within professional associations, student unions and university faculty clubs, in order to secure a forum for expressing their ideas to educated Egyptians.”<sup>197</sup> The Brotherhood used its growing presence in academia and civil society to challenge the state’s authority. And more importantly the organization offered services that the government refused to, thereby questioning the legitimacy of Mubarak’s authoritarian regime. Mubarak did not acquiesce to the demands of his citizens and riots erupted across Egypt in protest of his government. The riots continued throughout the latter half of the 1990s and into the 2000s, and the outbreak of violence in 2010 illustrated the regime’s complete loss of legitimacy.

Isolated riots transformed into a centralized protest in Cairo’s Tahrir Square on January 25, 2011. The protestors eventually secured Mubarak’s resignation, the first step toward dismantling the authoritarian regime. Elections conducted in 2011 and 2012 brought the Muslim Brotherhood and Mohamed Morsi to power, but optimism declined precipitously after Morsi failed to establish a legitimate regime that would remedy years of authoritarianism, foreign intervention, and economic woe.<sup>198</sup> In response, a group of disaffected army officers led a coup in 2013, and installed army chief general Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as president, illustrating the historical oscillation between a military intervention and an authoritarian regime.

Sisi was formally elected through fraudulent means in 2014. His primary objects are economic, and he has attempted to reduce the country’s heavy subsidies in basic necessities and foodstuffs. However, in a country where almost 50 percent of the population lives in poverty and relies on government aid, the elimination of these

---

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, 346.

subsidies has only further jeopardized the population's welfare.<sup>199</sup> Nevertheless, Sisi continues to defend his austerity measures, which though harmful to a significant portion of the population, have cut Egypt's external debt by nearly 14 percent. A poll conducted in May 2015 showed that almost 90 percent of Egyptians approve of Sisi's policies, especially Egypt's youth.<sup>200</sup>

Sisi's regime, however, remains authoritarian and political conditions have only grown increasingly repressive, as various freedoms of association, press, and information have been either severely curtailed or completely abolished. Currently, Freedom House gives Egypt's political economy a score of 33 of 40, closest to the worst rating a country can achieve.<sup>201</sup> The poor rating is due to Sisi's intolerance and the regime's various restrictions on print and television media—both state-run and private media are heavily biased toward the regime and alternative sources of information do not exist. Since Sisi has assumed office, he has secured a pledge of loyalty from twenty-state run and private newspapers.<sup>202</sup> Egypt receives a significantly higher score on its economic environment, largely because the country has reduced its debt and improved its credit rating among various European and American financial institutions. Overall, however, conditions are worsening, as Egypt remains highly authoritarian.<sup>203</sup>

---

<sup>199</sup> Ibid, 329.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, 334.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid, 342.

<sup>202</sup> Campagna, *From Accommodation to Confrontation: The Muslim Brotherhood in the Mubarak Years*, 283.

<sup>203</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 349.



### Exploratory Conclusions

Of the three countries analyzed in this work, Egypt possessed the most homogenous population. The absence of this obstacle, however, was not sufficient to enable its leaders to form a stable democratic regime. Their failure can be attributed to several factors.

First, foreign powers have dominated Egypt for much of its existence, robbing the country of the opportunity to develop the necessary administrative structure that would have enabled the country to create a democratic regime. For all practical purposes, Egypt has been ruled by authoritarian regimes since the abolishment of the Protectorate. However, even prior to this period, Egypt did not have the opportunity to develop institutions of self-rule. For much of its pre-colonial history, Egypt had to continuously adapt to foreign empires, new rulers, and different languages.<sup>204</sup> These conditions created a culture of alienation, and to a large extent, subsequent leaders ruled as authoritarians, using the country's history to justify their policies.

Furthermore, Egypt did not undergo a period of peace long enough for institutions to take root; constant disruptions and subsequent processes of adaptation prevented Egypt from developing the requisite democratic foundation. Although the legitimacy of the Egyptian *state* is rarely questioned, the country's successive authoritarian *regimes* have been illegitimate. The rule of Egypt's leaders since 1922 has been all encompassing, and their historic partnership with the military and security networks has marginalized opposition and prevented the dissemination of alternative, non-biased information.<sup>205</sup> Not

---

<sup>204</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 367.

<sup>205</sup> Campagna, *From Accommodation to Confrontation: The Muslim Brotherhood in the Mubarak Years*, 280.

only are dissidents marginalized, but also the fourteen thousand voluntary organizations that exist today in Egypt are forced to remain apolitical or they risk being banned.<sup>206</sup>

Since 2013, the military and its intelligence network retain effective control of Egypt.<sup>207</sup> The presence of a dictatorial regime today leads many observers to question why the democratic transition in 2011 failed, and the most cogent explanation attributes the failure to Egypt's authoritarian legacy. Although most citizens outspokenly desired democracy, the very foundation upon which Egypt constructed the state following independence was predicated on an illegitimate regime.<sup>208</sup> Further, a number of procedural failures during the revolt ensured that even though Mubarak was ousted, his authoritarian structures remained in place; for instance, Sisi was part of Mubarak's regime.<sup>209</sup>

Today, Freedom House ranks Egypt as Not Free, and the country receives poor scores in the categories of freedom, civil liberties, and political rights.<sup>210</sup> Prospects for democratization remain unoptimistic as the regime continues to disenfranchise the opposition through censorship, arrests, and imprisonment.<sup>211</sup> Furthermore, the security apparatus that Nasser established in the 1950s still remains in place, and for decades has produced a mistrustful and antagonistic environment.

---

<sup>206</sup> Ibid, 291.

<sup>207</sup> Thompson, A History of Egypt, 301.

<sup>208</sup> El-Bendary, The Egyptian Revolution: Between Hope to Despair, Mubarak to Morsi, 10-12.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>210</sup> "Egypt's External Debt Drops to \$39.9 Bn at End of March - Central Bank." *Aswat Masriya*. 1 June 2015. Web.

<sup>211</sup> EgyptSource. "Infographic: Sisi's Approval Ratings over the Past Year." *Atlantic Council*. 8 June 2015. Web.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Iraq: The State that the United States Sought to Transform into a Democracy but Failed**

#### **Introduction**

In March 2003, US troops invaded Iraq. The invasion was designed to achieve multiple goals. As noted by President George W. Bush, three of his leading objectives were to prevent Saddam Hussein from developing weapons of mass destruction, to break up the relationship that the Iraqi leader had been allegedly establishing with al-Qaeda leaders, and to help Iraq become a democracy. The creation of a democratic regime in Iraq, claimed President Bush, would help spread democracy throughout the Middle East and strengthen Israel's security standing. Since the invasion it has been learned that Saddam Hussein had not been developing weapons of mass destruction for quite some time and that linkages between al-Qaeda and the Iraqi regime did not exist. Of no less significance is the fact that Washington, instead of helping establish a democratic regime in Iraq, exacerbated political conditions in Iraq and its surrounding states. In this chapter I will explain, via an analysis of the evolution of Iraq's political, economic, and social system, why Bush's commitment to create a democratic regime in Iraq was destined to fail.

#### **Pre-Colonial Iraq: 633 – 1534**

In 633, the Arab conquerors rode to Ctesiphon, the Persian capital, which was just outside modern Baghdad, and from there swiftly entered Damascus and looted the city.

By 636 Arabs had destroyed the Byzantine Army in the territory that is now Jordan.<sup>1</sup>

Under Arab rule the inhabitants of Mesopotamia fared well: non-Muslims (Jews and Christians) lived in relative peace and were largely left to their own devices, as the Arab rulers did not initially attempt to proselytize. Instead, they moved into Persian territory, captured the capital, and officially hastened the end of Persian rule in Mesopotamia.<sup>2</sup>

In 650, the Abbasid Caliphate was established, marking one of the great periods in Islamic history. The leaders relished in both the Greek and Persian history of the region, and under the Abbasids, Iraq, and Baghdad, became the center of a prosperous empire.<sup>3</sup> The Abbasids worked to expand and centralize irrigation channels and river valleys, and ensured the expansion of both agriculture and manufacture. In Baghdad, the urban center of the territory, trade flourished and commercial transactions increased tenfold alongside scientific and intellectual advancements.<sup>4</sup> During this period, literacy rates improved exponentially, and Iraqi literature and scholarship flooded the region. Although Baghdad and the surrounding areas thrived under the Abbasids, the first Abbasid caliph was a Sunni who worked to suppress Shiite organizations, illustrating the early discrimination and persecution of the Shiite population. The first caliph's successors were less authoritarian and more tolerant of different religions and sects, but the perception of Shiites as the inferior Muslim sect became institutionalized very early on in Iraq's history.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Polk, William R. *Understanding Iraq: The Whole Sweep of Iraqi History, from Genghis Khan's Mongols to the Ottoman Turks to the British Mandate to the American Occupation*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2006. Print.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>3</sup> Marr, Phebe. *The Modern History of Iraq*. Third ed. Boulder: Westview, 2012. Print.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 58-59.

Abbasid prosperity came to a grinding halt following the Mongol massacre of thousands of Baghdad's inhabitants in 1258. In 1401 Tamerlane, a Turco-Mongol conqueror, issued the final blow to Iraq.<sup>6</sup> The physical infrastructure of the city was destroyed completely, and starvation and disease dominated the period following the two invasions.<sup>7</sup> This dark epoch came to an end in the sixteenth century with the rise of the Safavid dynasty in neighboring Iran. As Shiites, the Safavid dynasts massacred many leading Sunnis, whose prestige and invincibility had already been weakened by the Mongol invasions two hundred years prior. The rise of the Safavids provoked a protracted era of Turkish-Iranian hostility, which largely exacerbated Baghdad's economy that had been in decline since the Mongol invasion. Repression against the Shiite population continued throughout this period of hostility, and as a result, a relatively cohesive underground religious community emerged.<sup>8</sup>

**Analysis.** Relative peace followed the initial years after the Arab Conquest in 636, as religious toleration for the large number of non-Muslims prevailed. Most Christians and Jews retained autonomy, and it was not until the rise of the Abbasid caliphate in 650 that centralization began. Under the Abbasids, Iraq's capital, Baghdad, flourished, and the empire established the initial infrastructure that would eventually allow Iraq to lead the Arab world in economic, cultural, and intellectual development. The empire invested in agricultural, irrigation, and manufacturing infrastructure, encouraged facets of urban life, such as trade and commerce, and dedicated the country to scientific and technological advancement. During this period, Iraq boasted the highest

---

<sup>6</sup> Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 66-67.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

literacy rates in the region and the country disseminated significant Arabic literature and intellectual scholarship.

Although the Abbasids promoted substantial advancements in Iraq, the empire also institutionalized discrimination against Shiites, as a majority of the dynasts were Sunni and employed exclusively Sunnis in official posts. It is also important to emphasize that throughout the Abbasid period the Persians exerted considerable influence in the country, and the Shiites in Iraq and Shiite-majority Persia would develop a politically and economically significant relationship. The Persians wielded its authority via the Safavid dynasty, and violence between Sunnis and Shiites in Iran prompted the Abbasids in Iraq to institute repressive policies against Shiites, fearing a similar outbreak of violence. These policies removed Shiites from positions of authority in Abbasid Iraq, but in turn, this period of repression is significant to Iraq's political history because it enabled the formation of a unified underground Shiite coalition.

### **Ottoman Iraq: 1534 – 1918**

The territories that constitute present-day Iraq came under official Ottoman control in 1534, but complete integration of these territories progressed gradually throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ottoman interest in Iraq began as early as 1514, as an extension of the religious hostilities between the Sunni Ottoman Sultan and the Safavid shah.<sup>9</sup> Although many historians reference the three major provinces that arose during Ottoman rule—Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra—the tendency to view these provinces as distinct and divided along sectarian lines is ahistorical. Furthermore, the tripartite division of Iraq cannot even be attributed to the Ottomans who

---

<sup>9</sup> Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 6.

actually divided the country into four administrative units in the sixteenth century.<sup>10</sup> It is also important to note that throughout Iraq's history, even before its formal creation in 1920, Baghdad has always existed as the territory's proto-capital. In fact, during the Ottoman period both Basra and Mosul looked more toward Baghdad for guidance than to Istanbul, the empire's capital. In military affairs and government administration, Baghdad ranked considerably higher than either Basra or Mosul.<sup>11</sup>

When the Ottomans conquered Iraq in 1534 the empire was at its peak of power and authority, and as such, was able to instill some order and stability in Iraq. Stability required religious tolerance, and even though the Ottoman Sultan was Sunni, the empire initially tolerated the Shiite population. However, the continuation of hostilities between Turks and Safavids weakened the Ottoman Empire, and distracted attention from the empire's provinces. As a result, Turkish interest and influence in Iraq declined significantly, and funds were redirected away from Iraq. The hostilities also affected Shiites of the region, institutionalizing further discrimination, as many Ottomans feared that Shiites would ally with the Persian Safavids, jeopardizing the empire's hold on the entire region. As a result, the Ottomans began to rely solely on Sunnis in fulfilling military, government, and administrative positions, sowing the seeds of Sunni domination. Shiites continued to organize, however, and subsequently strengthened their ties to the Safavids, as a *result* of their alienation.<sup>12</sup>

Turkish-Safavid hostilities provided an opening for the Mamluks in Iraq in the early eighteenth century. The objective of the Mamluks however was neither stability nor

---

<sup>10</sup> Two of the provinces united to form the tripartite division.

<sup>11</sup> Visser, Reidar. "Historical Myths of a Divided Iraq." *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* May (2008): Web.

<sup>12</sup> Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 6-10.

prosperity, as their rulers extracted revenue from the region in order to maintain their dominance over the inhabitants.<sup>13</sup> Mamluk rule was relatively brief, and by 1831 the Ottoman Empire had regained control of the three provinces. However, some tribes in the countryside retained the autonomy they had acquired under the Mamluks. In 1839 the Tanzimat era began in the Ottoman Empire as it attempted to modernize itself and prevent nationalist movements from destabilizing the region. By promoting “Ottomanism,” the leaders hoped to avert internal factional struggle and European intervention. In Iraq, the reformers established a bureaucratic system, fiscal regularity, rule of law, and increased communication between the Ottoman subjects, provincial governors, and Istanbul.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, during the Tanzimat era Iraq developed land registration programs, a census, and a tax office. Yet, even with these reforms, the Mamluk legacy remained intact and tribal groups retained a significant amount of authority, especially in the countryside.<sup>15</sup>

The Ottoman Empire joined the Concert of Europe in 1856 after the end of the Crimean War, and subsequently started to Europeanize its various strongholds, including Iraq.<sup>16</sup> The Ottomans encouraged the formation of political groups and organizations across the empire, engendering political and civil society in many territories. However, some measure of European influence had already existed in Iraq, dating back to the British realization that the Euphrates formed a perfect link in the route from Britain to India. As early as 1765, Britain had established a consulate in Basra, and in 1798 it had

---

<sup>13</sup> Tripp, Charles. *A History of Iraq*. Third ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. Print.

<sup>14</sup> Rogan, Eugene L. "The Emergence of the Modern Middle East into the Modern State System." *International Relations of the Middle East*. Ed. Louise Fawcett. New York: Oxford University, 2009. Print.

<sup>15</sup> Tripp, A History of Iraq, 13.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. & Rogan, The Emergence of the Modern Middle East into the Modern State System, 23.



set up one in Baghdad.<sup>17</sup> During the period of Westernization the pattern of land migration shifted, and tribal societies began to rely more on settled agriculture than semi-nomadism. This was in large part due to the fact that the Ottomans believed farmers were easier to control and tax than Bedouins.<sup>18</sup> Within a number of years the nomadic population had declined from 35 percent to 17 percent, while the settled rural population rose from 40 percent to 60 percent.<sup>19</sup>

Although the program of Europeanization instilled some changes within the Ottoman Empire, Midhat Pasha, who became Iraq's governor in 1869, inaugurated the major reforms. Under Midhat, revenues from export trade, cash crops, and agricultural doubled, thus giving the economy a requisite boost. Midhat also sought to reform the political system by instituting reforms aimed to increase representation, such as the inclusion of local representatives in various administrative councils.<sup>20</sup> Midhat advanced reforms in other areas as well, such as education. He established the foundation for secular schooling, and opened a number of state-run universities, technical colleges, and military institutions. These reforms, especially concerning education, engendered the development of an urban and educated native elite. By the start of the First World War in 1914, a majority of the positions in the administration, the military, and the judiciary were staffed by members of this elite. However, this elite group was composed almost entirely of Sunnis, while Shiites continued to be excluded from participation in government and civil life.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> The first British-operated steamboat sailed on the Euphrates in 1834.

<sup>18</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 70-71.

<sup>19</sup> Marr, *The History of Modern Iraq*, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 5.

<sup>21</sup> Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 7.

Although a committed reformer, Midhat was no nationalist, and under his rule the provinces of Iraq actually increased contact with the Ottoman capital. Frequent communication between the empire and the province provoked resentment among members of the local population, and spawned revolts aimed to remove Ottoman influence. In response, the Ottomans encouraged factionalism in order to break the coalition that had revolted against Istanbul. In Baghdad, Ottoman authorities backed various tribal allies in order to maintain local order.<sup>22</sup> This tension was exacerbated when the Ottomans offered a concession to Germany to build a railroad from Istanbul to Basra. Outside interference increased again a number of years later when Britain discovered oil in Iran, and believed that oil might exist in Iraq too.<sup>23</sup>

In 1908, the Young Turk revolution commenced in Istanbul, which restored the Ottoman Constitution of 1876, and ushered in a period of multiparty, electoral politics. This movement reached the Mesopotamian territories, and political clubs, groups, and societies proliferated alongside a new system of newspapers and journals.<sup>24</sup> Until this period, a number of political groups had been organizing underground, one of which was the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), founded in 1889 by a number of medical students in Istanbul. Following the Young Turk Revolution this group became a political party. The ascent of the CUP to the forefront of the Ottoman political stage in 1912 had widespread effects across the empire. Although ideas of representation and elections continued to circulate, the CUP favored strong centralization policies that promoted Turkish nationalism and the Turkification of the Arab provinces.<sup>25</sup> And significantly, the

---

<sup>22</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 19.

<sup>23</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 71-72.

<sup>24</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 22.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 24.

CUP possessed backing from the Turkish military, and kept the Ottoman Sultan in power as a figurehead. The CUP ruled by decree, and embarked on a program of secularization that suppressed Christian minorities and the Muslim *ulama*.<sup>26</sup>

As the CUP grew increasingly authoritarian, nationalist organizations emerged across the Arab provinces, many of which unified to retain hold of the Arabic language and culture. For instance, a nationalist group in Basra established contact with nationalists in Egypt, because its neighbor enjoyed a comparatively free press during this period.<sup>27</sup> While most nationalists in Basra demanded provincial autonomy, some more radical factions called for complete sovereignty and independence from the Ottomans. After a 1913 CUP coup, tensions between CUP members and Arab inhabitants reached their zenith. In response to the coup, Arabs across the empire's territories issued publications and established organizations that emphasized Arab identity and culture, such as the National Scientific Club and the Baghdad branch of *al-Ahd*. These two organizations promoted greater knowledge of Arabic traditions, language, and literature, and attracted both Sunni and Shiite intellectuals in opposition to the CUP's authoritarian regime. Other secret societies formed in Baghdad and across the region, and many of them began to question the legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire. This conflict however became a nonissue when the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War on August 2, 1914 on the side of the Central Powers.<sup>28</sup>

Iraq did not become involved in the war until November 6, 1914, when the British landed the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force (MEF) in the territory and secured the

---

<sup>26</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 29.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 28-30.

area surrounding Basra.<sup>29</sup> Britain's main objective was to use its foothold in Basra to secure nearby oilfields in Iran, but the MEF quickly introduced British-Indian laws regulating the police, bureaucracy, and government. Although Britain implemented a number of changes in the region, the MEF possessed limited military objectives; in fact, after Basra's capture in 1914, neither Britain nor British officials in India had any conception of Mesopotamia's political future. Instead, the MEF simply pushed deeper into Iraq for the next four years.<sup>30</sup>

The Sykes-Picot Agreement devised in 1916 outlined the British and French division of the former Ottoman provinces. The provisions of the agreement were released publicly, and fears that the document aroused provoked both the Ottoman and local armies to fight harder to retain control of their respective territories. Almost a year later, in March 1917, Baghdad finally fell to the British, but the MEF did not come to control the entirety of the territory until the summer of 1918 when it began the occupation of Kirkuk and destroyed the last Ottoman forces. The Armistice of Mudros, negotiated on October 30, 1918, signaled the Ottoman Empire's defeat, and forced the defunct empire to cede its battalions in Mesopotamia to the British. One month later, in November 1918, the Ottoman troops completed their withdrawal. The First World War came to an official end after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919.<sup>31</sup>

**Analysis.** The conflict between Sunnis and Shiites continued as the Ottoman Empire assumed de facto control of the territory. The Persian Safavid Shiites continued to exert influence over the country, and wrestled frequently with the Sunni Ottomans who

---

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 31 & Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 74.

<sup>30</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 73-76.

<sup>31</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 31-42.

tried to deny them control. Throughout this period, Shiites embarked on a violent campaign, destroying Sunni shrines, transforming popular Sunni mosques into Shiite places of worship, and some Safavids even forcefully attempted to convert Sunnis to Shiite Islam. Continued confrontations between the two sects cemented sectarian loyalties that still prove divisive today.<sup>32</sup>

In 1534, the territories of Iraq came under formal control of the Ottoman Empire, and the sultan in power utilized this change in status to restore Sunnism to the country. Although Iraq was legally recognized as an appendage of the Sunni Ottomans, the Safavids refused to relinquish control over the territory that possessed the two most important Shiite shrines in Najaf and Karbala. Sunnis, on the other hand, wished to reinforce Iraq's Abbasid legacy and Baghdad's role in the foundation of universal Islam. These two differing visions of Iraq and its history hardened seemingly irrevocable sectarian loyalties, and illustrate two ingrained and oppositional conceptions of one country.<sup>33</sup>

The Ottoman and Safavid struggle for control also colored the political reforms implemented in Iraq in 1839 as part of the larger Tanzimat program. These modernizing reforms aimed to Westernize the country, a practical objective that would ultimately allow the Ottoman Empire to gain entrance into the Concert of Europe in 1856. The Ottoman government bureaucratized, and the reforms encouraged the enlargement of the settled population. In turn, fewer nomads and transitory populations provided a representative basis for the popular politics that Midhat Pasha would implement in the late nineteenth century. The combination of a sizable settled population and the

---

<sup>32</sup> Cleveland, *History of the Modern Middle East*, 55.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 56.

bureaucratic reforms implemented through the Tanzimat enabled the creation of representative administrative councils. These councils, although a step toward representative politics, were headed by Sunni urban elites, a class that had emerged following the period of modernization. Significantly, this class of elites perpetuated discrimination against Shiites, preventing their representation in the new councils. Thus, majority of political and economic decisions were decided without Shiite involvement, and subsequently, the resultant policies tended to favor the Sunni population.

Although Iraq's leading elites had largely disenfranchised Shiites, an eruption of nationalism and pan-Arabism following the rise of the pro-Turkish CUP in Istanbul provided hope that the two sects would cooperate to demand independence. To some extent, collaboration between Sunnis and Shiites did exist, as pan-Arabism inherently demanded a measure of solidarity. Various publications reinforced the country's Arab identity through the documentation of Arabic traditions, language, and literature. Yet, in large part, this surge of nationalism against the pro-Turkish coalition in Istanbul also highlighted the divide between Sunnis and Shiites because many Shiites in Iraq felt a more direct kinship with their Shiite Persian neighbor. For many Shiites, pro-Arab nationalism only served to reinforce their repression. The entrance of the Ottoman Empire into the First World War on the side of the Central Powers in 1914 temporarily rendered the nationalist debate a nonissue. For the next few decades, the British presence in the country would determine Iraq's political, economic, and social development.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 45-50.

### British Iraq: 1918 – 1932

The Ottoman surrender and subsequent British occupation elicited different reactions among the inhabitants in the three major provinces. In Basra, local Iraqi officials actually worked to accommodate the British, with whom Basra had established contact years prior due to increased commercial activity in the Persian Gulf. It was largely the case that all three provinces welcomed the expulsion of the Ottomans, but still remained apprehensive about the presence of a foreign, occupying power. Such apprehension manifested in the formation of numerous resistance groups.<sup>35</sup>

In Najaf, the Society of Islamic Revival was founded in 1918 to unite religious notables, clerics, and sheikhs. The Society's overarching objective was the defense of Islam, but many within the group also protested Britain's tightening of administrative control over Najaf. During this same period another resistance group formed, one that would outlive the Society of Islamic Revival. Ex-Ottoman Sunni officers founded *al-'Ahd al-'Iraqi* in 1918 to secure the independence of Iraq and the pan-Arab unity of the entire region. Unlike the Society of Islamic Revival, however, *al-'Ahd al-'Iraqi* advocated a partnership with the British, believing that British participation would facilitate the movement toward independence. By 1918 the British had become so deeply entrenched in Iraqi government and politics that their non-involvement would have been essentially impossible.<sup>36</sup>

Most of the political offices in Baghdad were entirely British-staffed, and a British civil commissioner headed the government. The British ruled directly, and swiftly abolished any remnants of the Ottoman representative systems, such as the elected

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 32.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 33-36.

municipal councils. As an alternative, the British authorities relied on local notables and compliant tribal sheikhs to retain order. Britain's policies and administrative reorganization led many inhabitants to believe that Iraq would be integrated into the British Empire. Direct British rule had the effect of stimulating nationalism, as both the Society for Islamic Revival and *al-'Ahd al-'Iraqi* began to advocate more vocally and publicly for the independence of Iraq. Some British officers realized that Arab nationalism was developing at an unstoppable pace, and that the continuation of direct rule in Iraq would only harm long-term British interests.

Resentment toward the British surged after London prevented an Iraqi delegation from attending the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919. In response, Arab nationalists in conjunction with Muhammad al-Sadr formed another secret society, the Independence Guard. The secret society wished to expel the British and establish Amir Abdullah, a son of Sharif Husain, as Iraq's ruler. The Independence Guard, although predominately Shiite, contained more diverse factions than either the Society for Islamic Revival or *al-'Ahd al-'Iraqi*, and was composed largely of civilians rather than military officers. As Arab nationalism became an increasingly potent force, many British officers began to seek partnerships with the local population. However, the British partnered exclusively with urban and Sunni nationalists, fearing the "reactionary" Shiites and their tribal affiliations.<sup>37</sup>

Continued resentment prompted the establishment of a congress in Damascus in March 1920, where *al-'Ahd al-'Iraqi* declared Iraq's independence under the leadership of Amir Abdallah. Despite vocal protest against British involvement in Iraq, the European powers continued to parcel Mesopotamia. At the San Remo Conference in

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 37-42.



April 1920, the Allied Powers ratified the British Mandate of Iraq.<sup>38</sup> Although Iraq would not formally exist as a British colony, it would be mandated to Britain by the League of Nations, and under Britain's tutelage, Iraq would develop institutions of self-rule. After the ratification of the Mandate, the British established the Council of State, a ruling body that marginalized the Iraqi population as it staffed majority of positions with British officers.<sup>39</sup>

The formal designation of Iraq as a British Mandate provoked intense resentment, as the Iraqi declaration of independence at the congress in Damascus had come to naught. Dissatisfied with British rule and influence, the leading *mujtahid*, Ayatollah Muhammad al-Shirazi, issued a fatwa in 1920 that declared service in the British administration unlawful. Ayatollah Shirazi and Sadr, leader of the Independence Guard, then encouraged cooperation between the two Muslim sects. Sunnis and Shiites joined together in prayer meetings to demonstrate political unity against the British.<sup>40</sup> In response, the British in June 1920 announced that elections for a Constituent Assembly would be held, but the outcome of these elections simply solidified the privileges of those in power. The elections were fraudulent and prompted vocal demonstrations in Baghdad. Yet, in the face of such public resistance, the British proceeded apace and continued to establish institutions without the consent of the Iraqi people. Ayatollah Shirazi then issued a second fatwa encouraging an armed revolt to expel the British. The British did not acquiesce; they simply tightened their hold over the country by arresting tribal chiefs and other dissidents. As public opposition increased, the British deployed additional security

---

<sup>38</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 80.

<sup>39</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 41.

<sup>40</sup> Baram, Amatzia. "Religious Extremism and Ecumenical Tendencies in Modern Iraqi Shi'ism." *The Sunna and Shi'a in History*. Ed. Ofra Bengio and Meir Litvak. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 105-21. Print.

forces to the three provinces, and by October 1920, rebels in both Najaf and Karbala had surrendered.<sup>41</sup>

One month later in November, Britain inaugurated a post-hostilities government headed by Sayyid al-Kailani, the elderly naqib al-ashraf of Baghdad.<sup>42</sup> Although the government included twenty-one Iraqis, the British discriminated against Shiites, whom they believed had spearheaded the revolt in 1920. The rebellion, which had aimed to abolish the British occupation, had not only strengthened Britain's position in Iraq, but had also reestablished the old Sunni-dominated Ottoman order. Discrimination against Shiites also existed within Iraq's military system, as the British organized the reinstatement of nearly 500 former Ottoman military officers.

Only a few months after the rebellion, a network of elder Sunnis, many of whom held power under the Ottoman Empire, dominated the new political and military administration. This system of government prevailed until March 1921, when Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies, convened the Cairo Conference to discuss the status of Britain's holdings in the Middle East. An Iraqi delegation attended the conference, and was forced to concede the establishment of the Kingdom of Iraq under Amir Faisal. Most Iraqis held a deep distrust of Faisal and his historically close association with Britain, but the British never acknowledged these qualms and Faisal was officially crowned in August 1921.<sup>43</sup>

Upon assuming office, however, Faisal became sympathetic to the call for independence, and his policies reflected his desire to unite Iraq's three provinces under a

---

<sup>41</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 43.

<sup>42</sup> Naqib al-ashraf was a governmental post in Muslim countries that denoted the leader of the descendants of the Islamic prophet Muhammad.

<sup>43</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 43-47.

native Iraqi government. Under Faisal, Baghdad regained its preeminence as the center of Iraq, and also as the center of political power. Political aspirants flocked to Baghdad and the influx of Iraqis from the countryside and rural areas created a system of patronage and cooption.<sup>44</sup> Land existed as the backbone of the patronage system, and served as both the prize for authority and power, and as a commodity that bestowed authority and power onto its owners. Although Iraq was designated as a kingdom, the country was not officially independent.

However, Iraq's new status did bring into question the country's relationship to Britain, and in October 1922, the final piece of the Cairo Conference, the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, was signed. The treaty provided for local self-government, but gave Britain jurisdiction over Iraq's foreign and military affairs. Although the agreement gave a semblance of normalcy to British-Iraqi relations, its terms differed insignificantly from the Mandate. Iraq's sovereignty in financial matters, international affairs and security, and judicial questions was severely curtailed. In response to the treaty, the Shiites of Iraq organized into two political parties, and held public demonstrations and published newspapers condemning the continuation of the British occupation. King Faisal also resented the treaty and stimulated anti-British opposition among his supporters. The immense power that the treaty extended to the British allowed Sir Percy Cox, the high commissioner, to impose direct rule and suppress dissident parties, newspapers, and opposition movements. Cox even authorized the bombing of tribal insurgents along the Euphrates River.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 53.

Cox's actions in Iraq only fueled the opposition movement, as anti-British demonstrations engulfed Baghdad and forced the resignation of Kailani, the leader of the post-hostilities government. A Sunni notable succeeded the naqib, provoking further resentment among the disenfranchised Shiite population.<sup>46</sup> With the 1923 Constituent Assembly elections approaching, the Shiite mujtahids reissued fatwas against involvement in the election. Although a large portion of Iraq's population did not participate in the June 1923 elections, the Constituent Assembly began its session in March 1924. The Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, which had been signed but not ratified, dominated the Assembly's initial proceedings, and the Assembly remained in stalemate until the new high commissioner, Sir Henry Dobbs, issued an ultimatum asserting that if the treaty were not ratified by June 10, the British would fulfill the Mandate using more unfavorable methods. Dobbs' threat resulted in the ratification of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, but by the slenderest margins. The ratification of the treaty and the subsequent Organic Law and Electoral Law—both of which embodied the constitution—established the formal apparatus of the Iraqi state, and represented a three-way compromise between King Faisal, the British, and Iraq's nationalist factions.

In 1925, only a year after the ratification of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, the League of Nations demanded that Britain submit a second treaty that would be reexamined twenty-five years later. The subsequent Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, less repugnant than the first, passed through the Constituent Assembly without significant contention. This treaty stated that at four-year intervals Iraq would be considered for admission into the League of Nations, a major step toward complete sovereignty.<sup>47</sup> Although resentment toward the British still

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>47</sup> Rogan, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East into the Modern State System*, 25.

existed, the second treaty actually produced a deepening of political engagement and cooperation between Sunnis and Shiites.<sup>48</sup>

In June 1930, Prime Minister Nuri al-Said negotiated a third Anglo-Iraqi Treaty, which formed the basis of Iraq's independence two years later in 1932. The treaty shifted control over Iraq's foreign affairs, financial matters, and judicial questions from the British to King Faisal, but asserted that in times of war Iraq would cede facilities to British troops. The third Anglo-Iraqi Treaty was ratified in November 1930. The worldwide depression of the early 1930s undercut Iraq's political progress. The country's economy, which was based primarily on agriculture, faltered as global cotton prices slumped. The emerging textile and manufacturing industries in Iraq received somewhat of a boost, but their output remained relatively limited. Continued economic decline resulted in the formation of a commission headed by Sir Ernest Dowson. His report criticized Iraq's land structure and system of distribution. Another testimony, issued by Sir Hilton Young, only corroborated Dowson's conclusions. Young advised the Iraqi government to borrow funds backed by oil revenue, as large quantities of oil had been discovered in Kirkuk in 1927.<sup>49</sup> The government acquiesced, and by 1931, oil revenues had come to constitute nearly 20 percent of all government income. During this same period the League of Nations discussed Iraq's membership, and advanced a number of recommendations, such as the protection of minority rights, to prepare the country for entrance. Finally, in 1932, the League's Assembly unanimously approved Iraq's membership in the League of Nations, and Iraq became the first Mandate to achieve

---

<sup>48</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 57-58.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 66-71.

complete independence as an autonomous state with a constitutional monarchy, an elected parliament, a legal system, and armed forces.<sup>50</sup>

**Analysis.** As I noted above, following the Armistice of Mudros in 1918, all of Mesopotamia was ceded to the British. Although the agreement established formal control over Mesopotamia, Britain's involvement in Iraq had actually preceded the armistice; the agreement in 1918 only legalized the occupation. However, for Iraqis, the armistice signaled Britain's failure to grant independence, a promise that had been assured during the war. Instead, at the San Remo Conference in April 1920, the Allied Powers granted the British a Mandate over Mesopotamia. Shortly after the conference, the British began their "tutelage," but their policies, though outwardly democratic and progressive, abolished any political progress that had occurred under the Tanzimat and Midhat Pasha.<sup>51</sup> For instance, the British announced upcoming elections for a new Constituent Assembly, but the ultimate outcome solidified the privileges of Iraq's pro-British contingent composed primarily of Sunni and ex-Ottoman officials.

The Constituent Assembly was given a nominal role in the construction of state infrastructure and institutions, but because the body was unrepresentative of the citizenry, the resultant establishments were insufficient. The British also relied on local notables and tribal sheikhs, an undemocratic tendency that only fueled the opposition. Underground nationalist groups continued to form, and Shiite clerics played a major role in anti-British demonstration. Subsequently, the British increased its military presence throughout Baghdad. The opposition groups condemned the British response; instead of

---

<sup>50</sup> Walker, Martin. "The Making of Modern Iraq." *The Wilson Quarterly* 27.2 (2003): 29-40. JSTOR. Web. Jan. 2013.

<sup>51</sup> Tripp, A History of Iraq, 43.

conceding to the legitimate demands of Iraqi citizens, the British simply suppressed its subjects.<sup>52</sup>

Nationalism swelled following the realization that the British had no intention to grant Iraq independence. In response, Iraq's differing sects acquiesced in a feat of ecumenism to attempt to expel the British; prominent Shiite religious leaders allied with King Faisal and Sunni Sharifians, the army controlled by Sharif Hussein of Mecca.<sup>53</sup> Leading Sunni and Shiite clerics led public, cross-sectarian prayers to demonstrate political unity. The revolt ultimately failed, and the religious unity displayed against the British deteriorated shortly after the British declared Shiites responsible for the uprising. And significantly, the revolt proved to the British that direct rule was too costly, and as a result, the foreigners placed Sunni and ex-Ottoman officials in political positions, renewing the historic discriminatory policies against Shiites.<sup>54</sup> Following the revolt, Baghdad became the center of Sunni domination, and sentiments of betrayal among Shiites, as the two sects had played an equal part in the revolt, only further spoiled sectarian relations. Many Shiites advanced the narrative that their involvement in the revolt had only enabled the Sunni minority to assume power, a sentiment reminiscent of the pan-Arab drive against the pro-Turkish CUP in the late nineteenth century that had enabled Sunnis to attain power. The outcome of the revolt also solidified the religious divide among Iraq's resistance groups.<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 73.

<sup>53</sup> Nakash, Yitzhak. "The Shi'ites and the Future of Iraq." *Foreign Affairs* 82.4 (2003): 17-26. *JSTOR*. Web. 19 Jan. 2013.

<sup>54</sup> Nakash, Yitzhak. "The Struggle for Power in Iraq." *Reaching for Power*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006. 72-98. Print.

<sup>55</sup> Pelham, Nicholas. "The Two Stripes of the Arab World: Shia Protestantism and the Sunni Counter-Reformation." *A New Muslim Order*. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co, 2008. 216-23. Print.

Following the revolt, the British modified the pre-hostilities government, and inaugurated a new governing body that included more native Iraqis—most of them, however, were Sunni.<sup>56</sup> The British also established an Iraqi army, but the same patterns of discrimination against Shiites proliferated in the military apparatus. Almost one year after the formal designation of Iraq as a British Mandate, Sunnis, a numerical minority, controlled the country's two largest institutions: the political apparatus and the military. Although most Sunnis pressed for independence, unlike their Shiite counterparts, they preferred to work in cooperation *with* the British, a factor that explains the Sunni population's historic partnership with foreign powers. The British benefited from their alliance with Sunnis because it allowed them to simultaneously obtain their objectives in the Middle East and appear in favor of Iraqi independence.<sup>57</sup>

Iraq's struggle to develop representative government illustrates how ethnically and religiously diverse the country was and is.<sup>58</sup> The three provinces that integrated to form the country contained multiple heterogeneous groupings: Assyrian Christians, Turkomen, and Kurds in the north, Jews in Baghdad, and various distinct and mixed Sunni and Shiite pockets spread across the territory. Furthermore, the British had to account for the new state's sizable tribal population that had been accustomed to full autonomy under the Ottoman Empire. British policies, however, did not attempt to quell religious and sectarian infighting. Instead, by consistently favoring the Sunni elites, the British exacerbated the already tenuous relations. The British played an equally detrimental role in the Iraqi economy, and encouraged friction with neighboring Kuwait following a policy that restricted Iraq's access to the Persian Gulf. For the colonial

---

<sup>56</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 45.

<sup>57</sup> Cleveland, *History of the Modern Middle East*, 173.

<sup>58</sup> See Appendix A for a present-day map of Iraq by religious sect.



administrators, “tutelage” was synonymous with policies intended to secure British objectives, such as imperial communications with India and access to Iraqi and Iranian oil fields. The proven high cost of direct rule also encouraged the British to delegate as much authority to the Iraqi government as possible. To strengthen the political basis of the country, the British installed Faisal, an outsider, as king in 1921.<sup>59</sup>

Many Iraqis believed that Faisal was doomed to fail, not only because he was a pro-British foreigner, but also because the British and the elite-dominated Constituent Assembly had not installed sturdy political, economic, and social infrastructure. When Faisal took office, Iraq possessed no institutionalized system of government, state education, defense capabilities, or other national organizations essential to both state and nation building.<sup>60</sup> As a result, Faisal actually became sympathetic toward the nationalist drive for independence. This shift attracted a cross-sectarian following, and his partnership with Iraqis who had a legitimate stake in the political, economic, and social future of the country enabled Faisal to implement efficient and representative institutions.

Under Faisal, Baghdad flourished, and its intellectual, cultural, and technological advancements drew comparisons to the golden period under the Abbasids. In 1922, Faisal received further support following the Cairo Conference, in which Britain and Iraq signed the first Anglo-Iraqi Treaty. This treaty provided for local self-government, but gave Britain the ultimate jurisdiction over foreign and military affairs. Conceived as a whole, the “democratic credentials” of the treaty were limited. Interestingly, however, the undemocratic nature of the treaty served as democratic fodder for the various opposition groups that resented the treaty. For the first time in the country’s history, political parties

---

<sup>59</sup> Cleveland, *History of the Modern Middle East*, 205-207.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

emerged. Although the platform of most parties was the expulsion of the British, the increased nationalist sentiments from the grassroots population produced a lively civil society in Baghdad. The country's capital became the center of political opposition, as dissidents published anti-British newspapers, held demonstrations, and demanded an end to British tutelage. As the opposition became progressively more vocal, Faisal utilized his role to support the drive toward independence. But again, instead of accommodating the Iraqis, the British high commissioner imposed direct rule, suppressed and disbanded political parties, and censored the press.<sup>61</sup>

The British continued to entrench their position throughout the early 1920s, and as the 1923 elections approached, nationalist groups advocated a boycott, believing that the upcoming polls would be as fraudulent as the last. Although a fair majority of Iraqi citizens boycotted the election, the newly voted Constituent Assembly began its session in March 1924. The body contained 99 members, 34 of whom were tribal sheikhs.<sup>62</sup> The organization quickly conferred significant power to Faisal, authorizing him to dismiss parliament, call new elections, and appoint the prime minister. The king, sympathetic to the nationalist cause, did not abuse these powers, but instead utilized them to advocate independence. Future kings, however, would not be so benevolent.<sup>63</sup>

In order to expedite independence, the new leaders worked to formalize the political apparatus. Such efforts produced the Organic Law of 1925, which established the new state's government as a hereditary constitutional monarchy with an elected bicameral legislature. With the state's government apparatus in place, Faisal and his nationalist compatriots worked to build a sense of national identity. The leaders tapped

---

<sup>61</sup> Walker, *The Making of Modern Iraq*, 33-40.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

<sup>63</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 45 & Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 73.

Islam as the official state religion, and most importantly, attempted to remedy religious intolerance by allowing both Sunnis and Shiites jurisdiction over various religious matters. Under Faisal, the state established a public school system that focused its curriculum on Iraq's cultural and intellectual role in the region, and political parties continued to form. Underpinning such essential advancements, however, was a patronage system that muddied power relations and kept in place the status quo. Nevertheless, the early to mid-1920s represented a period of significant national development for the fledgling new state. Yet Iraq's "democratic credentials" remained limited still. The largest political party, the National Democratic Union, criticized the constitutional monarchy, believing that the political system enabled the British to retain control over Iraq. Similarly, because the political parties were relatively new, most lacked a popular support base. The constitution itself boasted limited democratic principles, as it authorized the arbitrary disbanding of political parties, replacement of the prime minister at will, dismissal of parliament, and a host of other objectionable policies. The combination of such a constitution and the tenuousness of the entire governmental system gave rise to inherent political volatility.<sup>64</sup>

Continued British involvement only exacerbated political instability. Britain retained the ultimate authority over all pertinent state decisions, and was especially reluctant to relinquish its control because Iraq possessed massive oil reserves (which were discovered in Kirkuk in 1927). Nationalist groups continued to demonstrate, and the increasingly vocal demands for independence forced the two countries to reexamine their relationship.<sup>65</sup> In 1930, the League of Nations approved a second Anglo-Iraqi Treaty,

---

<sup>64</sup> Walker, *The Making of Modern Iraq*, 34.

<sup>65</sup> Cleveland, *History of the Modern Middle East*, 208.

which promised eventual sovereignty for Iraq by conferring to the king increased responsibility. Two years later, the League finally approved Iraq's membership, and the country achieved formal independence, becoming the first of the Mandates to develop a constitutional monarchy, an elected parliament, a legal structure, and defense forces.

Entrance into the League, however, did not mean a complete divorce from the British. Iraq remained politically constrained, forced to ally its policies with British objectives. Additionally, Iraq's change in status did not quell political instability. Between 1932 and 1939 Iraq underwent twelve different cabinets, multiple premiers (unfailingly Sunni), and even experienced a military coup. Though the country boasted a partial democratic edifice, most political activity was expressed through extra-parliamentary organizations, such as labor unions, student groups, and the army. Civil society flourished as the formal structures of government became increasingly irrelevant.<sup>66</sup>

### **Iraq in Transition: 1932 – 1963**

Although Iraq's entrance into the League of Nations officially ended the British Mandate, Britain maintained a public presence throughout the country, as most key advisors and officials kept their administrative posts. Similarly, Britain retained de facto control over Iraq's foreign affairs, which forced Iraq to align its foreign policy with London's. Domestically, tension between Prime Minister Nuri al-Said and King Faisal remained high, as Faisal demanded a more consensual form of government and Nuri's resignation. Nuri eventually resigned and the king appointed Naji Shawkat as prime minister. In 1933 a new parliament was elected with a large majority from the strongly

---

<sup>66</sup> Walker, *The Making of Iraq*, 34.

nationalist party of National Brotherhood, or the *Hizb al-Ikha al-Watani*. Opposition against Prime Minister Shawkat mobilized, and he was ousted after five months in office. King Faisal demanded that Rashid Ali al-Kailani, a fervent nationalist, form a government that conferred majority of power onto the Ikha Party but also included representatives from other sectors of Iraqi society. This move, however, reinforced sectarian tensions, as the composition of the new government bolstered Sunni political, economic, and social domination. In response, Shiite resentment grew.<sup>67</sup>

Shortly after the election of the new parliament, King Faisal died and was succeeded by his son Ghazi. Ghazi, who held pan-Arab sympathies, resented the continued British domination of Iraq, but like Faisal, he was indifferent toward the marginalization of the Shiite population. One of Ghazi's first policy objectives was to secure the passage of the National Defense Bill, which was ultimately approved in 1934. The act modified the Iraqi military by establishing conscription and augmenting the armed forces. The National Defense Bill had the most significant impact upon Iraq's Sunni population who had been pushing for reform of the armed forces. For both Shiites and Kurds, the act represented a further instance of marginalization.<sup>68</sup>

Sectarian tensions erupted in 1935 in southern Iraq among Shiites and tribal sheikhs protesting conscription and their continued exclusion from government and administrative offices. Sunnis in Iraq capitalized on Shiite and tribal aggression by portraying these two groups as backward, uneducated, and resistant to the needs of a modern state. Yasin al-Hashimi, Prime Minister of Iraq, suppressed the insurrection with the armed forces, and one year later in 1936 he strengthened his authoritarian hold on

---

<sup>67</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 79-84.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 81.

power and began to rule by decree, essentially transforming his office into a dictatorship. Hashimi's despotic tendencies coincided with increased solidarity among patriotic intellectuals and professionals in Baghdad. These individuals emphasized patriotism over nationalism, rejecting the ideal of a pan-Arab union. In response to growing opposition, Hashimi fostered an intelligence service that punished political dissidents, and he worked to control Iraqi society and instill values of order and discipline by implementing compulsory military training into schools. The prime minister's continued oppression began to alienate large sectors of Iraqi society, including members of the military. Resentment mobilized and Hikmat Sulaiman spearheaded a coup that forced the resignation of Hashimi in 1936.<sup>69</sup>

After the coup the king appointed Sulaiman as prime minister. As a Shiite Muslim, Sulaiman incorporated the historically largest proportion of Shiites into parliament. Sulaiman's primary focus as prime minister was foreign policy, and though he managed to secure diplomatic ties with Iran and Turkey, the British monitored his actions carefully, and largely inhibited the development of a distinctly Iraqi foreign policy. Despite continued British domination, the country served as a model for other League of Nations Mandates vying for independence, such as Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Transjordan. Yet, with Sulaiman as prime minister, a suspect of pan-Arab sympathies, Iraq did not play an active role regional politics. His most pressing concern was securing the *Shatt al-'Arab* waterway that separated Iraq from Iran. A point of contention between Iran and Iraq, the waterway had been designated neutral territory by a number of previous treaties, but in 1932 Iran challenged these agreements, provoking an armed skirmish along the border. Previous prime ministers had been unsuccessful at

---

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 83-88.

obtaining a resolution, but Sulaiman managed to negotiate the Iran-Iraq Frontier Treaty of 1937, which settled the border issue.<sup>70</sup>

The reestablishment of friendly relations with Iran enabled the formation of the *Saadabad Pact*, uniting Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan in an effort to expel increasing Soviet presence in the region. The Soviets had been attempting to establish a foothold in the Middle East to secure hegemony in the region against Europe and the United States. Although Iraq established ties with a number of countries in the region, the government took an “Iraq first” approach to its politics, concentrating heavily on social reform in the late 1930s. This approach garnered support from both radical and moderate groups, including labor associations and the nascent Iraqi Communist Party (ICP).<sup>71</sup> Political committees such as the Popular Reform Association developed a platform that advocated democracy, land reform, and the legalization of unions. Yet, many officials within Sulaiman’s government feared that the reformists would jeopardize their power. Sulaiman made a number of small concessions to the reformists but their vision remained largely incomplete as they failed to fulfill their goals.

Bakr Sidqi, commander of the armed forces and the de facto ruler of Iraq, launched an attack on the reformists. He justified his action with the claim that the reformists were communist sympathizers and enemies of the public good. Sulaiman quelled the reformer’s strikes and protests, and launched a preemptive campaign to discredit and arrest various tribal sheikhs. Sulaiman and Sidqi’s turn to armed authoritarianism provoked the resignation of many officials within government, and eventually resulted in the office corps’ assassination of Sidqi in July 1937. By this point,

---

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 91.

the majority of the military stood in opposition to Suleiman's government, and he was forced to resign one month after Sidqi's assassination.<sup>72</sup>

In December 1937 a parliament was formed with the officer corps retaining decisive power. The king requested that Nuri Said form a government, and once in power, Nuri used his position to advocate on behalf of Palestine, and he attended the London Round Table Conference on Palestine in January 1939. At home, Nuri's discovery of a supposed plan to assassinate King Ghazi led him to declare martial law, which prevailed until the king died in a car crash in 1939. Abd al-Ilah became the new regent, but by then Nuri had already utilized the previous king's death to enlarge his power. Tensions between the new king and Nuri mounted immediately, and the British backed the monarch. With the start of the Second World War in Europe, Iraq's relationship with Britain took center stage. London demanded that Iraq sever ties with Germany, and provide to Britain whatever assistance it needed as stipulated by the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty. Nuri complied. He imposed strict wartime conditions in Iraq, such as censorship and curfews, but factionalism within his cabinet and the officer corps forced his resignation in 1940, and Kailani returned to the premiership.<sup>73</sup>

In April 1941 a coup headed by Rashid Ali and the Golden Square officers dethroned Ilah. Political instability throughout Iraq enticed Britain to increase its presence, and British forces soon occupied Basra and parts of Baghdad. Kailani's government disintegrated, and under the new regent, Jamil al-Midfai formed a government and worked to purge oppositional elements from Iraqi society, including a number of Rashid Ali's supporters. Yet, the strength of opposition parties and politicians

---

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 92.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 98-100.



forced Midfai to resign shortly after he had assumed office. Nuri returned to power again but his tenure was also short lived, as the regent had begun to amass enormous power through constitutional amendments aimed to expand the role of the monarch. Although Nuri's reign was brief, he instituted a number of repressive and dictatorial measures, many of which ensured the protracted underrepresentation of Shiites in government. With augmented powers, the regent condemned the lack of progressive economic and social reform, something that had been promised by numerous previous prime ministers. The new Prime Minister Hamdi al-Pachachi worked to dismember Nuri's repressive structure. Specifically, he removed press censorship and redistributed land to small landowners and peasants. Yet the regent demanded democracy, political freedom, political parties, free elections, and social justice. The monarch even laid a foundation for a future social security system. Faced with unswerving demands from the king, Pachachi resigned in 1946.<sup>74</sup>

Pachachi was succeeded by Tawfiq al-Suwaidi who began to implement the democratic reforms that the regent demanded. Under Suwaidi, Nuri's repressive structure was entirely disassembled; martial law was lifted, detention camps were closed, and censorship of the press was terminated. Upon this foundation of freedom, parliament passed the Electoral Law, which divided Iraq into electoral districts designed to extend greater representation and facilitate the growth of political parties.<sup>75</sup> The most popular of these parties was the National Democratic Party (NDP), which advocated political freedom and reform through democratic methods. The NDP possessed no pan-Arab sympathies. It was devoted to a staunch "Iraq first" platform and to the removal of the

---

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 110-113.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 114.

British from the country. The Istiqlal Party, a direct rival of the NDP, sought to unite Arab nationalists under a banner of pan-Arabism. Like the NDP, however, the Istiqlal Party resented continued British influence, for it viewed their presence as a hindrance to pan-Arab unity. The liberalization of the political landscape enabled the formation of dozens of other smaller parties, such as the ICP, and Baghdad soon became a bustling center of a political life and debate.

Although liberalization widened the scope of political freedom, traditionally marginalized groups, such as laborers and peasants, did not benefit from these democratic reforms, and unrest permeated the country. In Basra strikes became a daily reality as laborers demanded wage increases and better working conditions. These strikes stressed the country's economic deterioration, and gained momentum as more citizens began to realize the growing financial predicament. Facing pressure, Suwaidi resigned in 1946. His decision officially ended the brief experiment in liberalization. Iraq's next prime minister, Arshad al-Umari, reestablished a number of Nuri's repressive policies, but the regent and many citizens protested and Umari was forced to resign. Nuri's return to power finalized the trend toward repression, as he immediately suspended the ICP, and even though the administration held elections nobody dared challenge Nuri's hold on power.<sup>76</sup>

Although Nuri possessed few pan-Arab sympathies he took a keen interest in the proceedings of the Arab League, a regional organization of Arab countries that had been founded in Cairo in 1945. This organization took on a major role a few years after it was created, as the Palestinian question rose to the forefront of regional politics. In 1947, Britain had referred the Palestinian question to the United Nations, which in essence

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 114-120.

meant that Britain would surrender its Mandate. However, prior to Britain's referral, the rise of Zionism, together with the horrors of the Holocaust, had prompted Jews to immigrate in large numbers to Palestine. The influx of Jews and the growing proliferation of a colonialist Zionist ideology ignited a violent confrontation between the Palestinians and the Jews that climaxed in 1947.<sup>77</sup> That year the constant skirmishes erupted into a civil war. In response to the outbreak of war, Britain referred the issue to the UN, and shortly thereafter the UN General Assembly called for the partition of Palestine into two separate states. As noted in the previous chapter, after this declaration, the British officially dissolved the Palestinian mandate, and David Ben-Gurion, leader of the World Zionist Organization, announced the creation of Israel.<sup>78</sup>

Britain's renunciation of its Palestinian Mandate prompted questions in Iraq over the nature of its political and diplomatic relationship with the British. Although the British were wary of reopening negotiations, they signed the Portsmouth Treaty in January 1948. According to the terms of the treaty, the British would withdraw all forces and surrender its military bases to Iraq's armed forces. However, the British secured a provision to allow its military to recover its bases in Iraq during times of war. The treaty was to remain in effect for twenty-five years, which, to the dismay of most Iraqis, would legalize British influence in the country until the mid 1970s. The Portsmouth Treaty spawned protests and marches across Baghdad, and in response, a number of government officials and members of parliament resigned.<sup>79</sup> Although a new government was formed under a Shiite prime minister, Muhammad al-Sadr, Iraqis continued to protest. Such penetrating anti-government sentiments actually increased cooperation among different

---

<sup>77</sup> Walker, *The Making of Modern Iraq*, 35.

<sup>78</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 116.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, 131.

political parties, all of whom resented the monarchy and protracted economic decline. Protest in Iraq continued for months and came to a head in 1948 with the outbreak of war in Palestine. In response, Sadr's government declared martial law. Martial law disenfranchised opposition parties, and in the 1948 elections, these parties won only five percent of the seats.

The premiership remained insecure throughout this period, with a number of different individuals ruling for short periods, largely due to internal division and factionalism. Instability ceased with the Arab defeat in Palestine, which prompted the return of Nuri to the premiership. He moved quickly to transform Iraq into a one-party state, and used oil revenues to bring about economic growth and development. Although Nuri instituted a repressive system, opposition parties, such as the ICP, the Socialist People's Party, and the United Popular Front Party, continued to publically and vocally combat his politics. Opposition prevailed, and Nuri resigned in July 1952.<sup>80</sup> The regent, however, remained uninterested in reform, and simply desired a strongman to restore order and abolish the fervently anti-establishment opposition parties.

Throughout the next six years, the premiership alternated between Nuri and the few politicians who challenged him. During this period, Nuri worked to coopt the military. He ensured their unswerving obedience and facilitated the continuation of martial law. Opposition groups remained active throughout Baghdad, yet Nuri's government continued to accumulate authority. In 1953, King Faisal III came to power and appointed a progressive reformist to the premiership.<sup>81</sup> The new government contained a number of younger Iraqis, many of whom expressed concern with social

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 135.

<sup>81</sup> Walker, *The Making of Modern Iraq*, 39.

justice and economic reform. This new government also boasted the largest number of Shiites in history, many of whom held powerful cabinet positions. Although the new government lifted martial law, it stimulated factionalism within the most threatening opposition party, the ICP.<sup>82</sup>

With the 1954 general elections approaching, the opposition parties—the ICP, NDP, and the Istiqlal Party—formed a coalition called the National Front. The newly formed coalition won 14 seats, an increase from the previous elections, but Nuri's party, the CUP, still won majority of seats.<sup>83</sup> Shortly after the elections, Nuri formed a government, subsequently dissolved parliament, and then demanded the disbanding of all political parties, including his own. After Nuri discredited his opposition, he launched yet another repressive campaign, aimed to eliminate communism and other non-conformist ideologies. He backed his campaign with economic revenue generated from oil production. The increase in exports gave Nuri immense financial authority, and produced a measure of patrimonialism, as Nuri's government doled out large financial rewards to acquiescent administrators and cabinet members.<sup>84</sup>

In the international arena, Nuri worked to strengthen ties with various Western powers, Turkey, and Iran. Consistent with his previous policies, he remained ambivalent to issues of Arab unity, because he held a deep distrust of pan-Arabism and believed that Iraq should emulate Western powers, not its Arab neighbors. As opposition increased, Nuri proceeded to use progressively stricter measures to quell dissent. For instance, in Baghdad, opposition came primarily from teachers, students, and other intellectuals. In response, Nuri closed the schools. He also became increasingly intolerant of opposition

---

<sup>82</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 102.

<sup>83</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 145.

<sup>84</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 106.

from Shiite groups, many of which were more anti-regime than their Sunni counterparts due to their historical persecution. In 1957, the ICP, the NDP, the Istiqlal Party, and the secular nationalist Baath Party formed the United National Front to oppose Nuri's government.<sup>85</sup>

The Baath Party, relatively new to the Iraqi political scene, drew support from students and young intellectuals that resented the conservative, elitist nature of Iraqi politics. The coalition rapidly increased its power, as many of the individual parties held ties with members of the armed forces. By 1956, a subset of the United National Front, the Free Officers, had caught Nuri's attention. The Free Officers, a predominately Sunni group unrepresentative of the larger coalition, met secretly in an effort to devise a coup to overthrow Nuri's government. However, the Free Officer coup was delayed after Nuri resigned suddenly. But in 1958, elections had brought Nuri back to power, and the Free Officers led by Brigadier Abd al-Karim Qasim launched the coup that overthrew the monarchy in July. Iraq became a republic under the Revolutionary Command Council (RRC), a supreme executive body.<sup>86</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the coup, it was unclear whether the act was more akin to a dramatic social movement or a true military coup. Qasim, who emerged as the new leader of the republic, carefully constructed a façade of political freedom, whereby popular participation remained essentially symbolic. To the public, Qasim propagated Iraqi unity under which socioeconomic and sectarian differences were inconsequential. Yet in practice, like his predecessors, Qasim continued to neglect Iraq's most marginalized groups – peasants and laborers received only marginal benefits from the

---

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, 130.

<sup>86</sup> Tripp, A History of Iraq, 146.

new republic. Behind the liberal smokescreen, he ruled increasingly by decree, refusing to utilize representative councils or institutions. Qasim, who served as both prime minister and minister of defense, relied progressively more on members from the old order and the NDP to achieve an “Iraq first” policy.<sup>87</sup> Major opposition to Qasim’s authoritarianism stemmed from the ICP, which during this period was the best organized and most established of the opposition parties, as it garnered considerable support from both urban and rural Iraqis. Although a communist party in name, the ICP did not adhere to an established form of communism. Instead, the party advanced a broad platform that focused primarily on social justice and the economic exploitation experienced by peasants and laborers. In conjunction with workers’ rights, the ICP pushed for greater democratic reform, which would enable marginalized groups, such as the working class, to advocate their position. Opposition to Qasim also existed among pan-Arab groups that resented his neglect of regional politics.<sup>88</sup>

Resistance in the post-coup period did not unify in the same way that it had during Nuri’s tenure. Instead, socioeconomic, geographic, patriotic/nationalist, sectarian, and political differences became divisive, prompting protests and street demonstrations in Baghdad, many of which the ICP had organized. Fearing increasingly vocal opposition, Qasim appeased the ICP by appointing one communist to his cabinet, but he simultaneously suspended all political party activity for one year. Additionally, Qasim launched a violent campaign against communists, arresting party leaders and removing them from influential posts in trade and labor unions. The Baath Party, an Arab

---

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 144.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 145.

nationalist party that had been a member of the United National Front, unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate Qasim.<sup>89</sup>

Throughout the early years of the republic, Qasim's government uncovered dozens of other assassination and coup plots. Under increasingly dire conditions, an Islamic party formed, sponsored by a Shiite ayatollah and led by a Sunni layman. The party was akin to the Muslim Brotherhood, which was gaining momentum in both Egypt and Syria during this period. The Islamic party's platform paid less attention to the exploitation of the working classes; instead it criticized Qasim's regime and deemed it contrary to Sharia law. Qasim's increasing intolerance of party activity forced most opposition parties underground, and even though his government had suspended political activity, most of them continued to gather frequently, especially members of the Baath Party.<sup>90</sup>

In September 1960, Iraq in conjunction with four other countries, oversaw the creation of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and shortly after its formation, oil revenues surged. Although Qasim ruled as an authoritarian, he began to utilize oil revenues to bring about reform. Immediately, Qasim directed funds to infrastructure, housing, schools, and hospitals, and coupled these measures with legislation to remedy poor working conditions and raise the minimum wage. Yet, these actions could not allay the resentment that the Baath Party held toward Qasim, largely because he failed to create representative institutions that would actually implement the

---

<sup>89</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 115.

<sup>90</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 156.



improvements. As a result, the autocrat was overthrown by a Baathist coup on February 8, 1963.<sup>91</sup>

**Analysis.** Formal independence exacerbated relations between Sunnis and Shiites because it sanctioned the political, economic, and social domination of a minority group. Sectarian tensions during this period only worsened as various Sunni premiers initiated authoritarian policies to quell the Shiite population. Even though the country had achieved formal independence from Britain, the country's authoritarian influence had infiltrated the regime. Throughout the 1930s leaders utilized the recently formed security and intelligence apparatus, censorship, and compulsory military training. Repression, not accommodation, remained the major tool of control for most of Iraq's leaders during this period. And furthermore, years of Sunni domination had produced institutionalized discrimination against Shiites. In other words, many Shiites did not believe that the regime was legitimate. A military coup in 1936 dismantled the despotic premiership and installed a Shiite premier. A period of social and political reform followed, but the fact that the prime minister was removed by military force and not democratic procedures only solidified the pattern of authoritarianism. Furthermore, the sectarian undercurrents behind the coup only emphasized the antagonistic relationship between the majority of Iraqi citizens and the governing regime. This pattern of antagonism would prevail until present day.<sup>92</sup>

In the years immediately following the coup, the new Shiite prime minister attempted to develop a distinctly Iraqi foreign policy, as years of British control had

---

<sup>91</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 116-120.

<sup>92</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 88.

stunted the growth of the country's diplomatic relations. Yet, the prime minister's policies reflected his sectarian identity.<sup>93</sup> He remained suspect of pan-Arabism and its tendency to support Sunni domination. Although the country remained apathetic toward the pan-Arab cause, the political and economic structures of the country, including its constitutional monarchy and bicameral legislature, served as a model for many Arab countries vying for independence. Nevertheless, Iraq's institutions were largely hollow because they represented colonial relics.

The military coup ushered in an era of accommodationist style politics, in large part because Shiites now controlled the government. This shift in governing ideology and the new "Iraq first" policies enabled widespread social reform throughout the 1930s. Throughout this period Iraq also experienced an intensification of political engagement, as parties began to institutionalize and acquire grassroots support. Furthermore, political parties worked to expand their voter base by incorporating different socioeconomic classes. As a result, labor parties and the ICP gained popularity. The Popular Reform Association, a prominent political committee, played a significant role in demanding democratic and egalitarian reforms. Reformist politics in Iraq, however, proved untenable, as the international climate remained hostile to communism. The British, though formally divorced from its Mandate, pressured the country to repress even moderate reformists. European fear mongering provoked a spate of authoritarian rule in Iraq, and ushered in a period of de facto military rule.<sup>94</sup>

Although the country formed a new parliament in 1937, real authority lay with the officer corps. The prime minister's position continued to fluctuate and political instability

---

<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 88-92.

persisted, especially after Iraq became a vocal ally of Palestine.<sup>95</sup> Throughout the late 1930s the prime minister ruled by decree, as martial law remained characteristic of Iraqi politics. Progressively despotic policies paralleled increasing centralization of power in the hands of the prime minister, and a tug-of-war battle for political authority ensued between the premier and the king. The onset of the Second World War, and Nazi Germany's conquests throughout parts of Europe threatened Britain's hold over Iraq and many of its other Middle Eastern possessions.<sup>96</sup> In 1941 Iraq experienced another coup, and Britain used this development to justify its increased presence in Baghdad and Basra. Foreign intervention only worsened political conditions, and throughout the early 1940s several different prime ministers ruled. Government stability remained largely nonexistent, and without a legitimate administrative structure, social conditions, including the underrepresentation of Shiites in the government and administration, also worsened.<sup>97</sup>

And yet, throughout this period the Iraqi people possessed an ally in the regent. The king demanded democracy, political freedom, political parties, free elections, and social justice. However, because variability in the premiership persisted, for the short term the government's ability to achieve real reform remained limited. The situation changed dramatically in 1946 when a new prime minister shared the regent's democratic vision. The two leaders dismantled the dictatorial remnants of governance by lifting martial law, closing detention camps, and reinstating freedom of the press. The new regime also initiated democratic policy initiatives, such as the Electoral Law, which formalized an electoral system for Iraq by dividing the country into districts that enabled

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>96</sup> Walker, *The Making of Modern Iraq*, 36.

<sup>97</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 111.

greater participation, representation, and party institutionalization. New parties also capitalized on increased political liberalization, including the NDP, which was founded in 1946.<sup>98</sup>

Although most politicians, parties, and citizens were dedicated to reform, two camps emerged—one advocated pan-Arabism, and another demanded Iraq-centered policies. Nevertheless, liberal freedoms increased, and Baghdad once again became a center of political ferment. Labor and working parties, which had been disenfranchised due to European fear mongering, possessed no organizational capacity, and remained uninstitutionalized and poorly integrated as other parties flourished. As a result, a large sector of Iraqi society did not possess a channel or political outlet to voice their needs and frustrations. The exclusion of laborers highlighted the country's concurrent economic deterioration. The lower classes demanded political representation and economic assistance, and in response, the prime minister that had inaugurated the period of liberalization was forced to resign. Democratic reform took a hiatus after the new premier suspended political parties.

Throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s the issue of Iraq's relationship with Britain resurfaced, especially following the creation of Israel. In 1947, the British surrendered their Palestinian Mandate, which prompted Iraq to reconsider its own imperial legacy. Iraq attempted to thwart British influence, but a treaty signed in 1948 reinforced the sentiment that although Iraq was formally independent, in many ways it remained an important strategic appendage of Britain. The terms of the treaty reflected such a relationship. Angered by a number of the treaty's provisions, Iraqi citizens unified around a nationalist platform, and soon began to protest the treaty, the monarchy,

---

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 114-115.

economic decline, and the suspension of political activity. Repression, instead of accommodation, was the government's tactic of choice, as the prime minister imposed martial law.<sup>99</sup>

Political conditions continued to deteriorate throughout the 1950s, mostly because the limited power of the prime minister prevented the renewal of democratic reform, a fact that in turn helped justify the continuation of martial law. These conditions produced a power vacuum, which allowed the installation of a despotic prime minister who continued the pattern of authoritarianism. Although authoritarian, the prime minister's power remained weak because he possessed no foundational support or grassroots backing. Instead, the institutionalized opposition parties wielded power and continued to demonstrate against the government. The organizational strength of the opposition parties caused frequent changes in the premiership, and even though martial law remained in place, the regime lacked the legitimacy to enforce it.

With the 1954 general elections approaching, the new prime minister, appointed by King Faisal, lifted martial law. Although a progressive, the new premier resented the labor parties, and encouraged factionalism to splinter the poll results. His strategy failed, however, as the opposition parties (the ICP, NDP, and the Istiqlal Party) formed a coalition called the National Front. Even though martial law was rarely enforced, years of political repression would indeed hinder the coalition's performance. Despite the fact that the National Front did not win a majority, the coalition attained fourteen seats, a considerable increase from the previous election. Ultimately, however, the coalition's electoral gains mattered little once Nuri took office and disbanded both parliament and political parties. This time around, with the financial backing from massive oil revenues,

---

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 131.

the prime minister ruled by patrimony, using monetary awards to force his administrators and cabinet members into acquiescence.<sup>100</sup>

Nuri also inaugurated a period of international diplomacy, but as a suspect of pan-Arabism, he directed his efforts to the West, Turkey, and Iran. The opposition groups organized into another coalition, the United National Front. This time, the secular Baath Party joined the ranks of the ICP, the NDP, and the Istiqlal Party. The Baath Party altered the course of the coalition because it retained ties to the armed forces. Within the United National Front, a small number of individuals formed a subgroup, the Free Officers (this group was unrepresentative of the larger coalition because it was predominately Sunni). The Free Officers, using ties to the armed forces, launched a coup in 1958, which overthrew the monarchy and installed Iraq's first republic under the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC).<sup>101</sup>

The RCC wasted no time in launching an oppressive campaign against the ICP and other labor groups. Because the RCC possessed no formal objectives for Iraq, the group turned to the unpopular issue of pan-Arabism. Although Iraq itself had remained historically uninterested in the pan-Arab cause, regional conditions, such as the formation of the United Arab Republic between Syria and Egypt, gave the RCC an outlet for external support. Inside the country, the RCC faced intense resentment from all sectors of the population. Regional politics also influenced the ruling style of many leaders within Iraq's government. For instance, leaders turned to Nasserism, and used Nasser's Egyptian policies to advocate Arab nationalism and emphasize the Arab character of the Iraqi people. Interestingly, though, politicians also used Nasser's ideology to strengthen the

---

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, 131-140.

<sup>101</sup> Polk, Understanding Iraq, 104-106.

Iraqi system through the nationalization of banks, insurance companies, and industry. The Nasserist ideology extended to the country's foreign relations, as Iraq attempted to strength its ties with its Arab neighbors, particularly Egypt. Iraqi Nasserists derived the authority for these transformations from the provisional constitution, which legalized an official Nasserist political party. Initially, Iraqi Nasserism proved less popular than Egyptian Nasserism, largely in part due to the fact that the major proponent of Nasserism in Egypt was in fact the charismatic Nasser himself. Iraq, on the other hand, possessed no such leader, and although the Nasserist political party did retain some measure of popular support it remained highly decentralized. Additionally, years of ICP repression demonstrated Iraq's bitter and troublesome relationship with both communism and socialism.<sup>102</sup>

Nasserism's most zealous dissidents were the Islamic groups that criticized the ideology as contrary to religious values and Sharia law. Opposition groups continued to vocalize their hostility, especially after Nasser himself issued public support to the Nasserist segments in Iraq. Following Nasser's affirmation a groundswell of support ushered dozens of party members into the presidential cabinet. Now, equipped with significant political authority, Nasserists advocated a three-pronged platform: Arab nationalism, state socialism, and Third Worldism. The platform captured a wide segment of the citizenry because it appealed both regionally concerned pan-Arabists and "Iraq first" domestic reformers. Furthermore, the ideology gained international support from other postcolonial nations in Asia and Africa. Unfortunately, however, the Nasserist three-pronged platform was devoid of actual policy suggestions or implementation plans, and for that reason, the ideology ultimately failed to revolutionize Iraq. Although the

---

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 115-118.

party possessed widespread popular support, without specific and practical objectives, the Nasserists could not retain such support. But for most supporters of Nasserism the only political alternative, Baathism, was unappealing. As a result, Iraqi citizens turned to extralegal structures of authority, such as patrimonial systems that employed tribal sheikhs and wealthy landowners. By the early 1960s, the Nasserist ideology was dead.<sup>103</sup>

The prime minister worked quickly to dismantle the socialist political and economic structure, reforming the party system and reinstating free elections. The new leaders also introduced a new economic ideology, liberalism, which was antithetical to Nasserism. Under this new system, the nationalization of Iraqi industries was halted in favor of private industry and entrepreneurship. A surge in oil revenues coupled with a reduction in the defense budget allowed the leaders to support the economic transformation. Liberalism, however, had its discontents. The lower and working classes feared privatization, aware that the new economic policy would skew the wealth distribution even further in favor of wealthy landowners and urban elites. Following the massive cuts in the defense budget, liberalism acquired an additional enemy: the army. The new economic system threatened the well-entrenched position of the military in Iraqi government, and in response, the liberalist politicians were ousted, giving the military even more political authority. The Sunni-dominated Baath Party, which had been adverse to the Nasserists, was now hostile to the liberalists, and after years of underground mobilization, launched two coups and captured the entirety of Baghdad's administrative apparatus. Within a little over a decade, almost three political, social, and economic ideologies had failed to transform the volatile Iraqi state.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 119-121.

<sup>104</sup> Tripp, A History of Iraq, 195-222.



### **Independent Statehood: 1963 – Present**

Immediately after the overthrow, the Baath Party installed the National Council of the Revolutionary Command (NCRC), filled administrative positions with party members, and embarked on a campaign of violence toward the ICP and known communists. Although the Baath Party had unified to coordinate the coup, it was rife with factionalism. Furthermore, the party did not possess a plan or distinctive political or economic policies. Lacking direction, the Baath Party concerned itself with pan-Arab issues, and in 1963, a Baathist coup in Syria provoked the formation of the tripartite unification with Syria and Egypt. Various dissident and more conservative factions within the Iraqi branch of the Baath Party rejected the unification, and mobilized support for a coup in Iraq.

For the next five years Iraq possessed two different rulers, both of whom relied on systems of patronage and spoils, while simultaneously dismantling the Baathist system and removing senior party officials from their posts. The leaders began to rely on pan-Arabists and channel Nasserite Arab nationalism. This shift in ideology also coincided with a number of legislative decrees aimed to strengthen the Iraqi system, such as the nationalization of banks, insurance companies, and industry.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, a new provisional constitution emphasized the Arab character of the Iraqi people and strengthened the country's ties with Egypt, and thus by extension with Nasser. The constitution also provided for the creation a Nasserist political party, similar to Egypt's Arab Socialist Union. The government's socialist orientation provoked resentment from a

---

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 178.

number of Islamic groups, many of which condemned these measures as contrary to the Sharia.<sup>106</sup>

Nasserists in Iraq amassed even more power after a Baathist plot to assassinate President Abdul Salam Arif was uncovered. Arif received support from Nasser, who immediately dispatched troops to Iraq, and as a reward, Arif appointed a number of Nasserist politicians to his cabinet. However, like the Baathists, the Iraqi Nasserists did not possess a cohesive platform and boasted only marginal popular political support. Their platform was divided into three broad issues: Arab nationalism, state socialism, and Third Worldism, but notably absent from the party's platform were practical policies and respective methods of implementation.<sup>107</sup> In fact, two major parties vying for power, the Baathists and the Nasserists, were not organized, hierarchical bodies, as both were internally divided and persistently unclear about their political, economic, and social objectives. Without cohesion in the political sphere, other extralegal structures of authority developed, such as the patrimonial system that favored tribal sheikhs and wealthy rural landowners. Arif, caught in the middle of what was in essence a power vacuum, abandoned both socialist objectives and the Arab nationalist cause.<sup>108</sup>

In September 1965, Abd al-Rahman al-Bazzaz was appointed as the first civilian prime minister of Iraq.<sup>109</sup> Once in office, Bazzaz took a less authoritarian approach than his predecessors and promised to end the oppression of political dissidents, liberalize the system, and reinstate both political parties and free elections. Unlike Arif, Bazzaz was a champion of private industry and quickly halted the nationalization of banks and

---

<sup>106</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 118-120.

<sup>107</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 163.

<sup>108</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 120-121.

<sup>109</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 181.

businesses. Although Bazzaz promised to loosen the political system, many Iraqis feared that he would also liberalize the economy, a move that would certainly benefit only wealthy landowners and elite urbanites. In 1966, one year after Bazzaz had taken office, Arif was killed in a helicopter crash that many alleged was organized by militant Baathists. Arif's brother Abdul Rahman succeeded him following his death.<sup>110</sup> Bazzaz wasted no time in developing a plan to regenerate Iraq's economy through the use of oil revenues coupled with a reduction in the defense budget. The military, which was heavily involved in all aspects of the administration and government, feared Bazzaz's plan, and Rahman replaced him with a former Free Officer, offering the military even more authority within Iraq's political landscape. Unsatisfied with Rahman's actions, the Baathists continued to mobilize, and on July 17, 1968, a Baathist faction launched a coup, seizing various government ministries and departments, and arresting Rahman's cohort of politicians. The Baathists installed a new regime, and once in place, carried out a second coup to capture other important posts in Baghdad.<sup>111</sup>

In the immediate aftermath of the coup, Ahmad Hasan al-Bakr was installed as president, prime minister, and chairman of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC).<sup>112</sup> Additionally, Bakr held the highest post within the Baath Party hierarchy. A conservative politician, Bakr saw social, sectarian, and ethnic distinctions as not only divisive but as deterministic. He expressed intolerance toward political debate and he, along with Saddam Hussein, Bakr's vice president, embarked on a campaign to arrest communists, Nasserists, nonconforming Baathists, liberal businessmen, and other citizens deemed a threat. Although the new regime discredited both communists and Nasserists, it

---

<sup>110</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 130.

<sup>111</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 183.

<sup>112</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 121.

espoused its own radical form of socialism that attempted to preserve and extend the rights of workers, peasants, and other poor citizens. Yet, behind the socialist façade both Bakr and Saddam relied heavily on an inherited patronage system that preserved the status quo and their hold on power.

Various Shiite-majority Islamic groups resented the secular nature of the Baath Party, and Bakr and Saddam took preemptive measures to break the impending religious coalition, such as closing Islamic schools, banning public prayer, and barring readings from the Quran on state-owned radio and television networks. In the Shiite-dominated south, protests erupted but were swiftly and violently suppressed. However, the continued persecution of Shiites and other religious activists actually served as somewhat of a uniting force, and a number of prominent Shiites, such as Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, founder of the Dawa Party, rose to the forefront of the underground political scene.<sup>113</sup> These underground groups conceived of Iraq as an Islamic country, advocating distinctively Islamic political, economic, and social policies. In the meantime, in neighboring Iran Ayatollah Khomeini was implementing the types of policies that many underground Shiite groups, such as Dawa, wished to see executed in Iraq.<sup>114</sup> Bakr and Saddam, acutely aware of the inklings of revolution in Iran and the presence of Shiite factions in Iraq, attempted to coopt Shiites into their government. For the most part, however, the growing Shiite influence was largely ignored until Khomeini's revolution in 1979 and the subsequent Iran-Iraq War.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi regime had been utilizing its oil revenues to build social welfare systems and remedy poor conditions caused by years of economic decline. Iraq

---

<sup>113</sup> Nakash, *The Shi'ites and the Future of Iraq*, 17.

<sup>114</sup> Dawisha, Adeed. "'Identity' and Political Survival in Saddam's Iraq." *Middle East Journal* 53.4 (1999): 553-67. *JSTOR*. Web.

had partnered with the Soviet Union to exploit its oil fields, and with the help of the Soviets the Iraqi government nationalized the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) in 1972, which had been a foreign-owned company with its headquarters in London.<sup>115</sup> The nationalization of the IPC redirected significant funds to the Iraqi state, which allowed the country to bolster its social policies. For instance, in 1973, a program of socialist goals was issued in the form of the National Action Charter. This charter aimed to liberalize the political system, which allowed parties such as the ICP to reorganize and align its political, economic, and social goals with those of the state.

As Iraq renewed warm relations with the West, its economic partnership with the Soviet Union began to fizzle. Internally, Saddam continued to exert his power, attaining more authority than Bakr. By the mid-1970s, Saddam was the country's dominant political figure, and the head of an expansive security system that subverted dissidents and other anti-regime activists. Yet, Saddam's security network had difficulty repressing Shiite groups, most of whom had been mobilizing underground for decades. These groups initiated riots in Najaf and Karbala and protested their continued alienation under the Baath Party. When Saddam's security system failed to subvert Shiite groups, he resorted again to cooptation and a two-pronged strategy of intimidation and the superficial adoption of Islamic attitudes.<sup>116</sup>

Tensions both internally and across the Arab world were high. Although Saddam had taken a more active role in Arab politics, the regional dynamic changed after a number of Arab countries severed ties with Egypt after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem. In neighboring Iran, the United States-installed shah was garnering hatred and resentment,

---

<sup>115</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 208.

<sup>116</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 127.

and in Iraq, the regime began to fear the growing power of Shiites and their organizations, such as the Dawa Party. As the revolution in Iran proceeded apace, Saddam strengthened his security network and authorized the arrest of thousands of Shiite clerics, layman, and even a number of Sunni Muslims. Amidst the crisis, Saddam also assumed the presidency 1979, as Bakr resigned, unable to contain the growing discontent in Iraq. Shortly after Saddam took office, the regime uncovered a plot to overthrow his government. In response, the regime began a campaign to eliminate any Iraqis hostile to the government. This purge was also directed against a number of Baath Party officials who had lost faith in Saddam's government and the growing repressive nature of his regime.<sup>117</sup>

Although the purges continued throughout Saddam's tenure and remained a major objective of his regime, he began to focus on fostering a cult of personality around himself, largely because he was unable to unify citizens of different sects, socioeconomic levels, and lineages around a singular political, economic, or social platform. He manipulated Iraqi identity through mythmaking, nationalist propaganda, and through a massive augmentation of the armed forces.<sup>118</sup> To facilitate the development of the Iraqi state, Saddam inaugurated the National Assembly in 1980. Although the establishment of the National Assembly signified a step toward reinstating parliamentary life, which had been on hold since the overthrow of the government in 1958, the new assembly was largely powerless, a puppet of the security forces.<sup>119</sup>

Part of Saddam's nationalist program was the cooptation of Shiites, whom he feared would instigate the same sort of revolution that the Shiite population in Iran had

---

<sup>117</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 210.

<sup>118</sup> Dawisha, *Identity and Political Survival in Saddam's Iraq*, 559.

<sup>119</sup> Karsh, Efraim. *The Iran–Iraq War: 1980–1988*. Osprey Publishing. pp. 1–8, 12–16, 19–82.

initiated under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini. The regime granted cooperative Shiites superficial and material concessions, and inaugurated a mass development and infrastructure program in Shiite-dominated areas, hoping to appease and draw their attention away from the revolution next door. Saddam constructed roads, schools, health and social services, and even refurbished a number of mosques and religious sites. Those Shiites who refused to liaise with the regime were deported in large numbers. Around this period, nearly 300,000 Iraqi and Iranian Shiites were forced to leave the country.<sup>120</sup> The regime also introduced severe punishments for disloyalty, and even forced the execution of many leading religious leaders, ayatollahs, and members of the Dawa Party. Other religious leaders, whom the government deemed less of a threat, were placed under house arrest.<sup>121</sup>

As his position grew increasingly untenable, Saddam authorized a surprise air attack on Iran on September 22, 1980. The raid was repelled quickly by an Iranian strategic counterattack, and by 1982, Iran had regained most of its territory but a war of attrition had commenced. Iran's military tact strengthened Saddam's resolve, and he launched an "Iraq first" campaign that discredited Arab nationalism and socialism, and promoted private enterprise and the creation of wealth. In line with his new policies, Saddam channeled funds into missile development and other military-related research and development projects.<sup>122</sup> With a bloated military budget and economic support from the United States, Iraq began to inflict severe damage on Iranian oil fields, and in 1988 Iran accepted the terms of a United Nations ceasefire. Although the war ended with an

---

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>121</sup> Pelham, *The Two Stripes of the Arab World: Shia Protestantism and the Sunni Counter-Reformation*, 220.

<sup>122</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 238.

Iraqi military victory and closer diplomatic relations with the United States, eight years of war had weakened the economy, depleted majority of Iraq's oil reserves, and brought about the accumulation of a massive debt. Moreover, the victory failed to quell the regime's fear of a Shiite revolution, as the security forces continued their close surveillance of Islamic groups, such as such as the Dawa Party, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), and the Badr Brigade. Yet in reality, majority of Iraq's Shiites were not affiliated with an opposition group, and it is apparent that the regime overestimated the extent to which the Shiite population posed a threat to its stability.<sup>123</sup>

In response to Iraq's crumbling economy, the regime embarked on a program of economic liberalization. The administration lifted price controls, encouraged entrepreneurship and industrialization, and sold state-owned industries to private companies, yet the cumulative effect of these policies was a spike in inflation. The regime also attempted to extract more revenue from the oil industry, but OPEC refused to raise the price of fuel. In August 1990, Saddam and his compatriots formulated a ploy to annex Kuwait, Iraq's oil-rich neighbor. The plans materialized within a matter of hours, and Saddam authorized the invasion, which was completed in single day.<sup>124</sup>

Although economics remained the driving motivation behind the attack, Saddam asserted that the invasion had a nationalist objective; he argued that the imperial powers had artificially separated Kuwait from Iraq after the end of the First World War. The discovery of oil in Kuwait in the mid-twentieth century had provoked skirmishes between

---

<sup>123</sup> Karsh, *The Iran-Iraq War: 1980-1988*, 43.

<sup>124</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 252.



the country and Iraq, as prior to the discovery, Kuwait was dependent on Iraq economically, and was, in essence, an appendage of Iraq.<sup>125</sup>

Saddam's invasion garnered both regional and worldwide condemnation, and both Iraq and Kuwait's assets were frozen. The UNSC passed a unanimous resolution demanding the complete withdrawal of troops, and the United States and the Soviet Union issued a joint statement criticizing the invasion. A few days later, after Iraq had refused to comply with the UN Resolution, the Security Council enacted a suffocating embargo on Iraqi trade and oil exports. Shortly after the embargo was implemented, Saddam agreed to negotiate Iraq's withdrawal under two conditions: (1) the simultaneous removal of all American troops from Iraq; and (2) the formation of an international conference to resolve unsettled issues in the Middle East, including the Israeli occupation of Palestine.<sup>126</sup> The UNSC rejected Saddam's conditions, and Iraq continued to face censure from other Arab countries that countries took punitive measures against Iraq. For instance, both Saudi Arabia and Turkey closed the oil pipelines that passed through their territories, severely reducing Iraq's oil exports. King Fahd of Saudi Arabia also constructed a deal with United States Vice President Dick Cheney, and in 1991, almost 250,000 American troops arrived in the Gulf region armed with missiles, bombers, and aircrafts. The United States partnered with other Arab countries and granted concessions to those that allowed welcomed American troops. In Egypt, the United States forgave all debts in exchange for use of the Suez Canal. To Syria, the United States granted arms, and issued public support to the country's intervention in Lebanon.<sup>127</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 132.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, 135.

<sup>127</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 255.

These measures, however, failed to secure Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, and in response the UNSC passed Resolution 678 on November 29, which stipulated that if hostilities persisted past January 25, 1991, the UN forces would use "all necessary means" to effect a withdrawal.<sup>128</sup> Iraq's forces remained intact, and on January 17, 1991, the United States, Europe, and other regional powers launched an air attack that crushed the Iraqi army. Iraq retaliated by launching missiles at Israel, believing that if Israel were to strike back, Iraq's Arab neighbors would rush to Saddam's aid. International condemnation strengthened Saddam's resolve, and on January 22, the Iraqi army inflicted massive damage to Kuwait, setting ablaze hundreds of oil wells, which not only dealt a major blow to Kuwait's economy, but also polluted the Gulf with oil slick. Nearly one month later on February 15, Iraq finally agreed to withdraw. Shortly thereafter, American troops commenced a ground offensive that resulted in the death of ten thousand civilians and thirty thousand Iraqi soldiers. President Bush ordered a ceasefire, and received criticism for not advancing into Baghdad.<sup>129</sup>

A few weeks later the UNSC issued a resolution imposing severe reparations on Iraq. The strict reparations program provoked revolts, and a violent antigovernment *intifada* commenced in Basra. Both the United States and Iran gave the rebels vocal support and encouragement but refused to supply them with arms. Instead, the American commander actually aided Saddam's regime in crushing the rebels. With military support from the United States, Iraq's Republican Guard defeated the rioters, rendering them powerless by March 25, 1991. Almost a week later, the UNSC issued the most severe resolution yet, which imposed a sanctions regime that essentially prevented Iraq from

---

<sup>128</sup> United Nations. Security Council. *UNSC Resolution 678*. 1990. November 29.

<sup>129</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 257-260.

complying with the reparations program. The UNSC resolution also authorized several commissions to determine whether Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD), a charge that stemmed from an alleged report that Iraq had attempted to acquire yellow cake and centrifuge tubes. However, the commissions, two of which included the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the International Atomic Energy Administration (IAEA), concluded that there existed no evidence of Iraq possessing WMD. Regardless, the UNSC enacted a no-fly zone on April 1991, and imposed a boycott on Iraq, which froze the country's assets and barred imports and exports.<sup>130</sup>

With Iraq economically imprisoned, Saddam began to alter the country's political system by fostering a tribal cult of personality around his regime. He reinstated the patronage system, and shifted his language to appeal to tribal clans and their historic lineages. He filled his cabinet with chiefs, and installed other tribal members in official posts within his administration. An overhaul of the intelligence network placed a number of sheikhs in police and military positions, and he used this new network to monitor dissident Baath Party members. Saddam's tribal network also facilitated purges, executions, and arrests.

By the mid-1990s the combination of sanctions and political patronage had rendered the average Iraqi citizen miserable. The quality of life in the country had taken a sharp downward turn; hospitals had run out of medicine, malnutrition was rampant, infant mortality rates were soaring, clean drinking water was unavailable, and the middle class had ceased to exist.<sup>131</sup> Saddam neglected these issues and instead directed most of the available funds to rearmament, and whatever income remained was doled out to his

---

<sup>130</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 139-142.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid*, 141.

patrons and clients. Due to the UN sanctions that had largely halted regional trade, Iraq's relationships with its neighbors continued to worsen. Iraq's relationship with the West also deteriorated after it was discovered in August 1998 that USCOM had become a front to disguise CIA, MI-6, and Mossad activities. After USCOM was expelled from Iraq, the United States and Britain retaliated with the bombing campaign, Operation Desert Fox.<sup>132</sup>

United States-Iraqi relations took another nosedive with the ascent of the American neoconservatives, particularly following the attacks on September 11, 2001. On that date, al-Qaeda, an Islamic terrorist organization, coordinated a series of surprise attacks in the United States, which killed nearly 3,000 Americans and injured another 6,000. The attacks provided an opportunity for the Bush administration to mobilize against Iraq. Although there existed no evidence that Saddam or even Iraq was affiliated with al-Qaeda, the Bush administration propagated the belief that the country was behind the attacks. The administration construed Iraq as a mortal threat to United States interests, and reopened the WMD investigation in Iraq, enlisting the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the Office of Special Plans. Neither organization produced any compelling evidence that Iraq possessed WMD. Nevertheless, the neocons in power pressured American intelligence agencies to confirm that the country did in fact possess such weapons, which would provide a justification for the United States to declare war against Iraq. Although neither commission discovered WMD or facilities to produce WMD, American forces were deployed to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and Turkey, in preparation for a war that had in many ways been inevitable since the Gulf War in 1990-1.<sup>133</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 145.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 149-150.

The United States launched the invasion on March 20, 2003. Within the first three weeks of fighting, the country experienced tens of thousands of casualties. Although the Iraqi army was severely outnumbered and outgunned, soldiers in Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul fought relentlessly to defend their land. On April 16, 2003, almost one month after the invasion began, President Bush declared that Iraq had been “liberated,” but the country was hardly free, and the fighting had devolved into a guerilla-style civil war, with United States troops only producing tension and hostility.<sup>134</sup> Looting remained rampant, along with the destruction of industrial facilities, government buildings, and historical landmarks. The National Library was burnt to the ground, and thousands of historical documents and artifacts were either pilfered or destroyed.

Relations between the American soldiers and Iraqis strained, and American insensitivity toward Iraqi culture, and the fact that none of the soldiers or administrators was required to learn Arabic, resulted in the formation of an anti-American insurgency. For instance, the United States Central Command (CENTCOM), in assisting the creation of a New Iraqi Corps, acronymized the new army as the NIC, unaware that the word “*nic*” in Arabic was disrespectful and offensive. Similarly, cultural values such as familial honor and dignity were either disregarded or exploited. The United States army authorized midnight cordon-and-sweep operations where American soldiers would barge into Iraqi homes and humiliate and interrogate the male members of the family. These operations engendered immense anti-American sentiment, which provided the insurgency with a steady flow of embittered Iraqis.<sup>135</sup>

---

<sup>134</sup> Executive Office of the President. George W. Bush. *President Bush Outlines Progress in Operation Iraqi Freedom*. News Archive. The White House: President George W. Bush, 16 Apr. 2003. Web.

<sup>135</sup> Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. *Imperial Life in The Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone*. First ed. New York: Vintage, 2007. Print.

The United States army also embarked on a de-Baathification program that tore Sunnis from their long-held political and administrative positions, which jeopardized the societal infrastructure of Iraq. Specifically, the Coalition Provisional Authority's order on April 16, 2003, "disestablished the Baath Party of Iraq, [eliminated] the party's structures and [removed] its leadership from positions of authority and responsibility in Iraqi society."<sup>136</sup> Not only were Sunni Baathists removed from their positions, but many also faced criminal charges and almost all members were banned from future public sector employment.<sup>137</sup> The United States pushed to complete the elimination of Baathist influence; such sweeping measures against such a large and fundamental sector of Iraqi society wholly altered the power structure of the country.<sup>138</sup>

By 2004, the United States' position had become tenuous. Even with the assistance of private military firms, such as Halliburton and Blackwater USA, the American troops could not contain the increasingly violent insurgency. Around this period, the situation in Iraq had devolved into somewhat of a civil war between different Sunni militants and also between Sunnis and Shiites.<sup>139</sup> As a result, the military attempted to reform the Iraqi military and police apparatus, hoping that once it had stabilized, the United States could withdraw. The military also inaugurated representative town councils and approved an interim constitution, the Transitional Administrative Law. American lawyers, however, authored the document.

Amidst these reforms the military continued its bombing campaign in Karbala, Najaf, Fallujah, and Samarra, and rebel forces retaliated with two violent attacks; a car

---

<sup>136</sup> Sayej, Caroleen Marji. *The Iraq Papers*. Ed. John Ehrenberg, J. Patrice McSherry, Jose Ramon Sanchez, and Caroleen Marji Sayej. New York: Oxford UP, 2010. Print.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 185.

<sup>138</sup> Polk, Understanding Iraq, 171-172.

<sup>139</sup> Fearon, James D. "Iraq's Civil War: No Graceful Exit." *Foreign Affairs* March/April (2007): Print.

bomb on May 18 that killed the head of council, and a revolt that killed Mosul's United States-appointed governor. Persistent violent opposition and a growing insurgency prompted the United States military to install a limited Iraqi Interim Government. This body, however, had no control over the country's armed forces or the country's finances, and could not even alter or enact laws. The fledgling administration was also staffed with either Americans or American-appointed officials, many of whom wielded power in Saddam's regime.<sup>140</sup>

In January 2005, the country held elections to assemble a body to draft Iraq's permanent constitution. The assembly would not only draft the new constitution but would also exercise legislative ability until the constitution was implemented and parliamentary elections held. In the months leading up to the elections, Shiites formed an umbrella organization, the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) with Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani as its symbolic head. The Shiite coalition put forth 228 candidates, while most Sunnis boycotted the election. As a result, the coalition won 140 of 275 seats.<sup>141</sup> Prime Minister Ayad Allawi (who had been unanimously elected by the Governing Council in 2004) and his party, the Iraqi List, won only 14 percent of the votes. The Sunni boycott called into question the legitimacy of the elections, and following the announcement of the results, Sunni groups launched violent attacks on polling locations across the country.<sup>142</sup> Later that year in December, the country held its first general elections, which would elect a 275-member Iraqi Council of Representatives. The electoral system was altered

---

<sup>140</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 173-176.

<sup>141</sup> Sayej, Caroleen Marji. "Democratization from Above or Below?" *The Iraq Papers*. Ed. John Ehrenberg, J. Patrice McSherry, and Jose Ramon Sanchez. New York: Oxford UP, 2010. 283. Print.

<sup>142</sup> "Law of the Supreme National Commission for Accountability and Justice, January 12, 2008." *The Iraq Papers*. Ed. John Ehrenberg, J. Patrice McSherry, Jose Ramon Sanchez, and Caroleen Marji Sayej. New York: Oxford UP, 2010. 329. Print.

through the implementation of a party list system and proportional representation, both of which would confer more political weight to Sunni voters. The turnout for this election was significantly higher than that of the election held earlier in 2005, and very little violence disrupted the process. The Iraqi National List, a coalition government led by a Shiite, Nouri al-Maliki, emerged victorious.<sup>143</sup>

In the 2010 elections, four coalitions participated: the cross-sectarian, nationalist Iraqiyya (the Iraqi National Movement), Maliki's Shia State of Law, the Iraqi National Alliance, and the Kurdistan Alliance. Iraqiyya, the party led by Allawi, won 91 seats, and the Prime Minister's party came in second with 89 seats. Turnout for this election was significantly lower than the 2005 parliamentary elections.<sup>144</sup>

**Analysis.** The Baathist coup ushered in another era of political repression even more tyrannical than the previous dozen. Almost immediately, the new regime stifled political debate and civil society through the arrest of hundreds of Nasserists, communists, dissident Baathists, liberal businessmen, and even arbitrary citizens. Although the regime worked to discredit non-Baathist forms of socialism and communism, it espoused its own form of redistributive politics. To some degree, the rights of Sunni workers and peasants were expanded and solidified, but in many ways, Baathist "socialism" was simply a self-serving façade for the party's leaders, including Saddam Hussein, who at this point was the president's vice president. The intensification of political and social repression triggered long-quiescent sectarian tensions. Although

---

<sup>143</sup> Dodge, Toby. "Conclusion." *Iraq: From War to a New Authoritarianism*. Washington, DC: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2003. Print.

<sup>144</sup> Fantappie, Maria. "Contested Consolidation of Power in Iraq." *The Carnegie Papers*. February 2013 (2013): 3. Print.



the Baath Party was predominately Sunni, its tenets were secular. These two facts drew scorn from Shiites who resented the return to Sunni domination and conceived of Baathism as Islam's antithesis.<sup>145</sup>

The regime held no qualms regarding repressive violence and following an outbreak of Shiite rioting, Saddam and the president closed Islamic schools, banned public prayer, and barred Quranic programs from state-owned radio and television networks. Shiites also resented their exclusion from real political power. Between the years 1968 and 1977, the RCC, which was the Baathist seat of legislative power, did not incorporate a single Shiite. The RCC also modified the provisional constitution to remove references to Islam, further secularizing the regime and garnering contempt from Shiites that rejected the very separation of religion from the state.<sup>146</sup> Shiites also protested Sunni political dominance as unrepresentative of Iraq's demographic composition, as Shiites still boasted a large numerical majority over their Sunni counterparts. Although the Shiite population could not amass formal political authority, years of persecution had allowed a number of Shiite groups to unify in opposition.<sup>147</sup>

Although Shiite groups held vocal protests throughout the 1970s, they did not openly confront the Baathist regime until neighboring Shiites in Iran broke out in revolution against the shah. Ayatollah Khomeini's Iranian Revolution forced the Baathist government to confront the Shiite protests, fearing that a similar Islamic revolution would overcome Iraq.<sup>148</sup> These suspicions triggered Saddam's takeover of the Baath Party in 1979. Relations between the Baath Party and Shiites only worsened throughout the Iran-

---

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 223-225.

<sup>146</sup> Bengio, Ofra. "Shi'is and Politics in Ba'thi Iraq." *Middle Eastern Studies* 21.1 (1985): 1-14. *JSTOR*. Web.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid, 3.

Iraq War, as Saddam and his compatriots manipulated Shiites in order to keep them loyal to the Iraqi state. In order to repress insurrection the regime used exploitative tactics and ardently emphasized the Arab identity of Iraq, distinguishing the country from its “backward” Persian neighbor. The party also worked to discredit Shiite opposition by referring to the war with Iran by a name that evoked the historic Arab victory over the Persians in 636.<sup>149</sup> The manipulation of Shiite identity elicited a sort of existential crisis for the majority sect that only abetted and justified further repression.

Throughout the Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam attempted to foster institutions of statehood. Many of these organizations, however, were simply puppets of the regime’s security forces. In order to facilitate these developments Saddam relied heavily on nationalism. Nationalism actually served a twofold purpose because it emphasized the distinction between Arab Iraq and Persian Iran, and it cultivated a sense of nationhood contingent upon Saddam’s cult of personality. The regime used nationalism to quell Shiites, as repression only increased violence and resentment. In order to preserve Shiite loyalty, the Baath coopted various religious groups, and a number of the high-ranking officials even visited Shiite holy sites in Najaf and Karbala. Saddam’s party granted acquiescent Shiites superficial and material concessions, but continued its policy of execution for especially dissident protesters.<sup>150</sup> The regime inaugurated a mass development and infrastructure project in Shiite areas in the hopes of appeasing and drawing their attention away from the Islamic revolution next door. The Baath Party constructed roads, schools, health and social services, and even refurbished a number of Shiite mosques. In 1980 the regime even went so far as to inaugurate the National

---

<sup>149</sup> Nakash, *The Struggle for Power in Iraq*, 90.

<sup>150</sup> Bengio, *Shi’is and Politics in Ba’thi Iraq*, 10.

Assembly, which served as a counterweight to the Islamic Republic, as almost 40 percent of the National Assembly's seats went to Shiites.<sup>151</sup> But like the regime's other policies, the National Assembly possessed no real political power or authority, nor did it provide Shiites access to power via other state-controlled outlets.<sup>152</sup> Nevertheless, the return to parliamentary life signaled, at least publicly, potential democratization. But, behind these very public concessions, the regime began to deport and even execute nonconforming Shiites.

In reality, the Iranian Revolution posed an insignificant threat to Iraq, as majority of the Shiite population did remain loyal to Iraq. While Khomeini's revolution piqued the interest of some more radical factions within the Dawa Party and SCIRI, the tenets of the Iranian Revolution were not appealing to most Shiites in Iraq. In fact, the armed forces that fought Iran during the war were composed primarily of Shiites.<sup>153</sup> While it may appear that Shiites thus condoned the repressive policies of the Baathists, it is more likely that many ordinary Shiites feared deportation and execution, and thus in public remained loyal to the Sunni-dominated regime. It is inaccurate to conclude that Shiite loyalty superseded sectarian allegiance.

As the 1990s approached, Iraq's economic system had become impotent. Costly ventures in Iran coupled with Baathist nationalization and "socialism" had put significant strain on the country's finances. In response, the regime reinstated the liberal policies of the 1960s, lifting price controls, encouraging entrepreneurship and industrialization, and privatizing state-owned assets. A somewhat impulsive and unfeasible economic overhaul, the new policies caused a spike in inflation. Iraq attempted to extract more revenue from

---

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>152</sup> Dawisha, *Identity and Political Survival in Saddam's Iraq*, 556.

<sup>153</sup> Nakash, *The Shi'ites and the Future of Iraq*, 20.

oil, but OPEC refused, and by the early 1990s, financial aid from the defunct Soviet Union was not an option.<sup>154</sup>

Instead, Saddam turned his focus to Kuwait, and through a combination of militarization and mythical nationalism, he invaded the country within twenty-four hours. Publicly, Saddam declared the invasion necessary to remedy the imperial, artificial separation of Iraq from Kuwait following the First World War. However, Iraq's discontent with the "artificial separation" was historically a nonissue until Kuwait's discovery of oil in the mid-twentieth century. Saddam's invasion garnered results that he had likely not intended, as Iraq faced international condemnation from both Western countries and neighboring Arab countries. Facing deep financial distress, Saddam had isolated the state from all potential outlets of economic aid.<sup>155</sup>

Interestingly, however, the regime's policies throughout the 1990s reflected a pan-Arabist shift, even as the state garnered censure from other Arab nations. Saddam utilized Arabist language to defend the invasion of Kuwait, and although the ultimate justification for the annexation was oil, the use of such language to condemn the region's colonial past remained a central tenet of the pan-Arab ideology. The regime also vocalized its regional solidarity to the UNSC. After the UNSC embargoed Iraqi trade and oil exports, Saddam stated that Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait was contingent upon the resolution of unsettled issues in the Middle East. The most pressing issue for Saddam was the Israeli occupation of Palestine, a matter that most Iraqi leaders had left untouched. For most Arab countries, however, Saddam's solidarity was disingenuous, and in many ways, Saddam's self-serving attempt to garner support from its neighbors backfired as

---

<sup>154</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 137.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 137-140.

Saudi Arabia and other Arab nations took punitive measures against Iraq. Saudi Arabia partnered with the United States to oppose Saddam, and other Arab countries followed suit and negotiated deals with the West.<sup>156</sup>

The attempted annexation of Kuwait increased Iraq's growing isolation from the Arab world and from the West. The major world powers, and even Iraq's close allies protested vocally against the country's actions and universally condemned the invasion and subsequent occupation. The result of such an expedition harmed Iraq's international standing and failed to solve the state's economic crisis. Furthermore, the invasion cemented the eventual downfall of Saddam, as he had lost all credibility. Although he remained in power his position had weakened considerably because he possessed neither domestic nor international support, and various UNSC resolutions had restricted any freedom he might have had to reform the largely defunct political and economic system.

Lacking popular legitimacy, he turned to extralegal sources of authority, rallying tribal clans around his leadership. Saddam broke from the Baath Party and in what remained of the political apparatus he installed tribal chiefs. He renewed surveillance via the intelligence network and focused investigation on Baathist officials. It remained unknown when (or if) parliament would be reinstated, and the quality of life for average Iraqis continued to plummet. Hospitals had run out of medicine, malnutrition was rampant, infant mortality rates surged, and the state suffered a dearth of clean drinking water.<sup>157</sup> Any funds that the country did have Saddam directed toward rearmament and the preservation of tribal loyalty. The situation was especially dire for Iraq's lower classes because they possessed no political or economic recourse; representative

---

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 138.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 144-146.

institutions had ceased to function and the state was crippled by repeated UNSC sanctions. By the late 1990s, every major power and most of the state's Arab neighbors stood in fierce opposition to the Iraqi regime. Opposition manifested in continued economic embargoes, and eventually military campaigns, as evident by Operation Desert Fox, a joint United States-British bombing campaign. By this point, democracy was a lost goal of the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>158</sup>

Although political, economic, and social conditions were horrific, circumstances worsened following the 2003 American invasion. Upon entering Iraq, the United States removed both Saddam and the Baath Party from power. This intervention exacerbated the sectarian discord that had been building due to dire conditions since the early 1990s. After Saddam's downfall, the United States conducted a census in order to measure the exact proportions of Sunnis and Shiites, and impose these proportions onto new political, economic, and social institutions.<sup>159</sup> For the first time in history, Iraqi institutions would accurately reflect and represent the population—at least in theory. Instead, this tactic unleashed latent sectarianism and magnetized the realignment of sectarian allegiances.<sup>160</sup> The toppling of the Baath Party also intensified sectarianism because it disenfranchised the Sunnis that had wielded authority since even before the Second World War. In this regard, de-Baathification was in essence synonymous with de-Sunnification, as nearly every Sunni family in Iraq was somehow identified with the Baath Party.<sup>161</sup> As a result, by May 2003, only a few months after the invasion began, some Sunnis were already

---

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 146-150.

<sup>159</sup> Pelham, *The Two Stripes of the Arab World: Shia Protestantism and the Sunni Counter-Reformation*, 104.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, 105.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, 109.

agitating for civil war. More radical Sunnis demanded the complete obliteration of the Shiite population.<sup>162</sup>

Barring one brief instance of political cooperation between Sunnis and Shiites, opposition to the war was divided along strictly sectarian lines. Initially, some radical Shiite laymen garnered cross-sectarian, anti-American support. One organization, the Sadrist Movement, originally Shiite in composition, began cooperating with radical anti-American Sunnis shortly after the downfall of the Baath regime.<sup>163</sup> The sects exchanged food, medicine, and weapons, and helped contain the destruction of the country. But by August 2004, the movement had fizzled. Another organization, the Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS), founded immediately following the overthrow of the Baath Party, attempted a cross-sectarian composition. Angered by the invasion's role in increasing sectarianism, the leader of the AMS remarked in 2004 that the Americans had intentionally solidified sectarian tendencies in order to bolster their position in Iraq.<sup>164</sup>

In 2005, Iraq held elections in order to assemble a body to draft the permanent constitution. The assembly would exert provisional legislative authority until the new constitution was implemented and parliamentary elections held. The authoritarian one-party rule of the Baathists had engendered an underground political response among Shiite dissidents. Although many Shiites throughout the latter half of the twentieth century staged vocal protests, significant coalescence was occurring underground.<sup>165</sup>

Shiites began formally organizing as early as 1958 in order to counter the increasingly

---

<sup>162</sup> Nasr, Vali. "Iraq: The First Arab Shia State." *The Missouri Review* 29.2 (2006): 132-53. *Project Muse*. Web.

<sup>163</sup> Baram, Religious Extremism and Ecumenical Tendencies in Modern Iraqi Shi'ism, 115.

<sup>164</sup> Janabi, Ahmed. "Early Elections Call Gains Momentum." *Al Jazeera*. Al Jazeera Media Network, 20 Jan. 2004. Web.

<sup>165</sup> Ahmad Al-Kubaysi, Shaykh. "Insurgency, Counterinsurgency, or Civil War?" *The Iraq Papers*. Ed. John Ehrenberg, J. Patrice McSherry, Jose Ramon Sanchez, and Caroleen Marji Sayej. New York: Oxford UP, 2010. Print.

oppressive and secular Baathist regime. Early parties, such as the Dawa Party and the SCIRI, had anywhere between twenty and forty years to organize and institutionalize before the United States invasion and the subsequent de-Baathification order that dismantled the one-party state. On the other hand, majority of Sunnis either pledged allegiance to the Baath Party or were forcefully integrated into the ranks. This fact prevented the formation of an alternative Sunni-dominated political party, and the consequences of authoritarian one-party rule proved calamitous for the sect that had ruled the country for almost a century.<sup>166</sup>

The dismantling of the Baath Party tore Sunnis from their long-held political positions and jeopardized the societal infrastructure of Iraq. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) destroyed Baathist structures and imposed criminal charges on many Sunnis and party leaders. The CPA even issued an order banning all Baathists from future public sector employment.<sup>167</sup> The United States also pushed to eliminate any symbolic remnants of the Baath Party by condemning the party's ideas, culture, and intellectual contributions. These sweeping measures aimed toward such a large and fundamental sector of Iraqi society wholly altered the power structure of the state. Sunni groups were forced out of government, and left without legitimate recourse to express their frustration and needs. Shiite groups, on the other hand, possessed the advantage of decades of organization and de facto institutionalization, even though most of their parties had existed covertly. Prior to the 2003 invasion, there existed no party that incorporated both Sunnis and Shiites. Such a party, even if formed immediately after the toppling of the

---

<sup>166</sup> Ibid, 260.

<sup>167</sup> "Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 1, May 16, 2003." *The Iraq Papers*. Ed. John Ehrenberg, J. Patrice McSherry, Jose Ramon Sanchez, and Caroleen Marji Sayej. New York: Oxford UP, 2010. Print.



Baath regime, would have in all likelihood been unsuccessful in the 2005 elections because Shiite parties were well organized and ready to wield power after years of oppression.<sup>168</sup>

The results of the first 2005 elections exemplified the ascendancy of identity politics in Iraq, a characteristic that the 2003 invasion only reinforced. In order to prevent a Sunni victory, Shiites formed the UIA, an umbrella organization lead by Ayatollah Sistani, one of Iraq's most fervent proponents of democracy. The UIA put forth 228 candidates, while most Sunnis boycotted the election.<sup>169</sup> As a result, the UIA won 51 percent of the seats in the National Assembly.<sup>170</sup> The Shiite victory meant that the coalition would draft the permanent constitution. Sunnis, highly unsatisfied with the resulting constitution, pledged to participate in the upcoming December parliamentary elections. In the months preceding the December elections, Sunnis campaigned vigorously through voter registration drives and strategy sessions aimed to curb the influence of the new Shiite coalition led by Maliki, the Iraqi National List.<sup>171</sup>

Although this surge in political activity marked an important step toward a democratic transition, the results of the parliamentary elections were sectarian in nature. While both sects participated actively in the elections, limited voter volatility ensured predictable results. The results demonstrated the unlikelihood of Sunni/Shiite unification in a cross-sectarian, nationalist party. In fact, a closer analysis of voting patterns revealed

---

<sup>168</sup> Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone*, 60-72.

<sup>169</sup> Sayej, *The Iraq Papers*, 283.

<sup>170</sup> Cole, Juan R. I. "The Rise of Religious and Ethnic Mass Politics in Iraq." *Religion and Nationalism in Iraq*. Ed. David Little and Donald K. Swearer. Cambridge: President and Fellows of Harvard U, 2006. Print.

<sup>171</sup> Cole, Juan R. I. "Shiite Parties and the Democratic Process in Iraq." *Political Change in the Arab Gulf States: Stuck in Transition*. Ed. Mary Ann Tetreault, Gwenn Okruhlik, and Andrzej Kapiszewski. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2011. Print.

the complete *absence* of cross-sectarian unity.<sup>172</sup> If politics cannot transcend sectarian allegiances, it is unlikely that real, dialectical political discussions and processes can even occur. The structures of statehood, such as constitutions and elections, remain useless in the absence of an Iraqi national identity.

Amidst the elections, sectarian violence continued to increase as the war progressed, and some Shiite clerics began to radicalize. Most religious leaders, however, such as Sistani (leader of the UIA) demanded restraint, self-determination, and democracy; Sistani, in turn, urged Shiites to refrain from retaliation. In the short term, most Shiites actually heeded Sistani's demands, but following a 2006 al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) attack on a historic Shiite shrine in Samarra, more Shiites began to radicalize. The attack marked the official commencement of a sectarian civil war. Shiites responded to the Sunni attack by looting mosques, expelling Sunnis from mixed neighborhoods, and even organizing violent death squads.<sup>173</sup> Still, however, Sistani pressed on in the hopes that appeasement of the American occupiers would guarantee eventual Shiite political rule. Sistani also had faith that the results of the 2005 election would quell violence. Unlike the Sadrist Movement, Sistani's crusade advocated moderate reform, not revolution.<sup>174</sup> And interestingly, Sistani's fatwas were unreligious in nature; instead, the ayatollah repeatedly urged Shiites to vote in elections and partake in peaceful change via the Transitional Administrative Law's representative town councils. Other Shiite groups, such as the Sadrist Movement and SCIRI's Badr Brigade, only contributed to violence in Baghdad.

---

<sup>172</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>173</sup> Baram, *Religious Extremism and Ecumenical Tendencies in Modern Iraqi Shi'ism*, 116.

<sup>174</sup> Pelham, *The Two Stripes of the Arab World: Shia Protestantism and the Sunni Counter Reformation*, 12.

Considering the existence of civil war, infighting, and America's protracted violent campaign, the results of the 2010 election were remarkable. Voting patterns suggested party-oriented politics that centered not on sectarian loyalty but on political personalities.<sup>175</sup> These elections also sought to challenge the results of the 2005 elections, which brought Maliki, an elitist, to power. The four major coalitions that partook in the 2010 elections (Iraqiyya, State of Law, Iraqi National Alliance, and the Kurdistan Alliance) each advanced distinct policy platforms.<sup>176</sup> The results of the election, especially the 91-seat victory of Iraqiyya, a cross-sectarian nationalist party, over Maliki's State of Law, do in fact suggest the beginning dissolution of sectarian voting patterns. The victory of a secular, nationalist party provides a clear contrast to the 2005 elections. Unfortunately, the authoritarian nature of Maliki's government, which still retained a majority, prevented Iraqiyya from affecting meaningful change once in parliament. The bureaucratic machinations of Maliki's government splintered Iraqiyya, and in essence, required the coalition to integrate into government in line with the sectarian formula that had enabled Maliki's rise to power.<sup>177</sup>

Maliki's maneuver halted the process of nation building and the political jungle gym he imposed does not bode well for Iraq's democratic future. His increasingly ineffective government has not only failed to reduce unemployment and provide basic services, but his regime consistently uses sectarian rhetoric to achieve its goals. Maliki's political decisions and policies have only driven deeper the wedge between Sunnis and Shiites. Iraqiyya's cross-sectarian nationalist victory in 2010 has been largely forgotten.

---

<sup>175</sup> Rahimi, Babak. "Iran's Declining Influence in Iraq." *The Washington Quarterly* Winter 2012 (2012): Print.

<sup>176</sup> Fantappie, Contested Consolidation of Power in Iraq, 3.

<sup>177</sup> Dodge, Iraq: From War to a New Authoritarianism, 12.

It remains unlikely that Iraq can evolve as a nation if the government continues to preserve and enforce sectarian divisions.

Today, various Freedom House indicators rank Iraq well below other Middle Eastern countries. In the past few years especially, Iraq's rankings have continued to plummet with the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) and its violence against Shiites, and Christians, Yazidis. The rise of ISIS has also paralleled a spike in sectarian attacks with state-sponsored Shiite militias engaged in open confrontation with Sunnis.<sup>178</sup> Amidst ongoing violence, Iraq held parliamentary elections in April 2014, which reaffirmed Maliki's majority coalition. Ongoing violence, however, did significantly impact the elections, as the country's Sunni minority protested against Shiite power, many of these protests turning violent in Sunni-dominated provinces. Shiites were also discontented with Maliki's authoritarian leadership that had produced immense corruption and mismanagement.<sup>179</sup>

The situation worsened in June 2015 as ISIS captured significant territory in northern Iraq, including Mosul, one of the country's most populous cities. In the north ISIS assumed control over government institutions, enforced a strict interpretation of Islamic law, and began to plan an attack on Baghdad. Maliki buckled following Mosul's capture and resigned. Iraq's new prime minister, Haidar al-Abadi, is generally well supported in parliament, and his regime is significantly less authoritarian than previous governments. Since his ascent to power in 2014, he has strengthened Iraq's relations with

---

<sup>178</sup> "Iraq: Country Report 2015." *Freedom in the World 2015: Discarding Democracy, a Return to the Iron Fist*. Freedom House, 2015. Web.

<sup>179</sup> Freedom House, Iraq: Country Report 2015.

Russia and Iran in an attempt to combat ISIS's increasing militancy.<sup>180</sup> By the end of 2015 ISIS controlled almost a third of Iraqi territory (nearly a fourth of the country's population). The Iraqi security forces, Shiite militias, the peshmerga, homegrown resistance groups, Iranian operatives, and international air forces continue to battle ISIS, but the Islamic group poses a significant and unprecedented military threat to Iraq. In the capital, political violence and repression through terrorism have also emerged in what is generally a violent atmosphere.<sup>181</sup>

Abadi is Iraq's current prime minister and his government has received widespread support. His cabinet has adopted an unwritten power-sharing agreement that promotes equality among the country's various religious and ethnic groups, which has appeased diverse sectors of the population. Nevertheless, the country's corruption index is still very high, and ongoing dishonesty and exploitation remains a major concern for voters. Citizens also voiced concern about freedom of the press, which is sanctified in the constitution, but in practice, the majority of the country's media outlets are not independent of political forces.<sup>182</sup>

Overall, Freedom House ranks Iraq as *Not Free*, giving the country a score of 6 (1 is the best, 7 is the worst) in each of its categories, *Freedom Rating*, *Civil Liberties*, and *Political Rights*. For comparative purposes, Egypt's rankings are slightly better with scores of 5.5, 5, and 6, respectively. The country is also deemed *Not Free*. Lebanon receives significantly better scores, and according to Freedom House the country is

---

<sup>180</sup> "Al-Abadi Praises Iraq-Syria-Russia-Iran Cooperation in Terror Fight." *Tehran Times* 7 Oct. 2015: Print.

<sup>181</sup> Freedom House, Iraq: Country Report 2015.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

overall *Partly Free*. Lebanon's individual scores for *Freedom Rating*, *Civil Liberties*, and *Political Rights* are 4.5, 4, and 5, respectively.<sup>183</sup>

### **Exploratory Conclusions**

Iraq has been unable to create a democratic regime due to a number of conditions. First, the country remains geographically, religiously, and ethnically divided.<sup>184</sup> Although some scholars dispute the notion that Iraq's three provinces are distinct entities, it is certainly the case that historically the divisions among the three provinces also roughly correspond to religious and sectarian divisions. For this reason, it has been significantly harder to integrate the provinces. Further complicating the picture is the presence of a large Kurdish population in the north. As of this writing, nearly 20 percent of Iraq's population is Kurdish, and the fact that Kurds believe that neither the Iraq state or regime is legitimate has prevented their integration. The process of democratization is an arduous one, and the presence of multiple competing factions only complicates and, in Iraq's case, obstructs the development of democracy. The historic disenfranchisement of the Shiite population further hinders the process of democratization because centuries of antagonism cannot be remedied quickly.

Constant intervention from foreign powers has also exacerbated sectarian tensions, in addition to the fact that foreign domination in and of itself has also impeded the formation of a democratic regime. Historically, sectarian relations have intensified during periods of foreign intervention, namely, the formation of the British Mandate

---

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> See Appendix A.

following the First World War, the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the subsequent Iran-Iraq War, and the 2003 United States invasion.<sup>185</sup>

Political cooperation between Sunnis and Shiites (and Kurds) remains a major obstacle toward democratization, especially because the relationship between the two sects is so nuanced. Although Sunni Muslims never constituted a majority in Iraq, both Ottoman and British officials cooperated with Sunnis and offered them privileged positions within the government and various administrative institutions. Colonial officials also actively repressed Shiite groups out of fear that they would hinder the formation of a secular state. Following the colonial period the Sunni population continued this pattern of Shiite repression, intensifying with a protracted period of oppressive Baathist rule from 1963 until 2003. Decades of one-party Baathist rule have also hindered the process of democratization in Iraq. The Baath Party curbed civil liberties and throughout its reign placed strict limits of freedoms of speech, religion, press, expression, and association. These tendencies, though many have been remedied since, leave legacies of authoritarian rule that have ultimately obstructed the formation of democracy. Historically, citizenship guarantees have been either limited or nonexistent. This was especially the case during the latter half of the twentieth century in which Shiites were barred from office. The exclusion of certain individuals from participatory government also resurfaced following the de-Baathification order in 2003 that barred all former Baath members (most of whom were Sunni) from holding public office. Limits on political freedom have disenfranchised

---

<sup>185</sup> Ayatollah Khomeini launched the Iranian Revolution in 1979 in response to the fact that the United States had installed a pro-Western shah. The revolution next door led many Sunnis to believe that Shiites in Iraq would launch a similar revolution to protest Sunni domination. As a result, the ruling Baath Party instituted severe measures to repress the Shiite population, which heightened sectarian tensions.

a number of Iraqi groups, manifesting in low levels of party system institutionalization, political participation, and responsive governance.

For much of its history Iraq has been at the mercy of foreign powers, largely because Iraq possesses significant oil reserves. The long period of foreign domination delayed the process of state creation until the mid-1930s. From the 1930s until 2003 Iraq experienced successive authoritarian regimes that obstructed the process of democratization. After Saddam's regime had been dismantled in 2003, the United States attempted to impose a democratic system.

It did not succeed for two critical reasons. First, a foreign power—the United States—imposed the system, and collected only limited input from Iraqis about the type of system they wanted to implement. Second, Iraq has not had sufficient time to create the bureaucratic structures necessary to serve three distinct groups of people: Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds. Only recently has Iraq been afforded the opportunity to structure its own political regime, and so far it has not been particularly effective.

Finally, the constant threat of violence has also impeded the formation of a stable democracy, especially with the recent emergence of ISIS, which, by the end of 2015, had captured significant Iraqi territory. Internal sectarian violence has also proven debilitating for democracy. In response to both external and internal violence various Iraqi governments have relied extensively on the military and on intrusive surveillance systems. For this reason, the relationship between government officials and the larger populace is mistrustful and antagonistic. Considering these factors, it is unlikely that in the near future a stable democratic system will take root in Iraq, a state burdened by decades of authoritarian rule, foreign intervention, and repressive politics.



## **CHAPTER III**

### **Lebanon: A Failed Consociational Democracy?**

#### **Introduction**

In view of the myriad of challenges Lebanon faces today, most people would find it difficult to accept that in the 1960s Lebanon was referred to as the “Switzerland of the East,” and international tourists viewed its capital, Beirut, as the “Paris of the Middle East.” A thorough analysis of Lebanon’s political, social, and economic structure, how it changed through the centuries, and the impact foreign powers have had on its development, would reveal that today’s skeptics have very good reasons to claim that those perceptions were based on an unsound understanding of the problems the country faced. My principal objective in this chapter is to describe Lebanon’s troubled history and to explain why its leaders have found it so difficult to create a stable consociational democracy. At the same time, however, it is important to recognize that though Lebanon has encountered major problems in its attempts to put in place a stable democratic regime, when compared with other Middle Eastern states it has been the most successful. In my concluding chapter I will attempt to explain why that has been the case.

#### **Pre-Colonial Lebanon: 632 – 1516**

In 632 the caliphs of Medina, the Prophet Muhammad’s successors, authorized the conquest of Syria. By 641 the invading forces had completely driven the Byzantines from the territory. Until the fourteenth century, Lebanon, which was part of pre-modern Syria, was ruled by a series of Islamic empires, beginning with the Umayyad caliphate twenty years after the territory’s initial conquering.

The Umayyads (661-750), with their capital in Damascus, controlled a massive swath of territory that stretched from the outer portion of Central Asia to North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula. The Islamic caliphate remained tolerant of Christians, in large part because they constituted the empire's principal tax base.<sup>1</sup> Under the Umayyads the Arabic language flourished, and soon even most of Mount Lebanon's Christians spoke Arabic.<sup>2</sup> The Umayyads ruled until 750 when the dynasty was replaced by the Abbasid caliphate (750-1258) centered in Baghdad. Although the Abbasids controlled almost as much territory as the previous dynasts, their hold on power began to deteriorate in the 800s, which enabled the creation of independent principalities in the more distant parts of the empire. Two of such principalities exerted control over Syria – the Tulunid and Ikhshidid states, and the Hamdanid and Mirdasid domains.<sup>3</sup>

Additionally, around the same period a sectarian geography that would persist throughout most of Lebanon's history cemented.<sup>4</sup> The majority of the country's Christians, most of whom identified as Maronite, settled to the north of the Beirut River. Most Sunni Muslims resided around the central ports of Sidon, Beirut, and Tripoli. A small number of Christians and Jews also dwelled in the port areas. The Biqa, in the eastern part of the country, was home to a mixture of Christians and Muslims (both Sunnis and Shiites), and most of the country's Shiites resided south of Sidon, and were heavily concentrated in Tyre.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Harris, William. *Lebanon: A History, 600 - 2011*. Reprint Edition ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2014. Print. *Studies in Middle Eastern History*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 62.

<sup>3</sup> Salibi, Kamal. *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*. Reprint Edition ed. Berkeley: U of California, 1990. Print.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix B for a present-day map of Lebanon by sect.

<sup>5</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 68.

As the Abbasid caliphate continued to deteriorate, Byzantine influence began to resurface. This development bolstered the power of Shiites who defended Lebanon's Islamic character most ardently. As a result, the Shiite population gained legitimacy and prestige among Lebanon's residents, and especially among Sunnis. Abbasid and Byzantine infighting also produced the Druze religion, which was an offshoot of the Ismaili branch of Shiite Islam.<sup>6</sup>

The Fatimid caliphate was established in Cairo in 973. The new dynasty exerted control over Syria and represented the Shiite and Ismaili sect of Islam. Under the Fatimids, Lebanon's coastal ports gained ascendancy, a development that conferred a measure of autonomy to the local Islamic ruling families, and as a result bolstered the country's role in Mediterranean trade. Similarly, the continued influence of the Byzantines had a positive economic effect as markets expanded, thus increasing the financial security of many Lebanese.<sup>7</sup>

In 1058, the Sunni Seljuk sultanate was established in Isfahan, but when the French Crusades began in 1099, the Europeans overwhelmed the power of the Seljuks. The French possessed a strategic interest in Mount Lebanon, home to a patchwork of Maronites, Druzes, and Twelver Shiites. Nevertheless, the Crusaders tolerated the presence of multiple different religious groups, and under the French, the mountain communities continued to consolidate because very few Europeans actually settled in the mountain region. The opposite occurred in the coastal cities of Tripoli, Beirut, and Tyre where the Crusaders invaded and launched multiple violent attacks against Muslims.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 73.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 75.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 77-80.

**Analysis.** During Lebanon's pre-colonial period, a number of significant transformations took place. Following the Arab Conquest in 636, the Arabic language flourished and within four decades most of the country's Christians spoke the language of their conquerors. Although Arabic became the predominant language in Lebanon, the Arab leaders did not use force to convert the native Christians to Islam because Christians composed the largest potential tax base. Religious persecution was poor economics.

A number of different caliphates ruled Lebanon until the Ottoman period, but most of these empires controlled vast swaths of territory that enabled the formation of principalities largely independent from the empire's capital. Consistent decentralization solidified the territory's sectarian geography because there was no unifying power that could break down different religious allegiances. Lebanon's current sectarian geographic makeup resembles closely what it did in the pre-colonial period—most Christians lived north of the Beirut River, Sunni Muslims were concentrated in the port cities, and Shiite Muslims resided south of Sidon. Although there was some variation in this divide, the heaviest concentrations of each religious grouping adhered to specific geographic locations across the country. Events toward the end of the pre-colonial period produced another significant religious grouping that would become essential to the future of the country's politics: Druzes.

The Fatimid caliphate, which ruled until the Crusades, continued the pattern of decentralization that enabled the rise of local autonomous ruling families, especially in the port cities. Autonomy permitted select families to participate in Mediterranean trade, which in turn, increased the financial security of many inhabitants. Centuries of religious toleration came to a grinding halt following attacks by the French Crusaders in Tripoli,

Beirut, and Tyre. The Christian French persecuted Muslims, and drove many away from the financially lucrative port cities. For this reason, a number of Muslims settled in Mount Lebanon, which was of less strategic interest to France. The French Crusades also permitted the early consolidation of Mount Lebanon as a distinct Lebanese community.

### **Ottoman Lebanon: 1516 – 1923**

In 1250, the Sunni Mamluks, Turkish slave soldiers, established power in Cairo, and ushered in a period of declining French influence across the Middle East, but particularly in the Levant. Eleven years later Damascus and Egypt were reunified under the Mamluks, and they ruled until the Ottoman takeover in 1516.<sup>9</sup>

During their tenure the Mamluks implemented several changes. They sought to subvert the different religious and ethnic communities, and by the fourteenth century, their actions had nearly eradicated the Ismaili population. In addition, the Mamluks worked to reinstate Sunni preeminence in the port cities of Tripoli, Beirut, and Sidon. This policy, however, had little effect on the mountain communities that had achieved substantial consolidation under French influence during the Crusades. Of no less significance, the Mamluks also implemented an administrative bureaucracy throughout Mount Lebanon, the port cities, and Damascus.<sup>10</sup>

As the tax based declined, the power of the Mamluks began to diminish. This change in fortune gave local chiefs more autonomy and financial mobility. To replace lost tax revenue, the Mamluks strengthened their long-distance trade network, which in turn increased the autonomy of local Druze lords, Sunni scholars, Shiite clerics, and the

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 92-95.

Maronite Church. The power of the Mamluks continued to wane, and in 1516 the Ottoman Sultan, Selim the Grim, defeated the Mamluk army and established a strict Sunni Islamic empire in the Levant.<sup>11</sup>

The territory comprising modern-day Lebanon was organized as the Emirate of Mount Lebanon, an autonomous province of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans exerted only nominal control, conferring significant administrative power to local chiefs through the *iqta* system or *iltizam*, which allotted tax-farmers sovereignty in Mount Lebanon.<sup>12</sup> These chiefs enjoyed a large degree of autonomy, and in exchange they had to provide the Ottoman Porte with money, supplies, and soldiers. The chiefs were also required to maintain order within their regions.<sup>13</sup>

From the moment they assumed authority, Ottoman officials demonstrated their prejudice toward Shiites and Druzes.<sup>14</sup> The Ottomans established the millet system, which divided inhabitants along religious and sectarian lines.<sup>15</sup> The system was structured into a two-tiered hierarchy that favored Sunni Muslims first, and Shiites, Christians, and Jews second.<sup>16</sup> Although Christians and Jews were given religious freedoms and various other protections, they were barred from both military and public service.<sup>17</sup> There existed significant de facto discrimination as well, as the Sunni ruling officials at the time actively repressed heterodox interpretations of Islam through heavy taxation. These measures engendered sectarian tensions, and Druzes of the Emirate refused to cooperate

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 101-112.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Traboulsi, Fawwaz. *A History of Modern Lebanon*. Second ed. Chicago: Pluto, 2012. Print.

<sup>14</sup> At time of Ottoman conquest the communal breakdown was as follows: 38 percent Shia, 29 percent Sunni, 17 percent Christian, and 13 percent Druze.

<sup>15</sup> Traboulsi, A History of Modern Lebanon, 43.

<sup>16</sup> The peasantry composed the largest portion of the Christian population.

<sup>17</sup> Traboulsi, A History of Modern Lebanon, 5.

and incited rebellions that would persist throughout the sixteenth century. Neither Shiites nor the country's Christian population, however, rebelled.<sup>18</sup>

The Ottoman system in the Emirate was divided between ranking officials and commoners or peasants. The majority of the ranking officials acquired their posts through hereditary ties. Once in office, most incumbents exploited their authority through political and judicial manipulation and extortion. Similarly, the taxation system afforded a heavy hand to those in office, which allowed most ranking officials to usurp tax money from commoners and peasants. There also existed a power conflict between the local ruling officials and the central authorities in Istanbul, as many of the local rulers controlled important ports, trades routes, and waterways, and would use this to their advantage to withhold taxes and duties to the Ottoman Porte. This system proved to be incredibly divisive and produced widespread independence movements, many of which were both encouraged and aided by Europe.<sup>19</sup>

Europe gained a foothold in the region under Druze Emir, Fakhr al-Din II, who, throughout his reign, strengthened the region's ties with Italy and the ruling Medici family of Tuscany. Fakhr permitted the family to intervene in the region's affairs in exchange for arms and ammunition. Fakhr's rule remained tenuous as periods of rebellion engulfed Mount Lebanon, but he managed to give the mountain's economy a boost through the introduction of silk production. The industry prompted a wave of urbanization, as Maronite peasants migrated from the north to the more central Druze regions to cultivate silk. As urbanization increased, the Druze leaders began to expel Shiites from the surrounding villages in order to ensure the continued migration of

---

<sup>18</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 113.

<sup>19</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 6.

Christian peasants to the cities. Silk production and the subsequent urban migration of large numbers of Christians changed the long-term sectarian makeup of the mountain, and eventually, Christians would come to outnumber Druzes.<sup>20</sup>

Lebanon underwent a period of repression and centralization under a new Sunni emir, Bashir Shihab. His policies spawned a number of Druze-initiated rebellions, including the peasant tax revolt of 1820, in which Christians, Sunnis, Shiites, and Druzes united to defend the region against the emir's repressive policies. Rebellions against Shihab and the new ecumenism among the country's different sects challenged his antiquated policies and modes of patronage. In order to overcome the powerful Druze lords that were provoking these rebellions, Shihab attempted an alliance with the mountain's Christian population. In 1825 he converted to Christianity, exiled Druze leaders, and strengthened the country's ties to the Maronite Church.<sup>21</sup>

Six years following the disruptive rebellions, Lebanon came under tenuous Egyptian rule after Muhammad Ali commanded his son, Ibrahim, to invade Syria. Ibrahim stationed his soldiers in key port cities and soon the Ottoman Porte recognized him as ruler of Syria. A Druze-led revolt erupted in 1838, and Ibrahim called on his Christian supporters to spearhead a counterattack against the insurgents. The Druzes were swiftly defeated, and the rebellion marked the country's first purely sectarian armed conflict. In order to prevent another revolt, Ibrahim instituted a number of repressive policies, such as forced labor, conscription, and excessively high taxes. Yet, these measures had the opposite intended effect. They provoked even more rebellions across northern Palestine, Tripoli, and Syria. Ibrahim's paranoia increased, and out of fear that

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 3-7.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 11-13.



Christians would join Druzes in a rebellion against his regime, he demanded that Christians turn in their arms. This demand, however, triggered yet another rebellion. A few years later, in 1840, the mountain's inhabitants organized a cross-sectarian coalition to overthrow the Egyptians and demand a reduction in taxes, administrative reform, and political/religious representation in the *diwan*. The coalition launched a revolt but received no support from the Maronite church, and without sufficient arms it was defeated in the first round of fighting. After this preliminary defeat, the mountain coalition received international support. British, American, and Ottoman troops landed in Beirut and began to bombard the region, hastening the end of Egyptian rule in Syria. The final Egyptian troops withdrew in October 1840.<sup>22</sup>

After the official departure of the Egyptians, Druze lords returned from exile and attempted to regain dominance over their Christian counterparts. This action ushered in another period of rebellion. The Ottoman Porte and the British gave their support to the Druze population, and defended their property rights. Yet, the mountain's Christian population continued to organize under Patriarch Hubaysh, and in a symbolic attempt at reconciliation, reaffirmed its loyalty to the Ottoman Sultan.<sup>23</sup>

The region's Christian population continued to thwart the efforts of the Druze lords. In response, a coalition of Druzes attacked the Christian leader, Bashir III in 1841. Christians came to Bashir's defense, but the armed Druze population continued to rally, and eventually the leadership of the Christian army splintered. Although the rebellion

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 12-15.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 13-14.

ended inconclusively, it signaled the death of the emirate.<sup>24</sup> A year later the Ottoman Porte appointed Umar Pasha as governor of Mount Lebanon.

During this same period, the Ottoman Empire became active in the world market, and the effects of economic growth reverberated throughout Mount Lebanon. However, the economic transformation also helped solidify the uneven patterns of growth and development between Lebanon's Druze and Maronite communities. During this same period, the country's sectarian geography hardened, with Maronites expanding toward the Druze south. The country's Maronite Christians retained a strong peasant and artisan base, while the Druze population exerted its power through the military and various tribal sheikhs. This social asymmetry had a detrimental effect on the country's Christian population, as the powerful Druze lords imposed a heavy tax burden on Christians. A significant portion of this tax revenue was directed toward the granting of privileges and immunities for the Druze population.<sup>25</sup>

Repression against Mount Lebanon's Christian inhabitants persisted, but they found ways to adapt. In Druze-dominated regions, Christians developed the *mudabbir*, an intellectual and administrative body that served as a mechanism of social mobility. The *mudabbir* produced numerous intellectuals and leaders, which, along with the improved economic conditions, aided in the formation of a Christian middle class. The Christian population also benefited from increased commercialization, which fostered economic differentiation and created a burgeoning financial industry. Commercialization also

---

<sup>24</sup> The death of the emirate also spelled the end of the Druze-dominated tax farming system, and subsequently dismantled Druze political supremacy over Mount Lebanon.

<sup>25</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 119.

produced a regional trade network that connected Mount Lebanon to Palestine and Syria.<sup>26</sup>

Economic changes resulted in a demographic shift, as Christians began to migrate south toward important commercial villages and routes. Prosperous conditions engendered a population boom among Christians, which would ultimately produce another demographic shift toward a Maronite majority.<sup>27</sup> Increased authority allowed the Maronite Church to begin exerting a strong influence on Mount Lebanon's political scene. However, economic success and political authority garnered the interest of the Europeans, who quickly intervened to exploit Lebanon's nascent economy. Their influence ultimately slowed the growth of both silk production and local industry, as they flooded Lebanon's markets with British goods.<sup>28</sup>

In 1843, Mount Lebanon was divided into two administrative regions under the *qa'im maqamiya*. The idea for the division emerged in Europe as a solution to the continuous fighting between Christians and Druzes. Although both religious contingencies rejected the country's division, the European powers implemented the divide nonetheless. The *qa'im maqamiya* only exacerbated the fighting, as the Druze population claimed that its dominion extended throughout all of Mount Lebanon. Christians, on the other hand, demanded the return of the Shihabi principality.<sup>29</sup>

The divide produced a deadlock that spawned even more violence regarding the proper ethnic and religious identity of the mountain. Securing authority over the mountain proved especially important for the country's Druze population, which was

---

<sup>26</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 19.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>29</sup> Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 11-15.

now a numerical minority (even in the Druze administrative unit Maronites constituted a majority).<sup>30</sup> Fighting between Christians and Druzes continued until the Ottomans intervened in 1845. Hostilities ceased and the Ottomans declared an end to European intervention in Mount Lebanon. Seven years later, in 1852, Druzes launched a revolt against the Ottomans, and across the country the financial and social position of all inhabitants started to decline slowly.<sup>31</sup> Continued rebellion also hampered the country's economy, especially because a wave of European industrial products had once again flooded Syria's markets.<sup>32</sup> In response to the economic downturn, in 1858 the Ottomans imposed the land code, which implemented a peasant-based market economy that would in theory maximize tax revenue. However, the land code required land registration, which only exacerbated sectarian conflict in Mount Lebanon as both Christians and Druzes fought for the same land titles.<sup>33</sup>

That same year a revolt erupted on Christmas Eve, as commoners demonstrated against taxes and high rents in Kisrawan. Hostilities persisted until they exploded in 1860, with both Christians and Druzes carrying out lethal acts of violence against each other. Anti-Christian riots in Damascus proved the most deadly with the massacre of some 25,000 Christians in the span of three days.<sup>34</sup> Sectarian violence continued and the European powers intervened. In August 1860 France sent 6,000 troops to Lebanon, and the army was tasked with building an autonomous Christian district in Mount Lebanon. Britain, which also had strategic interests in the country, defended the unity of the country and refused to aid in the creation of separate sectarian enclaves. After much of

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>31</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 27.

<sup>32</sup> Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 16.

<sup>33</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 32.

<sup>34</sup> Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 16

the fighting had ceased, an international commission composed of British, French, Prussian, Russian, and Austrian delegates convened in Beirut to determine Mount Lebanon's political, economic, and social status. The outcome of the convention was the *Reglement Organique* of 1861, which established Mount Lebanon as an administrative region, or *mutasarrifate*, of the Ottoman Empire. In practice, this designation meant that a Christian Ottoman administrator, who had to be approved by both the European powers and Istanbul, would wield power in Mount Lebanon.<sup>35</sup>

The *mutasarrifate* granted Mount Lebanon limited autonomy within the larger Ottoman Empire, divided the territory into seven districts, and created a twelve-member, consociational, elected Administrative Council. Initially, the councilors were equally divided between Christians and Muslims, with two of each for the majoritarian sects, but it was soon revised to give Christians a seven-to-five majority.<sup>36</sup>

By this point, Christians in Mount Lebanon commanded a hefty majority. Under the *mutasarrifate* Mount Lebanon became a monoculture and exported silk in massive quantities, but at the same time the region incurred massive deficits, as most crop economies generally do. Population growth also hampered the country's economy, and poor conditions drove many young inhabitants out of the country. In fact, between 1860 and the onset of the First World War in 1914, nearly one third of Mount Lebanon's residents emigrated. Although a significant number of Lebanese opted to leave the country, the Christian majority continued to establish itself in the more lucrative sectors of the economy. The shrinking Druze population was thus relegated to agriculture and

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 16-19.

<sup>36</sup> Traboulsi, A History of Modern Lebanon, 43-44.

artisanal production. The two-vote majority of Christians in the Administrative Council also contributed to the political marginalization of the Druze population.<sup>37</sup>

An increasingly foreign-dominated economy and continued emigration produced in Lebanon a new social force: nationalism. This brand of nationalism was reformist in nature, and its advocates controlled the Administrative Council. They criticized high taxes, demanded greater economic support from Istanbul and financial autonomy, and advocated an independent Mount Lebanon. The last demand intensified after the Ottomans were defeated during a war against the Russians in 1877.<sup>38</sup>

By the time the war with Russia had ended, Europe's principal actors, mindful that the power of the Ottoman Empire had been declining steadily for a long time, had already determined what would become of the empire following its inevitable disintegration.<sup>39</sup> Although reformists exerted power in Mount Lebanon, the economic conditions continued to deteriorate, as sericulture revenue declined and a shrunken tax base (due to emigration) generated less and less income for the country. In response, the Administrative Council once again demanded increased economic support from Istanbul. The Ottomans were forced to make a number of concessions to the nationalists to secure their loyalty, as the British and French continued to encroach into Syria. The concessions, manifested in the Protocol of December 1912, which widened the electoral base and allowed members of the Administrative Council more autonomy over Mount Lebanon's fiscal affairs. The reforms, however, lost their relevance when the Ottoman Empire sided with Germany and entered the First World War in November 1914. The Ottomans

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>38</sup> Shaw, Stanford J. "History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey." *Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey 1808–1975*. Ed. Kural Ezel Shaw. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977. Print.

<sup>39</sup> Traboulsi, A History of Modern Lebanon, 50.

abolished the autonomous status of Mount Lebanon and put the country under emergency rule, which would remain in place until 1916.<sup>40</sup>

In 1915, France and Britain began negotiations to determine what would become of the Ottoman Empire following its predicted collapse. The resultant arrangement was the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which stipulated that France would establish an administration in the Middle East, west of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo.<sup>41</sup> The agreement extended Britain the right to create its own administration in Mesopotamia. The territory in between was divided equally into French and British spheres of influence.<sup>42</sup> From this agreement the French gained hegemony in the Levant, and established a ruling post in Beirut. This system produced a highly decentralized Arab state, which prompted calls for independence, especially from within Mount Lebanon. Although France now had a stake in the region, the Ottoman Empire continued to function, but utilized highly repressive tactics to secure its power. The war and an Allied blockade only worsened the conditions in Mount Lebanon, and as a result, between 1915 and 1918, nearly half of the mountain's population had died.<sup>43</sup>

**Analysis.** The Mamluks, who came to power after the Crusades, instituted the territory's first administrative bureaucracy and aimed to establish Sunni preeminence. However, their decision to engage in religious persecution alienated large portions of the population, which in turn diminished their tax collecting capacity. As a result, revenues remained limited throughout the early Mamluk era. In an effort to regain lost proceeds,

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 71-72.

<sup>41</sup> Rogan, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East into the Modern State System*, 27.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 28.

<sup>43</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 116.

the Mamluks established a long-distance trade network that spanned across the entirety of the territory. The network benefited each of Lebanon's various religious sects because it increased their autonomy and financial power. By this point, Mamluk authority was largely nonexistent, thus enabling the Ottomans to overpower the Mamluks and install a Sunni Islamic empire in the Levant.<sup>44</sup>

The change in leadership did not diminish the autonomy of the local rulers. The one major change that the Ottomans imposed was the creation of the *iltizam* system, which granted formal and legal autonomy to farmers in Mount Lebanon. Although the Lebanese had grown accustomed to independence in the pre-colonial period, such independence was usually the result of structural deficiencies in the ruling empires, not a conscious choice to grant sovereignty. The Ottoman *iltizam* was the first system to intentionally and legally confer a large degree of independence to its subjects. However, the absence of a visible central power heightened sectarian tensions, which had already been brewing due to the imposition of the millet system.<sup>45</sup>

In theory, the system was devised to allow for religious pluralism. It granted separate legal courts under which different confessional communities could practice self-rule. However, the millet system triggered sectarianism for two reasons: (1) the Ottomans had devised the scheme to favor Sunnis and undermine Shiites and Druzes, and (2) such a structure deepened the division of inhabitants along sectarian lines. Unsurprisingly, violent battles over jurisdiction ensued with different communities laying claim to authority and power. In many ways, the millet system was also incompatible with

---

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 82-100.

<sup>45</sup> Traboulsi, A History of Modern Lebanon, 11-20.



Ottoman ruling practices. For instance, although Christians and Jews were allowed a measure of self-rule, they were barred from the military and public service.<sup>46</sup>

The Ottoman administrative system was highly deficient as well. The strict division (and widening gap) between ranking officials and commoners only spawned hostility because it ensured that the natives had no say in government policy. The absence of representative institutions became increasingly evident when Ottoman officials began to engage in economic exploitation, extortion, and other despotic practices. Autocratic rule produced a shift in the territory's demographics. Various independence movements, sparked by strict Ottoman control, garnered the interest of European countries. In exchange for a Lebanese foothold, Italy, for instance granted financial support and industrial tutelage. The result boosted the economic power of the territory's urban centers, which in turn, prompted massive waves of urbanization. Druzes then partnered with Maronite Christians to expel unproductive Shiites from the urban areas. The brief association between the two sects ultimately altered the sectarian makeup of Mount Lebanon and its surrounding communities, which had a critical impact on the process of democratization.<sup>47</sup>

Cyclical processes of centralization and repression marked the next couple decades, and the most interesting feature of this period was cross-sectarian solidarity against brutal rule. Cross-sectarian coalitions demanded administrative reform and political representation in the Ottoman councils. Solidarity between the sects, however, did not last and the instability of the Ottoman administration only provoked another series of rebellions. Although violent rebellions raged across the territory, the Ottomans

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 43-44.

<sup>47</sup> Harris, Lebanon: A History, 600-2011, 116-120.

made no effort toward reconciliation, and instead focused their attention on international markets. In its attempt to push Lebanon to join the world markets, the Ottoman Empire promoted policies that cemented a social asymmetry that aligned with the territory's sectarian division. The empire's economic policies undercut Christians, whose partnership with Druzes years prior had solidified the role of Christians as peasants and artisans. Druzes, on the other hand, began to exert authority through paramilitary and tribal structures of power. The hierarchy that had developed decades earlier gave the Druze population significant control over taxation, which in turn, solidified their financial ascendancy.<sup>48</sup>

Although the Druze population maintained financial ascendancy, Maronites still constituted an increasingly large portion of the population. As a result, they were able to organize through intellectual circles that facilitated social mobility. International conditions, such as increased commercialization across Europe and the Middle East, gave rise to a Christian middle class that utilized intellectual advancement to promote economic development. Augmented Christian authority produced intense resentment among the Druze population, and resumption in rebellious activity gave the European powers the justification they needed to intervene and reap the benefits of Lebanon's economic growth.<sup>49</sup>

Once firmly established in the territory, the European powers exercised their authority through the creation of a new administrative apparatus: the *qa'im maqamiya*. This system divided Mount Lebanon into two administrative regions with the intent of subduing religious aggression. The division did not engender the desired results; instead

---

<sup>48</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 74.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*, 75-80.

it produced contests for authority between Druzes and Christians and deepened the wedge. Both Christians and Druzes launched violent attacks that resulted in almost 13,000 casualties. The Europeans, who had not learned their lesson from the disastrous consequences of the *qa'im maqamiya*, intervened again. An international commission met to determine the political, economic, and social status of Mount Lebanon, and its findings were issued in the *Reglement Organique* of 1861. This new system abolished the mountain's two administrative regions in exchange for one single administrative region under Ottoman authority. The Christian population boom of a few years prior ensured that the administrator of this new region would be Christian.<sup>50</sup>

Although Druzes opposed Christian leadership, the new system provided for a representative body, the first of its kind that would actually wield legitimate political power. Predictably, the twelve-member elected Administrative Council was consociational in nature, which meant that Christians were given a seven-to-five majority. The objectives of the Administrative Council were, first, to free the country from European control and, second, to gain independence from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>51</sup>

In a sense the Administrative Council represented Lebanon's first organized nationalist movement. The nationalists demanded lower taxes, financial autonomy, and spoke vehemently about an independent Mount Lebanon. At the same time, the decline of the Ottoman Empire throughout the latter half of the 1800s slowed Lebanon's process toward independence because it gave European powers a justification to intervene. And once entrenched, the Europeans were unwilling to relinquish control of such a strategic area. In order to secure the goodwill of the Administrative Council in the face of

---

<sup>50</sup> Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, 11-15.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 12-16.

European pressure, the Ottomans conceded financial autonomy to the body in 1912. These reforms, however, came to naught two years later when the Ottoman Empire became entangled in the First World War and pledged allegiance to the Central Powers. The Ottomans usurped total power from the Administrative Council and instituted emergency rule.<sup>52</sup>

The Ottoman era represented a constant, multileveled tug-of-war primarily between Christians and Druzes, the Ottomans and Europeans, local ruling officials and Istanbul, and natives and the varying colonial authority. For this reason, violent rebellion was a constant feature of life during this period. Furthermore, the religious and socioeconomic antagonisms that had emerged during the pre-colonial period continued to define social and political life. The few representative institutions installed during the Ottoman period were weak, and those that were granted significant authority were consociational in nature, which tended to produce the calamitous combination of sectarian antagonism and political deadlock. The weakness of the Ottoman Empire also ensured early European influence, which proved disastrous because the Europeans only encouraged sectarian conflict through their policies and self-serving “reforms.”

### **French Lebanon: 1923 – 1943**

With France’s involvement legally sanctioned, its allies in Lebanon, the Maronites, began to reassert themselves throughout the new state, and campaigned against the larger Arab rebellion occurring across the Middle East. Specifically, Maronites feared that the establishment of a pan-Arab, Muslim state would weaken their stand within Lebanon. The Maronite patriarch sought support from the sultan, and in May

---

<sup>52</sup> Rogan, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East into the Modern State System*, 26.

1917, the French government appointed Francois George-Picot, an author of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, as high commissioner for the northern Levant.

Picot and the Lebanese Christians inaugurated a network of coordination called the *Comite Central Syrien*, which was designed to preserve Maronite influence in Lebanon.<sup>53</sup> After the official collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918, the French established suzerainty over the entire coast and reinstated the *mutasarrifate*. These measures received widespread support from Maronites, but a large faction of non-Christians continued to demand an Arab kingdom under King Faisal. The same debate emerged in the Administrative Council. Both non-Christians and Maronites, however, pursued the same objective—the formation of an autonomous Greater Lebanon. The alliance between the French and the Maronites continued to gain in strength, especially in response to the ongoing American King-Crane Commission that began in 1919. Although the commission's findings were not released until 1922—after wartime partition plans had been formalized—speculations abounded, and the Maronite fear that a Muslim state would be formed regained strength.<sup>54</sup>

The existence of the commission had a galvanizing effect on Arab nationalism, as most Sunnis, Shiites, Druzes, and even Orthodox Christians in Beirut, Tripoli, and Sidon protested against French presence. The French did not take any major remedial measures, mainly because much of their attention was directed toward keeping both the British and

---

<sup>53</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 202.

<sup>54</sup> King and Crane found that, after dozens of interviews with Syrians, Iraqis, and Palestinians, most Arabs desired full independence. The ultimate report, however, recommended fixed-term mandates under either American or British authority (the commission openly denied that the French should have any involvement in the region). The commission also recommended that Syria be established as a single monarchy under Faisal, with Lebanon as a near-autonomous province within the larger Syrian state. Finally, the report called for substantial limits on Zionist settlement in Palestine, essentially overturning both the Balfour Declaration and the Sykes-Picot Agreement (See: Rogan, *The Emergence of the Middle East onto the Modern State System*, 31.)

Zionists out of Beirut, as Britain had begun to implement the provision of the Balfour Declaration that promised a Jewish homeland in Palestine.<sup>55</sup>

French influence in the Levant was formalized into a League of Nations Mandate in 1920 at the San Remo Conference. Through the Mandate the French were required to offer tutelage, and prepare Arabs in the Levant for self-rule. By this point in time however the French had lost favor with the Levant's Maronite population, and the majority of the representatives in the Administrative Council favored a deal with Faisal and the Arab nationalists. A few months later in September, the high commission approved the establishment of a unitary Greater Lebanon. The formation of the new state significantly altered the country's communal composition.<sup>56</sup>

In the new territory, non-Christians commanded a 65 percent majority. In Mount Lebanon specifically the overall Christian majority declined from 80 percent to 55 percent.<sup>57</sup> The Maronites remained the largest community within Mount Lebanon but the proportion was almost halved. On the other hand, the overall Sunni population increased from 3.5 percent to 20.5 percent, and the Shiite population from 5.6 percent to 17.2 percent. The composition of the Administrative Council changed accordingly, but the body still retained its consociational framework. In 1920 the council consisted of ten Christians and seven Muslims (including Druzes), and was tasked with overseeing Greater Lebanon's domestic affairs and budget.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 203-204.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Although the alteration of borders impacted the Maronite population, Maronite growth in the region had already been decreasing due to WWI's negative effects on Mount Lebanon and widespread famine and plague.

<sup>58</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 205.

Although the Sunni population benefited from the creation of Greater Lebanon, the sect still desired further annexations, considering that Maronites would likely control the representative institutions for the next few decades. In order to achieve greater representation, Sunnis liaised with both Shiites and Druzes, which caught the attention of the French. In response, the French attempted to appease Muslims by reserving slots for Sunnis in the various representative councils of the larger Administrative Council. The Sunnis acquiesced.<sup>59</sup>

Shiites also secured a license to operate their religious law under the state umbrella. Shiite courts provided the sect with a shared apparatus to conduct their affairs without infringement by either Sunnis or Christians. Increased Shiite activism also drove many pastoral Shiites to Beirut, and throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Shiite presence in the capital expanded.<sup>60</sup>

The implementation of the French Mandate split the Lebanese Druze population between those who accepted the state of Greater Lebanon—and by default—French tutelage, and those who desired both different borders and complete independence from France. The Druze population that rejected Greater Lebanon rebelled against Christians, for they viewed them as the major beneficiaries of the new state.<sup>61</sup>

In 1922, the French established a new electoral system for the *mutassarifate* and replaced the Administrative Council with the thirty-six member Representative Council. The new system retained the consociational framework of Lebanese politics, but incorporated two-stage elections, universal male suffrage, and six multimember communal constituencies. A census, conducted in 1921, determined that Christians would

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 207.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 207-208.

receive seventeen seats in the Representative Council and Muslims (including Druzes) would receive thirteen.<sup>62</sup>

The new system of representation required the expansion of public education. Private, Ottoman-run schools had existed since the late nineteenth century but for the most part these schools had served only Christians and members of the Muslim elite. The French established a limited number of public elementary and secondary schools, but they were poorly funded compared to the private schools. The French language dominated the education in both private and public schools, as most business during this period was conducted in French, not in Arabic. The French also extended their influence past education. They established mixed courts where French judges presided. This action in turn infused elements of French law into the Lebanese judiciary.<sup>63</sup>

In 1922, the League of Nations approved the French Mandate, separated Lebanon from Syria, and ordered France to develop a constitution for Lebanese self-rule. The Representative Council created a twelve-member committee to oversee the drafting of the constitution.<sup>64</sup> The drafting committee drew its inspiration from the French Constitution of 1875, a document that established in France a republic with executive power split between a president and a premier, a two-chamber legislature, and multi-communal representation. Although the new system would certainly take on a consociational form, the drafters avoided the enumeration of specific communal allocations within the constitution.<sup>65</sup> The resultant political system was quasi-democratic in theory, but the Lebanese elite emerged as the structure's major beneficiaries, as they used their financial

---

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 209.

<sup>64</sup> The leaders of the drafting committee were non-Maronite Christians.

<sup>65</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 210.



power to implement a lucrative patronage system. Commercial Christian families in Beirut also directed significant funds to the politicians that would safeguard their wealth. In response, the constitution was altered in 1927 to augment the role of the president. This alteration also abolished the senate. Regardless, the patronage system persisted, and as a result, the elite handpicked most government employees.<sup>66</sup>

The political and economic clout of Maronites diminished significantly after the country conducted a second census in 1932. The survey revealed only a bare Christian majority, and although Maronites remained the largest community, their numbers had decreased by almost five percent, a considerable reduction within a ten-year period. The Druze population had also declined, slipping below seven percent. On the other hand, the Muslim population continued to rise, with both the Sunni and Shiite population each increasing by two percentage points. By the early 1930s, the trend toward a Muslim majority in Lebanon was obvious.<sup>67</sup>

The 1929 Great Depression had a significant impact on Lebanon's fledgling economy, which had already been in a tenuous state since the First World War.<sup>68</sup> Both the war and the Great Depression had also devastated the French economy and as a result, the French were not in a position to offer Lebanon significant financial support. Consequently, an economic divide emerged, as the French concentrated what support they could offer in Beirut. Mount Lebanon received almost no economic assistance from

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 211.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 212.

<sup>68</sup> The First World War had destroyed the sericulture industry in Mount Lebanon and the economic dynamism of the port cities.

France during this period, but was able to subsist on remittances from emigrants and a privileged tax status granted by the *mutasarrifate*.<sup>69</sup>

However, as the Great Depression persisted, conditions in Lebanon worsened. France's economy continued to deteriorate, and thus its financial support declined, which in turn provoked hostility from all Arabs in Lebanon. Remittance income in the mountain also shrank, both trade and tourism grinded to a halt, and the inflated bureaucracy absorbed any excess money. Laborers, students, and the unemployed mounted major strikes that devolved into violence. Economic woe also produced the country's first communist party in 1933. An effort to reform the political system and bureaucracy was made with the appointment of a new high commissioner that same year. The reforms, however, proved to be ineffective, as the elite classes continued the practice of "vote buying."<sup>70</sup>

The ineffectiveness of French tutelage helped reaffirm the demand for independence, especially after the passage of a pre-independence treaty in Syria in 1936. That same year a coalition in Lebanon secured a similar Franco-Lebanese Treaty, which promised both independence and membership in the League of Nations within three years.<sup>71</sup> As a result, the high commission restored the constitution. The restoration of the constitution also set the precedent of a Maronite president and a Sunni premier, a practice that is still in place as of this writing. The renewal of political activities paralleled Lebanon's economic recovery. Disastrous conditions worldwide prompted many emigrants to return to Lebanon, and many of whom returned with industrial prowess. As a result, the country experienced a massive industrial expansion in 1935. Along the coast,

---

<sup>69</sup> Harris, Lebanon: A History, 600-2011, 214.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 215-216.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 216.

the French invested heavily in infrastructure, and Lebanon developed a diversified line of manufactured products. In the 1930s, the country's economy resembled a "Singapore-style mixed economy."<sup>72</sup>

The country's economic recovery stalled in the late 1930s, as the shadow of the Second World War approached. In 1939, following the outbreak of war, both the Franco-Lebanese Treaty and the constitution were suspended. One year later, Nazi Germany captured France, and the Allied Powers, fearing Nazi activity in the French Levant, imposed a blockade on Lebanon and Syria. On June 8, 1941 the British invaded both Lebanon and Syria, bombarded Vichy posts, and secured a French surrender one month later. The British invasion brought Vichy French control over Lebanon to an end, as Britain secured for the country a pledge of independence. However, it is important to note that at this point in time France essentially had two governments: the Vichy government controlled by Germany, and the government in exile controlled by Charles de Gaulle. Following the end of the Second World War, de Gaulle's government returned to office and reasserted de facto control over Lebanon. Yet, throughout the 1940s both Britain and de Gaulle's government vied for authority in the country.

**Analysis.** Religious contention between Maronites and Muslims, including Druzes, characterized the early years of the French Mandate. The French, determined to protect their stronghold in the Levant and reverse the growing tide of pan-Arabism, extended their support to Maronites, thus pitting the two religious communities against each other. Although Maronites and Muslims possessed different long-term goals, in the short run, both groups wished to secure an autonomous Greater Lebanon. In 1920, at the

---

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 219.

San Remo Conference, a unitary Greater Lebanon came to fruition, but the redrawing of borders significantly altered the country's communal breakdown in favor of Muslims. Non-Christians attained a 65 percent majority across the new country as a whole, while the decline of Christian authority was most evident in Mount Lebanon, where the majority dropped from 80 to 55 percent. The overall Muslim population increased considerably, and the new composition of the Administrative Council reflected these changes.

Regardless of the many alterations following the San Remo Conference, each of Greater Lebanon's representative institutions, such as the Administrative Council and its various smaller committees, remained consociational in nature. As a result, the representative institutions remained fragmented, which allowed local notables to assume authority as defenders of communal interests.<sup>73</sup> These loyalties became crucial in times of open confrontation between the different religions, and largely prevented the formation of a cohesive national identity. Consociational politics was again sanctified in 1922 with the establishment of a new electoral system. Although the system was fragmented, the new reforms had a quasi-democratic tone that included two-stage elections, universal male suffrage, and multimember constituencies. The reforms also called for the expansion of public education, which many citizens hoped would remedy the fragmented social composition of the new state. The schools, however, did not significantly affect the country's national identity because the French designed a curriculum that ensured that courses would be taught in French, not Arabic.

A further opportunity to foster a Lebanese national identity around democratic principles arose in 1922 when the League of Nations formally approved the French

---

<sup>73</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 328.

Mandate, and separated Lebanon from Syria. The high commissioner appointed a Maronite-dominated parliament to draft a constitution. Sunnis and Shiites subsequently boycotted the drafting commission, which gave Maronites a free hand in the constitution's design.<sup>74</sup> The document altered the name of the country from Greater Lebanon to the Lebanese Republic, and issued a new flag, which adopted the tricolor from France but superimposed a cedar tree onto the white stripe. The constitution also formally adopted French and Arabic as Lebanon's two official languages. Additionally, the actual text of the 1926 constitution was very similar to the French one, and in many ways it sanctified French influence in Lebanese affairs. Because Maronites, who had a strong connection to the French, dominated the drafting of the constitution, French influence was inevitable. Had the country's Muslim population taken a more active role in the drafting, it is likely that the constitution would have reinforced the Arab nature of the state instead of the French one.<sup>75</sup>

Although many Muslims resented the new constitution because of its strong French undertones, parts of the document had some democratic elements. The Representative Council split into a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate, which would represent Lebanon's seventeen official religions. Similar to the French constitution, the 1926 constitution emphasized individual rights and liberties, and political and judicial equality. In its consociational structure, the constitution was distinctly Lebanese: the document authorized the sectarian distribution of government posts, and gave each of the religious communities jurisdiction over matters concerning marriage, divorce, custody,

---

<sup>74</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 89.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 89-92.

adoption, and inheritance.<sup>76</sup> The necessities of religious freedom solidified Lebanon's fragmented social polity.

In order to ensure political cohesion, the constitution gave extensive powers to the president, authorizing him to dismiss ministers at will. Additionally, the president was accountable only to the French high commissioner, which undermined the overall democratic structure of the constitution. Three days after the promulgation of the constitution, a Greek Orthodox notable was elected to a three-year presidency. One year later, the president utilized the extensive powers granted to him and abolished the Senate, extending his presidential mandate for another few years. With the Senate abolished, the Chamber of Deputies had to account for the sectarian breakdown of the country, and from 1929 onward the body was elected on a communal basis.<sup>77</sup>

The debate regarding Greater Lebanon's borders continued, as the constitution had not delineated official boundaries. The major issue was how to achieve a balance between the two largest communities: Christians and Muslims. The French, who still held significant authority, emphasized not the Christian/Muslim divide, but the religious diversity of the country and the seventeen official religions. Nevertheless, Maronites still retained a slight numerical majority following the 1932 census. Events surrounding the border debate resulted in a suspension in constitutional life. The high commissioner disbanded the Chamber of Deputies, leaving Lebanon without a single representative institution. Although the country's entire population resented the dissolution of even nominal democracy, Muslims were the most vocal objectors because the 1932 census had revealed a trend toward Muslim majority. After decades of Christian domination,

---

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 90.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 90-92.

Muslims had gained considerably in numerical clout but had no way to channel their demands.<sup>78</sup>

Optimism abounded in 1936 when the French negotiated a pre-independence treaty with Syria. Lebanon secured negotiations for a similar treaty that same year, and the high commissioner subsequently restored constitutional politics. The promise of independence aroused alarm among many Christians who feared that an independent Lebanon would be annexed by Syria, which would threaten the already waning Christian majority.<sup>79</sup> Negotiations began in Paris, and in November 1936 the Chamber of Deputies unanimously approved the treaty of Friendship and Alliance Between France and Lebanon.<sup>80</sup> Lebanon became an independent state and set its gaze on attaining membership into the League of Nations. Although the treaty did not discuss treatment of minorities, the president of the new republic guaranteed equal representation of the country's different sects in government posts. No matter how many political transformations took place, Lebanon could not escape its consociational fate.<sup>81</sup>

### **Postcolonial Statehood: 1943 – Present**

In 1942, a meeting among Britain, Egypt, and Syria established Lebanon as an Arab state and reinstated the Lebanese constitution. The Lebanese held their first elections since 1920 in August 1943, and the results produced a pro-independence parliament. In September, the parliament elected Bechara al-Khuri as president, a Maronite supported by both the French and the British, and Khuri appointed to the

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 91.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 100.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 101.

premiership Riyadh al-Sulh, a Sunni Muslim. Khuri emphasized Lebanon's confessional identity through his politics, and under his tenure it became precedent for the speaker of parliament to be a Shiite. Both Khuri and Sulh reasserted the country's Arab identity and attempted to wrestle a number of remaining concessions from de Gaulle's France.<sup>82</sup>

Although the president and prime minister were able to reassert Arabic as the language of business, the French delegate-general, Jean Helleu, would not relinquish to local security forces remnants of the Mandate, including controls over customs, ports, and railroads. In defiance, the parliament amended the constitution to increase Lebanon's autonomy, but Helleu authorized the arrest of both Khuri and his prime minister, and quickly appointed pro-French replacements. The British soon sapped Helleu's authority, and demanded that he release Khuri and the prime minister.<sup>83</sup>

With Khuri reinstated, Lebanon increased its involvement in regional affairs, and became a founding member of the Arab League. Arab nationalism within the country surged after both the United States and the Soviet Union recognized the sovereignty of Lebanon in the mid 1940s. Facing international pressure from the world's two major superpowers, France finally relinquished all nonmilitary provisions of the Mandate.<sup>84</sup> However, in August 1945, with the end of the war rapidly approaching, the French relinquished control over the French-trained soldiers to Khuri's government. This body would form the core of the Lebanese army. The Second World War ended in December 1945, but the last French troops did not withdraw until December 1946.<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 224-226.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, 226.

<sup>84</sup> Charles de Gaulle, Prime Minister of the provisional government in France insisted that France retain its military bases in Lebanon.

<sup>85</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 228.



The departure of French troops signaled genuine independence for Lebanon, but also gave Khuri a free hand in politics. In very short time he developed an extensive patronage system. "Vote buying" became rampant and elections were both unmonitored and unsystematic. Official ballots did not exist and voters simply wrote their choice on spare slips of paper.

A distraction from widespread electoral corruption came in November 1947 when the United Nations authorized the partition of Palestine. Khuri became an ardent supporter of the Palestinian cause, and was even elected to a second term as president sixteen months before the election was scheduled to take place. The UN partition plan had mixed effects on Lebanese politics and economics. On the one hand, the Arab boycott of Israel removed Haifa as Beirut's economic competitor, which made Lebanon the terminus for both Saudi Arabian oil and the Iraq Petroleum Company.<sup>86</sup> However, the partition also provoked a massive influx of Palestinian refugees into the country, and due to the resulting disorder, Israel was able to occupy significant amounts of territory in southern Lebanon until an armistice was signed in 1949. Political and economic disagreements around this same period also resulted in a break with Syria, and a subsequent economic downturn in 1951-2. The economic slump produced a political cleavage between Khuri and Sunnis, and a 1952 strike caused a government shutdown. Khuri was forced to resign as Sunnis refused to form a government.<sup>87</sup>

Camille Chamoun, a prominent Maronite acceptable to both Christians and Muslim elites, assumed the presidency in 1952. Although he ruled by decree, he promoted administrative reforms throughout the country and possessed Khuri's same

---

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, 229.

<sup>87</sup> Traboulsi, A History of Modern Lebanon, 105.

ardor for Palestinian affairs. Chamoun championed free trade and economic liberalism, and sought support from the West. He also established the Higher Judicial Council, which would appoint judges, separating the judiciary from executive and legislative interference. One of Chamoun's most significant reforms was the liberalization of the press.<sup>88</sup>

Between 1953 and 1956 Lebanon attained substantial political, economic, and social stability. Increased economic growth allowed the state to invest in transportation and communications infrastructure. Lebanese currency was backed by a de facto gold standard, and rates of tourism increased significantly. Although economic growth was considerable, most of the benefits remained concentrated in Beirut, and skewed toward the Christian bourgeoisie.<sup>89</sup>

Uneven economic growth and development produced resentment among Sunnis. In November 1953 Sunnis publicly denounced Christian authority and demanded a new census to prove the existence of a Muslim majority. The ascent of Nasser, a vehement Arab nationalist, in Egypt served as a trigger for Sunni activism. Muslim groups utilized Chamoun's liberal press to articulate public opposition to Maronite domination. Chamoun's position began to weaken as he curried favor with the Western powers, and refused to cut diplomatic ties with Britain and France after the Suez Canal Crisis in Egypt in 1956. Chamoun also accepted military aid and financial support from the United States, the only Arab country to do so. With the June 1957 elections approaching, and aware that his political position had weakened considerably, Chamoun gerrymandered

---

<sup>88</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 234.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, 236.

constituency boundaries in order to splinter the opposition groups.<sup>90</sup> In conjunction with his gerrymandering and the money he received from the United States, Chamoun was able to prevent an opposition victory, even though both Syria and Egypt financed his opponents. His triumph, however, provoked the opposition parties, and they intensified their hostility toward the government.<sup>91</sup>

Opponents to the regime received a boost in August 1957, after the United States attempted to overthrow the government in Damascus.<sup>92</sup> In defiance, Syria and Egypt unified under the United Arab Republic (UAR). This action drew the attention of many Lebanese nationalists, both Sunnis and Shiites.<sup>93</sup> Subsequently, Egypt began to send weapons to Muslim opposition groups in Lebanon. An unexpected outburst of violence occurred in 1958, after unidentified attackers murdered a Maronite newspaper editor in Tripoli. Using the weapons acquired from Egypt, opposition groups mobilized, and fighting broke down along sectarian lines between Christians and non-Christians. Both the United States and Egypt began to fear a long-term conflict, and as a result the United States suspended aid to Chamoun and Egypt stopped financing the rebels. During a lull in violence, the warring parties reached an agreement: Chamoun would remain in office to finish his term, but afterward Fuad Shihab, a Maronite army commander, would replace him.<sup>94</sup>

The 1958 Baathist coup in Baghdad and the following United States intervention hastened the end of Chamoun's tenure. Shihab assumed office, becoming Lebanon's first non-civilian president. Although an austere technocrat, Shihab increased investment in

---

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, 237.

<sup>91</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 107.

<sup>92</sup> The United States believed that Moscow was exerting significant influence on the Syrian regime.

<sup>93</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 238.

<sup>94</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 108.

Lebanon's infrastructure. He authorized the construction of roads that promoted unity throughout Mount Lebanon, and he increased investment in coastal and naval bases.<sup>95</sup> Although Lebanon's Maronites remained the major beneficiaries of Shihab's policies, he sought to equalize the sectarian political imbalance.<sup>96</sup> His policy program, Shihabism, was highly statist in nature, as he promoted social intervention through centralization and with the aid of a vigilant security apparatus. Nevertheless, he boasted strong relations with the Sunni prime minister, Rashid Karami, and retained robust alliances with numerous members of parliament. Such widespread support allowed him to implement both welfare and civil service reforms, such as Lebanon's first social security program and affirmative action policies for Muslims. The country's Shiite population, however, did not benefit from Shihab's redistributive policies—they remained underprivileged in both the government and the universities.<sup>97</sup>

By 1964, Shihab had amassed widespread popular support among the country's Christian majority, and many encouraged him to amend the Lebanese Constitution to allow him to run for another term. Prizing stability over personal power, Shihab refused and sponsored the candidacy of Charles Hellou.<sup>98</sup> For Maronites, Shihab left a positive legacy. National income doubled, civil services grew, investment in infrastructure increased, and many of Mount Lebanon's disjointed Christian villages unified through new roads. Although Shihab attempted to equalize the sectarian discrepancy that favored

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>96</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 241.

<sup>97</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 110.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, 112.

Maronites, his political and economic policies remained unsatisfactory to most of the country's Muslims.<sup>99</sup>

Upheaval approached as the 1967 war ended with Israel's seizure of East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan and the Golan Heights from Syria. In Lebanon, sectarianism persisted, as Christians and Muslims remained poorly integrated due to their distinct political, economic, and social goals that had only become more pronounced after the Israeli victory. Breakdown throughout the Arab world continued, as political regimes lost credibility. Palestinian refugees poured into Lebanon, and the presence of thousands of displaced people paralyzed the country's multi-communal regime and transformed its southern border with Israel into a de facto military post.<sup>100</sup>

Initially, the fighting actually taking place within Lebanon's borders was minimal, and relative peace allowed the country to reform its service sector. In 1968, however, the situation changed dramatically after a battle in Jordan prompted Palestinians to begin recruiting Lebanese fighters.<sup>101</sup> Under pressure, the prime minister formally authorized the Palestinians to use the country as a military base. Following this authorization, fighting in Lebanon officially began, as Palestinians mobilized along the southern border. Fighting diffused into the streets of Beirut, Tripoli, and Sidon, and Cairo's agreement with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1970 only boosted the armed presence of fighters throughout Lebanon.<sup>102</sup> Increased PLO militancy provoked a major

---

<sup>99</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 244.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*, 248.

<sup>101</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 115.

<sup>102</sup> The Cairo accord was an agreement brokered by Nasser between Yassir Arafat, chair of the PLO, and General Emile Bustani, a Lebanese army commander.

Israeli bombardment of southern Lebanon in May 1970, and thousands of Shiites egressed toward the north as refugees.<sup>103</sup>

Lebanon received another influx of immigrants after King Hussein of Jordan declared war on the Palestinian forces in Jordan. The king ousted the PLO, forcing the evacuation of thousands of militants and guerilla fighters from Jordan into Lebanon, alarming the country's Maronites. Suleiman Faranjiya, the new Maronite president, only worsened conditions by dismantling the security system, which rendered the country helpless in the face of Palestinian, Syrian, and Israeli militancy. Although the regional situation was deteriorating rapidly, Lebanon held parliamentary elections in 1972—they were the freest, fairest, and most efficient elections that the country had ever seen.<sup>104</sup>

Amidst both domestic and regional violence, Lebanon's educational disparities began to shrink due to a surge in literacy rates. By the mid-1970s, Lebanon boasted the highest literacy rates of the Arab world, and the greatest linguistic diversity, as schoolchildren learned French, English, and Arabic. University education also increased considerably. However, these domestic victories were overwhelmed in 1973, when in retaliation for the Munich massacre, Israel deployed combatants in Beirut who killed three of the PLO's highest-ranking officials.<sup>105</sup>

Initially, Lebanon's Sunni population was tolerant of the increased Palestinian presence, but as the PLO continued to entrench itself in Beirut, Sunnis in the government cooperated with Maronites to protect Lebanon's sovereignty.<sup>106</sup> The Lebanese armed forces launched an attack against the organization, and in response, the Palestinians

---

<sup>103</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 251.

<sup>104</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 152.

<sup>105</sup> During the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, West Germany, the Palestinian group Black September took hostage and eventually murdered eleven Israeli Olympic team members.

<sup>106</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 157-172.

bombarded the Lebanese airport, forcing Syria to intervene and impose an economic boycott on Lebanon. Faranjiya attempted reconciliation with the PLO, but the Palestinians refused to withdraw from its Lebanese strongholds.<sup>107</sup>

By 1975, Lebanon had ceased to be an independent state as the multi-communal regime failed to perform its duties following the violent intrusion of Palestinian, Syrian, and Israeli fighters. Quality of life continued to deteriorate for most Lebanese, and the constant violence among Muslims, Christians, and Palestinian rebels heightened sectarian insecurity. Sectarian identity also became increasingly important as Maronite control over Lebanon continued to slip. Violence in Beirut escalated, as the various sects coalesced into militias, and within a few months, the country had been entirely overrun by warlords, foreign powers, and Palestinian militants. By this point, there existed a Palestinian state run by the PLO within the larger Lebanese state.<sup>108</sup>

To counter the continuing deterioration of the country, Lebanon's president established the Lebanese Front in 1976. The coalition restructured the government, adjusted the National Pact in favor of Muslims, and equalized the Christian to Muslim ratio. The Lebanese Front also determined that the parliament would elect the Sunni prime minister to implement legislation together with the president. However, political reform came to a screeching halt following the August 1976 Tel al-Zaatar siege, in which Christian militias killed some three thousand Palestinians. Violence between Maronites and Palestinians persisted throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, as the PLO continued its operations in Lebanon. In 1978, Fatah, the largest faction of the PLO launched a sea raid against Israel and guerilla forces hijacked a bus on the Haifa-Tel Aviv

---

<sup>107</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 253.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*, 260-262.

highway.<sup>109</sup> These two aggressions provoked an extraordinarily violent Israeli response, as the Likud government launched an invasion of Lebanon that resulted in almost two thousand civilian deaths. Israeli belligerence continued until the UNSC issued Resolution 425, which required that Israel withdraw its forces from Lebanon.<sup>110</sup>

The UNSC resolution produced a temporary cessation in hostilities, but soon Israel proceeded to organize further attacks in Beirut. Throughout the summer of 1982, the Israeli forces bombarded the capital, destroyed inhabitants' access to water and electricity, and inflicted thousands of civilian casualties.<sup>111</sup> In September, a member of the Syrian Socialist Nationalist Party assassinated Bashir Gemayel, president-elect and supreme commander of the Lebanese Forces. Bashir's death produced a power vacuum in Beirut, and Maronites used the opportunity to enter Palestinian refugee camps. By the end of 1982, the Maronite militias had murdered at least 800 Palestinian refugees and Lebanese Shiites. Bashir's brother assumed the presidency, and quickly reestablished relations with the United States and Europe. The Western powers provided military support through a multinational force (MNF). They deployed a number of troops to Beirut both as protection against Israel and Lebanon's increasingly violent Maronite militias.<sup>112</sup>

Following the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Shiite groups in Lebanon began to organize around religious scholars trained in the Shiite holy cities of Najaf and Qum. A number of these groups militarized, and in April 1983, a Shiite suicide attack destroyed a large section of the United States embassy in Beirut. Copycat attacks erupted across

---

<sup>109</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 175.

<sup>110</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 267.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid*, Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 196.

<sup>112</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 272-273.



Lebanon, as Shiites organized truck bombings and further assaults on government and military headquarters. The two most devastating incidents took place on October 23, 1983, when the American and French barracks were struck at almost the same time. The attacks killed 242 United States Marines and fifty-eight French troops. Eventually, most Shiite groups unified, and in February 1985, Hezbollah emerged as the amalgamation of hundreds of militants. Hezbollah issued a manifesto in which it pledged to eliminate Israel and establish a Shiite Islamic state in Lebanon.<sup>113</sup>

Politically, the Lebanese parliament remained deadlocked until the Tripartite Agreement was signed in Damascus in 1985. The agreement essentially conferred command of Lebanon to Baathist Syria, but also established a network of privileged relations between Lebanon and Syria. Lebanon was required to coordinate its foreign policies with Syria, submit to Syrian military presence, and even consult its Baathist neighbor on education policies. The agreement also attempted to introduce political reforms and promote religious and sectarian equality in parliament. Although the agreement bestowed significant authority to the Syrians, Lebanese militias still dominated the scene.

The Soviet Union's power continued to decline throughout the 1980s, which prompted the United States to secure a position in the Levant in order to buttress its ascendancy in the region.<sup>114</sup> Fearing the impact of foreign intervention, Lebanese militias consolidated to assume the functions of the state.<sup>115</sup> The militias, however, implemented corrupt policies and profited from illicit activities, such as drug trafficking. The most sophisticated of these militias was the Christian Lebanese Forces, which boasted a

---

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, 276-277.

<sup>114</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 198.

<sup>115</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 278.

paramilitary staff of 10,000 and significant financial resources. Hezbollah continued to expand in Shiite areas, and its fervently anti-Israel policies attracted support from Iran. Throughout the latter half of the 1980s, Iran channeled arms, financial subsidies, and other resources into Hezbollah. With support from Iran, Hezbollah began to offer welfare programs for Lebanese Shiites, boosting the group's prestige among the poorer sectors of the state. As Hezbollah gained in strength, Israel deployed a military proxy, the South Lebanese Army (SLA), along its border with Lebanon.<sup>116</sup>

Although Hezbollah and a few other groups provided social services to its supporters, these services were minimal and often insufficient. Quality of life dropped measurably after 1984, as the country's economy experienced a major downturn. Militia-dominated Lebanon dismissed the rule of law and forced Lebanese of all religions into ghettos, thus facilitating a burgeoning black market. The upcoming September presidential elections provided a light of hope, which was shattered after a bomb killed the prime minister in 1987. After the premier's death, the government installed a rule-by-decree military cabinet.<sup>117</sup> Aggression between Lebanon and Syria surged, and daily violence continued until the UNSC issued a resolution demanding a ceasefire.

Shortly after the cessation of hostilities, a tripartite Arab committee produced in 1989 a National Unity Charter for Lebanon that attempted to restructure the country's government. The charter sought to strengthen Lebanon's consociational structure by shifting significant authority from a formerly Maronite president to a council of ministers (half Christian and half Muslim and Druze), to be chaired by a Sunni prime minister. The

---

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 280.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

confessional composition of the parliament also changed, so as to be divided equally between Christians and non-Christians, though Maronites would still retain a majority.

A Syrian attack on the Baabda presidential palace in Lebanon interrupted the implementation of the charter. Syrian hegemony, which persisted until 2005, alienated most of Lebanon's Maronites, which made up almost one third of the population. Moreover, the Syrians lacked a popular base of support in Lebanon, and had difficulty monitoring Hezbollah's activities against the SLA in southern Lebanon. Thus, in an attempt to secure its hold over Lebanon, Syria imposed on the Lebanese the Treaty of Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination in 1991. The treaty reasserted and centralized Syrian hegemony. One of its provision levied strict censorship and bans on association. The Syrian regime went another step further with the Amnesty Law in 1991 that granted immunity from punishment for war crimes committed between 1975 and 1991.<sup>118</sup> Although Syria retained authority over the country, Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, who assumed office a year later in 1992, attempted to reconstruct Beirut, which had been reduced to shambles following two decades of warfare. In addition, the prime minister embarked on a program of economic reform designed to stabilize the Lebanese currency and curb inflation. Hariri also endeavored to coopt Shiites through a redevelopment program in the Hezbollah-controlled south, but the Shiite's loss of the finance ministry soiled relations.<sup>119</sup>

Hariri's reforms came undone after Israel launched another offensive in southern Lebanon in 1996. This bombardment fueled Hezbollah resistance, as the organization began to infiltrate parliament and increase its investment in social welfare with financial

---

<sup>118</sup> Ibid, 286.

<sup>119</sup> Traboulsi, A History of Modern Lebanon, 198.

assistance from Iran. Violence persisted until a 2000 summit in Geneva ordered the definitive withdrawal of Israel from southern Lebanon. However, following the withdrawal of Israeli troops, Hezbollah entrenched itself in the territory that Israel had once occupied.<sup>120</sup> That same year Lebanon took another hit with the ascent of Bashar al-Assad to the Syrian presidency. Assad and Hezbollah soon developed a close relationship, which enabled Hezbollah to retain a form of privileged autonomy under what was essentially a Syrian monopoly of power in Lebanon.<sup>121</sup>

Following the withdrawal of Israeli troops, Lebanon held elections in July 2000. Although the opposition parties had gerrymandered Beirut, Hariri emerged victorious, disappointing those who resented Hariri's repeated failure to challenge Syrian hegemony. Hezbollah also gained strength due to financial and political support from both Syria and Iran, and by the early 2000s it was more organized, efficient, and better equipped than the Lebanese army. This power imbalance compelled the army to extend to Hezbollah substantial freedom of action. The opposition to Syria and Hezbollah, which was largely Christian in composition, remained unorganized throughout the early 2000s, as most leaders had been either jailed or exiled. Opposition groups received no international support either, as the United States continuously voiced support for Syrian hegemony. The situation continued to deteriorate, and Hariri began to lose control over the government as President Emile Lahoud's security apparatus spread throughout the country.<sup>122</sup>

---

<sup>120</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 292.

<sup>121</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 199.

<sup>122</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 293.

Syrian domination weakened in 2003, after President George W. Bush signed the Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act.<sup>123</sup> The act revoked United States approval of Syrian control. Foreign powers intervened again in 2004, when the UNSC passed resolution 1559. The decree demanded the withdrawal of Syrian military presence in Lebanon, the dismantling of Hezbollah, and free and fair elections. In response, Hariri resigned as prime minister, and was succeeded by Umar Karami, whose government was an extension of Lahoud's security apparatus. Shortly after Karami's ascent to power, opposition groups began to organize in order to reassert Lebanese sovereignty. Nearly one year later in 2005, a major turning point in Lebanese-Syrian relations took place when Hariri was killed by a truck bomb blast in Beirut.<sup>124</sup>

Shortly thereafter Christian protests erupted in Beirut. In response, Hezbollah reasserted its loyalty to Assad. Hezbollah's declaration prompted another round of public demonstrations, but this time the protest was cross sectarian in nature, as Sunnis, Christians, Druzes, and some anti-Hezbollah Shiites assembled in downtown Beirut. The protesters demanded justice for Hariri's death and independence from Syria. The demonstrations proved effective as the UNSC embarked on an investigation to determine the assailants behind the truck bomb that killed Hariri. In its final report, the UNSC accused the Lebanese/Syrian security apparatus with negligence and tampering with evidence. The release of the report and the ongoing protests in Beirut compelled Syrian troops to withdraw completely from Lebanon. Parliamentary elections were held in May, but the results accomplished little but to cement further sectarian political divisions.<sup>125</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> The Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act was signed in large part as retribution for Syrian attacks on United States forces in Iraq throughout the Iraq War.

<sup>124</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 295-296.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid*, 297.

**Analysis.** With a Muslim majority on the rise, a number of Sunni notables attempted reconciliation with Christians in the early 1940s. The resulting talks became known as the National Pact of 1943, and these discussions reiterated Lebanese independence, including its separation from Syria, which appeased Christians. The talks also emphasized Lebanon's Arab identity in an attempt to remove the lingering remnants of the French Mandate.<sup>126</sup> Most significantly, the National Pact formalized the sectarian power allocations in government, which unintentionally set a precedent for each future government. Accordingly, the president would be Maronite, the prime minister a Sunni, and the speaker of parliament Shiite. Other institutional arrangements were devised within the military and among the various ministries. Although the resulting system was strictly confessional, posts were divided equally and in accordance with the previous census. For the short term, the country experienced the beginnings of democratization, as each sect remained determined to transform the fragmented system into a stable democracy.<sup>127</sup>

It appeared that the National Pact had not only achieved its structural and institutional goals, but had nurtured the foundations of a Lebanese national identity. The formation of a national identity paralleled the trend toward regional Arab nationalism that persisted throughout the 1940s. By this point, Lebanon had received international recognition of its sovereignty, and the state utilized its newfound authority in its role as a founding member of the Arab League in 1945. Additionally, by the end of the Second World War, the remainder of French troops had departed the country.<sup>128</sup>

---

<sup>126</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 328.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, 329.

<sup>128</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 244.

However, it was not long before Lebanon's president began to exploit the extensive authority he had gained via the 1943 constitution. Corruption ensued, and although the state's institutions remained untouched, poor regulation of electoral law resulted in widespread vote buying, and unmonitored and unsystematic elections. The Lebanese citizenry also had to reconcile the constitution's fundamental contradiction—though it stipulated equality for all, “judicial and political inequality...belonging to hierarchized religious communities with unequal access to political power and public office” was institutionalized.<sup>129</sup> The institutionalization of a sectarian framework undermined the democratic progress initiated by the National Pact. The framework also ensured the political ascendancy of the Maronite community, because the president would always be a Maronite, even though the Christian numerical majority continued to decline. And similar to the 1926 constitution, the president was not accountable for his actions and could dissolve parliament at will.<sup>130</sup>

The formal implementation of the 1943 constitution highlighted a number of its flaws, and the National Pact reconvened to remedy some of the most egregious defects. Although the Pact reaffirmed the power-sharing formula, it ensured that the ratio would properly reflect the state's communal breakdown. The Pact also resumed the process of nation building, highlighting the country's Arab identity and securing its external sovereignty by proposing an alteration in the language of the constitution, which would define Lebanon as a “country with an Arab profile that assimilates all that is beneficial and useful in Western civilization.”<sup>131</sup> This change was designed to appease both Christians and Muslims, because it would, first, reinforce the country's Arab character

---

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 245.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 110.

without endorsing a pan-Arab union with Syria and, second, establish a cultural link with the West without accepting or calling for direct European or American intervention. In conjunction with the second change, the National Pact proffered a third, which stated, “Lebanon shall not be a base or a passageway for colonialism.”<sup>132</sup> Finally, though the National Pact endorsed the consociational nature of government, it reinforced the necessity of a partnership between the president and the prime minister. In order to assuage Muslims who had been disadvantaged by the power-sharing formula, the Pact demanded increased participation opportunities for Sunnis and Shiites. The Pact emphasized that the point of sectarian quotas was to remedy years of political discrimination against Muslims, not to bolster the authority of the ascendant Maronites. The National Pact’s proposition received widespread popular support, as both Christians and Muslims stood to benefit from the suggested reforms.<sup>133</sup>

But it was not to be. Maronites in office refused to support the changes, fearing that constitutional revision would damage the favorable status quo. Because the National Pact had garnered such support, Lebanon had two founding texts. The conflict between the National Pact and the 1943 constitution illustrated the growing gap amongst the elite government officials and the Lebanese citizens who desired reform and representative democracy.<sup>134</sup>

Although Lebanon’s political landscape remained in question, the country experienced unprecedented economic growth from 1945 until 1949, in large part due to the regional boycott of Israel. The UN partition and the aforementioned boycott, however, produced a massive influx of Palestinian refugees into Lebanon, which

---

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid, 111.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.



destabilized the economy. As economic conditions worsened, general resentment grew, especially after the president attempted to manipulate elections to ensure a two-thirds majority in parliament that would have enabled him to extend his presidency. The extension of the Maronite president's term was extremely problematic for Lebanon's Muslims, who after the prime minister's assassination in 1951, were left without a high-ranking representative official. Economic downturn combined with political hostility forced the president to resign.<sup>135</sup>

Lebanon's new president, Chamoun, was decidedly undemocratic, but throughout his tenure, the state experienced unprecedented levels of political and economic stability. The country benefited from a regional boom in oil, the economic impact of the Israeli boycott, and increased capital flows. These favorable conditions enabled Lebanon to develop a competitive construction industry, which caught the attention of international banks and produced a hearty tourism industry. Ultimately, however, the methods by which Chamoun achieved significant liberal reform undermined Lebanon's long-term goals. The National Pact was reduced to naught, as the president chose to rely solely on a very literal interpretation of the 1943 constitution, a reading that ensured his unchallenged authority. In his attempt to amass even more power, Chamoun subordinated the Chamber of Deputies, thus reducing its membership by almost half. Despite these measures, Chamoun did promote some genuinely democratic reforms. One of his major accomplishments was to extend the suffrage to women in 1952.<sup>136</sup>

Later that year, Lebanon held elections, and Chamoun's political wrangling ensured him a majority. Although initially Muslims had voiced support for Chamoun, his

---

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 123.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, 128-130.

exclusion of both Sunnis and Shiites from the government produced intense resentment, especially because Muslims possessed no recourse for political change. Anger manifested in rebellion in 1958, and sectarian violence overwhelmed Chamoun's government. By this point, Muslims had been entirely excluded from government, and had developed a relationship with Nasser. The Muslim alliance with Nasser alienated many Christians, even those suspect of Chamoun's government. Fighting between Muslims and Christians continued until Chamoun agreed that he would step down at the end of his term.

Although Lebanon had experienced economic growth and political stability throughout Chamoun's early years, social aggravation was the ultimate price for such prosperity.<sup>137</sup>

Throughout the next twelve years, Lebanon underwent a number of reforms, many of which were highly statist in nature. Shihab, who was the chief proponent of centralized control over social matters, worked to neutralize sectarian tension by demanding national unity.<sup>138</sup> He propagated a new Lebanese nationalism that advocated harmony and equality, and he understood the ways in which structural factors had repeatedly repressed the Muslim population. Shihab's most significant contribution to Lebanese politics was the creation of an alternative political regime that relied on independent sources of authority. These separate regimes were essentially a massive bureaucracy that employed over 10,000 servants, most of whom, Shihab ensured, were Muslim. The major obstacle to Shihab's reforms, however, was the increasingly powerful oligarchy that rejected any alteration to the status quo. The situation became more complex when some anti-Muslim Maronite groups partnered with the oligarchy to protest Shihab's affirmative action toward Muslims. More generally, however, the opposition

---

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, 127.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 138.

was protesting increased state intervention into realms normally left to the jurisdiction of either autonomous religious groups or individuals. Barring a few dissident factions, Shihab boasted popular support, and many citizens, both Christian and Muslim, asked that he amend the constitution so that he could run for another term. Shihab refused, and left behind a legacy of stability.<sup>139</sup>

Although many of Shihab's policies were directed toward Muslim enfranchisement, his reforms also benefited Christians. However, Shihab's main contributions to Lebanese society were material, and although he attempted to rid the state of sectarian conflict, the divide between Christians and Muslims was more deeply rooted than he acknowledged. Twelve years of reform seemed insignificant compared to centuries of violent disagreement between Lebanon's multiple religious groupings. After Shihab left office, sectarian allegiances intensified and the country's different social and religious groups remained poorly integrated.<sup>140</sup>

The two wars with Israel altered Lebanon's political, economic, and social future. The fragile multi-communal regime buckled under pressure, as thousands of Palestinian refugees poured into the country between the years 1967 and 1975. Shihab's bureaucracy, though generously staffed, was weak and unworkable, and had sapped authority from parliament. The influx of Palestinians had a twofold effect. First, it significantly altered the country's demography; and second, it transformed southern Lebanon's border with Israel into an active battlefield.<sup>141</sup>

The two wars hit Shiites the hardest since the majority of them lived in the south. Massive numbers of Shiites were forced to emigrate, and they faced political and

---

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 142-143.

<sup>140</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 329.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

economic discrimination as newcomers in the northern areas. State institutions had become increasingly bloated as well, and had no power to counter the growing disintegration of the entire Lebanese system. A civil war erupted and drove hordes of citizens to cling to their confessional identities. Lebanon's Muslims splintered, and sectarian conflict among Sunnis, Shiites, and Druzes emerged alongside a more general conflict between Christians and Muslims of all sects.<sup>142</sup>

Amidst the increasingly violent civil war, the Lebanese president attempted to counter disintegration through the formation of the Lebanese Front. The coalition restructured the government, adjusted the National Pact in favor of Muslims, and altered the Christian to Muslim ratio, which up until this point had been based on a decades-old census. The coalition proposed renewed cooperation between the Christian president and a new Sunni prime minister, and tasked Parliament with appointing a suitable candidate. Despite his efforts, it was impossible to bring about the political reforms in the midst of a violent civil war. The spike in attacks compelled the Lebanese government to table the coalition. For the next couple years, parliamentary life was largely nonexistent, as the country had to contend with thousands of civilian deaths and increased military activity in Lebanon.<sup>143</sup>

A breakthrough finally occurred in 1985 with the Tripartite Agreement that gave Baathist Syria control over a war-torn Lebanon. By 1989, nearly fifteen years of fighting had exhausted most of the warring factions, and a coalition of sixty-two Lebanese deputies (half Muslim, half Christian) met in Taif, Saudi Arabia to negotiate an end to the war and reform the political system. The major achievement of the conference in Taif

---

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 191.

was a reduction in presidential power and an increase in the prime minister's authority. A further reform substantiated the rebalance of executive authority—the division of parliamentary seats equally between Christians and Muslims. The civil war came to an end in October 1990.<sup>144</sup>

The Taif Accord proved successful throughout the early 1990s, but for all practical purposes it collapsed when the Christian opposition candidates boycotted the 1992 parliamentary elections.<sup>145</sup> The opposition agreed to participate in the 1996 elections, and for a short period democracy appeared to have a future. However, immediately prior to the elections the incumbent elites altered Lebanon's electoral law to ensure their reelection and the political status quo. Throughout the latter half of the 1990s the government curbed various civil liberties outlined in the Lebanese Constitution. In 1998, for instance, the government banned public demonstrations and censored numerous television programs. Optimism resurfaced in 1999, following the election of a new president and the resignation of the corrupt Hariri.<sup>146</sup> Still, one major obstacle remained and is still in place—how to contend with Hezbollah, an organization that consistently defies state authority.<sup>147</sup>

The country's most recent parliamentary elections were held in 2009. Though conducted peacefully, vote buying was rife and the elections only solidified the increasingly ineffective sectarian-based power-sharing formula. Saad Hariri, the son of the now deceased, former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, assumed the premiership, but the government collapsed in 2011 after a number of pro-Hezbollah ministers resigned to

---

<sup>144</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 329.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 370.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 371.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 330.

protest of a UN investigation concerning Rafiq Hariri's assassination in 2005. Saad Hariri was forced to resign and a Hezbollah-allied politician succeeded him, but then he also resigned two years later. In May 2014 the presidential term expired and Suleiman departed office, leaving Lebanon without an executive. Since 2014, the country has not had a president.<sup>148</sup>

By the end of the 2000s, the Lebanese polity had partially begun to reassert itself as the only legitimate source of political authority, but the country still faces external threats to its sovereignty from Israel, Syria, and Iran. Significantly, the country has not been able to consolidate its consociational democracy due to continuing interruptions from the outside (primarily protracted violence in both Israel and Syria). Lebanon appears to be caught in an insoluble dichotomy—its factions appear too divided to unify into a lasting alliance, but none of its factions is strong enough to overcome the others.<sup>149</sup> It may be the case that a consociational democracy *is* the correct political choice for Lebanon, but “neither the Lebanese elites themselves nor the external actors interested in the country have done much to make the system meaningfully effective...if anything, they have often deliberately eroded its efficacy.”<sup>150</sup>

Although the initial foundation of the democratic edifice has withstood civil war and relentless Israeli aggression, it is unclear yet whether the country will become meaningfully democratic in practice. Although proponents of democracy exist in Lebanon, the elites still hold sway, and the policies they promote and implement are often reflections of their own political agendas. Whether Lebanon can transform its fragile

---

<sup>148</sup> "Lebanon: Country Report 2015." *Freedom in the World 2015: Discarding Democracy, a Return to the Iron Fist*. Freedom House, 2015. Web.

<sup>149</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 371.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

consociational system into a legitimate, effective democracy depends on whether such a desire can overcome sectarian allegiances, and whether elite groups can become party to a democratic transition that will inevitably threaten their hold on power.<sup>151</sup>

As of this writing, Lebanon is not a legitimate democracy because the regime possesses a number of shortcomings. Primarily, the National Assembly, the country's legislature, is ineffective. The body's factions are fundamentally divided, which has prevented it from electing a president or issuing meaningful policy and reform. Among the dozens of political parties and factions represented in the National Assembly, Hezbollah-aligned parties control a significant portion of the seats. Furthermore, the seats are divided among the major religious sects under a formula that is unrepresentative of their current demographic weight; the last census was conducted in the 1930s. For instance, Shiites, a growing religious community, now constitute nearly one third of the population, but this sect commands only 21 percent of the National Assembly. And even though the National Assembly remains ineffective and politically deadlocked, it has extended its mandate until 2017, citing security concerns from the ongoing conflict in Syria. The country has not held elections since 2009, and although many claimed that they were both free and fair, the practice of vote buying was rampant, as the electoral framework is fundamentally flawed. Similarly, political and bureaucratic corruption is widespread. The regime is rife with bribery and anti-corruption laws are only loosely enforced.

The consociational system also limits eligibility for public office. For instance, the current power-sharing formula, developed in the 1943 National Pact, which has determined that the president must be a Maronite Christian, ensures that even the most

---

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, 372.

qualified Sunni, Shiite, Druze, or even non-religious politician could not become president. This is especially problematic considering the fact that for the past few years Lebanon has actually not had a president because parliament has refused to elect one. Although the consociational system does not overtly restrict participation, the system in itself frequently prevents voter preferences from being taken into account because political deadlock remains so immobilizing. Most Lebanese elections may be both free and fair, but they remain irregular due to the current parliament that has suspended elections and extended its mandate. Taken as a whole, the state, in essence, functions as a “trustee” for the differing religious and ethnic groups, which has produced political immobility and hindered formation of both a national identity and democracy based on shared political goals.<sup>152</sup>

Yet, the consociational formulation of government is continuously reaffirmed, which has diverted attention from pressing reforms concerning economic development, political accountability, and the rule of law. The consociational system itself is also structurally flawed because it tends toward deadlock, as each sect retains veto power over all public decisions. Furthermore, the consociational regime does not function because the society is so fundamentally divided. Within the past twenty years the result of such a system has been an intensification of political and economic stability, “forcing sectarian groups to rely on their own social and security networks, and to look for support beyond Lebanon’s borders.”<sup>153</sup>

Lebanon boasts a freer press than most of its neighbors but the system is not completely devoid of corruption. Most media outlets are allied with various sectarian

---

<sup>152</sup>Salamey, Imad. "Failing Consociationalism in Lebanon and Integrative Options." *International Journal of Peace Studies* Autumn/Winter 14.2 (2009): Web.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 84.



leaders or organizations, which means that most programs are heavily biased and strictly partisan. Although freedom of the press is sanctified in the Lebanese constitution, conditions for journalists are worsening, especially following the kidnapping of two reporters in February 2014. Similarly, strict laws surrounding libel and slander have permitted politicians to indict journalists for petty crimes. Authenticating these laws is a strong judicial system that remains highly unsympathetic toward journalists. Censorship runs rampant throughout the country, and currently there is no major effort on the part of politicians to remedy such tight restrictions on publications. Instead, many officials remain complicit in the censorship of publications that discuss homosexuality and sex. Judaic newspapers and magazines, moreover, are some of the most strictly censored publications in Lebanon. The government also bans music that is Zionist or anti-Christian.<sup>154</sup>

Freedom House's 2015 Democracy Index ranks Lebanon as *Partly Free*, but the country is experiencing a downward trend due to the parliament's repeated failure to elect a president. Violence in Syria and continued terrorism have also aggravated the parliament and unsettled the power-sharing sectarian balance within government. An influx of Syrian refugees further strained the system, and the Lebanese government lost control over public safety as sectarian violence, terrorism, and cross-border confrontations erupted. The situation improved slightly in February 2015 with the appointment of a new cabinet. As of this writing, however, the National Assembly remains unable to elect a new president. This failure has engendered a power vacuum that has paralyzed the government. Scheduled November elections did not take place, and the National Assembly renewed its mandate until June 2017, which will likely result in

---

<sup>154</sup> Freedom House, Lebanon: Country Report 2015.

another year of political deadlock. Considering these circumstances, Lebanon cannot be considered a legitimate democracy.<sup>155</sup>

### **Exploratory Conclusions**

Before democracy can emerge, it is fundamental that a state consolidates and legitimizes its power. Neither condition has taken root in Lebanon. The consolidation and legitimation process was significantly delayed by the colonial period, which spanned from 1923 until 1943. Even before that period, however, various European powers had intervened throughout the nineteenth century and established institutions, such as the *qa'im maqamiya*. Furthermore, throughout the country's history various foreign powers have competed for influence, this was especially evident in the Second World War as both Britain and France vied for authority in the country. Almost immediately after achieving independence in 1943, regional tensions erupted in 1948 with the outbreak of war in Palestine. Since that period, regional conflict has consistently destabilized the regime.

The geographic position of the country and the ongoing conflicts along each of its borders has ensured political, economic, and social instability. With foreign entities constantly intruding into its territory, the state has been repeatedly prevented from completing its essential tasks. This problem gained greater intensity in the 1960s when a non-state organization, the PLO, had constructed a state within a state on Lebanese territory. The PLO contributed to violence and instability in the state for almost twenty-two years, and the organization's immense authority illustrated that one, the state had not sufficiently consolidated or legitimized its power to defend itself against a non-state

---

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

organization, and two, that Lebanon's political regime was not powerful enough to serve as a counterweight to the PLO. Today, Lebanon faces the same pressure from another non-state organization, Hezbollah, which has sapped both authority and legitimacy from the state.

The influx of large numbers of refugees is further undermining Lebanon's capacity to create a stable political regime. As of 2015, the country housed nearly 400,000 Palestinian refugees, and their integration has posed numerous challenges to Lebanon's fragile consociational system. Lebanon also possesses a sizable population of Iraqi refugees fleeing ISIS. Although neither Palestinian nor Iraqi refugees can obtain privileges of citizenship, Syrian refugees, on the other hand, are granted a six-month, extendable residency permit and are often integrated into education and healthcare networks. Many refugees, however, no matter their country of origin, face discrimination in employment and housing. The continuous influx of both Syrian and Palestinian refugees (and to a lesser extent Iraqi and Sudanese refugees) has stressed an already deadlocked political system. The inflow of refugees has also led the state to curb citizenship rights for many inhabitants, in effect limiting the political participation of a large segment of society. As of 2015 there were almost 1.2 million refugees in the country, a significant portion considering that overall population is only about 4.5 million. The ongoing conflicts in both Syria and Israel have also produced debilitating violence in Lebanon, which has only emphasized how inept the consociational system is at managing the state's affairs.

Additionally, the divided nature of the country's population has prevented consolidation. An issue problematic to all states and democracies is the existence of

divisive factions, and the resulting political conflicts that such factions produce. No state boasts a complete harmony of interests and thus one of the first tasks of democratization is to balance competing interests. Lebanon attempted acquiescence through a consociational form of government, but this system has failed to produce compromise among the different sects. However, the paradox remains that for a country with such an intense divide and sectarian geography, a different type of political regime is largely impossible unless one resorts to authoritarian measures.<sup>156</sup> For this reason, the presence of competing religious groups remains the country's largest impediment to democracy, and the corporatist nature of the system (i.e. the president must be a Maronite, the premier a Sunni, the speaker of Parliament a Shiite, and so on) produces a "self-perpetuating capture of the state by a political sectarian elite that both lacks national accountability and undermines the government commitment to the public good."<sup>157</sup>

---

<sup>156</sup> See Appendix B for a present-day map of Lebanon by sect.

<sup>157</sup> Salamey, *Failing Consociationalism in Lebanon and Integrative Options*, 84.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **A Comparative Analysis of Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon**

At this point in my analysis it is helpful to draw a number of comparisons among Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon.

Immediately following the Arab invasions, the respective population compositions of Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon differed significantly. Among the three countries, Egypt possessed the highest degree of homogeneity. High levels of uniformity can in part be explained by the fact that the majority Coptic Christian population actually welcomed the Arab conquerors, whom they alleged would be less oppressive than the Byzantines.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, Egypt was not home to a multitude of different religious and ethnic factions, a condition that hampered regime development in both Iraq and Lebanon. Historically, Egypt has also boasted the highest degree of territorial unity, whereas it can be argued that Iraq and Lebanon are imperial creations. Nevertheless, processes of Arabization and Islamization occurred in each of the three territories during the pre-colonial period. Although the Arab conquerors espoused religious toleration, they were less intent on providing equality to non-Muslims. As a result, many natives were forced to convert to Islam and adhere to Arabic traditions and customs in order to integrate into the new system.<sup>2</sup>

Common to all three countries was significant isolation between the rulers of the successive Islamic empires and the native subjects. The large geographic distance between the various seats of empire and the populations of the three countries bred

---

<sup>1</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 169; Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 58-59 & Harris, *Lebanon: A History*, 600-2011, 78.

apathy and ultimately enabled the creation of independent principalities. Autonomous groups also emerged because the ruling empires conferred significant authority to local chiefs and notables so as to maintain order in the territories. These independent groups sanctioned by the empires eventually transformed into a fledging elite class in each of the three states that would become fundamental during the Ottoman period.

Geographic distance was not the only barrier between rulers and subjects. Throughout the pre-colonial period, rulers speaking numerous foreign languages, professing different religions, and representing disparate ethnicities commanded the territories. The presence of alien rulers proved most divisive in Iraq and Lebanon, where different religious sects were already vying for authority.<sup>3</sup> In these two cases, the foreign character of the successive empires only exacerbated societal contention. For both Iraq and Lebanon, decentralized rule provoked and solidified a deeply divisive sectarian conflict.<sup>4</sup>

Processes of Islamization and Arabization continued with varying speeds throughout the pre-colonial period. These transformations remained most pronounced in Egypt, where nearly the entire population had converted to Islam prior to the Ottoman conquest.<sup>5</sup> Christians, who had commanded a significant majority in the early 600s, today constitute only about 10 percent of the population, highlighting how effectively the Arab conquerors homogenized the native population.<sup>6</sup> In Lebanon, on the other hand, Arabization outpaced Islamization, and today, although 95 percent of the country's inhabitants are Arab, only about 54 percent are Muslim (compared to 90 percent of

---

<sup>3</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 66-67.

<sup>4</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 68.

<sup>5</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 171.

Egyptians).<sup>7</sup> For Iraq, the Arab Conquest produced both a majority Arab and Muslim population, but the overall regional Sunni majority cemented and institutionalized a lesser status for Shiite Muslims.<sup>8</sup> This prejudice, although most manifest in Iraq, exists in Lebanon too, where historic discrimination against Shiites has produced widespread poverty and underdevelopment in the south. Iraq's proximity to Persian Iran has also contributed to negative perceptions of Shiites, as throughout history many ruling Sunnis believed that Iraq's Shiites were loyal to Iran. Leading Sunnis also used this perception to accuse Iraqi Shiites of harboring anti-Arab sentiment, especially during the Iranian Revolution in 1979.<sup>9</sup> This accusation, however, rarely bore resemblance to reality.

For Egypt and Iraq, the pre-colonial period introduced a pattern of repressive and authoritarian politics, a legacy that would influence the trajectory of both regimes. In Egypt, the military emerged as the cradle of authoritarianism, and the early entrenchment of its authority established a lasting precedent of armed intervention in government administration. This factor would manifest in an abundance of military coups and rule by non-civilian leaders throughout the twentieth century. Significantly, this legacy has reasserted itself today under President Sisi, who came to office in 2013 via a coup.<sup>10</sup> In Iraq, a country also beset by its share of military coups, repression was directed primarily toward the Shiite population. Discrimination against Shiites began early, as Baghdad was the seat of the prosperous Sunni Abbasid caliphate. The first few Abbasid caliphs actively suppressed Shiites, institutionalizing perceptions of Shiites as inferior and non-Arab, a

---

<sup>7</sup> "Middle East: Lebanon." *The World Factbook*. Central Intelligence Agency, 19 Apr. 2016. Web.

<sup>8</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 58-60.

<sup>9</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 223.

<sup>10</sup> Wedeman, Ben, Reza Sayah, and Matt Smith. "Coup Topples Egypt's Morsy; Deposed President under 'house Arrest'" CNN, 4 July 2013. Web.

condemnation that Saddam Hussein would utilize during one-party Baathist rule.<sup>11</sup> In both Egypt and Iraq, repressive politics drove a deep wedge between the rulers and subjects, and established a pattern of antagonism that would persist until the modern period.

Authoritarianism was notably absent during Lebanon's pre-colonial period, in large part due to the country's geography and the presence of multiple, equally sized religious groupings.<sup>12</sup> Decentralized rule solidified a sectarian geography, and ensured that no unifying power could break down the different religious allegiances. Furthermore, because the sects were largely equal in size, none was able to overpower the others, a fact that also explains why processes of Islamization remained incomplete. Lebanon's geographic position along the Mediterranean Sea, and the presence of three major port cities also prevented the rise of an authoritative power because each of the religious communities gained early financial autonomy through a massive, cross-country trade network.<sup>13</sup> In this regard, the country's sectarian geography proved advantageous and financial prosperity during the pre-colonial period produced relative (but temporary) quiescence.

Formal processes of state creation began for Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon following the Ottoman conquest in the sixteenth century. Although the three countries remained provinces within a large, foreign empire, the autonomous groups that had formed in the pre-colonial period aided early consolidation. As a result, administrative, bureaucratic, and representative institutions quickly solidified. Institutional consolidation occurred earliest in Egypt under Muhammad Ali who took cues from French Revolution ideology

---

<sup>11</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 58-59.

<sup>12</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 75.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 78.



and Napoleon, who invaded in 1798. Although French influence did facilitate state creation, Napoleon's conquest illustrated Egypt's susceptibility to foreign invasion.<sup>14</sup>

Similar processes of consolidation occurred in Iraq, but much later in the 1860s as part of the larger Tanzimat reforms.<sup>15</sup> These reforms established a bureaucratic system, enhanced fiscal regularity, and allowed Midhat Pasha (Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire) to institute a representative system similar to the one Egypt had developed a number of years prior.<sup>16</sup> In Lebanon, the Tanzimat reforms also produced an administrative bureaucracy, but the resultant representative system immediately took on a consociational form.<sup>17</sup> Experimentations in representative politics produced differentiated social classes in each of the fledgling states. A new urban middle class diminished the influence of traditional religious authorities and elites. As the various representative systems developed, this new class demanded further reforms, such as the establishment of multiparty, electoral politics. Political and representative reforms also paralleled economic improvements aimed toward industrialization, which also engendered a vocal demand for greater political participation among the new middle classes.

A surge in nationalism accompanied political and economic reform. Demands for independence from the Ottoman Empire and the growing desire of the new urban classes to break from the traditional elites garnered the attention of the European powers. In each of the three states, the European powers became entrenched as the Ottoman Empire began its decline, which ushered in a period of imperialism that would eventually

---

<sup>14</sup> Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 38.

<sup>15</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 13-14.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 5 & Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 7.

<sup>17</sup> Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon*, 46.

transform into direct colonialism.<sup>18</sup> In the following decades, nationalism would ultimately be used to demand independence from the Western powers.

Although European influence had been present in Egypt for a number of years, interest resurfaced again as the country continued to develop politically and economically.<sup>19</sup> European influence in Iraq existed largely because the Euphrates River formed a perfect link from Britain to its empire in India.<sup>20</sup> In Lebanon, the Europeans intervened to quell religious fighting between Maronites and the Druze population.<sup>21</sup> As the Ottoman Empire continued to decline, the populations of Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon pressed for independence. However, the three countries would soon come under European control, which proved antithetical to democracy.

Formal European rule began following the end of the First World War. The period of colonial rule was considerably long for each of the three countries, which halted the state- and nation-building processes that had emerged in the pre-colonial and Ottoman periods. Further, the proximity of the Middle East to the European colonizers, and the fact that the Europeans did not control as much territory as the Ottomans, enabled their administrators to impose direct rule. Direct rule ensured that the three countries would have significantly less autonomy than they were used to under previous colonial systems.

For Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon, the European colonial period served as a major hindrance toward state consolidation and legitimization. In each of the three countries, the British and the French installed hollow institutions of statehood and offered only

---

<sup>18</sup> Rogan, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East into the Modern State System*, 23.

<sup>19</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 250.

<sup>20</sup> Polk, *Understanding Iraq*, 70-71.

<sup>21</sup> Traboulsi, *A Modern History of Lebanon*, 21.

superficial tutelage.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, the colonial powers treated their respective territories as tools of economic exploitation. For instance, European influence in the nineteenth century had transformed Egypt into an export-oriented economy, a fact that would characterize the country's relationship with both the British and the French for the entirety of its history.<sup>23</sup> European economic domination was significantly more destructive in Egypt than in either Iraq or Lebanon, and this was in large part due to the country's proximity to the Mediterranean Sea and the construction of the Suez Canal, an essential waterway connecting Europe to South Asia. The high cost of building the Suez Canal rendered Egypt bankrupt and ultimately dependent on the European powers until Nasser nationalized the canal in 1956.<sup>24</sup> In fact, even before the colonial period had officially begun, the Europeans possessed almost total control over Egypt's economy. Under the British, Egypt became a monoculture, which prevented the formation of institutions of economic self-sufficiency. The lack of tutelage was tied to the British notion that the Protectorate over Egypt existed solely for the purpose of economic exploitation.<sup>25</sup> This behavior also helps explain why the British failed to establish institutions of self-governance, an issue that became especially problematic the longer the British retained de facto control over Egypt.

In Iraq economic manipulation centered on oil, which had been discovered in Kirkuk in 1927.<sup>26</sup> By 1931, the colonial powers ensured that oil money would constitute nearly 20 percent of all government revenues. Because oil was such a strategic

---

<sup>22</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 75; Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 257; Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 33-36 & Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 203-204.

<sup>23</sup> Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 63.

<sup>24</sup> Karabell, *Parting the Desert: The Creation of the Suez Canal*, 79.

<sup>25</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 257.

<sup>26</sup> Cleveland, *History of the Modern Middle East*, 208.

commodity, the British neglected other areas of the Iraqi economy, and similar to Egypt, actually discouraged industrialization and diversification.<sup>27</sup> Like the Suez Canal, the presence of oil in Iraq ensured that the British would retain influence in the country even after the Mandate had been formally abolished. In Lebanon, European influence manifested in an economy divided along sectarian lines.<sup>28</sup>

The types of political systems that the British and French imposed in each of their colonies were also significant to regime formation in Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon. In each of the colonies, the colonial powers aided the creation of representative institutions. However, these bodies though formally representative, were only nominally so because the two European powers staffed them with either colonial administrators or allowed only certain citizens to partake. Ironically, although the institutions were merely facades, each of the three Middle Eastern entities experienced a period of politicization stirred by one common goal: independence. While a number of political parties formed in all three countries, most of them were dedicated solely to achieving independence, which meant that they espoused limited platforms. Furthermore, once independence had been achieved, most of these parties dissolved.<sup>29</sup>

The processes of state consolidation and legitimatization, which had been largely on hold for a number of years due to colonialism, resumed in the post-independence transition period. Transformations during this period reveal critical differences among the three states. Initially, following Egyptian independence in 1922, a constitution established a monarchy with a bicameral legislature, and determined that elections for the

---

<sup>27</sup> Walker, *The Making of Modern Iraq*, 34.

<sup>28</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 202.

<sup>29</sup> Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 228; Cleveland, *History of the Modern Middle East*, 173 & Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 207.

first parliament would be held in 1924. The elections, though conducted peacefully, displayed very low levels of contestation, as the Wafd Party won nearly 90 percent of the vote.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, the post-independence parliament elected the country's first prime minister, ushering in a nonviolent transition to parliamentary democracy. However, with the British still entrenched, via the four reserved points, the new Egyptian government's priority was to achieve complete independence.<sup>31</sup> This focus delayed the development of distinctly Egyptian institutions of state and nationhood. Political instability remained a reality throughout the transition period, as numerous resignations and dissolutions of parliament prevented consolidation and legitimization of the newly "independent" state. The transition period represented a political tug-of-war among the British, the Egyptian king, and the various premiers. Severe political insecurity undercut the viability of the constitutional monarchy, and as a result the Free Officers led a coup in 1952 that abolished the monarchy and halted all political activity.<sup>32</sup>

Following the Free Officer coup, Egypt experienced relative stability under its successive leaders, Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak. However, such stability must be qualified, as it was achieved merely because the country underwent so few changes in political leadership. This high degree of stability was in this sense antithetical to democracy because it implied a complete suspension of political life. Personality-based politics, that reflected the ambitions of whoever was the leader, produced stability.

Although Egypt was stable in the sense that it experienced the fewest changes in political

---

<sup>30</sup> Marsot, *A Short History of Egypt*, 84.

<sup>31</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 286.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 294.

leadership in the period from 1952 to 2011, such stability was produced by undemocratic procedures.<sup>33</sup>

In Iraq, hopes for democracy remained high, as the country was the first of the Mandates to secure entry into the League of Nations in 1932 with a constitutional monarchy, elected parliament, legal structure, and army.<sup>34</sup> Similar to Egypt, however, the British retained de facto control over the country, which meant that Iraq had to align its foreign policies with British objectives. Continued British influence meant that the country could not develop a distinctly Iraqi domestic or foreign policy, a reality that existed in Egypt as well. Iraq's transition period was significantly less stable than Egypt's, as from 1932 to 1939 the country underwent twelve cabinet changes, multiple premiers, and a military coup in 1936.<sup>35</sup> Due to such rampant instability within the institutions of government, most political activity took place in extra-parliamentary organizations. Similar to Egypt, instability in Iraq prevented the state from consolidating and legitimizing its power. Although both Egypt and Iraq possessed the requisite structures and institutions, these establishments were hollow and foreign to the natives, as the British had staffed them with their own administrators. For many Egyptians and Iraqis, the institutions were simply colonial relics that failed to represent their needs and desires.

In Lebanon, the French colonizers played a more active role in establishing distinctly Lebanese political institutions, namely, consociational democracy.<sup>36</sup> Although

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 294-349; El-Bendary, *The Egyptian Revolution: Between Hope to Despair, Mubarak to Morsi*, 5-10 & Campagna, *From Accommodation to Confrontation: The Muslim Brotherhood in the Mubarak Years*, 283-291.

<sup>34</sup> Walker, *The Making of Modern Iraq*, 30.

<sup>35</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 79-100.

<sup>36</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 200.

the natives demanded independence from the French, the primary conflict existed between Maronites and Muslims, not the citizens and their colonizers. Unlike the British, the French colonizers did not staff the institutions with their own administrators, and the representative systems in place, though consociational in nature, were truly representative. Furthermore, the French imposed democratic reforms very early on. In 1922, the French inaugurated a new thirty-six member Representative Council, two-stage elections, universal male suffrage, and multimember communal constituencies.<sup>37</sup> The Lebanese elite, however, soon coopted the reforms and implemented a system of patronage. Elite usurpation occurred only in Lebanon because the Lebanese elites were significantly more powerful than those in Egypt, or Iraq because they had amassed substantial wealth due to centuries of lucrative Mediterranean trade. However, massive industrial expansion in 1935 challenged the elite grasp on political power, as a new urban middle class emerged to demand representation. The onset of the Second World War halted political reform, and throughout the war the British challenged France's hold on Lebanon, illustrating the fact that throughout its history, multiple powers have sought to dictate Lebanon's actions.<sup>38</sup> This condition becomes especially important considering that Lebanon did not achieve complete independence until 1946. Two years later, the outbreak of war in Palestine destabilized the regime, and before the country could adjust to its newfound independence, another external force prevented the Lebanese state from consolidating. Lebanon did witness a period of brief stability from 1953 to 1956 due to a

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 209.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 216-219.

new leader that ruled by decree, but continuous fighting from 1948 onwards has prevented the state from consolidating and legitimizing its power.<sup>39</sup>

All three states underwent another period of politicization throughout the transition phase. In Egypt, the failure of the state to provide basic social services produced the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928.<sup>40</sup> Although de facto colonial rule continued in all three countries, only Egypt experienced a turn toward political Islam.<sup>41</sup> In Iraq, political parties began to form following a period of stability after the 1941 coup. Most of these parties demanded democracy, but internal divisions and factionalism prevented their institutionalization.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, insecurity in the premiership resurfaced in the 1950s, and constant fluctuations thwarted political consolidation. In Lebanon, political parties were less important due to disruptive sectarian divisions, which ensured that most citizens adhered to their communal loyalties. Some parties did form but few of them were cross sectarian in composition.<sup>43</sup> For Lebanon, achieving consociational stability based on religious allegiances took priority over the institutionalization of political parties.

At this juncture it is important to assess how each state's failure to consolidate and legitimize its own power affected its political trajectory in the latter half of the nineteenth century until present. This analysis is central to a study of democracy because it is widely accepted that a stable or enduring democracy will not emerge in a state that has failed to consolidate and legitimize its power. At the most fundamental level, the long period of colonial rule served to prevent state consolidation. For a significant period of

---

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 236.

<sup>40</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 287.

<sup>41</sup> Saddam Hussein would later use certain tenets of Islam to manipulate the Iraqi population but he was not an Islamist, which was a reflection of a longer and more exploitative period of foreign domination.

<sup>42</sup> Tripp, *A History of Iraq*, 110-121.

<sup>43</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 237.



time, all three countries were forced to align their policy objectives with those of their colonizing power, which delayed the formation of a distinctly Egyptian, Iraqi, or Lebanese political culture. Each of the three countries also faced pressure from the League of Nations, which rushed the state creation process because in order to gain external legitimacy and sovereignty the states had to rapidly develop institutions of statehood.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, entry into the League required the incorporation of the region into the global capitalist network, and due to the late entry of the three countries, their positioning within the global system remained subordinate. In order to compensate, many Middle Eastern states worked to expand state institutions, such as the military and the police, economic enterprise, and the bureaucracy. Thus, “state expansion acted to concentrate resources and, consequently, power in the hands of the regimes that controlled the state, thereby paving the way for authoritarianism.”<sup>45</sup>

Simon Bromley notes that the subordinate position of many Middle Eastern countries forced post-independence regimes to become highly involved in their economies, and initiate programs of nationalization and land redistribution.<sup>46</sup> Bromley extends the argument, noting that in countries where the European powers were in control of the economy, such as Egypt, state formation evolved primarily from an anti-imperial impetus.<sup>47</sup> Further, those classes of people typically associated with colonial rule (i.e. large landowners) were repressed, and this suppression “led to the creation of an authoritarian political system.”<sup>48</sup> In both Egypt and Iraq, the institutions of statehood

---

<sup>44</sup> Rogan, *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East into the Modern State System*, 23-26.

<sup>45</sup> Pratt, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Arab World*, 5-6.

<sup>46</sup> Bromley, Simon. *Rethinking Middle East Politics: State Formation and Development*. Cambridge: Polity: Blackwell, 1993. Print.

<sup>47</sup> Pratt, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Arab World*, 6.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

developed in the immediate post-independence period illustrate a link between authoritarianism and postcolonial state creation. As I noted above, processes of state creation were largely initiated to resolve economic problems created by years of foreign domination. Additionally, Bromley emphasizes that the process of dismantling colonial structures coincided with the repression of native groups that typically benefited from colonial rule. Subsequent processes of cooptation and the continuous expansion of the bureaucracy facilitated the concentration of resources into the hands of state executives, solidifying a system of authoritarianism that was backed by massive financial reserves.<sup>49</sup>

Additionally, many institutions developed during the immediate post-independence period were conceived as imperial remnants—none of the countries had time to develop a set of institutions contoured to the needs of their citizens. Once each country had achieved formal independence and gained membership into the League, external pressures and continued European imperialism served to disrupt processes of consolidation and legitimization. Thus, the state creation process was delayed again or it proceeded haphazardly.

### **Conclusions**

Considering the divided nature of Lebanon's society, the fact that it has been better able to engender a political regime that meets some of the conditions that are typically associated with democracy than either Egypt or Iraq enables me to derive a number of compelling, but tentative, arguments about democracy. Although religious divisions in Lebanon have contributed to political instability throughout the country's history, such divisions have also served as a mechanism to prevent the formation of a

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 7-8.

dictatorial or authoritarian regime. Two factors substantiate this argument: the strength of the Lebanese elites and the roughly equal size of each of Lebanon's religious groups.<sup>50</sup>

As I noted above, the elite class in Lebanon remains stronger than in either Egypt or Iraq and this can in large part be attributed to centuries of lucrative Mediterranean trade.<sup>51</sup> While both Egypt and Iraq formed authoritarian regimes in the pre-colonial and Ottoman periods, such a regime did not emerge in Lebanon largely because the elite class, which was composed of members from each religious sect, commanded significant power. Widespread prosperity among Lebanon's elite class combined with the fact that the different religious sects all possessed financial autonomy, ensured that none of the groups would attempt to overwhelm the others and establish an authoritarian regime.<sup>52</sup> Yet, this legacy has not always proved advantageous. Though it certainly prevented the rise of an authoritarian power, it has also produced a government that is not particularly responsive to its citizens, mainly because the elites still control significant wealth. Further, the consociational system, which guarantees representation for each religious sect, has prevented a compromise among the elites that would sustain a meaningful democratic system.<sup>53</sup> Currently, the absence of elite unification in the highest offices of government stands as an obstacle to democratic reform.

The size of Lebanon's various religious groups also helps explain why the country is not ruled by an authoritarian regime like Egypt or Iraq. The major religious factions are roughly equal in size, and as a result, none of the factions is strong enough or even numerous enough to overwhelm the others, essentially protecting against an authoritarian

---

<sup>50</sup> CIA World Factbook 2016.

<sup>51</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 75.

<sup>52</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 371.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, 370.

regime led by Christians, Muslims, or Druzes.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, throughout Lebanon's history, each of these different groups has at one point or another possessed significant prestige, political clout, and financial resources, which demonstrates that none of the factions has experienced undisrupted historical ascendancy. For this reason, democracy is, ostensibly, the best method to ensure the representation of each religious group. In theory, then, democracy in Lebanon should flourish.

Yet a closer examination reveals that Lebanon is missing a number of prerequisites for democracy, many of which I highlighted in my literature review. Before I continue, however, I must reinforce that much of Lebanon's instability stems from the country's geographic position, and the fact that throughout history Lebanon has found itself in the cross-current of various regional conflicts in Israel, Palestine, Syria, Iran, and Iraq.<sup>55</sup> These challenges have made it very difficult for the state to consolidate and legitimize its power, which as noted by a wide range of scholars, is one of the critical requirements for the establishment of a stable and legitimate democratic regime. Had Lebanon not been forced to contend with continuous violence beginning in 1948, it would be interesting to see what type of regime the state could have formed. It is also important to emphasize the length of European domination, which stretched officially from 1918 until 1943, though one could argue that domination actually began in 1843 when the French inaugurated the *qa'im maqamiya*.<sup>56</sup> Additionally, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the French and the British vied for control over Lebanon, which contributed significantly to political instability. It becomes clear that throughout its history, Lebanon has been caught in a barrage of other countries' conflicts.

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 371.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 370.

<sup>56</sup> Traboulsi, A History of Modern Lebanon, 21-23.

The above two factors help explain why Lebanon today possesses only a fledgling democracy. Robert Dahl, whose theories I discussed in my introduction, argues that for a political system to be a democracy it must be responsive to its citizens. In order to meet this requirement, the political regime must issue eight guarantees: (1) freedom of association, (2) freedom of expression, (3) the right to vote, (4) the ability to run for public office barring reasonable restrictions, (5) the right of politicians to campaign and compete for votes, (6) multiple sources of information, (7) free and fair elections, and (8) institutions to develop policy based on voter preference.<sup>57</sup> Currently, Lebanon fails to meet six of Dahl's eight conditions. Although the country does not limit freedom of association, it imposes severe curtails on freedom of expression and on the press. The country is particularly hostile to journalists, and the most recent government has imposed strict censorship laws that regulate the arts, the publication of books, and the media generally.<sup>58</sup> Lebanon also falls short on Dahl's fourth criterion, the right to vote. Although both men and women possess full suffrage, the ability to exercise the right remains limited because the current parliament has suspended the past few elections. Elections that *were* held have generally been free and fair, but they remain highly irregular.<sup>59</sup> Dahl also emphasizes that citizens must possess the ability to run for public office; this condition is necessarily limited by Lebanon's power-sharing formula. For instance, Druzes, Muslims, atheists, and all other non-Maronites are barred from the presidency, and similarly, no Christian, Druze, or Shiite could hold the premiership.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Dahl, *Polyarchy*, 5.

<sup>58</sup> Freedom House 2015.

<sup>59</sup> In his theory, Wolfgang Merkel addresses the issue of irregular elections. One of his criteria for democracy, which works within the framework of five interconnected partial regimes, is free fair, and regular elections.

<sup>60</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 224-225.

Dahl's eighth condition requires institutions that develop policy based on voter preference; Lebanon fails to meet this prerequisite. Because the current consociational system prioritizes the power-sharing balance, it often fails to develop any meaningful policy or achieve what voters demand. The system is so attuned to its multiple competing factions that retaining balance and stability takes precedence over policy. Policy development is also limited by the fact that consociational systems trend toward deadlock, which is especially obvious in Lebanon where each of the sects in parliament retains veto power over the others.<sup>61</sup>

Although high levels of public contestation exist in the sense that there are multiple competing groups, the number of participants is limited because of the power-sharing formula in place and the fact that elites still retain control over the system. According to Giacomo Luciani, who has attempted to typify the Arab state, argues that elite control represents a feature common to many countries in the region. He contends that even though a large middle class exists, it does not wield significant power.<sup>62</sup> Luciani's argument is particularly relevant for Lebanon. Wolfgang Merkel's contributions to democratic theory also become relevant. His argument outlines five partial regimes that characterize modern liberal democracies. Four of these regimes overlap with Dahl's prerequisites, but his fifth condition, that the state must have protection from nonelected groups that wish to overrule or overthrow the government, is especially important to my considerations as it helps explain why the Lebanese system is so unstable.<sup>63</sup> Two groups have historically threatened to completely destabilize the government: the PLO, which from 1967 until the 1980s operated a state within a state in

---

<sup>61</sup> Kamrava, *The Modern Middle East*, 370-371.

<sup>62</sup> Milton-Edwards, *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*, 11.

<sup>63</sup> Merkel, *Embedded and Defective Democracies*, 40.

Lebanon, and Hezbollah.<sup>64</sup> Today, the state faces significant pressure from Hezbollah, which has partially infiltrated the government as many allied politicians have gained office under the guise of the Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc Party. The group also maintains a paramilitary organization, the Jihad Council, which is believed to be more powerful than the Lebanese Army.<sup>65</sup> This has enabled Hezbollah to establish a state within a state, similar to the PLO in the late 1960s, and its power is only increasing. Currently, because the paramilitary wing is so strong the Lebanese state does not possess any sort of protection from this group.

Egypt possesses a number of conditions that typically facilitate the formation of democracy. For instance, the country has possessed historically high levels of homogeneity and territorial unity, a large youth population, and significant economic potential due to the Suez Canal, moderate oil reserves, and a bustling tourism industry. Yet, the country remains highly authoritarian. The authoritarian and dictatorial nature of Egypt's regime can be attributed to two factors: the role that foreign powers played in delaying the process of state creation, and the ways in which Egypt's rulers have justified their authoritarian policies using this history of foreign domination and the presence of external threats.<sup>66</sup>

Of the three countries I have considered, Egypt underwent the longest period of foreign domination. It could be argued that European domination began as early as 1798, following Napoleon's invasion and his and Muhammad Ali's subsequent reforms that essentially transformed Egypt into an export-oriented economy to provide raw goods for

---

<sup>64</sup> Harris, *Lebanon: A History, 600-2011*, 248-251.

<sup>65</sup> Freedom House 2015.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

the European powers.<sup>67</sup> But even prior to this period, Egypt was a province of the Ottoman Empire, and before that remained a domain in multiple foreign Islamic empires. Foreign domination continued throughout the early nineteenth century, as European-imposed institutions such as the *Caisse de la Dette Publique* and Dual Control gave the foreigners a foothold in the country. In the 1860s, the construction of the Suez Canal rendered Egypt bankrupt and essentially dependent on foreign powers.<sup>68</sup> European control was officially sanctioned by the League of Nations in the twentieth century, and although Egypt gained formal independence in 1922, Britain retained de facto control until the Suez Canal Crisis in 1956.

The argument can be made that Egypt's rulers in the latter half of the twentieth century and Sisi today have used Egypt's long period of foreign domination to justify their authoritarian policies. Nasser, Mubarak, and Sisi have invoked such a rationalization, and Mubarak and Sisi have also used the threat of external actors to justify similar dictatorial behavior. Although Nasser did not formally come to power until 1954, he was instrumental in the 1952 Free Officer coup that was launched essentially as an attempt to expel the British from the Canal Zone. Various Anglo-Egyptian treaties devised in the 1930s and 1940s had proven ineffective at securing complete independence, as the British retained an upper hand in the negotiations.<sup>69</sup> For the Free Officers, a coup was the only way to secure independence and break the pattern of foreign domination that stretched back to the eighteenth century. Once Nasser attained office he ruled as an autocrat and displayed repugnancy to foreign domination through his domestic and regional policies, such as his nationalization of almost all Egyptian

---

<sup>67</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 189.

<sup>68</sup> Karabell, *Parting the Desert: The Creation of the Suez Canal*, 74.

<sup>69</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 275-280.



facilities and his shift toward pan-Arabism that manifested in the Arab Socialist Union.<sup>70</sup> To retain his position, he established a security apparatus, a move that sealed his fate as an authoritarian ruler.

Nasser's death in 1970 and Sadat's ascent to the presidency only substantiate my claim. Sadat's foreign and domestic policies differed significantly from Nasser's. Sadat established relations with the West and even with Israel following his visit to Jerusalem in 1977.<sup>71</sup> He also attempted a liberalization of political life and the economy, allowing an influx of foreign Western investment and influence. His policies sparked a failed military coup in June 1981, and only a few months later he was assassinated "at the peak" of his unpopularity.<sup>72</sup> Sadat's policies, especially his attempts toward Westernization and liberalization, were ostensibly the cause of his assassination. Interestingly, the last time that Egypt attempted significant Westernization and liberalization occurred under Muhammad Ali, Said, and Ismail, the three leaders whose policies resulted in European domination in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>73</sup>

Mubarak's rise to power following Sadat's assassination also provides important insight into this argument. Although he was nominated by the National Assembly and confirmed through an election, Mubarak utilized Sadat's reputation as a pro-Western leader to establish a state of emergency, which then enabled him to rule by decree with backing from the military.<sup>74</sup> He also worked to reestablish relations with the Arab countries that Sadat had alienated through his pro-Western policies and visit to

---

<sup>70</sup> Ginat, *Egypt's Incomplete Revolution: Lutfi Al-Khuli and Nasser's Socialism in the 1960s*, 149.

<sup>71</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 326.

<sup>72</sup> Kepel, Gilles. *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and Pharaoh*. First ed. Berkeley: U of California, 2003. Print.

<sup>73</sup> Vatikiotis, *The History of Modern Egypt*, 59-6 & Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 248-251.

<sup>74</sup> Thompson, *A History of Egypt*, 342.

Jerusalem. Additionally, Mubarak used the growing popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood to strengthen his already iron fist. He proclaimed the group a threat to Egyptian society, and subsequently curtailed their power through legislative measures, and even used Egypt's Supreme Military Court to arrest and sentence nearly 1,400 Islamists in the span of one year.<sup>75</sup> Mubarak also used the presence of the Muslim Brotherhood to curtail political activity for all citizens, diminishing already low levels of public contestation. Mubarak was eventually ousted in the 2011 Egyptian revolt, but events in the current decade only substantiate the authoritarian argument.

In the first election following the revolt, the Muslim Brotherhood won majority of the seats, and Mohamed Morsi, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood was elected as Egypt's fifth president.<sup>76</sup> In 2013, Sisi used the Muslim Brotherhood's electoral victory to justify a military coup to remove them from power. Currently, Sisi rules as a dictator, and promotes authoritarian policies rationalized by the presence of threats to the regime.

Currently, Egypt fails to meet almost all of Dahl's criteria for democratic regimes. In theory all citizens (barring reasonable restriction) possess the right to vote, but as in Lebanon, the ability to exercise that right is limited because Sisi rules as a dictator. Further, free and fair elections are not a reality in Egypt, and have not been since even prior to Nasser's ascent to power in 1956. The country held an election in 2014 but it was conducted largely to reaffirm Sisi's power, as he won 93 percent of the vote, illustrating a completely lopsided and fraudulent victory.<sup>77</sup> The ability of citizens to run for office has also been historically limited, and it appears that the only guaranteed way to attain office

---

<sup>75</sup> Campagna, From Accommodation to Confrontation: The Muslim Brotherhood in the Mubarak Years, 295-297.

<sup>76</sup> Maqbool, Egypt Crisis: Mass Protests over Morsi Grip Cities.

<sup>77</sup> Guerin, Egypt Election: Sisi Secures Landslide Win.

is either through a partnership with the military or through a coup. The government has also curtailed various civil liberties, such as freedom of association, expression, and press. Voluntary organizations are forced to remain apolitical, and censorship remains rampant, exemplified by the military's seizure in 2014 of Egypt's largest private newspaper, *Al-Masry al-Youm*.<sup>78</sup> Additionally, Sisi does not tolerate opposition, and as of 2015 majority of dissidents had been completely marginalized. A vast network of surveillance that has been in place since Nasser's tenure continues to create an atmosphere of antagonism and paranoia. Finally, responsive institutions are largely nonexistent because the military is in control of almost all of Egypt's facilities. For these reasons, it is becoming increasingly difficult to challenge the authoritarian government.

Egypt also fails all five of Merkel's democratic criteria, and the country's rulers have used his fifth criterion—protection against nonelected groups—to justify their authoritarian policies. This pattern is becoming increasingly pronounced as the Muslim Brotherhood gains in popularity as an alternative to the dictatorial regime. Furthermore, political violence engendered by the 2011 revolt has spread across the country, and presented itself as another justification for authoritarian rule. Various militant groups have declared allegiance to ISIS, and other violent organizations have begun to carry out attacks in Egypt's most populous cities. In North Sinai, isolated attacks have largely transformed into an entrenched insurgency.<sup>79</sup> Sisi exploits the fact that much of this violence emerged during or immediately following the 2011 revolt to justify his dictatorship.

---

<sup>78</sup> Freedom House 2015.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

As I discussed in my introduction, Roger Owen delineates three types of states present in the Middle East today: the colonial state, the immediate post-independent state, and the authoritarian state.<sup>80</sup> Egypt presents an interesting case as it exists as somewhat of a hybrid between a colonial and an authoritarian state. Or, more accurately, Egypt's history as a colonial state has produced in Egypt the characteristics of an authoritarian state, such as heavy military involvement. In this regard, Egypt's authoritarian regime is predicated on its past colonial status. Beverly Milton-Edwards has also discussed extensively the presence of authoritarianism in many Middle Eastern states, noting the connection between legacies of colonialism and imperialism and present-day authoritarian regimes.<sup>81</sup> It is clear that Egypt aligns closely with these theories.

In order to examine the lack of democracy in Iraq, it is important to analyze the effects of the United States invasion in 2003. In doing so, a number of arguments about democracy become evident. Most significantly, the experience of the United States in Iraq demonstrates that democracy cannot be imposed by a foreign power, especially if the foreign power does not dedicate sufficient resources, personnel, and time. The United States' desire to exit Iraq shortly after toppling Saddam's regime is evident in Bush's statement in April 2003, only one month after the invasion, that Iraq had been liberated.<sup>82</sup> Although the United States ultimately occupied the country until 2011, such a protracted occupation was originally unplanned but the resultant civil war and insurgency—caused by America's conduct during the war—required that the United States extend its stay. Not only was the United States unprepared for such a venture, but also various actions committed by the United States army against the Iraqi people produced significant

---

<sup>80</sup> Milton-Edwards, *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*, 11-12.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>82</sup> Bush, *President Bush Outlines Progress in Operation Iraqi Freedom*.

antagonism that prevented a partnership necessary to try to establish a democracy.<sup>83</sup> The military's policies also helped produce instability throughout the country; for instance, the immediate de-Baathification program not only heightened sectarian tension but it destabilized the entire Iraqi system that had been in place for decades.<sup>84</sup> And significantly, the democratic reforms that the United States did impose were fundamentally flawed because the United States did not actually consult Iraqis in the process. For instance, American lawyers penned the Transitional Administrative Law, Iraq's interim constitution, without input from Iraqi citizens.<sup>85</sup>

A second argument essential to my analysis is the fact that Iraq did not have sufficient time to create the structures necessary to serve three distinct groups of people: Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds (who compose about 20 percent of Iraq's population).<sup>86</sup> Although the 2010 elections showed some cross-sectarianism in voting patterns, Nouri al-Maliki, Iraq's prime minister since 2006 and a Shiite, rules as an authoritarian, and quickly prevented the cross-sectarian coalition from engaging in meaningful change.<sup>87</sup> It could be argued that Maliki's authoritarian rule stems from an extended period of Shiite discrimination, as the Shiites' hold on power may have appeared tenuous in the face of centuries of Sunni domination. Thus, Maliki's dictatorial policies may ostensibly be a result of the desire of Shiites to hold onto their newfound power. Years of one-party, Sunni Baathist rule only substantiate this argument.

---

<sup>83</sup> Chandrasekharan, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone*, 67.

<sup>84</sup> Pelham, *The Two Stripes of the Arab World: Shia Protestantism and the Sunni Counter-Reformation*, 109.

<sup>85</sup> Sayej, *The Iraq Papers*, 283.

<sup>86</sup> CIA World Factbook, 2016.

<sup>87</sup> Cole, *The Rise of Religious and Ethnic Mass Politics in Iraq*, 62.

The third argument I posit is that the historic ethnic and religious divide in Iraq only reaffirms the contention that it is challenging to build a democracy in a deeply divided state, as already demonstrated by the challenges Lebanon encountered and continues to encounter. Events during the Iraq War did not remedy this divide, and in fact, as I discussed above, many actions actually worsened the situation. Further, during his time in office from 2006 until 2014, Maliki used sectarian rhetoric to achieve his goals and consolidate his power.<sup>88</sup> Since 2014 a new leader, Haider al-Abadi, has ruled as prime minister, and has implemented an unwritten power-sharing agreement, but this system may have the same fate as Lebanon's consociational democracy: persistent deadlock and instability.<sup>89</sup>

In order to further explain why Iraq does not possess a democracy I must turn to a number of theoretical arguments. Iraq fails multiple of Dahl's eight criteria. Although the country's past few elections have been deemed relatively free and fair, the government has limited civil liberties, such as freedoms of association, expression, and information. These freedoms are sanctified in the constitution, but nevertheless, majority of the country's media outlets are not independent of political forces. The country also remains hostile to journalists and criticism; under Maliki the government issued numerous arrest warrants for journalists, and the army invaded the offices of an Iraqi TV network that had broadcasted disapproval of Maliki.<sup>90</sup> Like Egypt, contesting the government is growing increasingly difficult, and this is especially so as ISIS continues to expand its presence in Iraq. The threat of ISIS and the prominence of other violent groups have been used to justify the imposition of strict censorship laws, the curbing of political liberties, and other

---

<sup>88</sup> Dodge, *Iraq: From War to a New Authoritarianism*, 203.

<sup>89</sup> Freedom House, 2015.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

numerous undemocratic policies. The threat of nonelected groups is essential to Merkel's argument, and like both Egypt and Lebanon, Iraq faces significant pressures from groups attempting to overthrow the government. In Iraq, the absence of a protection from unelected groups remains most pronounced due to the increasing strength of ISIS, which as of 2014 controls nearly one third of the country's territory.<sup>91</sup>

According to Roger Owen, Iraq would classify as a colonial state, and one could ostensibly argue that it is also an imperial state due to the eight-year occupation by the United States military.<sup>92</sup> Yet, in many ways Iraq could also classify as an authoritarian state, a legacy left by decades of one-party rule and military involvement under Saddam Hussein. Following his overthrow, Iraq began a transition to participatory democracy, but it remains incomplete due to the resurfacing of authorities leaders such as Maliki. As I noted above, the troubled transition also highlights the impossibility of foreign-imposed democracy, and the difficulty of establishing a regime in a country with a deeply divided population.

The historical, political, and comparative analysis of these three cases reveals the significance of historical legacies. The Egyptian case exposes the link between foreign domination and authoritarianism. Iraq too highlights this correlation, but also demonstrates that democracy cannot be exported by foreign powers, nor can it be imposed on a divided population without an extensive process of reconciliation. Lebanon's troubled experience with consociational democracy highlights the difficulty of

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Milton-Edwards, *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*, 11.

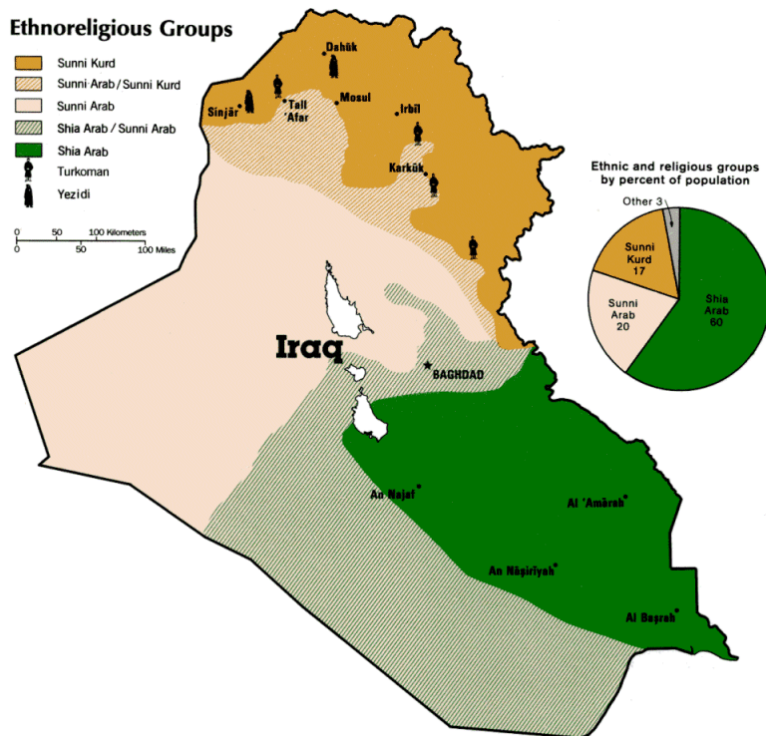
developing a system that engages the separate factions of society but that does not trend toward political deadlock.

In order to develop a generalized theory of democracy for the Middle East, it is essential to study other failed transitions in the region. Although these three cases reveal substantial information, the experiences of each country in the region are vastly different and an analysis of each would allow future researchers to posit a more succinct theory that captures broader regional themes. In this study I attempted to show the detrimental effects of colonialism and foreign domination on both state consolidation and democratization. However, it would be crucial to analyze a country in the region that experienced only limited foreign intervention, such as Saudi Arabia or Iran. An analysis of these two cases would reveal arguments about democracy that this study could not. For this reason, it is imperative to conduct comparative analyses of each country in the region, but it is also fundamentally important to avoid attributing essential characteristics to the region.

Any future study of democracy in the Middle East will also need to take into account a number of increasingly formidable challenges, such as population growth, environmental pollution, and water scarcity. A study of this breadth is vital, especially in a time when democracy has been faltering-worldwide. The three case studies I have considered here are part of a larger project critical to preserving the future of representative government.

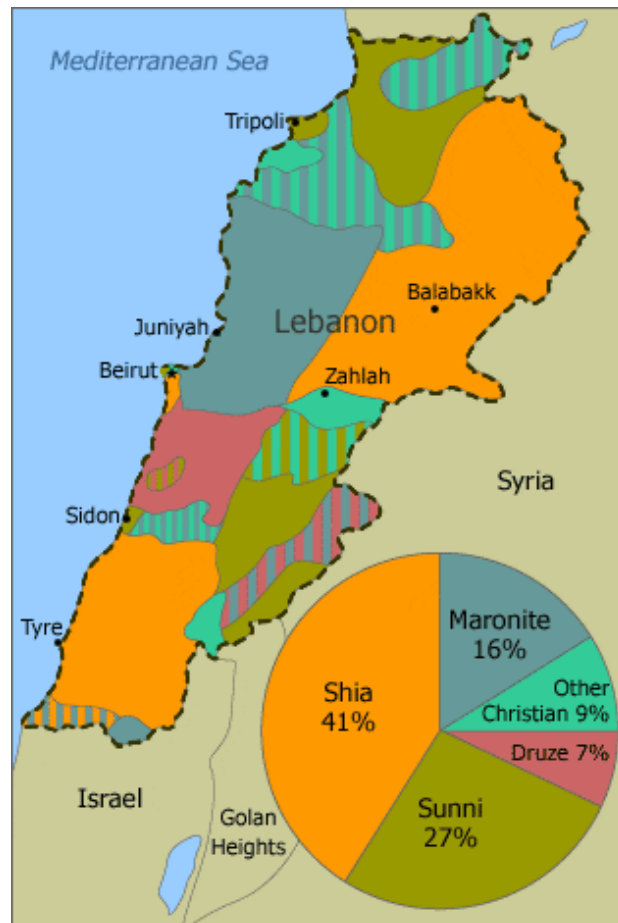


## APPENDIX

Appendix A: Present-Day Sectarian Map of Iraq<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marsh, Denali. "Ethnoreligious Map of Iraq: Sunni Arabs in Tan, Shia Arabs in Green, and Kurds in Yellow." *Understanding the Rise of ISIS*. Global State, 2015. Web.

## Appendix B: Present-Day Sectarian Map of Lebanon<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Cole, Juan. "Map of Lebanon by Religious Sect." *Informed Comment: Thoughts on the Middle East, History and Religion*. Ann Arbor: 2010. Web.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abisaab, Malek. "‘Unruly’ Factory Women in Lebanon: Contesting French Colonialism and the National State." *Journal of Women’s History* 16.3 (Fall 2003): 55-82.
- Abu-Husayn, Abdul-Rahim. *The View from Istanbul: Ottoman Lebanon and the Druze Emirate*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2004. Print.
- Abu Khalil, Asad. "Change and Democratisation in the Arab World: The Role of Political Parties." *Third World Quarterly* 18.1 (1997): 14-63. Web.
- Ahmad Al-Kubaysi, Shaykh. "Insurgency, Counterinsurgency, or Civil War?" *The Iraq Papers*. Ed. John Ehrenberg, J. Patrice McSherry, Jose Ramon Sanchez, and Caroleen Marji Sayej. New York: Oxford UP, 2010. 259. Print.
- Ajami, Fouad. "On Nasser and His Legacy." *Journal of Peace Research* 11.1 (1974): 41-49. Web.
- Ajami, Fouad. *The Vanished Imam: Musa Al Sadr and the Shia of Lebanon*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1992. Print.
- Akarli, Engin. *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon, 1861-1920*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1992. Print.
- "Al-Abadi Praises Iraq-Syria-Russia-Iran Cooperation in Terror Fight." *Tehran Times* 7 Oct. 2015: Print.
- Alin, Erika. *The United States and the 1958 Lebanon Crisis: American Intervention in the Middle East*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1994. Print.
- Anderson, Lisa. "Arab Democracy: Dismal Prospects." *World Policy Journal* 18.3 (2001): 53-60. Web.

- Anderson, Lisa. "The State in the Middle East and North Africa." *Comparative Politics* 20. October (1987): 1-18. Web.
- Anderson, Lisa. "Democracy in the Arab World: A Critique of the Political Culture Approach." *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World*. Ed. Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany, and Paul Noble. Vol. 1. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995. 77-92. Print.
- Attíe, Caroline. *Struggle in the Levant: Lebanon in the 1950s*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2004. Print.
- Auda, Gehad. "Egypt's Uneasy Party Politics." *Journal of Democracy* Spring 2.2 (1991): Web.
- Ayubi, Nazih. *Overstating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East*. New York: I. B. Tauris, 1995. Print.
- Aziz, T. M. "The Role of Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadr in Shi'i Political Activism in Iraq from 1958 to 1980." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25.2 (1993). Print.
- Baaklini, Abdo, Guilain Denoeux, and Robert Springborg. *Legislative Politics in the Arab World: The Resurgence of Democratic Institutions*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999. Print.
- Barak, Oren. *The Lebanese Army: A National Institution in a Divided Society*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009. Print.
- Baram, Amatzia. "Religious Extremism and Ecumenical Tendencies in Modern Iraqi Shi'ism." *The Sunna and Shi'a in History*. Ed. Ofra Bengio and Meir Litvak. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 105-21. Print.

- Barkey, Henri. *The Politics of Economic Reform in the Middle East*. New York: St. Martin's, 1992. Print.
- Batatu, Hanna. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes and of Its Communists, Ba'athists, and Free Officers*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1978. Print.
- Beblawi, Hazem, and Giacomo Luciani, eds. *The Rentier State in the Arab World*. London: Croom Helm, 1987. Print.
- Bellin, Eva. "Contingent Democrats: Industrialists, Labor, and Democratization in Late Developing Countries." *World Politics* 52. January (2000): 175-205. Web.
- Bellin, Eva. *Stalled Democracy: Capital, Labor, and the Paradox of State-Sponsored Development*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2002. Print.
- El-Bendary, Mohamed. *The Egyptian Revolution: Between Hope to Despair, Mubarak to Morsi*. New York: Algora, 2013. Print.
- Bengio, Ofra. "Shi'is and Politics in Ba'thi Iraq." *Middle Eastern Studies* 21.1 (1985): 1-14. *JSTOR*. Web. 21 Dec. 2012.
- Bermeo, Nancy. "Myths of Moderation: Confrontation and Conflict During Democratic Transitions." *Comparative Politics* April 29 (1997): 305-22. Web.
- Botman, Selma. *Egypt from Independence to Revolution, 1919-1952*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1991. Print.
- Bromley, Simon. *Rethinking Middle East Politics*. Austin: U of Texas, 1994. Print.
- Bromley, Simon. *Rethinking Middle East Politics: State Formation and Development*. Cambridge: Polity: Blackwell, 1993. Print.
- Brooks, Risa. *Political-Military Relations and the Stability of Arab Regimes*. Oxford:

- Oxford UP for IISS, 1998. Print
- Burnell, Peter. "Arrivals and Departures: A Preliminary Classification of Democratic Failures and their Explanation." *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 36 (1998): Web.
- Campagna, Joel. "From Accommodation to Confrontation: The Muslim Brotherhood in the Mubarak Years." *Journal of International Affairs* 50.1 (1996): Web.
- Carothers, Thomas. "Democracy Assistance: The Question of Strategy." *Democratization* 4.3 (1997): Web.
- Center for Human Rights Legal Aid. "Egyptian Politics: The Friction of a Multiparty System." Cairo, 1993. Web.
- Chandrasekaran, Rajiv. *Imperial Life in The Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone*. First ed. New York: Vintage, 2007. Print.
- Chaudhry, Kiren Aziz. "The Price of Wealth: Business and State in Labor Remittance and Oil Economies." *International Organization* 43 (1989): 101-145. Web.
- Chehabi, H. E., and Juan J. Linz, eds. *Sultanistic Regimes*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1998. Print.
- Churchill, Charles. *The Druze and the Maronites under the Turkish Rule from 1840 to 1860s*. London: Bernard Quaritch, 1862. Print.
- Cleveland, William L. *History of the Modern Middle East*. 3rd ed. Boulder: Westview, 2004. Print.
- "Coalition Provisional Authority Order Number 1, May 16, 2003." *The Iraq Papers*. Ed. John Ehrenberg, J. Patrice McSherry, Jose Ramon Sanchez, and Caroleen Marji Sayej. New York: Oxford UP, 2010. 184. Print.

- Cole, Juan. "Map of Lebanon by Religious Sect." *Informed Comment: Thoughts on the Middle East, History and Religion*. Ann Arbor: 2010. Web.
- Cole, Juan R. I. "The Rise of Religious and Ethnic Mass Politics in Iraq." *Religion and Nationalism in Iraq*. Ed. David Little and Donald K. Swearer. Cambridge: President and Fellows of Harvard U, 2006. Print.
- Cole, Juan R. I. "Shiite Parties and the Democratic Process in Iraq." *Political Change in the Arab Gulf States: Stuck in Transition*. Ed. Mary Ann Tetreault, Gwenn Okruhlik, and Andrzej Kapiszewski. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2011. Print.
- Colhoun, Jack. "Washington Watch: How Bush Backed Iraq." *Middle East Report* 176 (1992): 35-37. Web.
- Cooper, Mark. *The Transformation of Egypt*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1982. Print.
- Crow, Ralph. "Religious Sectarianism in the Lebanese Political System." *The Journal of Politics* 24.3 (1962): 489-520. Web.
- Crystal, Jill. *Oil and Politics in the Gulf*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1995. Print.
- Dagher, Sam. "Ex-Hussein Officials and Others Go on Trial." *The New York Times* [New York] 28 Dec. 2008, New York ed., A8 sec. Print.
- Dahl, Robert A. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1971. Print.
- Dawisha, Adeed. "Identity" and Political Survival in Saddam's Iraq." *Middle East Journal* 53.4 (1999): 553-67. *JSTOR*. Web. 7 Sept. 2011.
- Dawisha, Adeed, and I. William Zartman, eds. *Beyond Coercion: The Durability of the Arab State*. London: Croom Helm, 1988. Print.
- Marsh, Denali. "Ethnoreligious Map of Iraq: Sunni Arabs in Tan, Shia Arabs in Green,

- and Kurds in Yellow." *Understanding the Rise of ISIS*. Global State, 2015. Web.
- Diamond, Larry, Juan Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset. *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1990. Print.
- Diamond, Larry. *Political Culture and Democracy in Developing Countries*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993. Print.
- Dodge, Toby. "Conclusion." *Iraq: From War to a New Authoritarianism*. Washington, DC: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Print.
- Dominguez, Jorge, and Anthony Jones, eds. *The Construction of Democracy: Lessons from Practice and Research*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2007. Print.
- Democratic Transition and Consolidation.
- Drysdale, Alasdair, and Gerald H. Blake. *The Middle East and North Africa: A Political Geography*. New York: Oxford UP, 1985. Print.
- "Egypt's External Debt Drops to \$39.9 Bn at End of March - Central Bank." *Aswat Masriya*. 1 June 2015. Web.
- EgyptSource. "Info graphic: Sisi's Approval Ratings over the Past Year." *Atlantic Council*. 8 June 2015. Web.
- Executive Office of the President. George W. Bush. *President Bush Outlines Progress in Operation Iraqi Freedom. News Archive*. The White House: President George W. Bush, 16 Apr. 2003. Web.
- Ezrow, Natasha M. "Briefing Paper: The Importance of Parties and Party System Institutionalization in New Democracies." *Institute for Democracy and Conflict Resolution* (2011). Web.



- Fantappie, Maria. "Contested Consolidation of Power in Iraq." *The Carnegie Papers*. February 2013 (2013): 3. Print.
- Farha, Mark. "Demographic Dilemmas." *Lebanon: Liberation, Conflict, and Crisis*. Barry Rubin, ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 83-97. Print.
- Fawcett, Louise, ed. *International Relations of the Middle East*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2013. Print.
- Fearon, James D. "Iraq's Civil War: No Graceful Exit." *Foreign Affairs* March/April (2007): Print.
- Feaver, Peter. "Civil-Military Relations." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999): 211-41. Web.
- Feldman, Noah. "The Democratic Fatwa: Islam and Democracy in the Realms of Constitutional Politics." *Oklahoma Law Review* 58.1 (2005): 7. Print.
- Fletcher, Lehman. *Egypt's Agriculture in a Reform Era*. Iowa City: Iowa State UP, 1996. Print.
- Flora, Peter, Stein Kuhnle, and Derek Urwin, eds. *State Formation, Nation-Building, and Mass Politics in Europe: The Theory of Stein Rokkan*. New York: Oxford University, 1999. Print. Comparative European Politics.
- Gause, Gregory F., III. "Regional Influences on Experiments in Political Liberalization in the Arab World." *Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World*. Ed. Rex Brynen, Bahgat Korany, and Paul Noble. Vol. 1. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995. 283-306. Print. Theoretical Perspectives.
- Gerber, Haim. *Social Origins of the Modern Middle East*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1987. Print.

- Gerner, Deborah J, and Jillian Schwedler, eds. *Understanding the Contemporary Middle East*. 3rd ed. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2008. Print.
- Ginat, Rami. *Egypt's Incomplete Revolution: Lutfi Al-Khuli and Nasser's Socialism in the 1960s*. London: Routledge, 1997. Print.
- Goldschmidt, Arthur Jr. *A Concise History of the Middle East*. Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1979. Print.
- Guerin, Orla. "Egypt Election: Sisi Secures Landslide Win." *BBC News*. 29 May 2014. Web.
- Haggard, Stephan, and Robert R. Kaufman. *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1995. Print.
- Harik, Iliya. "Political Elite of Lebanon." *Political Elites in the Middle East*. Ed. George Lenczowski. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1975. Print.
- Harik, Illiya, and Louis Cantori, eds. *Local Politics and Development in the Middle East*. Boulder: Westview, 1984. Print. Westview Special Studies on the Middle East.
- Harris, William. *Lebanon: A History, 600 - 2011*. Reprint Edition ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2014. Print. Studies in Middle Eastern History.
- Hendriks, Bertus. "Egypt's Elections, Mubarak's Bind." *MERIP Reports* January 129 (1985): 11-18. Web.
- Henry, Clement, and Robert Springborg. *Globalization and the Politics of Development in the Middle East*. New York: Cambridge UP, 2001. Print.
- Hinnebush, Raymond. *Egyptian Politics Under Sadat*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1985. Print.

Hourani, Albert. *A History of Arab Peoples*. Cambridge: Balknap of Harvard U, 1991.

Print.

Hourani, Albert, Philip Khoury, and Mary C. Wilson, eds. *The Modern Middle East*. 2<sup>nd</sup>

ed. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004. Print.

Hybel, Alex Roberto. *The Power of Ideology: From the Roman Empire to Al-Qaeda*.

New York: Routledge, 2012. Print.

Hybel, Alex Roberto. *State Creation and Democratization in the Americas*. 2015. Print.

"Iraq: Country Report 2015." *FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2015: Discarding*

*Democracy, a Return to the Iron Fist*. Freedom House, 2015. Web.

Janabi, Ahmed. "Early Elections Call Gains Momentum." *Al Jazeera*. Al Jazeera Media

Network, 20 Jan. 2004. Web.

Kamrava, Mehran. *The Modern Middle East: A Political History Since the First World*

*War*. Second ed. Berkeley: U of California, 2011. Print.

Karabell, Zachary. *Parting the Desert: The Creation of the Suez Canal*. New York:

Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. Print.

Karl, Terry Lynn. *The Paradox of Plenty: Oil Booms and Petro-States*. Berkeley: U of

California, 1997. Print.

Karsh, Efraim. *The Iran–Iraq War: 1980–1988*. Osprey Publishing. pp. 1–8, 12–16, 19

82

Kedourie, Elie. *Democracy and Arab Political Culture*. London: Frank Cass, 1994. Print.

Kepel, Gilles. *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and Pharaoh*. First ed. Berkeley:

U of California, 2003. Print.

Khazen, Farid El. "Lebanon's First Postwar Parliamentary Elections, 1993." *Middle East*

- Policy* 13.4 (1994): 120-36. Web.
- Kienle, Eberhard. "More Than a Response to Islamism: The Political Deliberalization of Egypt in the 1990s." *Middle East Journal* Spring 52.2 (1998): 219-35. Web.
- Kramer, Gudrun. "Liberalization and Democracy in the Arab World." *Middle East Report* January/February 174 (1992): 22-25. Web.
- Krouse, Richard W. "Polyarchy & Participation: The Changing Democratic Theory of Robert Dahl." *Polity* 14.3 (1982): 441-463. Web.
- Kubba, Laith. "Arabs and Democracy: The Awakening of Civil Society." *Journal of Democracy* July 11.3 (2000): 84-90. Web.
- Langohr, Vickie. "Cracks in Egypt's Electoral Engineering: The 2000 Vote." *MERIP Press Information Note* November 39.7 (2000): Web.
- Langohr, Vickie. "An Exit from Arab Autocracy." *Journal of Democracy* 13.3 (2002): 116-22. Web.
- "Law of the Supreme National Commission for Accountability and Justice, January 12, 2008." *The Iraq Papers*. Ed. John Ehrenberg, J. Patrice McSherry, Jose Ramon Sanchez, and Caroleen Marji Sayej. New York: Oxford UP, 2010. 329. Print.
- Lebanese Center for Policy Studies. "Documents: The Constitution of Lebanon after the Amendments of August 21, 1990, and Sections of the Ta'if Agreement not included in the Constitution." *Beirut Review* 1.1 (Spring 1991): 119-72. Web.
- "Lebanon: Country Report 2015." *FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2015: Discarding Democracy, a Return to the Iron Fist*. Freedom House, 2015. Web.
- Lee, Robert D. *Religion and Politics in the Middle East: Identity, Ideology, Institutions, and Attitudes*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2010. Print.

- Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan A. Way. "Elections Without Democracy: The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 13.2 (2002): 51-65. Web.
- Linz, Juan J. *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. New Introduction ed. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000. Print.
- Linz, Juan J., and Alfred Stepan. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1996. Print.
- Luciani, Giacomo, ed. *Politics of the Middle East: The Arab State*. Routledge Library Editions ed. London: Routledge, 2015. Print.
- Maqbool, Aleem. "Egypt Crisis: Mass Protests over Morsi Grip Cities." *BBC News*. 1 July 2013. Web.
- Marr, Phebe. *The Modern History of Iraq*. Third ed. Boulder: Westview, 2012. Print.
- Merkel, Wolfgang. "Embedded and Defective Democracies." *Democratization* 11.5 (2004): 33-58. Web.
- "Middle East: Lebanon." *The World Factbook*. Central Intelligence Agency, 19 Apr. 2016. Web.
- Milton-Edwards, Beverley. *Contemporary Politics in the Middle East*. Malden: Polity: Blackwell, 2000. Print.
- Mukhtar, Abd Al-Munim. "On the Survival of the Byzantine Administration in Egypt during the First Century of Arab Rule." *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 27.3 (1973): Web.
- Najjar, Fauzi. "Elections and Democracy in Egypt." *American-Arab Affairs* Summer (1989): Web.

- Nakash, Yitzhak. "The Shi'ites and the Future of Iraq." *Foreign Affairs* 82.4 (2003): 17-26. *JSTOR*. Web. 19 Jan. 2013.
- Nakash, Yitzhak. "The Struggle for Power in Iraq." *Reaching for Power*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006. 72-98. Print.
- Nasr, Vali. "Iraq: The First Arab Shia State." *The Missouri Review* 29.2 (2006): 132-53. *Project Muse*. Web. 7 Oct. 2012.
- O'Donnell, Guillermo, Phillippe Schmitter, and Lawrence Whitehead, eds. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions About Uncertain Democracies*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1986. Print.
- Ottaway, Marina, Thomas Carothers, Amy Hawthorne, and Daniel Brumberg. "Democratic Mirage in the Middle East." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Policy Brief* October (2002): Web.
- Owen, Roger. *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*. London: Routledge, 1992. Print.
- Pelham, Nicholas. "The Two Stripes of the Arab World: Shia Protestantism and the Sunni Counter-Reformation." *A New Muslim Order*. New York: I.B. Tauris & Co, 2008. 216-23. Print.
- Picard, Elizabeth. *Lebanon, a Shattered Country: Myths and Realities of the Wars in Lebanon*. Trans. Franklin Philip. New York, NY: Holmes & Meier, 1996. Print.
- Piven, Ben. "Who, What and Where Is ISIL? Explaining the Islamic State." *Al Jazeera America*. 18 Sept. 2014. Web.
- Polk, William R. *Understanding Iraq: The Whole Sweep of Iraqi History, from Genghis*

- Khan's Mongols to the Ottoman Turks to the British Mandate to the American Occupation*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2006. Print.
- Posusney, Marsha Pripstein, and Michele Penner Angrist, eds. *Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Regimes and Resistance*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005. Print.
- Pratt, Nicola. *Democracy & Authoritarianism in the Arab World*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007. Print.
- Rabil, Robert G. *Religion, National Identity, and Confessional Politics in Lebanon: The Challenge of Islamism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Print.
- Rahimi, Babak. "Iran's Declining Influence in Iraq." *The Washington Quarterly* Winter 2012 (2012): Print.
- Richards, Alan. "On Transition from Authoritarian Rule and the Democratic Potential of Arab Regimes." *Economic Research Forum Newsletter* Summer (2002): 12-13. Web.
- Rogan, Eugene L. "The Emergence of the Modern Middle East into the Modern State System." *International Relations of the Middle East*. Ed. Louise Fawcett. New York: Oxford University, 2009. Print.
- Rokkan, Stein. "Dimensions of State Formation and Nation-Building: A Possible Paradigm for Research on Variations within Europe." (1975): 572. Print.
- Ross, Michael L. "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53.3 (2001): 325-61. Web.
- Ross, Michael L. "Will oil drown the Arab Spring? Democracy and the resource curse." *Foreign Affairs* 90.5 (2011). *Expanded Academic ASAP*. Web.
- Rubin, Barry. "The Military in Contemporary Middle Eastern Politics." *Armed Forces in*

- the Middle East*. Ed. Barry Rubin and Thomas Keaney. London: Frank Cass, 2002. Print.
- Salame, Ghassan. *The Foundations of the Arab State*. New York: Croom Helm, 1987. Print.
- Salamey, Imad. "Failing Consociationalism in Lebanon and Integrative Options." *International Journal of Peace Studies* Autumn/Winter 14.2 (2009): 84. Web.
- Salibi, Kamal. *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*. Reprint Edition ed. Berkeley: U of California, 1990. Print.
- Sayej, Caroleen Marji. "Democratization from Above or Below?" *The Iraq Papers*. Ed. John Ehrenberg, J. Patrice McSherry, and Jose Ramon Sanchez. New York: Oxford UP, 2010. 283. Print.
- Sayej, Caroleen Marji. *The Iraq Papers*. Ed. John Ehrenberg, J. Patrice McSherry, Jose Ramon Sanchez, and Caroleen Marji Sayej. New York: Oxford UP, 2010. 184. Print.
- Al-Sayyid Marsot, Afaf Lutfi. *A Short History of Modern Egypt*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1985. Print.
- Shafik, Nemat, ed. *Prospects for Middle Eastern and North African Economies: From Boom to Bust?* New York: St. Martin's, 1998. Print.
- Shaw, Stanford J. "History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey." *Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey 1808–1975*. Ed. Kural Ezel Shaw. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977. Print.
- Shehata, Dina. "The Fall of the Pharaoh: How Hosni Mubarak's Reign Came to an End." *Foreign Affairs* 90.3 (2011): Web.



- Traboulsi, Fawwaz. *A History of Modern Lebanon*. Second ed. Chicago: Pluto, 2012. Print.
- Thompson, Jason. *A History of Egypt*. Cairo: American U in Cairo, 2008. Print.
- Tilly, Charles. *Coercion, Capital and European States, A.D. 990 - 1992*. Revised Edition ed. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992. Print.
- Tripp, Charles. *A History of Iraq*. Third ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. Print.
- Vatikiotis, PJ. *The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*. 4th ed. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1991. 38. Print.
- Visser, Reidar. "Aspects of Constitutional Law: De-Baathification, Government Formation, and Proportional Representation." *A Responsible End? The United States and the Iraqi Transition, 2005-2010*. Charlottesville: Just World, 2011. Print.
- Visser, Reidar. "Historical Myths of a Divided Iraq." *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* May (2008): Web.
- Visser, Reidar. "Preface." *A Responsible End? The United States and the Iraqi Transition, 2005-2010*. Charlottesville: Just World, 2011. 34. Print.
- Walker, Martin. "The Making of Modern Iraq." *The Wilson Quarterly* 27.2 (2003): 29-40. *JSTOR*. Web. Jan. 2013.
- Wedeman, Ben, Reza Sayah, and Matt Smith. "Coups Topple Egypt's Morsy; Deposed President under 'house Arrest'" CNN, 4 July 2013. Web.
- Zollner, Barbara. "Prison Talk: The Muslim Brotherhood's Internal Struggle during Gamal Abdel Nasser's Persecution, 1954 to 1971." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39.3 (2007): 411-433. Web.

"2015 UNHCR Country Operations Profile - Lebanon." *UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency*. 2015. Web.