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SOCIAL CONTROL AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE

A field study on the Political System of Iraq and the
influence of Clannism

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Abstract

This thesis raises the question of the political system of Iraq, reformed post-2003 invasion. It will further examine what political structure is applied, clientelist, or programmatic. An illustration of the significance of Iraqi clans in society and how that leads to Clannism is presented. The main objective is to get a profound understanding of how the Iraqi political system is vulnerable to Clannism. The empirical material used in the results is gathered through interviews conducted in the field of Baghdad, Iraq. The informants are political actors acquiring differing power positions in diverse agencies, parties, and organizations. Activists from Non-Governmental organizations were also interviewed in order to gain a complementary perspective. The central finding is that the connection between Clannism and Clientelism is a factor preventing the development of the political system towards programmatic politics. This is a result of the social control that the clans acquire.

Keywords: Clannism, Programmatic political system, Clientelism, Social control, Iraq

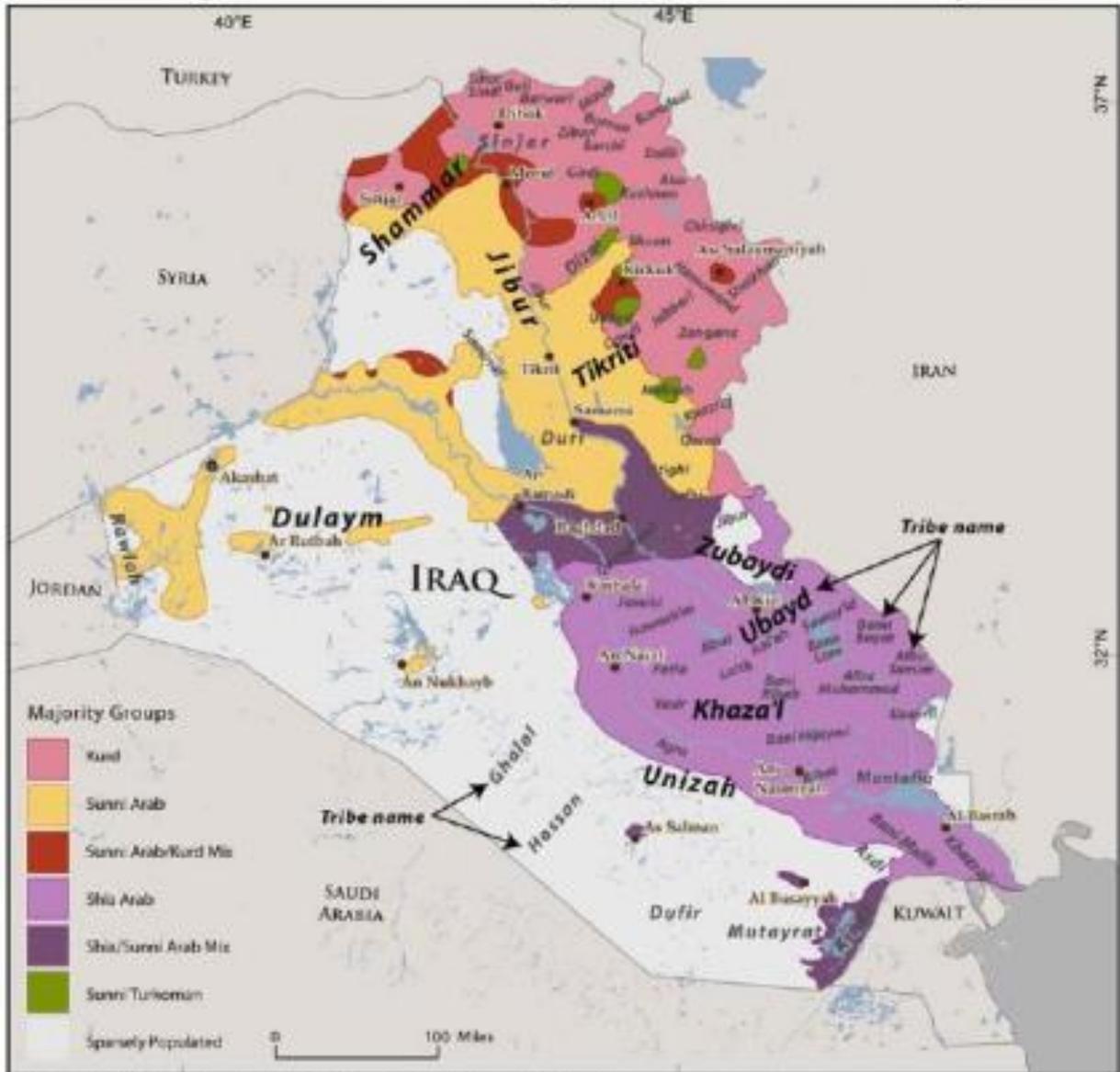
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Figure 1. Tribes and Major Confederations in Iraq



Source: CIA Iraq Country Profile: Inset: Distribution of Ethnoreligious Groups and Major Tribes
 Map: Congressional Cartography, Library of Congress, 2007

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

While the whole region of the Middle East and North Africa has been of interest in the field of political science, Iraq is a unique case to study. The American invasion of 2003 was believed to give a democratic transition from the previous dictatorship. During the speech of announcing the invasion, George W. Bush used terms like “free” and “liberate” the Iraqi people, to help them reach a democratic state (theguardian, “George Bush's address on the start of war”, 2003). In 2005 the first elections were held, and a new constitution was created. Despite radical changes in Iraq's political system since 2003, it is safe to say that the state of Iraq has a long process toward democracy and freedom. Freedom House ranks the country as “not free”, corruption is high, and the state has limited capacity to provide security and civil rights, even though there are laws and treaties that are supposed to protect those rights (Freedomhouse, 2020).

With the political changes since 2003 Iraq should at least be transitioning towards a programmatic political system that has functional political institutions and parties with the ability to provide public policies and services. However, reality looks different, which was proven by the protests that started in October 2019. Prior to that, during the time of the 2011 uprisings of the Arab Spring, the uprisings seemed to bypass Iraqi authorities, even though the society had “destabilizing problems” (Brynen et. al. 2012, p. 42), such as a young population with high levels of unemployment and sectarianism that has been increasing significantly (Brynen et. al. 2012). Later on, with continues high dissatisfaction with the Iraqi government and their immense level of corruption and disablement to offer public rights and services since the invasion of 2003, resulted in a protesting Iraqi population in 2019. The protesters, particularly the youth, were demanding political justice, simple civil and political rights, and a state free of foreign influence but also a new constitution and government free from the sectarian rule (Svenska Dagbladet, 2020). The capabilities of the political institutions of the

post-2003 Iraqi regime are limited. That, according to Migdal, is one way to define a weak state. In cases where the state has weak capabilities, there will be possibilities for alternative actors to take part in the political system and to complete tasks that should be done by the regime (Migdal, 1998, Introduction to part one).

Those alternative actors are in the case of Iraq the powerful “families” and “clans” connected to them. The term clan is defined by Mark Weiner as an extended family, that individuals must rely on as a community or a collective group. Their importance becomes more significant in cases where the state becomes weak and an alternative actor is needed. This is based on the need to form a collective identity and is explained as a part of human nature. In this type of system, extended family connections set the rules that the individuals of the clan need to follow. This happens to maintain the political order of the clan (Weiner, 2014, Part 1). Another study on clannism or as Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner refer to it, “tribalism”, shows that the studies of “tribes” and their impact on political systems and institutions in the Middle East should be a factor of interest for political scientists. The tribes are not only a part of the history of the Middle East but even a part of the new state formation processes (Khoury and Kostiner, 1990, p. 1-25).

Focusing on Iraq as a case, clans in Iraq have always had an impact on Iraqi society in one way or another. Before the Ottoman Empire, and the political reformation that developed during that time, the Iraqi clans worked as socio-political institutions where the leader of the clan (the sheik, plural: shuyukh) had the political authority. That authority was gained either from historical lineage connected to pre- Islamic clans or to the sheik’s ability to serve the interest of the community and the reputation of the members of the specific community that he was the leader of. The role of the sheik was to solve feuds and stop violence, keep the honor and reputation of the family, and his generosity and strength defined the whole clan. (Hassan, 2008; Choucair-Vizoso, 2017, p. 501). Before the British mandate, Iraq was divided into three provinces, the northern province of Mosul, the central province of Baghdad, and the southern province of Basra. They were each supported by and tied either, “The great Syria”, Iran or the Gulf countries. Under the British mandate of 1920, a political community was not constituted between these provinces, and forced a unity, that led to obstacles in the nation building (Cleveland and Bunton, 2018; Qader, 2018). During British rule, the role of the clans took a different form. It was no longer the protection of the people that were of interest to the clans, but rather the power gained through alliances with central political authorities. Trans-local political alliances became more valuable to the shuyukh, and they started to join parliamentary politics to become a part of the political elite. The clans started to lose their

power during the time of the monarchy in Iraq (1920s”), where a modernization and urbanization process started to take place. After that, with the strict laws against clannism during Saddam Hussein’s dictatorship, the political authority was mostly in the hand of the regime. Even though the clans had lost a lot of their power after the 1958 revolution against the monarchy, we can, till this day, see the impact of the clannist structure in the Iraqi political system (Hassan, 2008; Choucair-Vizoso, 2017, p. 501; Qader, 2018).

1.1.2 “Clan” vs. “Tribe”

It is of importance to study this neglected perspective and both works of Weiner and Khoury & Kostiner have been used to gain an understanding of the concept of clans. Since the terms “clan” and “clannism” can give different meanings, the reader must understand how these terms are defined and used in this study, therefore, in order to clarify for the reader, it is the definition of “clan”, and “clannism” given by Wiener, mentioned above, that will be used throughout the thesis. This is due to the fact that the term “clan” is the closest transition to the Arabic word “ashira” that was used by the informants when conducting the interviews. Also, the term “tribalism” has a negative meaning to it due to racist and post-colonial associations, and even though it is this term that seems to be used by researchers the preference is to avoid the term.

1.2 Research objectives

With the given background, this study has the objective to examine the political system of Iraq and the influence the Iraqi clans have on the political system that was reformed after the 2003 invasion. Political systems will be discussed in the frame of programmatic and clientelist characterizations. Scholars have different interpretations and views on clientelist and programmatic political systems. Suzan Stokes's definition is the one that will be used in this research. Stokes builds her conclusion based on arguments and definitions that other scholars have on the topic, by reviewing other thoughts and giving her arguments she builds a conclusion that is of interest to this research. She particularly provides a discussion about the commitment between the client and the patron, which will be of importance to the analysis of

this study (Stokes, 2009). This is to form a profound understanding of what happens to a political system when other actors gain importance.

Further, regime or state formation and changes in political systems can be seen as products of conflicts between social groups in society. Therefore, a social force approach/paradigm is used. According to Killian Clarke (2017), A social force approach examines conflicts between social groups with a collective and shared identity or interest that might lead to political instability. Those social forces consist of ethnicity, nation, class, religion, region, clans, and families. Clarke offers a perspective, where political conflict is analyzed with the use of those factors, where the "clan" can be one particular factor that is in the way of creating a stable political system (Clarke, 2017). This theory will be used to examine the importance of Clannism, as a factor with influence, which is another objective of this research. The clans will be analyzed and put in the context of the patron-client relationship.

To summarize, this research aims to examine how the Iraqi political system can be understood in terms of clientelism and programmatic politics, to do that Suzan Stokes theory will be applied to the empirical material. Further, the aim is to examine the kind of influence that the clans have on that political system, and here Killian Clarke's theory will be applied. The main questions leading this research are:

Why is *clientelism* applied to the political system of Iraq that was reformed post-2003?

- How does *clannism*, as a social cleavage, influence the system?
- What are the possibilities for political actors and NGOs to develop a *programmatic* political system?

By examining how the clannist structure is influencing the creation of a programmatic political system, the ambition is to be able to give an understanding about the political world, more specifically, the institutions and structures that are made by the actions of human beings, that can later define the behavior within different structures. The political world, how it is constituted, and the driving forces and effects of it are of interest to the social scientist (Hancké, 2010, p. 233-234). Therefore, by reaching an understanding of clannism as an influential social factor, on the political system the ambition is to note that social structures are of importance when researching the development of the MENA-region. With the help of the chosen theories and the empirical data gathered through a field study in Baghdad, Iraq used together, the goal is to contribute with a new explanation about why Iraq has failed as a state despite the political changes that occurred post the invasion of 2003. To be able to get an

understanding of how clannism is influencing the political system, people working on a political change in Iraq were interviewed. The information about the influence of clannism on the political system was gathered by asking questions to people working on the development of the political system. The participants in the interviews were political actors acquiring different political positions, and activists from several non-governmental organizations (NGO:S). This was done to examine how clannism is influencing their work (more about that in chapter two).

Further, the ambition of this research project is to engage in the broad ongoing debate about why democracy has not succeeded in the MENA-region and, to do that with the help of data gathered from within the field. This, to be able to bring a perspective that goes beyond the typical explanations and arguments used in studies about democracy in the MENA-region. The arguments have, for an extended period, been limited to strong authoritarian regimes seen as factors standing in the way of democracy or that Islam as a religion does not correspond with developing democracy. Susana Mangana explains how these theories were proved to be wrong when the Arab Spring (2010) showed the opposite. People demanding their civil rights during the Arab spring showed that orientalist arguments, about Islam linked to dictatorship, or a lack of interest in gaining equality from the people, was proved to be inaccurate (Mangana, 2013). This will hopefully be part of a missing “puzzle” in this ongoing debate where more light can be shed on social aspects and their influence on policy-making processes. Since puzzles are questions in research that should have been raised and answered by other political scientists, the questions raised in this study are still to be answered and further researched (Hancké, 2010, p. 234). By using other scholar’s theories and trying to explain and build on them, the expectation is to make this research cumulative and solve the puzzle of the importance of studying clannism as a structure, in order to understand the political system of Iraq. Even though there is no aim of making any generalizations with this study, it will hopefully be able to explain other similar cases in the MENA-region¹.

As noted by the last question mentioned, the research questions aim to explain if clannism in Iraq, can be a cause that is standing in the way of the development toward a programmatic political system. The research goal is hence that explanatory where I seek to explain the effects of the Iraqi political system and the fact that it is a weak state. Exploratory research goals seek if a cause can have a possibility to explain an effect. The aim is to examine if there

¹ Here, I am thinking about Lebanon, that has similar sectarianism, and was at the same time as Iraq facing a revolting population demanding political and social rights.

is a causal relationship between clannism and the creation of programmatic policies (Toshkov, 2018, p. 222- 224).

1.3 Overview of Method, Theory and Empirical Material

The method generating the empirical material of this study is based on a qualitative design. The reason for that is the interest in getting descriptive answers rather than statistical generalizations (Toshkov, 2018, p.219-230). Since the aim is to explain the political structure and get an in-depth understanding of the influence of the clannist structure on the possibilities to reach a programmatic political system, a case study with interviews is the most suited method. This case study was performed in the field and included interviews done in Baghdad, Iraq. There are arguments that state that single case-studies, which is what this study is based on, might be less reliable and uncertain (King et al., 1994). Despite that, single case studies can contribute to precise descriptions, which will lead to the analysis aimed at here (Flick, 2014, p.121-122). Thus, single case studies can be used when a contribution to general knowledge about the “real world” is of interest (Toshkov, 2018). To reach the aim, interviews with politicians and NGO activists were conducted. The methodical chapter will provide a discussion about the interview methods used to collect the data, the methods used to code the data, and will also include an explanation about the informants. This will be provided in the second chapter of the thesis.

The theoretical approach will be presented in the third chapter and will include a presentation about clientelism discussed by Stokes, an approach to the importance of studying clannism as a social force applied by Clarke, and the relationship of the state and the society explained by Joel S. Migdal. The theories guiding this study will be used to help define the current political system, and to build the analysis of concepts that can describe the Iraqi political system, and how the influence of the clans can be explained. Since Stokes makes a clear linkage between clientelism and poverty and between the voters and parties voted for in her conclusion, where she explains that “We tend to treat clientelism as involving a dyadic link between patron and client, in an electoral context, between party and voter. But really the strategic interactions of at least three actors should be considered: party leaders, party brokers, and voters.” (Stokes, 2009, p. 20), Clarke and his view on clannism as a social force will be

applied to this model. This, to reach the aim of this research and to form a strong cumulative theoretical approach to explain the failed political system of Iraq. When it comes to Migdal, his view on the relationship between state and society and how that can affect the weakness of the state will be presented in order to reach a better understanding of the state of Iraq and the position it acquires today.

Further, as it will be shown in the empirical presentation, the clans of Iraq are of importance. By analyzing the clans as the third part in a clientelist political system the ambition is to get a better understanding of how clannism works in Iraq and therefore how it influences the political system and the society.

1.4 Delimitations

This study is limited to clannism as a structure and is not a study about the Iraqi clans. The aim is not to give a description of the clans as a social or political actor, rather about their influence in the Iraqi political system. Despite that, a map will be provided to showcase the big clans of Iraq and their geographical area. It is also of importance to highlight the fact that the clans and the religious minorities of Iraq are two separate actors (Home Office A, 2017; Home Office B, 2019).

In the beginning, this research aimed to look at norms and structures in Iraqi society and how different norms are affecting the current political situation. After being in the field for two weeks and after conducting two interviews, the role of the clans became very clear. Therefore, the focus shifted to examine the influence that the clannist structure has on the political system.

Deciding upon the actors that were of interest in this research was a complicated task. Given the time limit, and other factors such as lack of having a network of people that could help in Iraq, the interviewees had to be limited to interviewing people that have experience from working on the development of the political system. Hence, the choice behind the focus on political actors and NGO activists. Other actors that could have been of interest to the study are people working with the media networks. A huge part of the media in Iraq is privatized and connected to political parties and actors, which, for example, can affect the voting behavior of Iraqis, or the trust the people can have for different actors. It is also seen as a factor that has been strengthening sectarian conflicts. Having that perspective in the study

could have been of interest but had to be removed from this study for the sake of limitation, but can absolutely be a base for further research.

2 Methodological approach

2.1 Why field research?

In qualitative research, an essential feature is the choice of the relevant method (Flick, 2014, p. 15). That choice is determined by the structure of the study (Leavy, 2017, chap.1). This study aims to gain knowledge about the influence of the clannist structure on the political system. By asking questions about how people engaged in the policymaking process are influenced by clannism as a structure, the ambition is to collect data that can answer the research questions intended to be answered here. People's experiences need to be studied in such cases, and the best way to do that is through interviewing them, in their field. Field research is done when the goal is to understand people's experiences. It further creates a human connection between people. Data collected through field research can increase the knowledge of the whole contexts of the political dynamics and can lead to insightful information that can otherwise be overlooked or neglected (Kapiszewski et al., 2015, chapter 1). In fact, it was not until being in the field that the structure of this thesis could be clarified. With that being said, field research is not free from any problems. Time constraints, adoption to different settings and situations, and understanding of norms are only some issues that have to be taken into consideration when doing field studies (Bailey, 2018, p.105). The biggest challenge that I met in the field was the time constraints. The most complicated task was to get in touch with possible informants through Emails, the information sheet that was created prior to the interviews and Emailed to several institutions and actors did not lead to any interviews.

I also had a problem with conducting an Interview with Hanaa Edwar, which is seen as one of the most influential women's rights activists. Her viewpoints were of interest and we tried to arrange an interview, but due to her traveling and work schedule, it was unable to make

time for an interview. Although, in an attempt to understand her viewpoints on the topic of this study, I decided to attend a workshop and a lecture that she was arranging through her organization toward the end of my visit to Iraq. Her encouraging words, tips on other organizations, and resources she provided me with came to be helpful to gain an understanding of women's rights issues in Iraq.

2.2 Talk as Data – The design

Collecting data through talk is not uncommon in qualitative research. The main tool for collecting the data was through interviews. The interviews took two different forms. Focus groups and semi-structured face-to-face interviews (Flick, 2014, p 43). Interview as a method is suitable to use when the purpose of a study is to understand what people think about a certain subject or to get information about their work and experiences (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002). Since the aim of this study is to get answers about how clannism influences the transition toward a programmatic political system, politicians and NGO activists and their work, the interpretations they have of clannism, their view of the current political structure, and their own experiences are of interest. The answers gained by the informants are primary sources that could not have been gained by the use of another method. With the use of primary sources, the aim is again, to engage in the ongoing debate with “raw” material that can help solve my puzzle (Alvehus, 2014, p. 34-35). A detailed explanation of each method will now be provided.

2.3 Focus groups

Sometimes researchers find that focus groups can be useful. When interviewing groups of six to ten interviewees, the focus will be directed towards the group discussion instead of the individuals in the group. The purpose of the focus group is to collect data based on the group discussion that could not have been collected otherwise (Bailey, 2018, p.108). The target of the focus groups done for this particular study was to see if there is a shared and collective view on clannism. Also, to see if the influence takes different forms between participants in the group. Since, it is of importance to gather a homogeneous group of people (Ibid), two

different focus groups were held. One with female participants and the other with the male. That made both interviews go smoothly without worrying about any boundaries being crossed due to more conservative norms that could exist. It was also a way to respect the social norms of the Iraqi society. Mainly, since several women participants expressed that they would be more free-spoken that way. The focus group with the male informants was held with eight men from several non-governmental organizations. The focus group with the women was planned to be with five women, but two decided to invite me to their home. These women belong to the political elite, therefore they are living under constant threat. A meeting conducted at their homes felt safer for them and resulted in a much more comfortable atmosphere where room for sharing personal experiences got created. For the focus groups held for male participants, the moderator was another man that had an excellent understanding of this research topic. He was provided with the questions, and since he was a professor researching similar topics, he was able to moderate and lead the focus group in a good way (Alvehus, 2013, p. 90). That was again a decision made to respect the social norms and make the group feel more comfortable during the meetings. This also provided better communication to the discussion hence, my lack of speaking academic Arabic and the group's lack of speaking English. During the face-to-face interviews, that problem was solved simply by me asking what the participant meant. In the context of focus groups, this could have been an issue and a reason for ruining the dynamic of the group. Therefore, having a moderator felt like the better decision to make. The focus groups took approximately two and a half hours each. They were recorded, and all the participants had given their permission to be recorded in advance. Notes were taken to have a clear structure of whom the person speaking was. Whiteboard was also used during the focus group with male participants held by the moderator which became handy during the transcription process.

Several activists interviewed had an academic background and were political scientists working at Al- Nahrain university and Baghdad University. Given the fact that academic background gives social status in Iraq, the decision was made to remove those informants from the focus group and conclude face-to-face interviews with them. The face-to-face interviews with the participants acquiring an academic background turned out to be some of the most beneficial ones because of the different perspective that could have been lost in a group discussion. Those interviews could, in addition to providing insightful information on the activist's work at different NGO: S, give an academic point of view on topics related to the research of the informants. Although two interviews of such characteristics had to be removed in this thesis because of the focus turning away from the aim of this research, they

gave important and detailed information about the electoral systems of Iraq. This part had to be removed due to limitations of the data but it raised my awareness about that specific topic. One example of the benefits of this is when an interview with Dr. Imad Saleh (presentation in Table 4.2), got divided into two parts, where the first part was on his views and experiences as a chairman of an NGO and the second part gave insightful information on how the Iraqi history has been affected by clannism. These will be presented in chapter four with the rest of the empirical data.

Additionally, the importance of creating homorganic focus groups to an extent determined that decision as well. The social status could have been a factor creating a hierarchy between the informants. In order to make sure that everyone in the focus groups could feel comfortable, heard, and seen as much as everyone else, that decision was made. The choice of interviewing NGO activists was made in order to get a broader sector of participants from the social movements instead of only focusing on politicians. In this way, any type of political propaganda that can be presented by leaders sometimes, be avoided or at least noticeable to the researcher (Kathleen Blee, 2013).

2.4 Face-to-face interviews

The first part of interviews was done with politicians and former politicians, some of them being members of the Iraqi parliament. Three of the informants were active and nominated to the parliament by different parties but did not succeed during the elections, one is a former member of the parliament and the rest of the policymakers are in some way or other still active in different political parties and/or committees. The structure of the interviews that this thesis is based on is semi-structured interviews due to different reasons.

This method gives the informants the space to engage in a discussion about their work, perspective, and beliefs. Due to the conversational quality of the semi-structured interviews, the conversations gained a flow and depth that was appreciated by the informants, even though the "order" in the interviews could at some point be inconsistent (Ibid). Semi-structured interviews, with an open-ended approach, needs good prior research, it provides the informants an opportunity to organize their answers within their framework" as Aberbach & Rockman (2002) state, and give the informants a preferred method to them by letting them speak somewhat freely about their work. Semi-structured interviews give the researcher more

work before and after the interviews (when transcribing) but will increase the validity of the study (Ibid), which is a goal that every researcher should strive for.

It was also the method chosen because of the social status of the informants. Since most of the participants are a part of the political elite the interviews had to be professionally done. Interviewing an elite or members of an elite can lead to some challenges while conducting the interviews. First of all, because of different understandings about what elites are, a definition of what the elite is considered to be here needs to be provided. The term elite can often be used on individuals depending on their social position in the society, this can be problematic to an extent because it might not define their authority or influence in their society. That influence might not always be found with the leaders of different organizations or institutions, but rather to individuals with social capital, important social networks, or positions in the society that can be seen as strategic, based on the influence that individuals can make. That elite status can be changed during time and context (Harvey, 2011). With that definition provided, what is described in this study as an elite group are the individuals who have or have had social influence over their societies, that was given to them by their political positions but also their social status in different groups and contexts. The elites in this study are not only elites simply because of being politicians, they are chosen because of their importance in different contexts and places in society. The interviews were based on a guide with a few twelve open-ended questions, with three themes guiding the interview. The themes were 1. Political system, 2) The Clans, and 3) Personal experiences.

It is of importance to have developed knowledge about the subject when interviewing individuals that are educated or work within the elite of the studied case/object. This will minimize the risk of transforming the interviews into lectures and losing the discussion about the topic the researcher is looking for (Leech, 2002). For that reason, lectures that I was able to attend in one of the universities about the history of Iraq, and tribal history in particular, and the political structures gave me better background information as a researcher to start the interviews with. It was very helpful, especially since the lectures were in Arabic. That made it easier for me to lead the interviews in Arabic further on and gave the interviews a more professional form because I did not have to stop the informants in the middle of the interview to ask about what different things meant and in the cases that this was done it led to clarity in the interview. It also showed that I as a researcher had some information prior to the interviews which was very helpful while conducting the elite interviews, hence it gave a positive impression and made it possible for me to create open-ended questions (Harvey, 2011). Interviewees can at some points towards an interview get tired and their answers might

get less detailed, especially towards the end. One helpful thing that was suggested in Harvey (2011) is to introduce the main topics and an approximation of the inquiries that will be conducted. This, in order to give them an awareness about the length and the structure of the interviews. It showed that I respected their time and was appreciated. Encouraging phrases helped show that I was interested in what they were saying as well (Harvey, 2011).

2.5 The interviews - Possibilities and Limitations

Being able to do the interviews in Arabic was a strength that made the understanding between the informants and I stronger. Explaining the research topic and giving a presentation about myself as a researcher interested in getting knowledge from within the Iraqi society was something appreciated. All the participants had an understanding of the lack of an academic use for the Arabic language I had, which came to the benefit for the research. Restating and summarizing what they were saying was seen as a way for me to understand their argument clearly, instead of giving the image of trying to change their words or reinterpreting the information that was given by them (Leech, 2002). Misunderstanding with the participant was minimized and the interviews would end with the informants not only recommending other informants to me but recommending me to other policymakers and activists that would not have accepted being interviewed otherwise.

Having been an activist myself, in the civil society and in a political party at a time, gave me prior experience on how to react during the interviews. My short experience with several journalists and students conducting interviews for their research had already put me in the same situation as the participant. For example, an understanding for how a participant could feel nervous despite the fact that they were talking about their work, made it important for me to show that the point of the interviews was to gain knowledge about their experiences, and to show constant respect for what they were saying. This resulted in good interviews where several informants talked about sensitive and private things that gave a richness to the data gathered and to the participant recommending me to other people.

Snowballing was therefore the method of finding and reaching out to informants. It was effective and the same names started to be recommended by different actors. That "secured" the choice of informants. Going to the field, the only contact available was with a Dr. Falah Hasan that helped with the process of finding the informants, hence his academic background

in political science. I was afraid of not being able to reach out to the political actors and only have professors and civil society activists as informants, but a successful interview with a former member of the parliament, Taleb Al-kharbit, opened up some closed doors. That gave more than one "network" to search for informants from and made it easier to get different perspectives from different people (Alvehus, 2014, p 66-69).

2.6 Additional material

In order to verify and complement the material gathered from the informants, additional resources will be used. They will be applied on the empirical material when there is a need and place to complement the material. Some of the resources are academic works in arabic, while others are books explaining several factors further, such as sectarianism. Other resources, verifying the arguments on inequality and women's rights are reports explaining the situation of women in times of conflict. Where these sources are applied will be made clear through chapter 5.

2.7 Coding

When it comes to analyzing the material that is gathered and transcribed it is crucial to create a structure that can organize the data. That structure can be created in the process of coding and labeling. Qualitative research seeks to generate interpretations from close examinations of empirical data rather than of statistical and numerical forms. It gives several approaches on analyzing qualitative data, gathered through interviews. The process in this particular study was to formulate codes and labels found in the transcripts of the interviews. The use of different software programs can sometimes be good but is excluded here. The reason behind excluding the use of a software program to code the material, was based on the fact that the topics/categories became clear early on in the process of coding and labeling. A category is a concept used to organize the generated codes when the data is being examined. The categories helped construct the empirical chapter that will be presented next (Roulston, 2013). Because the categories are based on my theoretical approaches, it gave a structured and nuanced format to work with. It is further the same structure that is used throughout the thesis.

3 Weak state, Clientelism and Clannism

3.1 Presenting the theories

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the theoretical approaches that will be used to support the empirical material of this study will be gathered with the help of research from three different scholars. The theories are used, mainly as a guide to the empirical material, to fill gaps that might be discovered in the empirical data. Since the purpose of having a theory in political science is to integrate the knowledge gained about a theme and help provide predictions and identify empirical puzzles, the theories chosen will help in creating an analysis that can develop the knowledge about the raised issue of this study. The theories will be applied according to the theory application model, where the theoretical viewpoints will be connected with the empirical data, in order to answer the questions and reach the aim. This, more “humble” goal of theory engagement, will place the focus on the empirical material and help contextualize and analyze it (Toshkov, 2018, p. 225 - 226).

To summarize, Joel S. Migdal’s perspective on state-society relationships and the weakness of the state measured by the capabilities of a state to acquire social control will be used to explain why the political system in Iraq post-2003 has failed. Killian Clarke’s view on social cleavages where clannism will be in focus is used in order to explain the importance of the clans as a social cleavage with a massive amount of power in Iraq. Lastly, Suzan Stokes's definition of clientelist political systems will be applied to increase the understanding about the political system in Iraq and how the influence of clannism on the political system can be understood.

3.2 Weak state: State Capabilities

In “Strong Societies and weak states: State-society Relations and state capabilities in the Third World” by Joel S. Migdal, the relationship between the state and the society is discussed in the context of strong and weak states. The central question of the book explains why some states are stronger than others, and the main issue raised is on the capabilities of a state. Capabilities are used as a measure to determine whether a state is strong or weak. The strength of a state is measured by the influence that the political leaders acquire and to which degree they can rule the population. If the political leaders of a state can, with the help of political strategies, lead the society to the desired change, the state is classified as strong. This determines the capability of the state and capabilities in return are measured by several factors. The factors are seen as different capacities of the political leaders in a state to:

1. Penetrate the society
2. Regulate social relationships
3. Extract resources
4. Use the resources in appropriate and determined ways

The less capacity a state has on these factors, the weaker the state is. It is through state planning, policies, and actions made through the *political agencies*, that the direct impact of the society can and should be made. The social control that the state acquires in society is, essentially, determined by the capabilities of the state to reach the mentioned capacity goals (Migdal, 1988, Prologue – p. 9).

The reason behind the importance of acquiring social control is based on the fact that social control is one way to mobilize the population. A high level of social control helps the state mobilize the groups within the society, through the three following indicators. First, there needs to be a form of obedience to social control, second, there needs to be participation in the state-run or state-authorized institutions. Also, legitimization and acceptance of the state as the leading authority that has social control over the society needs to be given, which is the third factor (Migdal, 1988, p. 32-33).

Further, as argued by Migdal, the kind of capabilities that the state should have, have been in discussion since the creation of the contemporary state system of the world. Today, the accepted norm is that the state should be the authority that can provide rules about

constitutional principles, written and unwritten laws, regulations, decrees, and be able to have rules for “boundaries and acceptable behavior for the people.” (Migdal, 1988, p.14). This is at least the picture of the role of a state in the global west.

In western societies, where the states are defined as strong, an acceptance about the role of the state is acquired. The state is accepted as the organization with the political authority with the legitimacy to create the rules. This has not always been the case. Since the creation of the modern state and development of the political form that exists, other political forms and ways of the ruling have been challenged. Especially, the ways in which the population is mobilized and the gain of social control. Social control includes control over people’s behavior in favor of the given rules of the state. It was when the state had the capability to increase its social control, and take that control from the clans or, other political forms, that was able to set the rules of behavior, their role became strong (Ibid, p. 14- 24). This shows that when the leaders of the state want to take over the social control, it needs to overpower other political and social actors and structures.

The ambition of state leaders should always be to make their organizations the overpowering one’s in their societies in order to achieve predominance. The ability to reach that predominance can in some third world societies be questioned because of the difficulties some states have had with this process. Migdal offers a state-society model where the aspirations of the state are compared to the achievements of reaching predominance. Informal and formal organizations are explained as “... the settings within which people have had structured, regularized interactions with others.” (Migdal, 1988, p. 25). Here small families and clans are included as an example. To make the people behave in their desired ways the organizations will use sanctions, rewards, and symbols so norms and a certain structure/form of a rule can be followed (Migdal, 1988, p. 24-33).

The rules that are created can be about small things in the life of an individual to bigger things. It creates a way of living and behaving in which the individuals have to follow in each situation. An example that illustrates how certain norms can be problematic and go against the laws of a state are the age of the marriage of young girls (ibid).

Further, the power over production and redistribution of goods is taken by those groups and physical defense can be offered in an organized way. All of this determines the character of social control in society. Social control is gained that way and there will always be competition between the state and the social organizations that are trying to set the rules of the society. It becomes a battle between the state leader(s), that wants to be able to set the rules of their territory, and the social organizations that try to maintain their power, if not make it even

stronger. The competition is about the kind of political strategies that need to be adopted on issues like who will rule and who will determine the rights of the property. Also, about the use of the resources and assets of the society. The more social control the organizations acquire that way, the stronger the social organizations will be, and the weaker the state becomes. The weakness of the state should be seen as a result of the strength of social organizations, such as clans, and as a conflict between the state and the society about who can rule the society. It is when the state can rule over social organizations, such as clans, the state gains social control (ibid).

In the case of Iraq, as it will be shown in the empirical chapter the social control lies in the hand of several clans. This gives clans, as social organizations, power over the state due to reasons that will be discussed in chapter five. To build a base for that discussion Stokes and her thoughts and definition of clientelism will now be presented.

3.3 Clientelism

To understand the influence of the clans on the political system, the political system itself needs to be understood. To define and clarify how the Iraqi political system is formed, Suzan Stokes's work on *clientelism* will be presented and applied to the empirical material. The empirical material shows that the political system in Iraq is fragmented. To understand the fragmentation, Stokes's viewpoints on clientelism and how it affects the creation of programmatic systems will be provided. Hence, the presentation below.

In a programmatic political system, public policies and services are offered by the state. In a clientelist political system, the public service and the distribution of public services are dependent on a relationship between a client and a patron. The problem with clientelism, as a political system, is that it can invalidate democratic processes, and/ or slow down economic development and allow autocratic regimes to hold on to their power for longer periods, or make it hard to reach a positive political change. The development of public goods by the government gets discouraged and if poverty is found in a society it will be harder to work against clientelist structures. People will turn to a patron when the state is not able to offer public services, material goods, or security. To gain those basic public services, the people, which in this case becomes the clients, gives the patron, the actor providing them those

services, political support. This political support can come in the form of electoral support, where aspects such as threat and vote-buying are not uncommon to use by the patrons. Clientelism is a materially oriented political strategy where providing public services is dependent on whether the client gives their political support or not (Stokes, 2009).

For clientelism to exist in a political system, there needs to be dependency by the population on the things that a patron can offer. That dependency is created when the state is not offering the things that the people require, most often due to the weakness and ineffectiveness of the state. The benefits that a client is hoping to gain, is the factor determining the client's political support to different actors (Stokes, 2009).

There are two subclasses in a clientelist political system, vote-buying, and patronage. Vote-buying, as defined by Stokes, is a “narrow exchange of goods” (Stokes, 2009, p. 3). Goods can include benefits and protection that are gained when the client gives their vote. Patronage on the other hand is offering public services such as public employment, for instance. Patronage is used for gaining political support. Here, the most powerful political actor might not be the same actor who holds public resources. It is in this case that the patron, that is able to provide for public resources, and distribute them to the most powerful actor in the society becomes the patrons. This creates a clientelism-patronage distinction where the patron has an economic monopoly over the goods and that economic monopoly is independent of the outcome of elections. The political monopoly gained however, requires maintenance in public office (Stokes, 2009, p. 3-4).

In her article Suzan Stokes refers to other scholars and their definitions on clientelism. One definition that is of importance to this study is James Scott's emphasis on the relationship between a patron and a client as a friendship. In this friendship, an individual with socioeconomic status uses his influence and resources on an individual with lower status, to provide for benefits and protection. Adding to that argument, Stokes raises the question of why clients do not purchase the protections or goods/benefits that are provided by the patron, instead of giving up their vote in order to gain it. She explains that material poverty in society is the answer and becomes an important aspect that needs to be looked at. The income of a client might not help with providing for the resources needed, there might not even exist a developed market where the benefits can be found in another way. Therefore, having someone that can provide that, only by giving their vote, can be beneficial for the client (Stokes, 2009, p. 3).

This far, Stokes has shown that a clientelist political system is dependent on a society that has material poverty, where the population, the clients, needs to be in need of the benefits that a patron is offering. That need emerges when the state is not able to offer the citizens those benefits, that can come in a material form or the form of security. Further, Stokes attempts to explain the relationship between the client and the patron. One explanation presented by Stokes is the norm of reciprocity, where “gifts” are seen as something that needs to be paid back for. The benefits provided for by the patrons represent the gifts. This norm strengthens the client-patron relationship and it develops a trust between them. The patron becomes an actor that the client can turn to in need of economic support or even when there is a need to interact with the authorities. It is the values of the community that shape the relationship between a patron and his clients. This norm can also exist in a relationship between a patron and a politician. Another explanation of the relationship is the one based on fear of losing the benefits that the patron is providing for here, the hospitality of the patron, is seen as a way of controlling the clients. Loyalty is, further, an important aspect of a clientelist political system. To secure their power, patrons choose clients that can be loyal to them, even independently on the rewards or the benefits they can give (Stokes, 2011, p. 5-7, p. 12).

Clientelism requires a patron in the society that becomes the third part, when the state is weak and unable to provide for public benefits for the people. To understand the actors in the Iraqi society that became those patrons, Killian Clarke will be applied to this model, the next section will therefore provide a summarized presentation of the main point explaining how clannism in Iraq can be understood as the patrons.

3.4 The influence of the Clans

When it comes to the questions about why some states democratize and others develop authoritarian regimes or stay in a system somewhere in-between democracy and authoritarianism, Killian Clarke offers an approach relevant to this study and will be applied to Stokes model of clientelism. Regime formation and changes are explained as a result of struggles and conflict between social groups or social cleavages in a society. Different social cleavages get created between social groups that share the same identity and interests. Those

social cleavages are then used in order to explain the political development of a state. The different cleavages defined by Clarke include the factors class, race, ethnicity, religion, sect, language, gender, clan, family, caste, religion, culture, and nation (Clarke, 2017, p. 569-572).

The social force paradigm is one of three research traditions that can be used when studying the formation, transformation, or even collapse of political regimes. The emphasis is on the structural keystones mentioned above. They are used to mobilize and form powerful and important social groupings in society. Those social factors or cleavages, can overlap each other and historical and social constructions within a society can show which of the cleavages has a political significance (Clarke, 2017, p. 572, 578-579).

When it comes to postcolonial cases in Africa and Asia a social force paradigm is crucial for the understanding of the political changes. Clarke claims that “social forces structured along the lines of ethnicity, nation, region, religion, and family have been important drivers of political change.” (Clarke, 2017, p. 588). Those social cleavages tend to be politicized. To understand why some cleavages become of importance and strong in a society, the emergency of them needs to be viewed at. The clans or the "tribal" social cleavage (as referred to by Clarke), can be a reason behind instability in some cases. It can also affect the new political institutions, regime structures, and the distribution of power in the society. Ancient identities, based on factors such as sect, religion, families, or language, can in some cases be dominant in a society. Clarke refers to the Middle East as a region that should be studied through this lens. Different paths of regimes of the Middle East have been affected by clan-based groupings in the society. This needs to be taken into consideration while studying why states in the MENA-region have had the political outcome they have had. (Clarke, 2017, p. 590-593).

Taking this into account, Iraq will be studied through Clarke's pluralized version of a social force approach, where the focus will be on the clan as a social cleavage to help explain the regime formation. Clannism applied to Clientelism, where the clans are seen as the patrons with the most power in the society will explain the influence of clannism on the political system of Iraq.

4 The case of Iraq – Explanatory factors

This chapter will provide an overview of the data gathered. While conducting the interview similarities between several viewpoints got uncovered. During the transcription process, the similarities formed codes that lead to three categories that should be seen as definitive factors describing the political system of Iraq and the ability of the influence the clans acquire. The importance of each factor was demonstrated in every interview, they are 1. The weakness of the state, 2. Social status of the clans and three 3. Trust. A presentation of the factors and what the informants commented on them will now be provided. Table 4.1 will summarize the findings.

A presentation of the informant will follow in Table 4.2. The participants of the face-to-face interviews will be presented by names and professions. The focus groups will be referred to as “focus groups male participants” and “focus group female participants - One” and “focus group female participants - Two”. Only the name of the moderator will be provided to the focus groups with male participants. This due to respect the desire of several informants to be anonymous.

Table 4.1: The explanatory factors to the influence of the Clans

<i>FACTOR</i>	<i>COMMENT</i>
<u>Weakness of state</u>	
The constitution	Vague constitution that enables interpretations, results in laws and policies not being followed. Clannism is a part of the constitution.
Poverty & Inequality	High level of poverty and inequality.
Corruption	High corruption in the political system, the institutions and agencies of the state.
Political debate	Political actors not able to discuss different topics due to their sensitiveness and tabooeness to different clans.
<u>Social Status</u>	
Community Society	Iraq is explained as a community society, where ties to the extended families are of importance.
Identity and sectarianism	Religious and sectarian identity forms the clans, which creates strong connections
Clash of generations	There is a young generation trying to remove the influence of the clans but are tied to social norms.
Social norms	The Social status of the clans seen as the results of social norms that has to be followed by different actors and applied at different levels in several ways.
<u>Trust</u>	
Lack of benefits	The lack of benefits provided to people by state create mistrust in the state as ruling authority, the trust moves to actors providing for the benefits → clans.
Sectarianism and religious identity	Post 2003 invasion civil wars and sectarianism lead to mistrust between the people, this made the ties to the clans stronger and more definite. Creation of segregation.

The categories will be used as a guideline to the next chapter where each category will be presented further and analyzed. Theories presented in the previous chapter will be adapted whenever possible to reach an understanding on the influence of the clannism.

Table 4.2: Presenting informants (in alphabetical order)

<i>NAME</i>	<i>PROFESSION</i>
Dr. Adnan Miran	Political scientist and activist.
Dr. Imad Saleh	Professor in political science at Al- Nahrain university and Head of an NGO.
Faiza Jaber Babakhan	Activist at severel womens rights movements, earlier member of the “Iraqi Constitution Drafting Committee”.
Fayroz Hatem	Political activist, Nominated by “Al-I’tilaf Alwatani” to the parliament during the 2018 elections.
Dr. Hussein Mushatat	Professor in Political science and NGO activist, Charman for the organization “Center for Strategic Studies and Capacity Development”
Mohammed Hameed Fadhel	Political activist and prior leador of the party “Al-tahalof Al-madani Al-dimokrati”.
Dr. Muthafar	Professor in Political science and psychology.
Nada Al-Abadi	Previous member of the parliament and spokesperson for the Iraqi education department.
Noor Salem	Political activist, nominated to the parliament during the 2018 elections.
Taleb Al-Kharbit	Previous member of the parliament and Sheik of the Al-kharbit clan of Anbar.
Dr. Yassir Al-Bakri	Political scientist and activist.
Salama Al-Khafaji	Member of the Parliament, earlier member of the “Iraqi Constitution Drafting Committee”. Was the moderator during “focus group mala

5 Mapping out the influence of the clans

The table presented in chapter four shows that three main factors can explain the influence of clannism on the political system in Iraq. These factors are each divided into “under categories” that will form each section of this chapter. In this chapter of the thesis the three factors will be presented in a more detailed way and illustrated with the help of examples given from the informants. The factors will also be analyzed in accordance with the theories presented in chapter three to reach the aim of this study.

5.1 Weakness of the state

The weakness of the state was the main issue discussed by all informants during the process of conducting the interviews. Each informant could give examples of how the weakness of the state is both an effect and result of clannism and each informant presented in table 4.2 offered detailed information on their experience on this topic. Since there are many subcategories explaining the weakness of the state, which determine the weakness of the political system, section 5.1 will be divided into five sections where different arguments on the factors will be presented and analyzed.

5.1.1 Vague constitution

The weakness of the Iraqi state can be seen as a result of a constitution that enables different structures, and different interpretations of laws created. During the interviews, Taleb Al-Kharbit, and other informants argued that the constitution can be an important factor that has affected the weakness of the state.

The Iraqi constitution that was constructed in 2005 makes it able to adapt sectarian interpretation. The sectarian interpretations are grounded on a clannist basis. This, according

to the informants, leads to different ways of ruling in different societies in Iraq, and laws and policies, therefore, gets adapted differently. Those different interpretations and applications of parts of the constitution create “under-societies” that are ruled by their structures instead of following the laws of the state. Each "under-society" gets its own rules that are accepted by the leadership of the clan. This, according to Al-Kharbit, is an effect of the construction of a constitution that is not representative to the Iraqi people, the Iraqi norms, or even the Iraqi clans and important families. Several examples were mentioned by Al-Kharbit, Noor Salem, and others. One is the quota system that determines how many women there have to be in the parliament but does not mean that the women in parliaments are the ones chosen by the people, another example is the fact that the division of the seats, 329, is just a number taken and divided into the different districts, and to minority groups. In Al- Kharbit’s experience reaching any policies or political changes in the parliament is a hard task because each district will work on representing “their people ”, and due to the clannism in Iraq, the districts that have similar sectarian, religious or ethnic identity will work together. This is determined by the constitution and for those reasons, the constitution is seen as non-representative and un-effective. The laws, treaties, and the construction of the parliament determined by the constitution, is flawed and this is one reason for the constitution not being applied in the same way everywhere.

The "under-societies" created based on clannist roots can use the norms and rules they have created, to stimulate a behavioral system that has to be followed by the people. As an example, being mentioned by several informants, the norm of the marriage of under-aged girls has become regular in some societies even though it goes against the laws. The acceptance of Shuyukh, by referring to a norm in society the girl is part of, makes the illegal act by the laws, and accepted norm that can be applied and lived by. The laws get completely ignored in cases where social norms are strong and accepted. This makes the whole political system weak as a result of a vague constitution.

Applying this to the theoretical positions it is clear that the incomprehensibility of the Iraqi constitution created in 2005, has enabled different interpretations, has caused the weakness of the state and created room for the clans to establish their own systems of behavior. The incomprehensibility of the Iraqi constitution created in 2005, that enables different interpretations is a severe problem. After 2003 the religious and sectarian divisions led to a civil war with ethnic cleansing between Shia and Sunni and other minority groups in Iraq (this will be discussed further soon), the conflicts between the groups in the Iraqi society made the religious identity of the Iraqis stronger. The connection to families and clans became further

significant and made each group wanting to belong to their clans, which also follows religious and sectarian ground points. The interpretations of the constitution were made to fit each group since each group felt that the new constitution was not representative of them. Since the clannist norms and ties were strong, they continued to lead the society. Already, at this level, we can see how the different interpretations made by each group, on the laws and policies, can get in the way of new developing policies that can give the state legitimacy. The constitutional principles, the written and unwritten laws, regulations, and decrees are not controlled by the state but by the clans. This shows that the political authority and social control lies in the hand of the clans. How the clans have been able to get to the political institutions of the state will be a section discussed separately, first the weakness of the constitution needs to be understood better.

Another aspect of importance demonstrated by the informants, especially, Fayroz Hatem and Nada Al-Abadi is the fact that during the process of constructing the new constitution, the state was unable to promote the new political structure that was about to be created. Lack of true election campaigns that show the importance of each and single vote for example was not common to find. Neither educational programs about how the new political system would benefit the people or should work were endorsed according to Nada Al-Abadi.

This absence of enlightening campaigns about the new political system and the new way of the political rule would be helpful to society. The unawareness of the new forms and policies established in the constitution of 2005 resulted in a return to clannism. With the clans being the actors with social control and political authority, clientelism in the political system got enabled. Stokes explains how actors with a political and economic monopoly can become important actors in the political system and will strive for influence. Clans aim for political influence due to the power accompanied by it. Having political actors representing them in the political institutions is a way of holding onto that power. This leads to the next factor explaining the weakness of the state, the representation of the clans in different state agencies, institutions, and public offices.

5.1.2 Clannist representation in the political system

Hence the weakness of the state and its lack of being the ruling authorities, the clans took over that role and created a clientelist political system. The interviews show that the political actors

in Iraq need the support of clans to gain the support of the people ². The power of mobilizing society lies in the hand of the clans. Further, due to the fact that it is the clans that are the actors in society that hold the authority to rule over their societies and citizens, the political actors become dependent on the clans to gain political support. That dependency gives the clans the power to choose political actors they want to support, based on whom they will benefit from the most. This gives the clans further power in the state-run or state-authorized because the representative they will support will follow the rules of the clans. The dependency, by the political actors, on the support of the clans becomes a crucial factor that explains the weakness of the state. It lays in the interests of the political actors to stay in power and hold on to or gain public offices. Since they are dependent on the support of the clans, and the other benefits they also become dependent on following the norms and the structures that are created by the clans. It is for that reason that these norms have to be followed and cannot be worked against. In this way each clan will hold onto their power, the political actors will be favoring the rules and policies that their clans will support and will require to be presented in the political institutions, instead of the laws and policies made to develop the authority of the state again. This creates a band of dependency that is complicated to break and will strengthen existing connections to the way that new actors, willing to make a political change inadequate to take place in the political system.

Several informants illustrate this issue further and explain that because of the lack of support they get by the clans, their opportunity to be part of the political system gets debilitated. Political actors that are linked or supported by the clans can, therefore, maintain public offices. When the political actors are connected to powerful religious leaders, their political gain will be maximized significantly (see “identity” for further discussion). Anyone else will be excluded. Clientelism is therefore applied between the clans and the political actors generating a relationship where the clans offer support and mobilized groups voting for the political actors if the political actors represent the clans and their structures in a good manner. The clans and the political actors benefit from each other and the political authority of the clans becomes stronger because they now acquire not only the social control but also indirect participation in the state- run institutions. The question that might be raised here is why clannism can be influential to this degree, and why political actors don’t create a

² This issue is even presented by Qader (2018), where he further explains that candidates of elections belong to the clans.

connection to the people, where they gain their support by applying programmatic policies. This will be the next factor determined by the weakness of the state.

5.1.3 The capabilities of ruling

Iraq, as a state, has shown its failure by not being able to be representative of its people. Also, for not having the capabilities of ruling all of its members in a just way. The empirical data has shown that the state lacks the capacity to regulate the social relationships of the people and penetrate the society, hence the clans' power to do so. The political system has not been able to apply all the values of a programmatic political system. The political institutions are still resistant to a democratic way of development. The political leaders, the policies and the institutions follow a structure of clientelism. The informants demonstrate that the state has shown its failure in generating social, civil, and political rights to its people. The weakness of the state is seen by the informants as a result of the political system's inability to provide any success. There is a lack of the policies made by the state for the people, to show that the state has the authority and the ability to lead. When even the representatives of the state (political actors) follow the rules of the clans, the authority of the state is viewed as damaged by the population. To this day, no political parties or institutions have been able to show their ability to lead, according to Yassir Al-Bakri. The state lacks in offering economic stability, political stability, and security.

The capabilities of the state to have any influence over the political institutions is limited and controlled by clannism. The measurement of the capabilities of a state, presented in the theory chapter, applied to Iraq, shows that the capabilities of ruling the population of Iraq are in the hand of the clans rather than the states. When the political system enables other actors to rule the society in their desired way and loses the social control it should ensure, there will be consequences on the political system itself. In a programmatic political system, benefits and public services and policies should be provided by the state. As presented by Stokes the distribution of the public services and resources should be equal. The capacity to rule should be in the hands of the political agencies, institutions, and changes should be made with different strategies and policies by the state to gain the support of its people. The goal of a state should be to be able to provide for all of this. Since the state has been unable to reach those goals its capabilities of ruling the state got lost, and as mentioned turned to the clans that gave them the authority of being the third parts between the political actors of the state

and the population. The lack of true representation, lack of providing benefits and public services, lack in generating and adapting just laws and are all factor leading to the weakness of the state and making it possible for the role of the clans to become more significant in the society and for them to become the strongest patrons in the society where their clients are the politicians and the people. Other determining factors to the weakness of the state are poverty, inequality, and corruption in the state. Since these are all explanatory factors to the weakness of the state that enables clientelism the next section will provide a discussion on that.

Further, the informants argue that there is a lack of information on how policies can be created. This is a reason that can define the lack of capacity of the political actors to make a change through the political system. Here, I would like to shed some light on an additional reading that can be applied to explain the lack of good policies created, that goes beyond the explanation that the theories provide. Howlett et. al. explains that an important part of creating new policies is the providing of information and advice to the political actors. The advantages and disadvantages of alternative policies from actors working with the governments should be provided in order to clarify or falsify policies that get created. It is important that there are actors that can analyze outcomes of different policies (Howlett et. al, 2015). This, in my understanding, is a missing resource for political actors in society. Noor Salem illustrates this by referring to herself, her political knowledge can be explained as a result of her academic background. Other political actors might not have that.

5.1.4 Poverty, inequality and corruption

The next factor caused by the weakness of the state emphasized by the informants is poverty and inequality. As presented above, the state is not able to provide for public services, Dr. Adnan Miran demonstrated during the interview how a lack of job opportunities is a factor for poverty. Corruption in Iraq is also high thus the jobs, services, and benefits of the state goes to corrupt leaders instead of the population. Poverty and inequality became higher and the decency of the clan leaders, the patrons, that can provide for some benefits gets stronger.

Stokes explains how the client's dependency on what the patrons are offering intensifies clientelism. When the clans are the actors in society that can provide the patrons what the state is not providing, the dependency on them gets even stronger. This will create a model where the patrons will be incapable of getting beyond their dependency on the clans and will lead to them being controlled in order to gain the benefits the patrons can be providing.

Considering the lack of benefits provided, the lack of work opportunities divided between the people in a just way, and other factors leading to poverty and inequality there is no room for the patrons to get out of poverty. This reinforces clientelism and gives the clans more power over society. The state not being able to solve issues of poverty and inequality will only lead to more dependency on strong clans. The problem with that is that in order for the people to gain benefits from the patrons, which are the clans, the political order created by the norms of the clans has to be followed by the people.

This is demonstrated by one of the informants during the focus groups with the male participants as a system created in the society that is similar to an unhealthy relationship between a man and a wife, where a wife gets controlled by her husband as a result of her dependency on him. Her ability to leave is reduced because of that dependency. The dependency on clans by the Iraqi people can be explained in the same way. In order to gain benefits that the people lack in, as a result of poverty, inequality, and corruption, the people will need the clans, and will, therefore, follow their way of ruling.

The aspects mentioned above place the clans in the most powerful position in society, due to the weakness of the state. Especially since the clans are seen by the people as the legitimate authorities to solve their problems, provide security, and offer material resources. When the state is able to attain the authority of social control, one can argue that it is moving towards a programmatic political system. The reason that explains the fact that the resources of the state are in the hands of clans, it is a fact that the political actors in power today are those represented and supported by the clans. The actors that have the control of resources share them with each other. It creates a model where the resources do not go beyond the hands of the people in power and for them to be able to hold on to their power the resources are shared between them and the clans. This is enabled due to the high corruption in Iraq and the fact that the institutions of the state are weak and controlled by clannism. This power over resources enabled by clientelism determines the influence of clannism on the political system in Iraq today.

This, as shown by the data gathered, is a result of the people following and being ruled by clannism. That control of clannism leads to social norms that are caused by the weakness of the state but can also be seen as a factor for weakening the authority of the state since the social norms can not be worked against or removed from society. This is illustrated in the next chapter as a discussion about the ability to make changes through the political system is affected by social norms.

5.1.5 Social norms and weakness

The social norms of Iraq are crucial factors to study to gain an understanding of the influence of clannism on the political system. The social norms will now be viewed as parts of the weakness of the political system. The weakness of the state is also found when several policies cannot be discussed in the council of representation, because of their sensitivity to some societies, based on different norms in the different societies and to some clans. “Fasl”, “Nahwa” or “Daga” are three norms mentioned by several informants.

Those norms, as explained by the informants, are used as punishments or as ways to end conflicts between families. An example is when girls or women are married off between clans in order to prevent conflicts in society. This is the norm of “Fasl”, or when a group of people shoots at someone's house as a signal of threat or punishment, “Daga”. They are norms in society that some political actors and civil society activists have tried to work against in different ways. One way is by trying to show the importance of updating the laws and the constitution. But due to the "tabooness" of these topics, work against those norms meets rejection and no room gets created to an open dialogue about the consequences of them. This is based on several reasons. The first one is the will of the politicians to keep the support of the clans that go by these norms, or because of the lack of ability to find solutions that every clan will agree on. The “Fasl” as a norm was not discussed before 2017 when it got illegalized. Even though the illegalization made the cases fewer, it is still something that can occur regularly. That is a result of a corrupt judicial system in Iraq that also follows the rules of the clans.

It is for reasons like these that these norms have to be followed and cannot be worked against. In this way each clan will hold onto their power, the political actors will be favoring the rules and policies that their clans will support and will require to be presented in the political institutions, instead of the laws and policies made to develop the authority of the state. This strengthens the band of dependency between the clans as patrons and the political actors and clients that is complicated to break and strengthens existing connections to the way that new actors, willing to make a political change are not able to take place in the political system.

This issue of the social norms that are based on clannism on how different actors in society has to follow them is also demonstrated differently, This time as a result of the weakness of the state. Salama Al- Khafaji is one informant that illustrates this clearly. She has been affected by social norms where a conflict between two families resulted in the death of her

son and husband. The state could not offer her the security she needed. The judicial system could not give her justice but the conflict ended when different Shuyukh got involved. Even though she is a part of the political system, as a politician acquiring a position in the parliament, she uses the power of the Shuyukh to solve personal issues.

Fayza Babakhan, working for women's rights in Iraq explains how even she, as a lawyer, can find clannism as the only way to solve some problems. A recent experience she had was when a young girl reached out to her seeking help, the only way to solve the issue was by going to the Sheikh to help solve her problem because he was seen as someone that the family of the girl listened to. She explains that if they had taken the girl to the police she would have been killed, due to the simple fact that they would not have been able to protect her.

When the political actors and the activists of a state are unable to form policies because of the sensitiveness to the clans. The influence of the clans becomes stronger. This is another aspect of the political process that is influenced by clannism and should be seen as an effect of clientelism in Iraq. If the political actors had not been dependent on the clans to the extent they are, policies against clannist norms and structures could have been generated and adapted and it would start a transition towards a programmatic political system.

5.2 Social status

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the clans have had a crucial role over the Iraqi society in different ways throughout history. This was also a topic discussed by the informants and the light was shed on the social status that the clans attain as a huge factor explaining their influence on the political system. To understand that influence of the clans further, their social status can be explained in different ways and demonstrated by a few examples. Factors generating the social status and different aspects that are of importance to this study will be presented in the following section.

5.2.1 Community society and the social norms

While conducting the interviews, several informants explained Iraqi society as a community-based society. There are differences between the city and rural societies in Iraq, but the mentality of the Iraqi people is based on a community perspective. This way of thinking

creates social structures and norms that are significant to the understanding of Iraq's current political situation and the connections to the clannist way of ruling. These norms can be found in every aspect of society, it is generally demonstrated early in one's life through the education system, as will be discussed and are not supposedly connected to religion.

To exemplify this, Nada Al- Abadi talked about her family and how they would make her wear traditional religious clothing (abaya), even as a communist family not being connected to any religion. This is based on the fact that they lived in an area where women are expected to wear the abaya and this therefore must be followed despite the women's religious affiliations. The acceptance of the community was of importance to her family. All women informants could give examples from their own life on how they in one way or another have been constrained by the norms. They also mention that some of these norms got stronger post the 2003 invasion. These norms develop into being the ways of living by the rules, that the community has set and agreed on to follow. This, according to the informants, is another factor explaining the strength of clannism.

To an Iraqi individual, traditions, norms, and social structures, created and accepted by the society, are like laws that need to be followed. One specific norm mentioned in the interviews is the norm of "respect" which was explained by the informants as a way of not being able to criticize another person that is telling you how to follow the rules. In schools, students are taught from a young age to listen and respect what the teachers are telling them. Criticizing the actions of people of "higher" status can be seen as a discourtesy. This norm follows the individual at home, where the elderly in the families are supposed to be listened to and respected in a way that their rules need to be followed without critique, and the same thing is applied in the work sphere. This creates a certain way of living and a behavioral system that makes the individual used to being ruled by the norms existing in the society, without questioning them. Dr. Yassir Al Bakri explains this as a result of the political system not being able to show a good picture of another way of ruling the society, and will, therefore, keep the image of the "strong ruler" as the only legit way to rule the state. Hence, the turn to clannism.

Clannism, at this point, is not only a social force that is of importance to study in a client patron relationship. It becomes of importance to the understanding of why a society can be ruled on clientelist ground. In the case of Iraq, the social role that the clans acquire gives them the ability to be an important part of the political system as the most powerful patrons of influence. Given the weakness of the state and laws not being clear and open for different interpretations, social norms created by clannism, will not only be followed by the political

representatives in different parties, institutions, and positions. They will be adapted and used in order to base new policies. Al-Kharbit explains this and argues that clannism gets adapted in the political system and creates a structure where the state is not able to stop norms and traditions affecting the political system. This argument was made by other informants as well and show that the social norms are applied to the political system.

The interviews show that political actors are not only dependent on the support they gain from the clans. The social control that the clans have reached makes the clans the most legitimate actor in the society seen by the people, due to them setting the rules of behaving and them being the actors providing for benefits and security. This creates a relationship between the political actors and the leaders of the clans, similar to the one between the leaders of the clans and the population.

By accepting that each “under-society” can, without consequences lead their societies in their ways, the state creates a structure where social control is no longer within their power. This affects the ability of the state to regulate social relationships, which is one way for the state to increase its role. Instead, that is given to the clans, that because of the clientelism of the political system and the role of clannism gets intensified. It will also make the shared identity by each community even stronger and tie stronger bands between the people of the community and the leaders of the clans and the political actors that are supported by the leaders.

Applying this on the creation of a programmatic political system presented by Stokes, it gives the understating that programmatic policies will not have room to be applied and the result will be that the basic needs and rights of the people will not be met by the state. This because of their lack of capacity and lack of resources to offer. This issue becomes stronger when the norms that have to be adapted by the political actors in the political system are norms that can inhibit the state's ability to work on inequality. As illustrated in the empirical data many of the

norms are against women's rights. The actors in society that want to work against those norms and create laws and policies will not have the chance to do so in order to respect the boundaries that clannism sets. The dependency and the connections to the clans make it impossible for actors willing to work on a political change to succeed. Unless they get the acceptance of the clans.

Further, Dr. Imad Saleh explains that the social importance of the clans is not a new phenomenon to the Iraqi people. The ties and connections to the families have always been crucial to the Iraqi population, but history shows that this relationship could be controlled in

cases where the state had the authority of ruling. Since the invasion of 2003 and the weakening of the political system, that has consolidated the social importance of the clans, and been a factor for politicizing their importance. The community-based mentality made it logical to move towards clannism. Due to the norms, found in every aspect of the Iraqi society, followed by the people, the dependency on the clans did not seem to be abnormal, and political actors applying clannism into the political structure was the result of this. The image of the clans as crucial actors in the political system was not something reacted against but became the norm.

To give an example of the raised issue of the social norms the education system is mentioned by Nada Al-Abadi. The educational system in Iraq, where the weakness of the state can be found, could have been an eligible platform to raise awareness about damaging structures in the society, or even spreading awareness about people's rights and how the new political system should be. Schools in Iraq could be a place where the new generations could learn how to become creative individuals instead of only being one part of the community that has to follow the norms. However, the corruption that has reached the educational system made the schools and universities that are supposed to be a place where generation with an awareness of the political situation is raised, with an understanding about what kind of rights they have, become another platform to follow and adapt clannist structures. Al-Abadi explains that this will in result leads to a generation used to being controlled and will follow the rule of the leaders of their communities. It complements and continues a set behavior that allows the norm of the clans to become even stronger. One example that illustrates this is how teachers can pass the exams simply because they belong to a certain family or clan. If the teacher wants to benefit from a clan, they will provide for a “favor” by passing the student to gain any benefits they are in need of³. One aspect that enables this will be discussed in the next section and is connected to the creation of strong ties and the relationship of “friendship” created by a client and a patron.

³ During my stay in Iraq, I experienced this, where teachers of the school that a relative attends demanded resources from the parents in order to pass them.

5.2.2 Connections to the clan based on identity and sectarianism

Dr. Imad Saleh mentioned that in 2006 Iraq witnessed a civil war between Shia and Sunni and sectarianism increased significantly. This issue will be presented and discussed further in the section “trust” however it needs to be presented prior to that. Sectarianism made clannism more significant. The religious identity of an Iraqi individual and the connections to the extended families and clans become brighter and lead to segregation between the people. The segregation could be found in each city where walls could separate between different areas in the cities, and different “under-society” had geographical places. This created and reinforced clannism, especially since the weakness of the state that could not offer security for the people. When that happened the connections to the clans became stronger and the leaders of the clans were not only seen as the rulers of the society but as the friends and family providing for security.

Since the clans are created and formed of the shared identities and interests, as explained by Clarke, it is sectarian and religious aspects that form each “under-Society” led by the clans. The people of the “under-societies” will turn to the leaders when no other actors are to be found. The connection between the leaders of the clans and the people becomes strong because of different identity aspects. Applying this on Iraq as a case it becomes another explanation to the weakness of the state, that determines the strength of the clans and their influence. And since one definition presented in the theoretical chapter on clientelism, is the fact that the relationship between the patron and the clients should be seen as a “friendship” relationship, the support between the clients and the patrons becomes an important norm to the Iraqi individuals. How this can affect the political system is seen when the client mobilizes their communities to make them vote for the political actors they want to support. And since clannism becomes a part of the identity of the people, it becomes something that cannot be taken away from the people easily.

During the focus groups with the male participants, a discussion about changing the norms of clannism was also raised. Activists working with the youth see how the younger generation uses the NGO:s as a way of escaping from what they experience as “controlling norms of clannism”. The activists explain how there is a clash between the older and the younger generation in the society where the youth are trying to break loose from clannism. The reactions they get from the rest of society are inhibitory. They state that social norms are connected to the people in a very strong way. They meet problems such as girls not being allowed to participate in activities with men or activities that include being outside after a

certain time or places (because it is seen as immodest for a girl to be participating in such activities). The activist leading some organizations explains that even they have to accept and follow certain norms in order to change them. They try to plan for activities in accordance with the existing norms, in order to make a political or social change in society.

The social status of the clans, which is seen as a factor defining the strength of clannism, is based on strong ties connected to people's identities. It is therefore hard for new actors to take over that social status from the clans and this also explains the strength of the clans as patrons in the clientelist political system

5.3 Lack of trust → Fallback to clannism

As table 4.2 shows, another factor of importance to the understanding of the influence of clannism on the political system is due to a lack of trust in the state. As the informants argued, it is this lack of trust that creates room for other actors to become, such as clans, to become the ruling organization of the state. The lack of trust will in this section be explained as the lack of benefits provided by the state, which leads to the fallback to clannism. Furthermore, to understand why the fallback goes to clans that strengthen clannism, and not other actors in society, the identity-based connections to the clans have to be presented and analyzed in section 5.3.2.

5.3.1 Lack of benefits

According to the informants, the weakness of the state has resulted in a lack of trust in the state's capabilities to rule. First of all, the trust towards the authority of the state is a factor that the informants showed the importance of. The weakness of the state demonstrated throughout this chapter leads to a search for other actors that can provide what is needed. The people had no other choice to start giving their trust to the actors providing for different kinds of benefits. Dr. Muthafar explains that the poverty created in Iraq as a result of a history with different wars, sanctions, invasion, and a civil war has made the people in need of actors in

the society that provides for material goods. The actors that were able to do that could easily gain the trust of the people. Given that clientelism is strong, due to the dependency on the clans, the state has not been able to apply or promote a programmatic political system, and instead created a system that seems resistant to the creation of programmatic structures. This affects the state's capacity to generate social, civil, and political rights to the people, as has been shown. The problem is not only that the citizen will lack those rights, but their belief in a political system and a state that will provide those rights increases. People living in such conditions, and people witnessing nothing but corruption, wars, invasion and civil wars will not be able to believe in the state that has failed in showing their ability to rule over their territory in just ways. Dr. Muthafar and Al-Bakri, explain that this creates a system of behavior where a fall back to the clans is the only solution that seems possible for the people and the only way of ruling that gets accepted. Applying this on Migdal's view on legitimacy, it can be understood as another factor that explains how the authority that the state should obtain goes to the clans instead. The informants explain how the Iraqi people do not have trust in the political system. This will make them look out for other actors in the society where they can lie their trust in, even though that specific actor might be a reason for the political instability as explained by Clarke.

Clientelism shows how important the relationship between the political actors and the Shuyuk is. In order to be able to be part of the political system, the political actors need to gain the support of the clans, as shown. The bigger problem is that the same system is created in civil society. The activists active in several Non-governmental organizations in Iraq explained during the focus group how the NGO: s was seen as a simple way to gain financial benefits by international actors. Corrupt leaders and politicians started taking over different organizations and doing the same thing as in the political sphere. Today, Iraq has a lot of NGO: s but few have been able to provide benefits for the populations according to Dr. Imad Saleh and Dr. Hussein Mushatat (also a point raised during the focus groups). The activists that try to make changes in society get stopped by the clans and the state, and the organizations that have a connection with political actors and big clans become stronger. Instead of working on developing the society, each organization works to strengthen the clan they are supposed to represent. To the people, this gives an image of a corrupt state with corrupt institutions and a corrupt civil society that they don't see as beneficial, which results in the lack of trust they have. Hence, the lack of benefits they can provide.

This makes the clannist structure the only structure able to provide for people's needs and creates stronger connections to it. The national identity gets removed and the clannist identity, based on religion and sect, gets intensified. As a result of the lack of trust in the political system, political engagement is affected which can be seen in the low participation during the elections.

5.3.2 Sectarianism and religious identity

The last thing that was discussed and presented as an issue by the informants is the fact that trust was also based on religious and sectarian factors, that can be seen as a result of the civil war in 2005 when different Shia and Sunni militias could kill people based on their believed religious and sectarian identity. That created a society that lacked trust for each other and the religious and sectarian identity became even stronger, as explained in section 5.2.2.

Therefore, the connections to the families and the clans became stronger, and the sectarian identity defined the support the people could give later on during elections for example. The trust between the political actors and the people, or the factor that can be seen as connecting the people and the political actors is therefore based on sectarianism.

When it comes to the trust between the people and the politicians, it is based on the sectarian and religious identities as mentioned. To be able to gain that trust the political actors had to gain the support of the big clans in order to strengthen their support base. They are not in need of showing the people what they can do to gain that support. Sometimes the support for a political actor can be gained simply by being supported by a sheik of a clan. As an example, lifted by one informant that has to be kept anonymous due to his will, Muqtada Al Sadr is a religious actor in Iraq that has respect between the Shia clans, it is simply enough for a politician to be seen in a picture with him in order to gain trust and support.⁴ By gaining his support the political actors get benefits such as staying in public offices and even economic

⁴ Al Sadr has a movement with power explained further by this quote: “The Sadrist movement led by al-Sadr, and joined a large non-sectarian protest movement. The coalition derives power and legitimacy from its ability to assemble demonstrations and protests.” - Herbert (2018)

benefits. Without that support, the political actor will have a lot to lose and are therefore not willing to go against him, or other strong actors and Shuyukh.

This is also a way for each clan to have a representative in the political system that will be working on strengthening the role of the clan. The role of the political actors becomes to represent each clan and work for the interest of each clan with the leaders. Instead of working for policies to develop the country their work gets focused on how to strengthen the power of their own clan or for the clans supporting them. If you don't have the support of a clan you are not able to make it to the political world. And since the political actors are not working on providing benefits for the people, and it is the clans that have that power, the trust goes to clans.

Chapter 5 of the thesis has provided different explanations and factors seen by the informants as the determining factors to the influence of the clans leading to the inability to reach a programmatic political system in Iraq. Those factors have been based on identity, trust, resources, constitution, corruption, and much more. The theories were applied at different factors to create an analysis that can answer the raised issue and give a detailed understanding of how factors at different levels can be seen as a result of the current political system. The conclusion in the next chapter will give a short summary of the analyses and present my thoughts on this research.

6 Conclusion

The political system of Iraq is a complex system that can best be understood in terms of its clientelist characteristics. The weakness of the state has resulted in the opportunity for the clans to become the ruling actors of society. This, through the social control they acquire. That social control gives the clans the authority to be a part of the political system, as patrons in the clientelist system of dependency between patrons and clients. Political actors become the clients of the clans hence political support they are interested in gaining through them. This resulted in the political actors aiming to reach the trust and support of the clans. To reach that trust and gain the support, political actors need to represent the clans they are connected to in their public offices and political positions they acquire. This makes the political actors controlled by clannism, instead of being able to gain back the authority of the state and gain the social control that is the main factor for strengthening the authority of the state.

Because of the lack of capabilities, the political actors provide for the people, and their interests in gaining the support of the clans in combination with the corruption in the country, programmatic policies cannot be applied. This creates a further dependency on the clans and strengthens the clientelism in the political system.

The programmatic political system is one where public goods, services, and benefits are provided to the people by the state. The trust and the image of the state as the ruling authority by the people get damaged when the political system of a state is not able to provide for that. This removes the legitimacy of the state to be the ruling authority. It is in these cases that the people turn to the clans they are tied to by identity aspects and connections and accept a system where they become the clients. The client-patronage distinction becomes an important factor between the people and the clans in this case. Especially, since the fact that sectarianism and the civil war created stronger connections to the clans that affected the trust and support to them. In order to reach security, for example, you will have to be part of a

powerful clan. It lies in the interest of the clients that the clan and families they are connected to are a powerful one. In order to be powerful, the monopoly over economic and political resources are of importance to gain. The client-patron relationship between the people and the clans enabled the clans to create a client-patron relationship between the political actors and the clans. Hence, the dependency on the clients in order to gain political support.

The influence of the clannism on the political system can be noticed clearly in the creation and adoption of the state laws, over the representation in the government, on the resources of the state and over the social norms that determine the behavior structure of the Iraqi people. That influence on every aspect of state and society, gives the clans power and they become the leading authorities of the state. In such scenarios, the capabilities of ruling the state is clearly in the hands of the clans. Therefore, the norms they create in society, the structures, the unwritten laws, and the individual's ways of living are controlled by clannism.

The simple answer to the questions of this study is that Clientelism and Clannism are affected and supported by each other. Together, they are preventing the development of programmatic policies. In order to reach a change, work needs to be done at several levels. Starting from the top-down, the political elites need to be less dependent on the clans in order to make a change, they should be working on gaining the social control of society, to be able to mobilize their supporters, based on the policies they create that can be beneficial for the people, instead of the support they acquire because of their connections to the clans. It is not helpful that political actors themselves are limited and controlled by clannism.

The next level and factor that needs to be worked on is the fact that social norms in Iraq are stronger than the laws of the state. As shown, it creates further dependency on the clans, giving the clans more social control. The constitution needs to be adapted by everyone in the state, even the actors with the most power in society. Further, the social norms that are creating inequality, sectarianism, and a stronger connection between the people and the clans need to be worked against, at a local level. More resources should be given to the right types of NGO:s and actors in society that try to make a change at a "grassroot" level in the society, especially, given the fact that there is a young generation thirsty for that change. The state, with its agencies and institutions, needs to gain the trust of the people, and the only way that seems possible to do this is to provide for public services and work against poverty and security problems.

Finally, I would like to illustrate the strength of clannism in Iraq with my own experience from being on field. As somebody, born in Iraq, but raised in Northern societies for my whole life, I found it hard to go against the social norms of the Iraqi society, even though there are

no benefits that I could gain. In order to gather the material, I had to respect and follow certain rules and norms, one example was that I had to have a male relative following me around everywhere, for security reasons. The strength of clannism was something that could be noticed easily in every aspect of the lives of the people and even me, as someone from outside the society, was affected by the norms. It is therefore completely understandable that a political change will take time, and it will, in my experience, be dependent on a social change of the society. Recommendations to further work will for that reason be on how to let a social change occur and how social changes can lead to political changes. The focus has to be on the development of the grassroots. In order for programmatic policies to be applied, the new generations need to be less dependent on clannism than the generation in power today. Changes in the constitution needs to be applied and followed, as mentioned, and there need to be an understating of the fact that applying policies giving only an image democratic structures will not be fruitful to the state. In fact, it creates an image to the Iraqi people that they have to be ruled in authoritarian ways, which is a dangerous image to create.

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Appendix A: Interview guide

Opening: Asking the informant to present themselves and explain that the structure of the interview is semi-structured.

Theme 1: Political system

How would you describe the political system of Iraq?

Why has the state of Iraq not been able to develop a stable political system?

How do you see the development of the political system?

What do you think needs to be done by the state in order gain back its authority?

Theme 2: The Clans

How would you describe the power of Iraqi clans?

What is the influence of the clans on the political system?

What kind of influence do the clans have on the population?

How is religion, identity and other factors affecting the influence of the Clans?

Theme 3: Personal experiences

How have you been affected/ influenced by Clannism?

How is your organization working on the creation of a stable political system?

What are the limitations and possibilities you meet in your work?

Outro: Asking the informants if they would like to add additional comments, and invite for further contact.