

Iraq

Ethnicity in Iraq

Group selection

Population sizes were compared among four sources, the 1994 projection of ANM, the 2003 Fearon list, the 1993 MIR list (using UN population estimates for 1995) and the CIA World Factbook list of ethnic groups for 2000 and 2005 (cp. references below). The following codings were made after the comparison of the different estimates:

Shi'a Arabs: While the CIA and Gurr estimate the size of this group at 60%, other sources, including Fearon and the Fischer Weltalmanach give a value of 63%, which is consistent with the estimate that the Shi'a make up about 2/3 of the Muslim population of Iraq, which in turn is about 95% of the total population. For this reason, the slightly higher estimate is retained.

Sunni Arabs, Kurds: The values for these two groups fluctuate somewhat, which is unsurprising since accurate estimates for the Kurdish population was harder to come by under the rule of Saddam Hussein and now, some parts of the Sunni Arab population have temporarily sought refuge in neighboring countries regularly returning for a short while when their visitors' visa run out. After weighing all available estimates, the values of 19% for the Sunni Arab population and 16% for the Kurdish population were chosen.

Power relations

Saddam era: During the reign of Saddam Hussein, groups other than his own religious group and political power base, Sunni Arabs, were discriminated and on several occasions targeted by military operations. This resulted in the establishment of no-fly zones after the Second Gulf War (1991) to protect Kurdish populations in the north and the Shi'a majority in the south. The situation of the Kurds has improved, as they "have been autonomous since 1991 in their northern region" (¹⁶¹⁸). "[T]his region was established as an allied-protected autonomous region following the end of 1991's Gulf War" (ibid). They are therefore coded as separatist autonomy for the period from 1991 through 2002. While the Kurdish security situation improved somewhat, the Shi'a were still actively, though less

¹⁶¹⁸ [Minorities at Risk Project, 2009]

violently discriminated against. Sunni Arabs are coded as monopoly holders for these periods.

Comment by 2014 updater (YP): Quite superficial justification of previous codings. Crucial events potentially influencing coding decisions and cut-off dates:

- Military coup by Quasim (1958) and subsequent talks about Kurdish autonomy.
- Takeover of the country by the Baath party (Ramadan revolution and military coup) (1963)
- Saddam's rise to power (1979)
- First Gulf War (1991)
- US invasion (2003)
- US withdrawal (2011)

Post-Saddam era (2003-2013): The US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 fundamentally altered the ethno-political distribution of power. Constructing the post-Saddam “order”, the US forces relied heavily on the demographically dominant Shia in the South and also courted the Kurdish minority (Anderson and Stansfield, 2004; ¹⁶¹⁹; ¹⁶²⁰). Quite obviously, this put an end to decades of Sunni monopoly rule in Iraq. In line with the 1 January rule, these changes have to be coded from the year 2004 onwards. Thornier questions concern the coding of the respective degrees of political power for all three relevant groups.

¹⁶¹⁹ [Katzman Prados, 2005]

¹⁶²⁰ [Nasr, 2006]

Shi'a Arabs: In all quasi-governments and governments since the US invasion, Shia elites have been in a leading role, occupying significantly more cabinet posts than any other group. This is true for the coalition-appointed Iraqi Governing Council (ICG) in power between 13 July 2003 and 1 June 2004 (see ¹⁶²¹), Iyad Allawi's Iraqi Interim Government after the “transfer of power” from the occupation forces to Iraqi authorities (in power from 28 June 2004 to 3 May 2005; see ¹⁶²²), Ibrahim al-Jaafari's Iraqi Transitional Government (3 May 2005 to 20 May 2006; see ¹⁶²³), and both of Nouri al-Maliki's governments (al-Maliki I: 20 May 2006 – 22 December 2010; al-Maliki II: 22 December 2010-2014; see ¹⁶²⁴ as well as ¹⁶²⁵). All these governments and also the post-invasion order more general have been described as “Shiite-dominated” or “Shiite-led” in various sources (see e.g. ¹⁶²⁶; ¹⁶²⁷; ¹⁶²⁸; ¹⁶²⁹; ¹⁶³⁰; ¹⁶³¹). In all cabinets, however, other groups have also been included. Thus, the Shiites are coded as senior partner in an ethnopolitical power-sharing regime from 2004 onwards.

¹⁶²¹ [Otterman, 2004a]

¹⁶²² [Otterman, 2004b]

¹⁶²³ [Beehner, 2005]

¹⁶²⁴ [Filkins Oppel Jr., 2006]

¹⁶²⁵ [Wing, 2011]

Kurds: For the Kurds, the US invasion and post-Saddam Iraqi politics has turned out to be a quantum leap in terms of political representation. They were a crucial partner for the US forces and their allies and have been duly represented in all branches of the post-invasion administration (see ¹⁶³² and the sources mentioned above). This has led some analysts to conclude that “Iraq’s Kurdish community, essentially underrepresented in and repressed by previous Iraqi governments, is emerging as a major force in post-Saddam Iraq” (¹⁶³³), that “(t)he high-level Kurdish participation marked the first time in Iraq’s history that the Kurds had entered national politics on an equal footing with Iraq’s Arab majority” (ibid.), or that the “Kurdish parties are now one of the most powerful forces (if not the most powerful) within the post-Saddam environment” (Anderson and Stansfield, 2004, 162).

¹⁶³² [?]¹⁶³³ [?]

Even though Kurds are a major force in Iraqi politics by now, viewing them on an equal footing with the Shia majority appears to me as a stretch too far. In all cabinets since 2003, they have received significantly fewer seats than the Shia majority and, most of the time, roughly as many but often more important seats than the Sunnis. Also, their temporary role as the kingmakers in the government formation process of 2006, which secured them the presidency as well as the foreign ministry does not seem to justify a coding as senior partner (¹⁶³⁴), keeping in mind the distribution of the other cabinet posts (see citations above). On these grounds, the Kurds are coded as junior partners from 2004 onwards.

¹⁶³⁴ [Katzman, 2010]

Their de facto autonomy status prevailing since 1991 was strengthened by the regime change and finally codified in the 2005 constitution (¹⁶³⁵; ¹⁶³⁶). Thus, the Kurds continue to be coded as regionally autonomous.

¹⁶³⁵ [Katzman, 2010]¹⁶³⁶ [International Crisis Group, 2011]

Sunni Arabs: The previously dominant Sunni minority has clearly lost large amounts of its access to executive power. Especially the rigid de-Baathification program introduced by Paul Bremer’s US-led administration purged many Sunnis from the government apparatus (¹⁶³⁷). While Allawi’s interim government took a somewhat softer stance and tried to reintegrate moderate ex-Baathists into the administration, al-Maliki used de-Baathification and the “Justice and Accountability law” succeeding it from 2008 onwards to get rid of internal Sunni rivals (¹⁶³⁸; ¹⁶³⁹). All this has contributed to a sense of “marginalization” and “political exclusion” among the Sunni Arab community. Such grievances became apparent in the January 2005 parliamentary elections that were boycotted by large parts of the Sunni population as well as during the Sunni insurgency in 2006/07 (¹⁶⁴⁰).

¹⁶³⁷ [Otterman, 2005]¹⁶³⁸ [International Crisis Group, 2013]¹⁶³⁹ [Otterman, 2005]¹⁶⁴⁰ [International Crisis Group, 2013]

And yet, perceived marginalization and its most obvious manifestations do not automatically imply that the Sunnis have in fact been excluded from political life. Instead, it has always been a stated aim of the US-led coalition to include the Sunnis into the post-Saddam Iraqi order (¹⁶⁴¹). As a matter of fact, in all the governing bodies

¹⁶⁴¹ [Filkins Ooppel Jr., 2006]

or cabinets since the invasion, Sunnis have been represented in non-negligible numbers (see the sources cited above). Due to intra-Sunni splits between radical and moderate factions and perhaps also the grievances fuelled by the vast power losses when compared to the pre-invasion regime, many Sunnis have never felt aptly represented (¹⁶⁴²). If we look at the actual composition of the governments since 2003, however, it seems difficult to code the Sunnis as anything else than a junior partner in an ethnic power-sharing regime.

¹⁶⁴² [International Crisis Group, 2012a]

The situation has changed since the withdrawal of the last US forces in late 2011. While there have been accusations before that al-Maliki is purging internal, mainly Sunni rivals from his government, his increasingly authoritarian and exclusionary credentials have only become blatantly visible in the absence of the coalition forces (¹⁶⁴³). On the very same day the last US forces withdrew, Maliki turned against the most high-ranking Sunni politician, Vice President al-Hashimi, forcing him into exile. A similar fate awaited finance minister al-Issawi, another prominent Sunni leader, in late 2012. Apart from these most prominent cases, al-Maliki took several other steps to get rid of or reduce the influence of Sunni internal rivals (¹⁶⁴⁴, ¹⁶⁴⁵). This has left the Sunnis with only “nominal representation” (¹⁶⁴⁶). Another recent ICC report states that Maliki as “reneged” on his commitment to power-sharing and that the largely Sunni-backed Iraqiya coalition, from which all Sunni cabinet members stem has lost “any clout to influence governance or the action of the security forces” (¹⁶⁴⁷). Against this backdrop, the Sunni representation in the Iraqi government from 2012 onwards must be regarded as merely tokenistic and the Sunni minority is thus coded as powerless.

¹⁶⁴³ [Filkins, 2014]

¹⁶⁴⁴ [Filkins, 2014]

¹⁶⁴⁵ [International Crisis Group, 2012a]

¹⁶⁴⁶ [International Crisis Group, 2013]

¹⁶⁴⁷ [International Crisis Group, 2012b]

Regional Autonomy Codings: As far as the regional autonomy codings are concerned, neither Sunnis nor Shiites enjoy significant executive power at the regional level. While the Iraqi constitution allows for the formation of regions with quite substantial autonomy from the central government in Baghdad, all attempts by Sunni but also by Shia provinces to attain regional autonomy have been blocked by the al-Maliki regime (see e.g. ¹⁶⁴⁸). Thus, as already stated above, only the Kurds are coded as regionally autonomous.

¹⁶⁴⁸ [Ottaway Kaysi, 2012]

Additional Information: Ethnic composition of the various post-Saddam governing bodies and governments.

- Iraqi Governing Council (ICG): 13 Shiites, 5 Kurds, 5 Sunnis, 1 Turkmen, 1 Assyrian Christian (see ¹⁶⁴⁹)

¹⁶⁴⁹ [Otterman, 2004a]

- Iraqi Interim Government: Most cabinet members are Shiites, but Sunnis and Kurds are also well represented. Still one Turkmen and one Christian in the cabinet (¹⁶⁵⁰)

¹⁶⁵⁰ [Otterman, 2004b]

- Iraqi Transitional Government: 17 Shiites, 9 Kurds, 8 Sunnis, 2 Turkmen, 1 Christian (¹⁶⁵¹)

¹⁶⁵¹ [Beehner, 2005]

- Al-Maliki I: 17 Shiites, 7 Kurds, 7 members of the exclusively Sunni Iraqi Accord front, 5 members of Iyad Allawi's secular Iraqi National List including both Sunni and Shia elites (¹⁶⁵²)

¹⁶⁵² [Filkins Opperl Jr., 2006]

- Al-Maliki II (cabinet size varies over time): 20-28 Shiites, 7-9 Kurds, 7-11 Sunnis, some others (¹⁶⁵³).

¹⁶⁵³ [Wing, 2011]

- Al-Maliki III (2014-?): ?

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Political status of ethnic groups in Iraq

From 1946 until 1958

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Shi'a Arabs	0.63	JUNIOR PARTNER
Sunni Arabs	0.19	SENIOR PARTNER
Kurds	0.17	POWERLESS

From 1959 until 1963

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Shi'a Arabs	0.63	JUNIOR PARTNER
Sunni Arabs	0.19	SENIOR PARTNER
Kurds	0.17	SELF-EXCLUSION

From 1964 until 1979

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Shi'a Arabs	0.63	POWERLESS
Sunni Arabs	0.19	MONOPOLY
Kurds	0.17	SELF-EXCLUSION

From 1980 until 1991

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Shi'a Arabs	0.63	DISCRIMINATED
Sunni Arabs	0.19	MONOPOLY
Kurds	0.17	DISCRIMINATED



Figure 371: Political status of ethnic groups in Iraq during 1946-1958.

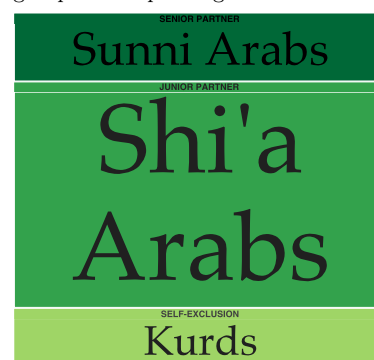


Figure 372: Political status of ethnic groups in Iraq during 1959-1963.

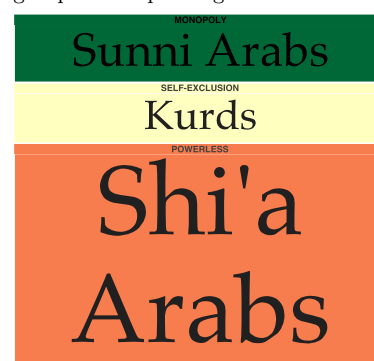
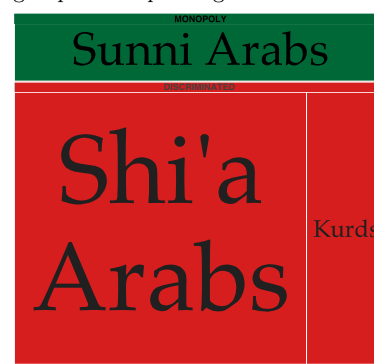


Figure 373: Political status of ethnic groups in Iraq during 1964-1979.



From 1992 until 2003

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Shi'a Arabs	0.63	DISCRIMINATED
Sunni Arabs	0.19	MONOPOLY
Kurds	0.17	SELF-EXCLUSION

From 2004 until 2011

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Shi'a Arabs	0.63	SENIOR PARTNER
Sunni Arabs	0.19	JUNIOR PARTNER
Kurds	0.17	JUNIOR PARTNER

From 2012 until 2013

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Shi'a Arabs	0.63	SENIOR PARTNER
Sunni Arabs	0.19	POWERLESS
Kurds	0.17	JUNIOR PARTNER

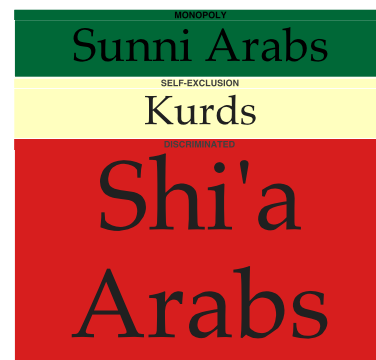


Figure 375: Political status of ethnic groups in Iraq during 1992-2003.



Figure 376: Political status of ethnic groups in Iraq during 2004-2011.

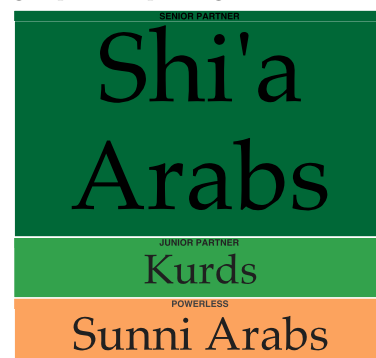


Figure 377: Political status of ethnic groups in Iraq during 2012-2013.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Iraq

From 1946 until 2013

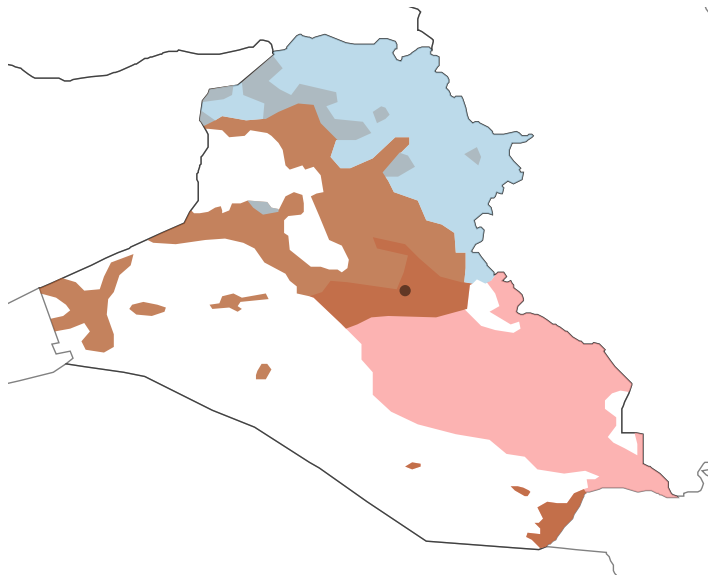


Figure 378: Map of ethnic groups in Iraq during 2012-2013.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
■ Shi'a Arabs	108 233	Regional & urban
■ Sunni Arabs	96 795	Regional & urban
■ Kurds	72 411	Regional & urban

Table 112: List of ethnic groups in Iraq during 1946-2013.

Conflicts in Iraq

Starting on 1948-04-15

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Egypt	Government of Israel		1948-04-15			
Government of Iraq	Government of Israel		1948-04-15			
Government of Jordan	Government of Israel		1948-04-15			
Government of Lebanon	Government of Israel		1948-04-15			
Government of Syria	Government of Israel		1948-04-15			

Starting on 1958-07-14

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Iraq	Military faction (free Officers Movement)		1958-07-14			
Government of Iraq	Military faction (forces of Abdul Wahab al-Shawaf)		1959-03-08			
Government of Iraq	NCRC		1963-02-08			
Government of Iraq	Military faction (forces of Abd as-Salam Arif)		1963-11-18			
Government of Iraq	SCIRI	Shi'a Arabs	1982-08-01	Explicit	Yes	Yes
Government of Iraq	Ansar al-Islam	Sunni Arabs	2003-12-12	Presumed	Yes	
Government of Iraq	Ansar al-Islam	Kurds	2003-12-12	Presumed	Yes	
Government of Iraq	RJF	Sunni Arabs	2004-03-31	Explicit	Yes	
Government of Iraq	Al-Mahdi Army	Shi'a Arabs	2004-04-04	Explicit	Yes, from EGIP	Yes
Government of Iraq	ISIS	Sunni Arabs	2004-05-17	Explicit	Yes	

Starting on 1961-12-31

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Iraq	KDP	Kurds	1961-12-31	Explicit	Yes	Yes
Government of Iraq	PUK	Kurds	1976-12-31	Explicit	Yes	Yes
Government of Iraq	KDP-QM	Kurds	1977-12-31	Explicit	Yes	

Starting on 1972-04-11

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Iran	Government of Iraq		1972-04-11			

Starting on 1990-08-02

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Iraq	Government of Kuwait		1990-08-02			

Starting on 2003-03-20

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Australia	Government of Iraq		2003-03-20			
Government of United Kingdom	Government of Iraq		2003-03-20			
Government of United States of America	Government of Iraq		2003-03-20			