

Democracy and Ethno-religious Conflict in Iraq

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In its heated aftermath, the Iraq war is variously seen as liberation from tyranny and a conquest aimed at dominating the Arab nation. From a more detached point of view, the current situation in Iraq looks like another example of state implosion, comparable to Somalia, Sierra Leone, Columbia or Zaire, where the central political institutions have crumbled as a consequence of war, conquest, revolution or a combination of the three. Several fundamental problems and obstacles have to be solved if the situation is to improve. The list is long and includes technical problems such as the repair of infrastructure and the re-opening of hospitals and schools, the security problem of re-establishing a state monopoly of violence, the political task of building a credible interim government,¹ and finally, the difficulty of choosing the right institutions that will make democracy work in Iraq.

Successful democratisation is particularly important from an American foreign-policy point of view, since the main rationale for the war has shifted from the elimination of dangerous weapons to regime change. Simply handing over power to a group of ex-generals and Ba'athist party officials who would probably solve two-thirds of the problems – the approach adopted in many US interventions across the globe over past decades – was out of question. While many Ba'athists are currently again employed in the new police force, administration and army, the reconstruction of their one-party regime was never an option. President George W. Bush had committed himself to make Iraq a democratically governed and 'free' country.

However, the seeds of democracy may have difficulties to germinate in the sandy soils of Iraq. In view of the rather unfavourable

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circumstances, some may say that the administration has run into a commitment trap. Two problems stand out as particularly difficult. First, not all major political forces in Iraq may *want* Western-style democracy, not because Islam is incompatible with democracy,² but because currently dominant political forces – for example, those within the Shi'ite political landscape³ – are for historical reasons not inclined towards a secularised political system with a clear division of power. These forces can influence the outcome of democratic elections through the well-known mechanisms of patronage and pressure politics. Secondly, even if most Iraqis wanted democracy, it may not work because the political conflicts unleashed by democratisation exceed the conflict absorption capacities. More specifically, democracy entails the danger that the demands of the Kurds, Shia and Sunni leaders spiral up and unleash centripetal forces that cannot be held in check by a weak centre. Before explaining why this should be the case and which institutions are best suited to avoid it, it would help to explore, on a more general level, why democracy may stir up ethno-religious conflict.

Democracy and ethnic conflict

Contrary to the most fervent advocates of exporting democracies across the world, democracy does not automatically produce inter-ethnic harmony.⁴ Especially during the early decades of democratisation, tensions along ethnic-religious lines may be heightened and lead to violence and finally the abortion of the democratic process itself. To be sure, established democracies resolve ethnic conflicts more peacefully than autocratic regimes.⁵ However, this may be due to the fact that democracies are on average much richer.⁶ And richer countries have the means to accommodate ethnic claims; for example, through redistribution.⁷ As soon as a dynamic perspective is introduced, it emerges that *introducing* democracy means, more often than not, ethnic trouble. The recent history of Kenya, the Ivory Coast, Mexico, former Yugoslavia and Georgia provide some illustrations for this, and countries like South Africa look like exceptions to the rule.

Why should this be the case? The very nature of democratic legitimacy provides incentives for formulating ethnic and nationalist claims and mobilising followers along these lines.⁸ In democracies, rulers no longer rule by the grace of God or Allah, nor in the name of civilising the planet, as in colonial empires, nor bringing revolutionary progress, as under Communism, but in the name of the people. When empires crumble, Ottoman *begs* and *kadis* leave, British political officers sail back, or Russian party elites head for Moscow, the question rises: who is this people, and more precisely, where are its boundaries, who should be

included and who should not? Historically, nationalism provided the answer to this question. In ethnically heterogeneous states, however, several competing claims to nationhood by various ethnic or religious communities may appear, each vying to become the *Staatsvolk*.

This is not to say, however, that ethnic heterogeneity does automatically lead to conflict and violence, as the examples of Switzerland, India and other multi-ethnic democracies show. Researchers have demonstrated that more heterogeneous countries do not necessarily have more ethnic conflict, if we again control for levels of economic development and regime type.⁹ Thus, we should look for other factors that explain when political conflict is more likely to oppose *ethnic*, rather than other groups, and when such conflicts are likely to escalate. I have identified two closely related conditions.¹⁰ First, no strong networks of civil society organisations have developed prior to democratisation and the introduction of the modern nation state. Secondly, weak states cannot guarantee and enforce equality before the law, democratic participation, protection from arbitrary violence and access to state services, for *all* the citizens of the state. Elites therefore will discriminate between individuals and groups and establish patron-client relationships. They will give preference to members of their own ethnic group, when trans-ethnic civil society organisations are not available. Political support and votes thus will be secured along the channels of ethnicity or other communal solidarities.

The rise of the ethnic question in Iraq¹¹

Unfortunately enough, Iraq fulfils all conditions for a pervasive and conflictual politicisation of ethnicity. First, it was ethnically too heterogeneous to allow an obvious answer to the question 'who is the people?' In the year of independence (1932) its population was made up of 21% Sunni Arab speakers; 14% mostly Sunni Kurdish speakers; 53% Shia Arab speakers; 5% non-Muslim Arab speakers, composed mainly of the Baghdad Jews; and 6% other religious-linguistic groups such as the Sunni Turkmen of Northern Iraq and the various Assyrian-speaking Christian sects.¹²

Secondly, and more importantly, in 1932, only a few modern civil society organisations existed, and none had a trans-ethnic reach. All the religious-linguistic groups mentioned above were subdivided into tribes and tribal confederations, especially the Kurds and the Shia. A considerable part of the overall population was nomadic herders (estimated at 35% in 1867 and 5% in 1947),¹³ while the overwhelming majority was farmers and peasants. The literacy rate remained somewhere between 5% and 10% in the remote Ottoman provinces later

to become Iraq.¹⁴ Political clubs, patriotic reading circles and other bourgeois associations, trade unions and farmers associations are unlikely to flourish in this social environment. Traditions of statehood were weak in this backwater area of the Ottoman empire. Degrees of administrative penetration, effective control over the means of violence and service extension to the masses of the population were well below the level of other large countries such as Egypt with its history of nineteenth-century state-building.¹⁵ Thus, the new leaders of the state and the various political factions forming in the newly introduced parliament relied exclusively on appeals to the solidarity of a particular ethno-religious group in order to gather a following and legitimise their rule.¹⁶

The Arabisation of the state

The politics of ethnicity therefore dominated from the very moment when the British installed the Hashemite Faizal of the Hijaz, the commander of the Arab forces that contributed to the defeat of the Ottoman armies in the Middle East, as the king of Iraq. He and his ex-Sharifian officers were stern adherents of the Pan-Arab nationalism that had earlier developed among Ottoman notables. They dominated politics in the first decades of independence, providing almost half of the premiers appointed during the mandate (1921–1932) and the monarchy (1932–1958) – the rest coming from old Ottoman bureaucratic families or the Sunni notables of Baghdad. Only four out of the 23 individuals appointed as premiers during that period were Shia.¹⁷

This new Sunni Arab elite acknowledged that feelings of national solidarity were completely absent in Iraq during the 1920s. The idea of an Arab nation – which should become the ideological basis of the nation-building process – was hardly known even among the Arab-speaking population of the country, which felt loyal to their clan, their village, their guild, their religious sheikh, but not to peoples in Syria and Egypt they had hardly ever heard of. In the eyes of the new rulers, this mosaic structure had to be overcome and the different pieces melted together into a conscious Arab nation capable of defending itself against European imperialism. In stark contrast to the multi-cultural Ottoman empire, the new regime envisioned the compulsory assimilation of the different minorities – in fact the large majority of the population – into the mainstream of Arabism and implicitly Sunni Islam, which was regarded as the centre piece of the nation's cultural heritage and its foremost contribution to world history.

The main instruments to achieve this aim, as in any other nation building projects of the modern world, were schools, the army and a unified administration. The education system came under the control of

the founder of modern Pan-Arabist thought, the Christian Syrian Satia al-Husri. The army introduced universal conscription – irrespective of religion or tribal status. A unified administration by Baghdad-trained officials attempted to end centuries of indirect rule that, in this remote corner of the empire, had not been profoundly altered through the Ottoman reforms of the nineteenth century or the Young Turk experiments.

Parallel to the ascendance and spread of Pan-Arabism, the Sunni Arabist factions in the army, state administration and later also the Ba’ath Party gradually ousted other ethno-religious factions. A few figures will suffice here to illustrate this process: As early as 1936, out of a sample of 61 officers, only two were not Sunni Arabs.¹⁸ During the monarchy, there were still 15% Kurds in the higher ranks of the administration and 25% in the lower ranks. An unknown, but very substantial proportion was Jewish Arabs at the beginning of the 1930s. In the decade after 1958, Kurds only held 2% in the higher tiers and 13% in the lower tiers of the administration¹⁹ and Jews had been expelled altogether from government and later the country. The Ba’ath Party still included 54% Shia in the period 1952–1963 among the members of the Central Command. Their share was reduced to 6% during the period 1963–1970.²⁰

During their ascent to power, the Pan-Arabist factions became radicalised and took on fascist tints in the 1930s and again under the rule of the Ba’ath from 1968 onwards. Their ultimate goal, the creation of a united Arab (Sunni) nation, was never achieved. The more the regime tried to enforce its vision of society, the fiercer resistance became, giving rise to ever higher levels of repression and domination. This in turn nourished feelings of being ruled and dominated by ‘ethnic others’ among those who refused to melt into the great Arab nation and who were increasingly excluded from state power.

*Pan-Arabist
factions took
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Could it have been different? At two points in Iraq’s history, it seemed as if this spiral of ethno-religious exclusion and conflict had been halted. Bakr Sidqi’s regime of 1936–37 was modelled after Kemalist Turkey. He tried to promote an overarching, explicitly multi-ethnic Iraqi nationalism. The Kurdish language, Shia religion and other ethnic symbols were recognised as part of the nation’s heritage. Qassem’s reign, in the period 1958–1963, was initially based to a large extent on the Communist Party mobilising large sections of the newly populated suburbs and involving the largest ethno-religious groups within its Central Committees. The Free Officers under Qassem were oriented

towards social reforms, including a serious attempt at land reform and a break with the principle of indirect rule in tribal areas. As was the case with Bakr, Qassem had Kurdish roots and understood Iraq as a multi-ethnic national state. Kurds and Shia Arabs were well represented in Qassem's National Council of the Revolutionary Command, the group of Free Officers leading the coup and the government.²¹ Major political dividing lines were reorganized on ideological principles transcending communal boundaries, and a shared sense of struggling for the nation's future spread.²²

Unfortunately, both regimes proved politically too weak to make a stand against the Arabist circles in the army, which were allied with urban notables and a rising class of bureaucrats. In their eyes, nation-building and political integration meant sharing power and privileges with other factions within the army, the bureaucracy and government.²³ Even the trans-ethnic political parties that had supported the two regimes could not resist the centrifugal forces of ethnic factionalism. This is illustrated by the history of the Communist Party. The Kurdish sister party of the Communists fused, in the 1940s, with the group of left-leaning Kurdish officers who were estranged from the army by the rise of Pan-Arabism in the officer's corps. Their new party, Hizbi Rizgari Kurd, joined the newly founded Kurdish Democratic Party in 1949. In 1957, the Kurdish section of the Communist Party of Iraq, which had leaned increasingly towards the pan-Arabist camp, split away and also joined the KDP.²⁴ Thus, within a period of 20 years, the Communist movement had been divided along ethnic lines.

Shia and Kurdish rebellions

The rise of pan-Arabism to the status of a national ideology and the Arabisation of army, government and administration were contested right from the beginning. Exclusion from power on the basis of ethno-religious background gave rise to ever more articulated Kurdish nationalism and a politicised Shi'ism.

While Iraqi independence was still on the negotiating table of the colonial powers, the Shia leadership did what it could to obtain an autonomous area under British or Turkish protection within the new state.²⁵ At a very early stage, however, it became clear that the mandate power and the newly installed Sunni elite would not allow a fragmentation of the state's authority over its territory. Throughout the 1920s, rebellions against the new authorities spread across the south.

Even more important than the question of autonomy was the ethnic composition of the army, which was to be substantially enlarged after independence. The principle of universal conscription was met with great

suspicion, especially by the tribal leaders who feared losing control over 'their rifles' and who quite realistically predicted that they were to deliver the rank and file for an army commanded by the Sunni Arab elite of Baghdad. Shortly after the announcement of a decree on universal conscription in 1935, three years after independence, most of the southern tribes rose up in arms and a widespread rebellion shattered the region.

It was brutally put down by Iraqi troops and the Royal Air Force. Little distinction was made between the civil population and armed fighters. Men who were or seemed to be leaders of Shia tribes faced summary execution. Politics in the southern region was profoundly transformed and indirect rule through sheikhs replaced by a close supervision of political activities by a newly founded Department of Tribal Affairs. The education system was reorganized along the pan-Arabist lines defined by Husri and his followers. Shia disaffection and distrust of the Iraqi state and its ruling elite has been a constant of Iraqi politics ever since. While in subsequent decades more Shia ministers were included in the cabinets²⁶ and more Shia became members of parliament thanks to a redrawing of electoral districts, this did not fundamentally change the estrangement of the Shia population from the Iraqi state – although this estrangement was temporarily overcome by a fervent wartime nationalism that even embraced sections of the Shii population during the war with Iran. However, this nationalism quickly dissolved when the war with Iran ended.²⁷ Saddam Hussein's bloody repression of the uprising at the end of the 1991 Gulf War, bearing more than a superficial resemblance to the British–Iraqi campaign of half a century earlier, has further deepened the cleavage between Sunni and Shia Arabs.

As with the Shia, Kurdish political leaders – Ottoman notables and officers, as well as important sheikhs and tribal chiefs – resisted the formation of the new state right from the start. They still hoped that a Kurdish nation state would be cut out of the dying body of the Ottoman empire, as had been promised by the imperial powers at the end of the war. Eventually it became clear that this was not going to happen. While the status of the northern province of Mosul, largely populated by Kurdish speakers, was still a matter of debate between Turkey, Britain and the League of Nations, Kurdish leaders demanded similar concessions from the mandate power as Shia, Assyrian and Turkmen officials had demanded. These included the establishment of Kurdish schools, the nomination of Kurdish officials, and a ruling that Kurdish

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become the official language in all those places where Kurdish speakers formed a majority.

Because of the uncertain status of Mosul, the British and the Sunni elite had to be much more careful and conciliatory than they were in their previous dealings with the Shia demands so as not to break promises made to the League of Nations. They therefore reintroduced and reinforced the system of indirect rule through tribal leaders and sheikhs left by the Ottomans. Some of these leaders, such as the famous Sufi sheikh Mahmud Berzenjii from Suleimaniya, quickly gained power and influence and went so far beyond the principles of indirect rule as to declare an independent Kurdistan. He had replaced the talisman bracelet with suras from the Koran with a piece of paper with President Wilson's 14 principles. This action did not, however, prevent the British from subduing his rebellion by force of arms in 1924.

The sheiks and their tribal followers were not the only Kurdish forces resisting the expanding Arab state. They were soon joined by two other sections of the Kurdish-speaking population: first, by urban intellectuals and professionals, who in later years often were members of the Communist party; and secondly, by Kurdish officers serving in the Iraqi army. These different currents of Kurdish nationalism entered into an uneasy relationship with each other. Party splits and fusions, purges and factional fighting, including armed confrontations with heavy casualties, have characterised the history of the Kurdish movement up to the present day.²⁸

In the different wars between this nationalist movement, militarily based on the tribal fighters it could muster in the mountains, and the various Arabist governments, a common pattern can be discerned. The weaker the centre, both domestically and internationally, the more concessions Baghdad had to make to the Kurdish leaders, who established an autonomous quasi-state in the north. As soon as the centre gained strength or the Kurds lost international support, the Iraqi army crushed the guerrilla movement. The reprisals against fighters and the civil population became, in each round (1932, 1940–44, 1958–75, 1980–88), increasingly violent, and were directed at ever larger sections of the Kurdish population.

At the end of the Iran–Iraq War in 1988, the resistance movement broke down under an assault that exceeded in brutality, systematic character and ruthlessness all previous reprisals. The gassing of the Kurdish town of Halabja, in retaliation for their sympathy with the Kurdish movement and Iran, became a symbol of the genocidal character of the so-called *Anfal*²⁹ campaign. The Iraqi army started to systematically destroy all Kurdish villages in the north that had supported the

rebellions³⁰ and to deport and resettle the population (estimated at around 800,000 persons) in newly built 'collective towns' outside the Kurdish areas, mostly on the edges of the Mesopotamian plain. Arab families were settled in the fertile valleys and plains of Kurdistan and especially in the oil-rich region of Kirkuk.

Most significantly, this last campaign of repression, no longer narrowly targetting the supporters of rebels but the Kurdish population at large, fostered feelings of unity and shared destiny among the Kurds – a development similar to the deepening of ethno-nationalist identities and solidarities formed during the Bosnian war. While still fragile and utterly divided along several lines, the Kurds do now have a clear sense of nationhood and feel more than ever before alienated from the Iraqi state.

At the end of the 1991 Gulf War, the rifts which had steadily deepened over past decades between large sections of the Shia and the Kurdish population on the one hand, and the Arabist regime on the other, became visible to the world. Ethnicity and religion are today the main political dividing lines in the country. No trans-ethnic political groupings have survived, to this author's knowledge, the history of political mobilisation and violence along the ethno-religious lines outlined.

The current situation

The political power of ethnicity and religion is most probably going to be reinforced, not weakened, when democratisation takes on momentum in the coming months. As at independence, no trans-ethnic networks of civil society organisations exist that could provide alternative channels for the aggregation of interests. In the first months after the war, a sub-national power structure that was hitherto hidden under the centralised military, party and security apparatus has become visible. It consists of leaders of tribal factions, village and neighbourhood councils of elders, and, most importantly, the supra-local religious organisation of Shia clergy as well as, so it seems, of the Muslim Brotherhood among the Sunni. The Ba'ath Party had strongly relied on these local and regional structures, albeit to varying degrees. Weakened over the past 20 years by war and a decade of international sanctions, the Ba'ath regime increasingly had to rely on local power brokers to ensure compliance and eliminate opposition. In a dramatic shift away from modernist ideology and the practice of Ba'athism, Saddam Hussein declared that the Iraqi tribes represented the true values of the nation, such as bravery and honour, in their purest form. Following the Shi'ite uprising at the end of the 1991 Gulf war, he provided tribal sheikhs in the Sunni heartland and in the Shi'ite south with new political legitimacy by granting them regular audiences and

institutionalising their role as middlemen between the rural population and the party, and by supporting them financially and distributing light weapons.³¹ Today, none of these leaders has a trans-regional or even trans-ethnic constituency.

Under these circumstances, the solidarity of the Kurdish nation, the Shia sect and the Sunni Arab population will likely serve as channels for gathering popular support when it comes to elections. Each political party will try to relate to as many urban notables, tribal sheiks and rural village headmen (and their respective voting blocs) as possible. These clientelist pyramids will rarely include members of ethnic-religious groups other than those of the party leaders. Democracy in Iraq will likely be dominated by the micropolitics of clientelistic alliance building on the one hand, and by the macro-politics of ethno-religious party competition on the other.

Designing democratic institutions for Iraq

Democratic politics would very likely lead to a radicalisation of these ethno-nationalist parties and lead to an upward spiralling of their demands. This is the unfortunate conclusion when other similar experiences are assessed.³² According to Donald Horowitz, one of the most distinguished experts on ethnic politics, this tendency is explained by the incentive structure of ethnic party systems. In non-ethnic party systems (such as the US or Germany), politicians must mainly court the floating voters in the middle of the political opinion spectrum and therefore move away from extremes. An ethnic party, in contrast, seeks its support only *within* a clearly defined segment of the population, because once ethnicity has become a basic principle of political contest and conflict, the boundaries between groups harden and an individual's group membership is cemented. For this reason, it is worthwhile for ethnic party leaders to take radical positions to forestall competition over representation of 'true' group interests.³³

How can such a radicalisation of ethnic politics be avoided? Three issues are crucial. The first is whether moderation and accommodation should be achieved through electoral incentives or through power-sharing arrangements immunised from the vagaries of electoral results. A second problem concerns the vertical distribution of power between different levels of government: how much federalism; which type (ethnic versus territorial); and with regard to which sectors (for example, fiscal federalism, educational). The third issue relates to timing and outside support: at what point in the process should elections be held in order to minimise the destabilising effects of democratic politics? Which outside institutions are best suited to support the transformation process?

Power sharing versus electoral incentives

Most foreign policymakers and academic experts,³⁴ as well as the major established parties 'united' in the Iraqi Governing Council, currently seem to favour a power sharing arrangement for the future Iraq, along the lines of so-called 'consociational' democracy.³⁵ A grand coalition of elites of differing ethnic origins is currently being formed, which is supposed to negotiate a stable formula of power sharing. The different groups will likely be represented in the highest government positions and the cabinet according to their demographic size. List-system proportional representation has been proposed as the electoral system of choice for the future,³⁶ since it favours grand coalitions among ethnic parties and implies maximum party control over voters. Other mechanisms are ethnic quotas in government and bureaucracy, reciprocal affording of veto rights and regional autonomy. According to the proponents of power-sharing arrangements, the common interests of the elite cartel will prevent a radicalisation of demands and the negotiated distribution of power is insulated from the uncertainties of electoral moods.

At first sight, Iraq seems to fulfil several conditions that political scientists have identified as favourable for the establishment of power-sharing arrangements:³⁷ a small overall population size; a small number of ethno-religious segments; and a high degree of elite control over their future voters over their support base. More importantly, Iraq's oil should provide an adequate resource base to allow a generous policy of inclusion and power sharing. An escalation of distributive conflicts is easier to avoid in such circumstances than in a country of all-pervasive poverty. However, Iraq lacks a political culture of moderation and compromise that many see as necessary for a power-sharing arrangement to work in a sustainable way.³⁸ If power relations between the groups change, leaders may not be prepared to re-negotiate compromise and the consociational regime breaks apart.³⁹ This has been the case in Lebanon and many other countries with power-sharing arrangements. As one researcher has remarked, 'the list of cases where consociational arrangements applied reads like an obituary page'.⁴⁰

To substitute for a culture of moderation and compromise, a strong outside hand may be needed to bring the parties together when they cannot agree on how to divide the cake and, if necessary, to enforce a compromise and raise the costs of defection. In Northern Ireland, the British and Irish governments have effectively forced the conflicting parties into a 'coercive consociationalism'.⁴¹ Without a similar coercion over a prolonged period of time, it will probably take only a few months in Iraq for the Kurdish north to declare itself independent and Kirkuk its capital, and for the Shia to establish a de facto independent state ruled by

an alliance of clergy, tribal elders and urban *bazaaris*. If a power-sharing arrangement is what Iraqis and American foreign policymakers choose as the country's future political system, the centripetal drive will have to come from the outside. Re-importing a Hashemite king, as some have suggested,⁴² will not help at all, since historically, the royal family played an important part in Sunni Arab domination.

Whether the Iraqis will tolerate a strong American political role for a prolonged period of time, however, is an open question. Such a role would need a great deal of diplomatic wisdom, cultural sensitivity and political cleverness to persuade Iraqis that continued American interference was anything other than imperial imposition. A far more likely outcome is a further backlash against US power and its Iraqi executors. This could well take the shape of a victory of anti-democratic and anti-Western forces at the polls, gaining votes across the ethnic divide. Democracy would thus dig its own grave.⁴³

*A further
backlash
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power is likely*

There are two alternatives: either to transfer control over Iraq's democratisation to another body with more legitimacy, such as the United Nations, or to favour a different institutional design with less centripetal pull than a power-sharing arrangement. I will limit myself to a discussion of the second option here since I will advocate a UN-controlled transition in the concluding section. As an alternative to power sharing, an electoral system that fosters moderation and compromise across the ethnic divides may be introduced. Such a moderating electoral model may include the following three mechanisms. First, the most powerful elected official, the president or prime minister, should be the choice not only of the majority of the population, but of states or provinces of the country too, as is the case under the current constitution in Nigeria. This provides a strong incentive for taming ethno-nationalist demands and seeking support across the dividing lines of ethnicity and religion. Secondly, an alternative-vote system produces, if demographic relations permit, moderation of other elected politicians such as members of parliament, because they can hardly win with first votes alone and therefore will have to seek support from voters that have other first preferences. In ethnically divided societies like Iraq, this often means voters of other ethnic-religious backgrounds. Finally, the political party law may require all parties contesting the elections to be organised in a minimum number of provinces. Taken together, these three devices should lead to moderation of ethnic claims and to a convergence of positions at the centre of the political spectrum.

How exactly the moderating electoral model may or may not work in the case of Iraq is open to debate. Vote-pooling devices such as the alternative-vote system tend to be more difficult to organise and less transparent than, for example, list systems and proportional representation. More importantly, such devices may lead to considerable shifts in outcomes from only relatively small changes in party support.⁴⁴ The sustainability of such a moderating model therefore depends on the willingness of all parties to accept defeat – in contrast to the power-sharing arrangements, designed to prevent any major group from suffering defeat. As many examples of newly democratising societies have shown, accepting defeat at the polls may be the most critical and difficult aspect of the democratisation process. Allegations of fraud, mobilisations of supporters, and violent contests between party supporters and militias on the street have often led to the breakdown of democratic experiments. Thus, democratic consolidation may again depend on outside support. The intensity of intervention needed at the beginning is probably not lower than in a power-sharing arrangement. But intervention may be substantially reduced once the moderating model is in place, since it effectively allows for an adjustment of power relations through elections – in contrast to power sharing where such adjustments have to be negotiated. Ideally, electoral monitoring and the threat of international sanctions in case of non-acceptance of electoral results may be sufficient outside interference to help democracy work in the long run. However, without the support of the major political forces in the country and their continued commitment to democracy, the most cleverly designed electoral system will fail.

Federalism: how much and how?

In order to further reduce the risk of a return to autocracy, reducing the prize for winning power at the centre may help. Federalism is seen by many as the ‘golden road’ to reducing ethnic conflict in a sustainable way.⁴⁵ However, federalism may also provide a platform for radical positions and corresponding counter-reactions and thus lead to a radicalisation of ethnic politics in new forms, for example as an escalating fight between centre and federal entity over the distribution of resources.⁴⁶ In the cases of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, this led to federal collapse.⁴⁷ Finally, federalisation may heighten, rather than reduce the risks of gross human-rights violations, especially for members of ethnic minorities living under the rule of the majority government in a federal unit.⁴⁸

To overcome these problems, three institutional elements have been proposed. Territorial federalism (misleadingly also called ‘national’

federalism) is said to reduce the incentives for politicians at the provincial level to pursue a policy of ethnic antagonism. In a territorially defined system, such as Switzerland, the federal entities do not correspond with ethnic boundaries, and an aggregation of ethnic demands via provincial governments is discouraged. The current situation in Iraq provides an opportunity to introduce a non-ethnic federalism, since the Kurds in the north are split between two chiefdoms⁴⁹ – an important aspect mostly overlooked by proponents of a unified Kurdish province.⁵⁰ Both Talabani's and Barzani's parties officially demand autonomy for a unified Kurdish era (including Kirkuk) – as have their predecessors since the 1920s. However, the chances that they would accept two federal entities rather than one are high, given their bitter rivalries and their inability, despite heavy American pressure over the past years, to overcome the cold ceasefire and to cooperate actively. A territorial federalism may also be in the interest of the Sunni, because it would avoid an overly powerful Shia province and thus reduce the political impact of the demographic majority of the Shia. Kurds and Sunni together may be strong enough to convince the Shia of the advantages of a non-ethnic federalism.

To avoid the sort of resource fights between centre and provinces that led to the dismemberment of Yugoslavia and to the proliferation of claims to federal statehood in Nigeria, fiscal federalism has been proposed as a solution.⁵¹ Fiscal federalism would imply central control over the oil revenues of Iraq. A very large share of these revenues would directly be distributed to the federal states responsible for a large part of government functions. Ideally, the national government's hands would be tied by fixed revenue-sharing formulas that determine how funds are distributed and allocated, thereby granting wider discretion to lower levels of government. Fiscal federalism of this sort would greatly reduce the incentives to fight over control of the central government. And it would reduce the pressure for controlling the oil fields in Mosul and Kirkuk, perhaps even to the point of halting the dynamics of ethnic cleansing that have plagued these regions for decades.

It is highly doubtful, however, given the lack of an independent control and auditing of government spending in Iraq and given its tradition of political corruption and misuse of public funds, that fiscal decentralisation would work without continuous monitoring by international organisations. Quantitative research indicates that large amounts of petroleum are a curse rather than a blessing for the establishment of rule of law and accountable government since it frees those in power from the necessity of raising resources through taxes – and thus provide government services in exchange – and of establishing a general climate of security and predictability that may foster

investment and trade.⁵² To overcome the 'honey pot' effect and mitigate the 'resource curse' of oil riches, at least during the essential first phases of the state-building project, a trust fund under international supervision, perhaps that of the World Bank, might be the appropriate way to go forward. In the long run, strong mechanisms of accountability supervised by an independent judiciary will have to be put in place to avoid endemic corruption and political manipulation of the distribution of resources characteristic of oil-rich countries, for example, contemporary Nigeria.

To ensure protection of individuals and minorities from abuse of power, a strong minority rights regime at the national level, a powerful independent judiciary system and effective enforcement mechanisms are needed. Otherwise, revenge against Sunni Arab individuals living in Kurdish or Shia-dominated federal units will be endemic, the series of ethnic cleansings and forced resettlements will continue, and the smaller, dispersed minorities, such as the various Christian sects, the Turkmen and the Yezidi, will face discrimination by provincial governments. There is currently no judiciary system that would be capable of handling the thousands of claims addressing past injustice, forced resettlement and expropriation and that would protect citizens from similar treatment in the new federal entities. The holding of elections is no guarantee, as Fareed Zakaria has reminded us,⁵³ against democracies turning illiberal.

Timing and outside support

This general problem of 'illiberal democracy' raises questions of timing and outside support: when should elections be held and which actors are best suited to support the democratic transition from the outside? The two questions are linked, since different actors may have different time spans available for legitimately operating in Iraq.

There is general agreement among experts on democratisation that rather than rushing towards elections, newly democratising societies need, first of all, a state monopoly of violence, rule of law, separation of powers and a functioning party system.⁵⁴ The corresponding institutions, such as a non-corrupt police force, an independent judiciary capable of enforcing its verdicts, a legislating body sufficiently legitimised and professional to draft new legislation where necessary, and political parties with solid membership structures and programmes, may need time to operate adequately and on a routine basis. And citizens too need time to adjust their behaviour to the new circumstances, to overcome the all pervasive fear typical of totalitarian regimes and develop their own visions of a political future. The constitution of parliament and the election of a government may follow later and effectively constitute the last, rather than the first step in the process of democratisation.

In the case of Iraq, immediate democratisation may quickly overstrain the capacities of conflict absorption in a political system that has been – since its foundation in the 1930s – held together by coercion and repression. Ideally, enough time should be given for the formation of parties and civil society organisations that are not associated with the existing ethno-religious programmes. Some of these organisations may be rebuilt on the basis of past experiences and memories.

The Communist Party, whose leadership has returned from exile in Syria, should be encouraged in rebuilding a trans-ethnic power basis, leaving behind remaining Cold War reflexes – just as the occupying forces may have to overcome their Cold War reflexes. The Ba'athists should be allowed to regroup under new leadership and transform into a

*We should not
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Iraqi
nationalists*

modern, conservative party with Pan-Arabism as its founding doctrine – with the exception of the leading stratum of the party who were involved in the gross and systematic human-rights abuses of the past. They should be excluded from any political role and be put on trial. We should also not be afraid of Iraqi nationalists, even though these certainly will be less pro-Western and pro-American than the US administration would wish. Other organisations, such

as business groups, trade unions and other civil society actors, should be encouraged to emancipate themselves from the tutelage of the Iraqi state and set up their own organisational infrastructure. This may indeed take years. And it may again need outside encouragement and support by the most professional institutions in this field, such as the German political foundations.

In a fully ethnicised political landscape such as Iraq, it takes time for trans-ethnic parties and organisations to take root. The experience in Bosnia clearly shows that even with heavy outside financing and logistical support, non-ethnic parties may have enormous difficulties in gathering votes as long as a society still struggles with the traumas of ethnic warfare. Supporting such parties and organisations is a medium-term enterprise. It is well worth the effort, since if it succeeds, they will provide some of the political cohesion that ethnically divided polities so desperately need.

The alternative to such a bottom-up, slow process of democratisation is the fast and top-down approach favoured by the Bush administration – although from the perspective of those who had opposed the war, including the French government, the current timetable is painfully slow in handing sovereignty back to the Iraqi people. The push for elections is understandable, given that a continued American occupation of Iraq will

create even more serious problems of legitimacy than the war itself – and given that sovereignty is a sacrosanct doctrine in the world order of nation states where colonialism is no longer a legitimate political option.

To manage a quick handover of power to a US-friendly, yet democratically elected Iraqi government, in the first months of the occupation, all forces hostile to the US and Western-style democracy were excluded from the emerging political centre. Pro-American exiles were put in positions of power, in the hope that they would gain the confidence of the population and later win enough votes to outbalance anti-American forces. This approach carries high risks of an anti-democratic backlash, and is overly confident about the capacity of arms and money to bring legitimacy to the pro-American forces.

The approach favoured here demands a perhaps equally strong dose of outside interference, yet by the UN instead of the US. The electoral system proposed needs independent monitoring and outside pressure to make sure that losers accept the verdict at the polls. Fiscal federalism may work better, especially as long as trust in government institutions is still a rare good, if the distribution of oil revenues is subject to oversight by an outside agency. The set up of an adequate minority-rights regime and judicial reform are tasks where legal expertise from around the world and perhaps even some involvement of outside judges may be needed. The formation of civil society organisations and trans-ethnic parties has to be encouraged from the outside. International organisations and bodies are better legitimised – certainly in the eyes of Iraqis – to oversee such a far reaching process of institutional change than an occupying army and its civilian face. The more control over the political transformation process is handed over to these actors and institutions, the better the chances for democracy in Iraq. It may well be that the US administration cannot simultaneously democratise and control Iraq, and will have to make up its mind about what it really wants.

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Notes

¹ Larry Diamond, *Can Iraq become a democracy?* 2003. Available from www.stanford.edu/~ldiamond/papers/Iraq_040403.pdf.

² Cross-national evidence of Islamic 'underachievement' with regard to democratisation is presented by Steven Fish, 'Islam and authoritarianism', *World Politics*, vol. 55, no. 1, 2002, pp. 4–37, who, however, does not take historical factors into consideration. One of many accounts of the compatibility of Islamic religious doctrine and democratic pluralism is Abdulaziz Sachedina, *The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Most recently on the debate on Islam and democracy see Larry Diamond, Marc F. Plattner, and Daniel Brumberg (eds.) *Islam and Democracy in the Middle East*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2003),

³ See, for example, on the political backgrounds and programmes of the various factions within the Shiite clergy Christopher de Bellaigue, 'The Shiites under occupation', *The New York Review of Books*, vol. 50, no. 12, 2003, pp. 24–26.

⁴ This is shown by historical research – see Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence. Democratization and Nationalist Violence* (New York: Norton, 2000); by cross-country statistical analysis – see Ted R. Gurr, 'Peoples against the State: Ethnopolitical conflict in the changing world system', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 38, 1994, pp. 347–377,

and Demet Yalcin Mousseau, 'Democratizing with ethnic divisions: A source of conflict?' *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 38, no. 5, 2001; and by comparative case studies such as Donald Rothchild, 'Ethnic bargaining and state breakdown in Africa', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1995, pp. 54–72.

⁵ Philip G. Roeder, 'Soviet federalism and ethnic mobilization', *World Politics*, vol. 43, 1991, reports that the probability of escalation to ethnic violence is 15% in autocracies, but only 1% in democracies (p. 21). Zeric Kay Smith, 'The impact of political liberalisation and democratisation on ethnic conflict in Africa: An empirical test of common assumptions', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2000, pp. 21–39, at p. 21, shows, on the basis of different data, that the propensity to violent ethnic conflict is lower in regimes that respect civil liberties. Gurr's earlier data showed that a high degree of democratisation correlates with peaceful forms of resolving ethnic conflicts, see Ted R. Gurr, 'Why minorities rebel: A global analysis of communal mobilization and conflict since 1945', *International Political Science Review*, vol. 14, no. 2, 1993, pp. 161–201, at p. 183ff. Furthermore, in stable, democratic systems, peaceful protest seems to be more intensive. However, Gurr's sample also contained many Western democracies, which due to their resource wealth are better able to resolve conflict by means of redistribution and decentralisation. And *democratisation* in the south between the years 1975 and 1986 had the effect – when case examples are studied one-by-one (*ibid.* 184ff, 187) – of intensifying conflicts and frequently ended in reauthoritarianisation of the political system (*ibid.* 184f.).

- ⁶ Adam Przeworski, Michael E. Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, eds. *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- ⁷ Zeric Kay Smith, 'The impact of political liberalisation and democratisation on ethnic conflict in Africa: An empirical test of common assumptions', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2000, p. 35.
- ⁸ The following draws on Andreas Wimmer, *Nationalist Exclusion and Ethnic Conflict. Shadows of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- ⁹ D.G. Morrison and H. M. Stevenson, as well as Walter L. Barrows, looked at the relations between cultural pluralism and political instability in a sample of 33 African countries. The two studies yielded diametrically opposed results. Both are cited in Nelson Kasfir, 'Explaining ethnic political participation', *World Politics*, vol. 31, 1979, p. 386. Kenneth McRae, *Conflict and Compromise in Multilingual Societies: Switzerland* (Waterloo: Wilfried Laurier University Press, 1983) combined measures of civil strife with indexes of the relative religious, racial and linguistic heterogeneity of 90 countries. He found no clear pattern of correlation. The debate has been recently revived with T. Vanhanen, 'Domestic ethnic conflict and ethnic nepotism: A comparative analysis', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 36, no. 55-73, 1999, who tries to establish, on the basis of new data, a linear correlation between ethnic heterogeneity and conflict. Robert Bates (ed.), 'Ethnicity, Capital Formation, and Conflict', *Working Paper No. 27* (Harvard: Center for International Development, Harvard University, 1999), however, arrives at a curvilinear relationship for a sample of African countries. The same holds true for Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler (eds), 'Greed and Grievance in Civil War' (Washington: World Bank Development Research Group, 2000); Indra de Soysa, and Angelika Wagner (eds), 'Global market, local mayhem? Foreign investment, trade openness, state capacity, and civil War, 1989-2000' (Bonn, 2003); Tanja Ellingsen, 'Colorful community or ethnic withces' brew? Multiethnicity and domestic conflict during and after the cold war', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 44, no. 2, 2000; and Demet Yalcin Mousseau, 'Democratizing with ethnic divisions: A source of conflict?', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 38. no. 5, pp. 547-567. James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, 'Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 97, no. 1, 2003, using a qualitatively much improved data set and analysis, find no significant relation whatsoever if controls for levels of economic development are introduced. Barbara Harff, 'No lessons learned from the Holocaust? Assessing the risks of genocide and political mass murder since 1955', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 97, no. 1, 2003, pp. 57-73 finds no correlation between diversity and the probability of ethnocide and political mass murder.
- ¹⁰ See Wimmer, *Nationalist Exclusion and Ethnic Conflict. Shadows of Modernity*, chapters 3 and 4.
- ¹¹ For more extensive treatment of this topic, see *ibid.*
- ¹² These figures are cited in Kanan Makiya, *Republic of Fear. The Politics of Modern Iraq* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 215.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁴ Reeva Simon, *Iraq Between the Two*

- World Wars: The Implementation of Nationalist Ideology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 81.
- ¹⁵ Sami Zubaida, 'Community, class and minorities in Iraqi politics', in Robert Fernea and Wm. Roger Louis (ed.), *The Iraqi Revolution of 1958: The old social classes revisited* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1991), pp. 197–210.
- ¹⁶ Simon, *Iraq Between the Two World Wars: The Implementation of Nationalist Ideology*, pp. 55ff.
- ¹⁷ Hanna Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes, and of its Communists, Ba'athists and Free Officers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 176, 186.
- ¹⁸ Cited in Makiya, *Republic of Fear. The Politics of Modern Iraq*, p. 215.
- ¹⁹ Ferhad Ibrahim, *Die kurdische Nationalbewegung im Irak. Eine Fallstudie zur Problematik ethnischer Konflikte in der Dritten Welt* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1983), p. 40.
- ²⁰ Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes, and of its Communists, Ba'athists and Free Officers*, p. 1080.
- ²¹ The best English sources for the two episodes are *ibid.*, p. 784, 844, 996, 1008, 1046; Makiya Makiya, *Republic of Fear. The Politics of Modern Iraq*; and Liora Lukitz, *Iraq. The Search for National Identity* (London: Frank Cass, 1995), pp. 141ff.
- ²² Sami Zubaida, 'Community, class and minorities in Iraqi politics'.
- ²³ On the overthrow of Bakr, accused of promoting Kurds and other non-Arabs in the army over Arab nationalists, see Simon, *Iraq Between the Two World Wars: The Implementation of Nationalist Ideology*, p. 134.
- ²⁴ Ibrahim, *Die kurdische Nationalbewegung im Irak. Eine Fallstudie zur Problematik ethnischer Konflikte in der Dritten Welt*, p. 40.
- ²⁵ The following draws on Yitzhak Nakash, *The Si'is of Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).
- ²⁶ Their share rose from 18% under the mandate to 35% during the last decade of the monarchy, according to Batatu Batatu, *The Old Social Classes and Revolutionary Movements of Iraq: A Study of Iraq's Old Landed and Commercial Classes, and of its Communists, Ba'athists and Free Officers*, pp. 1080.
- ²⁷ Faleh A. Jabar, 'The Iraqi army and anti-army: Some reflections on the role of the military', *Adelphi Paper* 354 (London: IISS, 2003), pp. 115–129.
- ²⁸ Andreas Wimmer, 'Stämme für den Staat. Tribale Politik und die kurdische Nationalbewegung im Irak', *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, vol. 47, no. 1, 1995, pp. 95–113.
- ²⁹ The Al-Anfal (literally: the spoils of war) campaign took its name from the eighth sura of the Koran, where the warriors are reinforced in their faith, reminded of their duties, and encouraged to be merciless with non-believers.
- ³⁰ For *Middle East Watch* reports on the Anfal campaign, see <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1993/iraqanfal/>
- ³¹ See Amatzia Baram, 'Neo-tribalism in Iraq', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 29, 1997, pp. 1-31 and Judith Yaphe, 'Tribalism in Iraq, the old and the new', *Middle East Policy*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2000, pp. 51-58. More recently, the subject has been extensively treated in Faleh Abdul-Jabar and Hosham Dawod (eds.), *Tribes and Power. Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Middle East* (London: Saqi, 2003). See in particular, Faleh A.

- Jabar, 'Sheikhs and ideologues: Deconstruction and reconstruction of tribes under patrimonial totalitarianism in Iraq, 1968-1998'; Hosham Dawood, 'The 'state-ization' of the tribe and the tribalization of the state: the case of Iraq'; and Keiko Sakai, 'Tribalization as a tool of state control in Iraq: observations on the army, the cabinets and the national assembly'.
- ³² Przeworski and his associates found on the basis of a 135-country sample, that democracies are less stable when the country is divided along ethno-religious lines, see Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, and Limongi (eds), *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*, p. 125.
- ³³ Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 342-349; see also Alvin Rabushka, and Kenneth Shepsle, *Politics in Plural Societies: A Theory of Democratic Instability* (New York: Charles E. Merrill, 1972). Paul Brass Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*. (New Delhi: Sage, 1991), chapter 9, however, believes that pluralistic party systems with maximum party competition do not necessarily heighten tensions, as sooner or later even majority ethnic groups split into several competing parties, which makes coalitions necessary, so that finally non-ethnic party alliances arise. While this may be valid in the case of India, where there is an impressive diversity of groups and subgroups and where a strong national non-ethnic party can therefore act as political glue, such as in the examples discussed in Crawford Young, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), pp. 308-326, experiences in other countries such as Sri Lanka, Rwanda, Zanzibar or Nigeria speak a different language. However, there certainly are cases of small countries like Trinidad and Tobago, where a pluralistic and largely ethnicised party system does not lead to radicalisation of positions, despite the absence of a consociational regime. Compare also Hans van Amersfoort, and Herman van der Wusten, 'Democratic stability and ethnic parties', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 4, no. 4, 1981, pp. 476-485.
- ³⁴ Brendan O'Leary, 'Multi-national federalism, federacy, power-sharing and the Kurds of Iraq', paper presented to the conference 'Multi-Nationalism, Power-Sharing and the Kurds in a New Iraq', George Washington University, 2003.
- ³⁵ Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977) uses the concept both descriptively and normatively – as a model for resolution of conflicts in ethnically divided societies. Extensive controversy has developed over the two usages; see critiques by Paul Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism. Theory and Comparison*. Chapter 9; René Lemarchand, *Burundi. Ethnocide as Discourse and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), chapter 9. Older discussions are summarised in Ian Lustick, 'Stability in deeply divided societies: Consociationalism versus control', *World Politics*, vol. 31, no. 3, 1979, pp. 325-344. The most recent overview is given by Rudy B. Andeweg, 'Consociational democracy', *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 3, 2000, pp. 509-536.
- ³⁶ O'Leary, 'Multi-national federalism, federacy, power-sharing and the Kurds of Iraq'.
- ³⁷ Andeweg, 'Consociational democracy'.

- ³⁸ Adele Jinadu, 'Federalism, the consociational state, and ethnic conflict in Nigeria', *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, vol. 15, 1995, pp. 71–100; Donald Rothchild, 'Hegemonial exchange: an alternative model for managing conflict in Middle Africa', in Dennis Thompson and Dov Ronen (ed.), *Ethnicity, Politics, and Development* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1986) ; Eric A. Nordlinger, *Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies* (Cambridge: Center for International Affairs of Harvard University, 1972), chapter 4; see discussion in Andeweg, 'Consociational democracy', p. 523.
- ³⁹ Pierre L. van den Berghe, *The Ethnic Phenomenon* (New York: Elsevier, 1991).
- ⁴⁰ Mark Simpson, 'The experience of nation-building: Some lessons for South Africa', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 20, no. 3, 1994, pp. 463–474.
- ⁴¹ See Brendan O'Leary, 'The limits of coercive consociationalism in Northern Ireland' in *Political Studies*, vol. 37, 1989, pp. 562–588; Brendan O'Leary, 'The nature of the British-Irish agreement', *New Left Review*, vol. 233, 1999, pp. 66–96.
- ⁴² Aeed Dawisha, and Karen Dawisah, 'How to build a democratic Iraq', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 82, no. 3, 2003, pp. 36–50.
- ⁴³ We currently do not know how Iraqis perceive the regime change and the American invasion. If we extrapolate from the surveys that have been made in a number of Arab countries about the legitimacy of the war and the American role in the region, the prospects for a pro-American vote by Iraqis
- ⁴⁴ Andrew Ellis, 'The politics of electoral systems in transition', in Andreas Wimmer, Donald Horowitz, Richard Goldstone, Ulrike Joras and Conrad Schetter (ed.), *Facing Ethnic Conflicts Towards a New Realism* (Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003) ; Ben Reilly and Andrew Reynolds, 'Electoral systems for divided societies', in Peter Harris and Ben Reilly (eds), *Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators* (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 1998), pp. 191-204.
- ⁴⁵ For an overview see Hurst Hannum, 'Territorial autonomy. Permanent solution or step toward secession?' in Wimmer et al., *Facing Ethnic Conflict. Toward a New Realism*.
- ⁴⁶ For empirical evidence see Michael Hechter, 'Containing nationalist violence', in Andreas Wimmer et al., *Facing Ethnic Conflicts. Toward a New Realism*.
- ⁴⁷ For an analysis of the reasons for the numerous breakdowns of ethnic federal systems see John McGarry, and Brendan O'Leary, 'Federalism, conflict-regulation and ethnic power-sharing', paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia 2003
- ⁴⁸ Walter Kälin, 'Decentralized governance in fragmented societies: Solution or cause of new evils?' in Andreas Wimmer et al, *Facing Ethnic Conflicts. Toward a New Realism*.
- ⁴⁹ Andreas Wimmer, and Nina Glick Schiller, 'Methodological nationalism and the study of migration', *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, vol. 53, no. 2, 2002, pp. 217-240.
- ⁵⁰ O'Leary, 'Multi-national federalism, federacy, power-sharing and the Kurds of Iraq'.
- ⁵¹ Fiscal decentralisation is today widely regarded as way of bringing government closer to the citizenry and make provision of public goods more efficient. Its effects on economic development are mixed, as shown by Jonathan Rodden, 'Beyond the Fiction

of Federalism: Macroeconomic Management in Multitiered Systems', *World Politics*, vol. 54, no. 4, 2002, pp. 494–531. In the case of Iraq, the main argument in favour of fiscal federalism would be political rather than economic.

- ⁵² Indra de Soysa, 'The resource curse: Are civil wars driven by rapacity or paucity?' in Mats Berdal and David Malone (ed.), *Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000), relates resource abundance to 'bad governance' to the propensity for civil wars. For Richard Auty, author

of *Resource Abundance and Economic Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), abundance reduces the prospects for sustainable economic growth, again mainly through 'bad governance'.

- ⁵³ Fareed Zakaria, 'The rise of illiberal democracy', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 76, no. 6, 1997, pp. 22–43.
- ⁵⁴ Donald Rothchild, 'Liberalism, democracy and conflict management: The African experience', in Andreas Wimmer et al., *Facing Ethnic Conflicts. Toward a New Realism*; and Zakaria, 'The rise of illiberal democracy'.

