

**BUILDING STATES, FAILING NATIONS:  
THE FAILURE OF POST-CONFLICT  
RECONSTRUCTION IN IRAQ**

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It is not difficult to pinpoint the seeds of my interest in the field of state reconstruction; suffice it to say that being a western educated, young Kurdish woman whose earlier life experiences as a Kurdish refugee as a result of the first Gulf War (1980-1988); and my family's subsequent exile to Iran, where limited politico-economic opportunities prevented a humane existence other than at the level of second class citizens, played a profound role. My interest in nation-building also results from my identity as a Kurd from northern Iraq, and my earlier memories of Kurdish resistance against the brutality and oppression of the Ba'athist regime. My father's decision to escape the brutality of the regime in 1988, the memory of war and conflict and the profound sense of fear and insecurity have enabled me to gain a deep level of empathy and awareness of the trials that conflict-ridden societies experience. I will forever remember the memory, sense and smells of war and bombs falling on terrified villagers. It is therefore my profound privilege to have selected an area of study, which I feel so essentially and irrevocably connected to, and feel an intense desire to dedicate my life to. Having said this, it was also profoundly difficult to focus my thesis on religion and the role of religious actors, particularly as a secular, educated young woman; because of my experience in the deeply religious society in the short years after the 1979 revolutionary Iran, which instilled in me both a deep sense of awe and aversion to institutionalised religion. Nevertheless, the role of the political theorist is fraught with difficulties that challenge us as humans first and foremost, and second as scientists responsible with the onerous task of addressing political challenges.

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Finally, I would like to note that I alone am responsible for any errors or oversights within the thesis.

Hawzhin Azeez.

## **Abbreviations**

ARC	Accreditation Review Committees
CAVR	The Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation in East Timor
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
CSIS	Centre for Strategic and International Studies
HNDC	The Higher National De-Ba'athification Commission
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICP	Iraqi Communist Party
ICTJ	International Centre for Transitional Justice
IDC	Iraqi de-Ba'athification Council
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IST	Iraqi Special Tribunal
JAM	Mehdi Army or Jaysh al-Mehdi
JHU	National Heritage Party
NATO	Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RCLO	Regime Crimes Liaison Office
SCIRI	Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Reformed to SIIC after 2007.
SICT	Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal
SPSC	Serious Crimes of the Dili District Court
TJDB	Transitional Justice Data Base
UNTAET	The United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor

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## ABSTRACT

The fundamental objective of this thesis centres on identifying the most prominent contemporary lacuna in reconstruction of conflict ridden, weak and failing societies, particularly with an interest in deeply religious societies. The case study utilised focuses on the U.S. led reconstruction, as well as the policies and failures within the post-Saddam Iraq. It is argued that the U.S. led coalition forces imposed a linear liberal democratic peace model on Iraq, which immediately faced significant resistance from the long suffering recipient society. The thesis posits that the model of reconstruction imposed on recipient societies, such as Iraq, is inadequate and quixotic and requires a fundamental shift in approach, norms and the attitude of the international donor community.

An analysis of Iraq demonstrates that polyethnoreligious societies face substantial identity insecurities, often perpetuated and reinforced by previous colonial practices and repressive regimes. Thus, the international community is faced with significant socio-political engineering, which in deeply religious societies requires a fundamental shift in inter-societal attitudes. Iraq demonstrated that the liberation of long oppressed societies from the clutches of dictators does not necessarily produce inherently liberal, though perhaps tentatively democratic, societies because of the unique nature of the social structures of such societies. This was evident through the rise of top-level religious actors such as Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and the lesser educated Muqtada al-Sadr. The resultant dialogues produced from the political activism of such actors not only shaped the state-society and inter-societal discourse on the ideal Iraqi identity; but also provided a powerful example of the return of the role of religion into the political sphere. It is this gap, the role of religion and its influential representatives, and their relationship towards, and impact on reconstructions and social engineering, which is at the centre of this thesis.

The significance of this study relates to the crucial and evolving state-society relations within the Middle East and the violent internal dialogue currently in evidence through the *Arab Spring*. More importantly it aims to direct attention towards establishing a link between the field of nation-state building and deeply religious Islamic societies; and thereby contribute to a attentively emerging area of international relations and political theory that is bound to be the determining and all-consuming dilemma facing the international system as a result of seismic events of the recent revolutions in the Middle East.





## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Overview:**

It is increasingly evident that liberal peace theory has largely failed in reconstructing post-Cold War struggling, weak and failing states. The field of state reconstruction is dominated by top-down, liberal institution and market-orientated values, which subjects weak and failing states to a specific, limited and linear reform agenda. This theory revolves around the introduction of democratic norms, strengthening the governing system and its associated institutions, as well as establishing the rule of law (see Newman, Paris and Richmond 2009). The decolonisation era, the prominence of liberation movements in addition to the rise of national revolutionary wars, such as the Algerian War of Independence (1954-62), and the Latin American guerrilla revolutionary and independence wars, produced a unique dilemma for the international system. As a result, liberal peace theory gained increasing prominence in the twentieth century as the solution for this new predicament. Additionally, the geopolitical terrain of Cold War and post-Cold War era, the end of the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the necessity of strengthening state sovereignty, reaffirming control over borders and the domestic stability of states became paramount. The consequence of conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo as well as in Haiti, Sudan and Somali among others indicated the large human, economic and political toll, state failure, weakness, and disintegration could cost the international system.

At the same time though, a contradictory trend based on human rights promotion, coupled with globalization trends, began to pose severe challenges to state authority. The growing normative and legislative reach of international organisations such as the United Nations, The World Bank, the European Union (E.U.) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) contributed to the rise of human rights values that attempted to contravene the instability that conflict ridden states posed to the international system. Consequently, a major aim of reconstructions was to design them with the view that the plight of humans, at the hand of arbitrary state power, would be addressed once and for all. The idealistic post-Cold War era was one based on optimistic human rights standards, multilateralism, international cooperation, and states that increasingly democratised to address and reflect the general will of their citizens. Yet, at the same time, a vexing problem still faced the international system, which involves problem states labelled as weak, struggling or failing. These weak and failing states stubbornly refused, or lacked the capacity, to address vast human rights violations,

genocide and significant social, economic and political turmoil, that increasingly, in an ever more globalised world, spilled over across regions. What followed was vast numbers of U.N. endorsed and U.S. led missions that attempted to address problem states and their weaknesses. Liberal democratic forms of governance, supported by strong and effective institutions, along with market liberalisation, were deemed as the most effective policies, and the field of peace-keeping and peace-building evolved to address this shift. According to Newman, Paris and Richmond (2009, 7), this shift represented a post-Westphalian approach that did not merely focus on establishing stability, but was aimed specifically to address state conflicts, solely on the basis of “liberal democracy and market economics”. Thus, the international order became increasingly vested in rehabilitating conflict ridden states, which progressively culminated in increasingly interventionary style missions. As a result vast numbers of U.N. endorsed and U.S. led missions such as Haiti (1995-96), Bosnia (1996-97), Liberia (1993-97), Angola (1997-99), Kosovo (2000-01), Afghanistan (2002), Burundi (2004-07), Central African Republic and Chad (2007-10), Sudan (2005-11) among others ensued. Some regimes, such as Angola, Rwanda, Liberia as well as East Timor, either reverted to conflict, or have experienced minimal success (Paris and Sisk 2009, 58). The majority of these missions emerged as peace-keeping and peace-building cases that evolved into more complex reconstructions aimed at addressing political and economic shortfalls of such societies. The more recent cases of Afghanistan and Iraq characterize a more aggressive form of state reconstruction and posed a completely new set of theoretical and empirical dilemmas to the field. Nevertheless, the field remained consistent in the top-down, state-centric policies it continued to impose in reconstructions.

Simultaneously, the increasing number of secessionist and nationalist movements following decolonisation, entrenched the necessity of promoting civic nationalism, and re-aligning ethnic and religious loyalties towards the civil society sphere; with some instances of decolonisation leading to successful nation-building. Mahatma Gandhi’s advancement of *Satyagraha*, and adherence to non-violent protest (Rothermund 2006, 56), proved to be one of the more exceptional instances, though. In other situations such as in Somalia, Congo, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, and Nigeria among others, secessionist and nationalist movements embodied a more violent persona. Pavkovic and Radan’s (2011) analysis of such movements yields the proposition that out of 275 recent examples, 195 entailed active violence. They conclude that such movements have led to over 5 million dead combatants in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The field of reconstructions thus began to view ethno-religious values as a barrier against

effective state reforms. Added to this perspective, was the increasing international fear of religion, or more specifically Islamic fundamentalism, following the remarkable events of the 1979 Iranian revolution resulting in the ousting of the secular, yet authoritarian Shah (see Abrahamian 1982). Regionally, the Middle East<sup>1</sup>, the birthplace of Islam, and the stagnant Israel-Palestine conflict, has increasingly emerged as the centre of authoritarian regimes that demonstrated a dogged resistance to democratisation, even as the Third Wave of democratisation swept across the rest of the world. The importance of the region's natural resources, combined with historical legacies, and the region's unique relationship with the Western world, made potential interventions and reconstruction a delicate and far more complex process than reconstruction in other regions. These factors reduced the incentive for intervention, despite extensive human rights violations. Concerning the field of reconstruction though, the most obvious and enduring trend that emerged was one of avoidance of an integrated and holistic approach to ethnic and religious identities in reforms. Instead, secular political reforms were deemed as the appropriate method of building bridges between long warring groups in post-colonial societies.

A reoccurring theme within this thesis focuses on providing a greater understanding of the limitations pertaining to the current understanding of the term 'state-building'. It is proposed that definitional inconsistencies directly influence the nature of reconstructions, as well as the types of policies implemented. This is because definitions determine the focus of reconstructions and prescribe the nature of policies as state-centric in stance and, hence, focus on sovereignty re-establishment, institution building and liberal democratic norms. This is important because definitions are powerful tools in demonstrating the central concerns of a field of study. They act as a basis for, and inform transitions within theories, norms and principles. Definitions are particularly important in their practical application in transitioning theory to policy within the field. According to Francis Fukuyama, the aim of state-building activities is to reconstruct and to develop conflict ridden societies. Fukuyama posits that

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<sup>1</sup> According to Bernard Lewis, the Middle East is more a concept than a region (1995, 64-67). Others (Askari 2006, 7) have defined the Middle East as a region that encompasses countries such as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, the U.A.E., Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine. Askari (2006) also includes North Africa, including: Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. Ayoob (1996) defines the region as ranging from Pakistan to Morocco, extending to Turkey and to the Horn of Africa. However, there are still significant definitional problems in defining the region. Brown (1984, 281) for instance has argued that scholars have yet to come to a concrete agreement as to the boundaries of the region. Orfy (2011, 37) notes that the concept of 'the Greater Middle East' has complicated definitional boundaries further. Likewise, Cantori and Siegel have contributed to the discussion through breaking the region down into the 'core' and the 'periphery', with the Arab countries consisting of the core and non-Arab countries such as Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan as the periphery (Tibi 1998 49-50; Cantori and Spiegel 1970).

reconstructions entail any policy that involves the “restoration of war-torn or damaged societies to their pre-conflict situation” (2006, 5). He further adds that development can be defined as the implementation of policies that entail the “creation of new institutions and the promotion of sustained economic growth” (Fukuyama 2006, 5). This process essentially involves a transformative progression towards greater living standards, and political and economic equality in the recipient society. In *Nation-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2004), Fukuyama provides an apt definition of the state as the establishment of new governing bodies and structures, while at the same time strengthening state capacity. While these definitions provide a basic understanding of reconstruction of post-conflict societies, they do not adequately capture the complexity of the field and the normative and empirical values that underpin the paradigm.

Defining the field remains an essentially contested concept. As Dobbins et al. (2007) highlight, such missions are increasingly aggressive and interventionary in nature. The end of the bipolar world order allowed the global hegemon to increase the rate of missions as well as the duration of missions. Progressively, such missions entailed activities aimed towards producing social and ethnic cohesion and stability, demilitarization, and introducing democratic processes such as: new institutions, party formation and elections (Dobbins et al. 2007:4). The definition of such missions that Dobbins et al. presents is more accurate than those proposed by Fukuyama because it takes into consideration the increasingly interventionary nature of U.S. led missions. Dobbins et al. further argues that reconstructions entail “the use of armed force as part of a broader effort to promote political and economic reforms with the objective of transforming a society emerging from conflict into one at peace with itself and its neighbours” (2007, 12). Other international bodies such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), on the other hand, define state-building as an “endogenous process to enhance capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relations” (2008b). Cynthia Ann Watson provides a similar definition when she argues that such missions comprise activities aimed at “stopping violence against the population of a country and then constructing a society supported by institutions based upon the rule of law and various other norms that will make it function autonomously and to the benefit of its population” (2004, 9). The majority of these definitions propose a similar understanding and demarcation of the activities, processes and values required to aid conflict-ridden societies. However, they also touch upon a crucial dilemma that emerges in producing these definitions- the distinction between demonstrating the impact of exogenous

activities that are society, as opposed to state-centred in scope. In other words, these definitions focus on providing a state-centric account of reconstructions. The recipient society is, consequently, exposed to strict state-centric processes, including institution building and democratisation of the political and governing process. There is, in reality, often little attempt to address the social implications of such a process and, hence, it is assumed that reconstruction of a state and the re-establishment of its sovereignty will promote legitimacy, and hence encourage greater social stability and better society-state relations. This tension is inherent within this thesis and is a theme that runs consistently across all the chapters. As a result, theorists have labelled this paradigm either ‘state-building’ or ‘nation-building’. Increasingly, though, this gap in research is garnering slow and tentative attention from scholars in the field. A more recent attempt to define the distinction between state-building and nation-building was adopted by the OECD (2008a). The report defines nation-building as distinct from state-building, and notes that nation-building entails any “action undertaken by national actors, to forge a sense of common nationhood, usually in order to overcome ethnic, sectarian or communal differences; usually to counter alternate sources of identity and loyalty; and usually to mobilise a population behind a parallel state-building project” (2008a, 13). The report further adds, though, that such activities “may or may not contribute to peace-building”, and that it is “confusingly equated with post-conflict stabilisation and peace-building in some recent scholarship and U.S. political discourse” (2008a, 13). However, the distinction here is that this definition views nation-building as an exogenously produced activity, and does not consider the alternative account of international actors and donors engaging in the promotion of nation-orientated activities. Overall, there is still much confusion in relation to what the field should be labelled as, though the dominant consensus runs across more state-orientated definitions, with those espousing nation-orientated accounts still tending to remain in the margins of the field.

Because of this fissure, this thesis consistently refers back to this distinction, and highlights the importance of separating nation-building from state-building as two separate (yet linked) concepts rather than synonymous theories, as it currently stands within the field. In defining nation-building as distinct from state-building, the thesis also posits the importance of focusing just as actively on producing nation-building and society-orientated policies designed to address long held grievances. More distinctly, it posits unequivocally, that liberal peace theory consistently fails to address protracted ethnic conflicts, and achieves limited success in building ethnoreligious cohesion. While the field currently imposes limited nation-

building processes, such as Truth and Reconciliation Commissions like those introduced in Timor Leste in 2001-2008, these measures are proving largely ineffective (see Hayner 2002 for instance). For the most part, such nation-orientated activities are secondary elements of reconstructions, and generally garner less effort and time in contrast to re-establishing the sovereignty of the state. However, as this thesis posits recurrently, rebuilding a state does not necessarily imply the development of a sense of nationalism. The thesis resolutely divides nation-building and state-building as distinct, though closely interlinked processes, requiring their own distinctive policies. Consequently, this thesis insists on labelling such practices as 'reconstructions'. This label addresses several problems within the literature as well as the empirical practices of such policies. Firstly, the thesis inherently rejects the labels 'state-building' and 'nation-building' as they currently stand in the literature. Instead, by labelling the practice as 'reconstructions', the definition encompasses both state-building and nation-building as two mutually exclusive policies, designed to restructure institutional weaknesses and social cleavages within conflict ridden societies, weak states and failing regimes. As will be highlighted in the case study, reconstructions consist of overhauling states that have experienced long term, usually armed, ideological or identity conflicts that have steered the deterioration of the physical, normative and social infrastructures of the state. As a result, because armed conflicts and violence play such a prominent role in weak states, whether through internationally led interventions resulting in locally inspired resistance, or through civil conflicts, the term 'development' also loses some of its theoretical utility. The term 'development' implies the betterment of a system that is limited, not necessarily because of violent armed conflicts that are domestically inspired or externally imposed, but solely the improvement of weak state structures or economic underdevelopment. This limitation within development theory will be expanded further in the literature review. Likewise, the historical and theoretical correlation of the term 'development' to the economist's strand of thought (highlighted in the literature chapter), produces strong policy implications for the economic field. Development theorists have noted that economic development can produce a stronger and more cohesive nation, through a fairer distribution of wealth, an expanding middle class, civil society development and the promotion of stronger institutions (Lipset 1960; Huntington 1968; Diamond 1992; Przeworski and Limongi 1997). In the words of Seymour Lipset, "the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances that it will sustain democracy" (1959, 75). However, the development strand of political science is merely one element of reconstruction. For instance, it does not encompass peace-keeping or peace-enforcement within violent situations. Not to mention the dominant flaw of ignoring issues of identity and

culture that marketization does not adequately address. In contrast, with regard to the use of the term ‘reconstruction’, the paradigm encompasses both the state, as well as the society, as the two dominant actors in the processes of ‘fixing’, ‘rehabilitating’ or ‘developing’ a nation-state. More importantly, the term ‘reconstruction’ suggests the restructuring, reforming and renovating of not only the state, but also societal relations; because it views the destructive nature of violence and conflict as well as economic and market failures, both at a state and social level, as inherent within weak and failing states. This term does not produce preferential and definitional implications towards a ‘state-centred’ or a ‘society-centred’ approach. The term ‘reconstruction’ is also non-gendered in nature. For instance, state-building often focuses on the physical, institutional and governing structures of the field; it is also the norm and the dominant approach. In contrast nation-building is the more feminine of the two, and is generally focused on fixing ethno-religious and community relations, addressing feeling of ‘trust’ and resentment, building bridges and addressing protracted and primordial conflicts.

Another theme that runs consistently within the thesis, but is largely compressed into Chapter Two, entails an analysis of the U.S. led mission in Iraq, and highlights inconsistencies and disjuncture in the policies imposed as against the values and norms inherent within Iraqi society and culture. In general, U.S. led invasions and aggressive interventionary missions have been increasing in numbers in the past few decades. In the space of a decade, the U.S. engaged in over seven international interventions in order to liberate and state-build conflict ridden societies. These cases include the liberation of Kuwait in (1991)<sup>2</sup>, Somalia (1992), Haiti (1994), Bosnia (1995), Kosovo (1999), Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) (Dobbins et al. 2007). The level of success has been limited in the majority of these missions. Yet, as David Chandler (2010, 1) points out, such missions are activities that the international community is “compelled to do” in spite of the obviously inconsistent nature of the field and a general inability to recycle past lessons. Additionally, the majority of these cases involved predominantly Muslim societies (with the sole exception of Haiti). These missions, combined with the terrorist events of 9/11, have inadvertently negatively affected the U.S. image of Muslim societies, as well as determined the nature of the reconstruction. This experience, combined with the essential nature of U.S. foundational myths on foreign policy and decision making, further combined with the increasing incidents of religiously motivated violence and

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<sup>2</sup> Kuwait stands apart from the other cases as it only entailed its liberation from the invading Iraqi forces. No subsequent reconstruction ensued in contrast to the other cases.



terror attacks, for example, the events of the 1979 Iranian revolution, and more recently September 9/11, fortified the necessity of liberal democratic institution-building. Once the 2003 invasion occurred, and religiously based violence and conflicts increased disproportionately between Sunni and Shia, as well as increasing intra-communally, the necessity of liberalising societal and ethnic relations became increasingly clear. At the same time, such a perception failed to consider that religion, religious institutions and its relevant actors could also be a source of peace and conflict resolution. Further, the use of religion as a motivational force for social violence was considered evidence of the violent nature of Islamic societies. The view that religion and its values may merely be a readily available means of expressing political, social and economic discontent garnered little to no interest. Hence, religiously based violence was viewed as the end in itself, rather than a means to an end: greater access to power and resources or a desire to self-direct their own destinies. The division of communities, along strict ethno-religious lines by previous colonial powers, which was further perpetuated by consecutive Iraqi regimes, also gained little attention as a focus and an essential basis for policy and decision making that demonstrated greater cultural and historical sensitivity. Indeed, the pitting of identities against others has traditionally served as a dominant policy that has consistently defined state-society relations in Iraq. Instead, the reversion to violence was widely deemed as justification for the necessity of launching such missions, so as to bring law and order, and peace and stability to traditional societies.

This research, thus, aims to demonstrate the dominant gap within the literature and the empirical practices of reconstructions: that the inadequate levels of attention toward nation-building measures have prevented an appropriate level of legitimacy of reconstructions within recipient societies, thereby reducing the field's success rate. The analysis of Iraq's reconstruction demonstrates this factor well. The legitimacy of the mission was in question from the very moment the U.S. led operation started. Firstly, with the lack of legal jurisdiction to invade Iraq, and later, with incidents that indicated a distinct lack of attention to the needs of Iraqi society, such as the 2004 Abu Ghraib prison scandal. Chapter Two explores the origins of American interest in direct interventionism, and the origins of the values that define the foundational myths of the American nation, which can be traced back to the teachings of the founding fathers. A combination of external and domestic policies, self-interest, benevolence and imperialism have produced a unique perspective towards external threats, particularly when it involves threats from weak or failing states. The inherent

values of Wilsonianism have continued to influence American desire and interest in directing and shaping the lives of post-colonial societies. This desire often manifests through importation of liberty and democracy, but is too often introduced through America's vast technological and military prowess. Another trend that defines the field is the increasing dominance of the field by America, thereby reducing the role of the United Nations, and other important international organizations that fulfil an essential role in legitimizing missions. The combination of American hegemonic power, united with the subordination of the United Nations to American national interests, has ensured that the empirical and normative values that dominate the field are aligned with U.S. views and direct interests. What results is the dominance of westcentric values, such as the importance of introducing liberal, institutionally based democratic processes, market liberalisation and the notion that the rule of law trumps local practices and interests.

Chapter Two also raises the issue of American imperialism, and notes the negative impact of U.S. neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism, on the legitimacy of reconstructions. A history of colonial and imperial legacies and the increasing predisposition towards using American military and hegemonic might to coerce international relations and the destiny of post-colonial states, particularly weak and failing nations, along American interests further exacerbates the field's level of success. Consequently, this chapter insists that the combination of America's foundational myths, particularly Wilsonian values, combined with a history of colonial and imperial practices produces a dual model. The policies and processes adopted often reinforces this model explicitly. The model entails policies designed to restrengthen the sovereignty and power of the state, particularly through the redevelopment of democratic institutions.

While there is attention paid to nation-building measures such as the imposition of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, and trials of war criminals, often these practices are inadequate or ineffective in addressing the root causes of social divisions and long-standing conflicts. Disproportionate attention is paid to rebuilding the state's authority and capacity to address internal dimensions as a form of resolution. It is left to the newly reconstructed, and institutionally weak state to address internal ethnoreligious or other identity conflicts. However, social and other identity cleavages are intensified by the selected accommodation, or exclusion of various elements of the recipient society's culture and identity. Often religion and religious actors are excluded from participation, and the secular and the democratic are accommodated and promoted. This often means that parties or groups that had perpetuated

past injustices and violence are recycled back into the new 'democratic' system, which plays an increasingly harmful part in post-conflict peace (Paris 1997; 2004; Roland and Sisk 2009). However, the separation of church and state prevails, to the detriment of protracted values that define communities, and struggles for greater access to power and resources in conflict ridden societies. In turn, the model imposed often exacerbates identity conflicts and does little to reduce social tensions. Thus, this chapter not only identifies the predominant American model of reconstruction and highlight inherent inconsistencies, but it also notes the limitations of the liberal democratic model.

Further, the reconstruction of Iraq faced various material, security and ideological dilemmas that posed an immediate and long term challenge to the U.S. plan for Iraq. The rise of sectarian conflicts and the increasing breakdown of security and services increased societal discontent significantly. In turn, the U.S. and the coalition sped up the reconstruction process and immediately implemented democratic procedures such as promotion of party formation and elections. The mission's legitimacy became further aggravated through the policy-makers absence of cultural, historical, and identity awareness of Iraq's complex social terrain. Chapter Three then attempts to evaluate and highlight Iraq's cultural and historical legacies from its inception as a modern state to now. The chapter also traces the formation of cultural and religious divisions that have prevented the realization of a cohesive modern nation-state. Historically, identity cleavages emerged as a result of Ottoman and British colonial practices, and their response to the rise of religious and ethnic nationalism, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The arbitrary nature of French and British colonial involvement in the establishment of modern Iraq, and other states in the Middle East, also entrenched identity politics and increased the probability of identity clashes in the region. For modern Iraq, the internal struggle to establish the sovereignty of the state often conflicted with the necessity of building a unified and cohesive national identity. Yet, the state largely failed on both accounts. For instance, the establishment of state sovereignty was hijacked persistently by military elites that entrenched arbitrary and non-democratic practices in acquiring access to power and resources. Elite personalities and their loyalty and affiliation towards sectors of Iraqi society also determined the level of access to power and resources between the various religious and ethnically divided communities. These practices entrenched nepotism and patron-client relations in the socio-political and economic spheres. The consolidation of society-state relations was finally cemented with the rise of the Ba'athist regime into power in 1968. The regime further entrenched identity and religious divisions

through the distribution of power and resources and, so, essentially failed at producing national cohesion. Increasingly the use of arbitrary violence and authoritarianism in state responses to the rise of nationalist demands, such as the Kurds, created deeper social and identity divisions. The adoption by the state of a Sunni-Arab Iraqi identity and its active and aggressive promotion isolated the majority of Iraqi's from the states' narrative. In turn, the privileged group adopted increasingly security-centred approaches that led to policies of further marginalisation for the outer groups. This process has produced a security, identity and resource crisis for all groups involved. As a result, distrust and fear have ruled group interactions within post-colonial Iraq, exacerbated by increased state repression. This trend, however, is not unique to Iraq or the Middle East region. Burma, Sri Lanka, Southern Sudan, Tajikistan, Timor Lest, Afghanistan and many other post-colonial states have experienced these trends to varying degrees. As a result, often the most difficult, delicate and complex solution is to create feelings of mutual trust, tolerance and cooperation between different groups and communities in such post-colonial regimes in order to promote political legitimacy. Yet, the policies imposed by the international community often hinder the development of such a process. Instead, hastily constructed elections and political parties that largely lack wide legitimacy, or have previously played a strong role in armed conflicts, violence and oppression of other groups tend to reinforce feelings of mistrust, and antagonism, and reopens shared wounds and anger. In the end, results are predictable. Each group votes for its own political party, entrenching and solidifying group boundaries, and spotlighting an almost impossible task of cooperation.

The result of these processes, combined with the states relationship with colonial practices, played an essential role in the post 2003 reconstruction. Thus, Chapter Three spotlights the necessity of understanding past historical legacies and their implications for reconstructions. It highlights the fact that: political legitimacy is the ideal end-goal of such reconstructions, which can only emerge as a result of addressing, and building bridges between mistrustful communities such as, the Shia and the Sunni's in Iraq. Yet, the implementation of the American model, liberal peace theory, creates tensions between the past and the new model of a reconstructed state. Inadvertently, conflict erupts from various sources and for a variety of reasons. Donald Rumsfeld typified the lack of cultural context when he noted in 2003 that the majority of the conflict in Iraq was based on "pockets of dead enders" (cited in Felice 2009, 90). The crucial issue of Kirkuk is another example where the various communities and their interests have been subordinated to the state-centric reconstruction. The chapter

serves to demonstrate the limited nature of the U.S. model of reconstruction in addressing nation-building in recipient societies. Chapter Three concludes with an account of the nation-building policies that the U.S. and coalition forces imposed in Iraq. However, the policies introduced largely failed to attract the level of success that the coalition desired, precisely because of the lack of understanding of the inter-communal relations and historical legacies in Iraq. As a result, the policies implemented brought into direct tension the necessity of addressing past injustices in contrast to reducing incentives for spoilers. In other words, addressing past injustices and the transitional process came into direct conflict, particularly when the policies selected failed to achieve a level of success. The mishandling of the 2003 de-Ba'athification process and the 2004 trial of the regime's leaders, served to increase the de-legitimisation of the reconstruction. In reality, these failures have exacerbated inter-communal relations, and the reconstruction, as the chapter demonstrates, has largely failed to nation-build. The mismanagement of post-conflict transitional justice led to increased division that amplified violent dialogue between religious and ethnic communities.

As a result, the exclusion of the Sunni's, irrespective of their involvement in the Ba'athist regime under Saddam, led to the further marginalisation of an important group in Iraq; at the very least, this policy deprived the state of skilled civil servants. On the other hand, the Shia's, heady with the possibility of political dominance for the first time since the formation of Iraq as a state, began an extensive and at times violent internal dialogue over the nature of Shia socio-political and economic influence in the post-Saddam era. This internal dialogue eventually led to sectarian conflicts and culminated in the 2006-2007 civil war. The 2006 bombing of Iraq's Golden Mosque in Samarra represented the crux of this violent dialogue. This internal dialogue, not only within the Shia community but also within wider ethno-religious groups in Iraq, increased domestic tensions. Identity and ethno-religious boundaries became emphasised, leading to the rise of several important actors. Increasingly, it was religious actors such as al-Sadr and Grand Ayatollah Sistani, with their respective militia armies, who came to prominence.

Chapter Four thus focuses on the rise of such religious actors and their impact over the reconstruction of Iraq, both from a nation-building and state-building perspective. As Chapters Four and Five demonstrate, such actors can wield powerful influences and, in an ever more interconnected, globalised post 9/11 world, where religious fundamentalism appears to be the dominant challenge of the twenty-first century, such actors cannot and should not be ignored. However, the approach towards the marginalization of the Sunnis,

widely believed to be collaborators of the Saddam regime, represents a greater gap in the field. This gap involves finding a necessary balance between society-orientated measures, and state-orientated policies, that takes into consideration the short term and long term gains and development in the overall reconstruction process, with the aim of establishing a unified nation-state. In other words, finding a means in which past collaborators of regime brutality are effectively punished and successfully rehabilitated back into society in a manner that is just and perceived as legitimate by victims and society.

Until Iraq, the nature of reconstructions had largely avoided much theoretical and empirical interaction with the field of religion.<sup>3</sup> However, Iraq, Afghanistan and the recent Arab Spring uprisings have highlighted the possibility of increasing international involvement in the Middle East. It is, therefore, essential that Iraq, as the first full scale regime change and reconstruction in a deeply Islamic society, is analysed in depth in relation to its religious elements. Iraq has demonstrated some important implications for the reconstruction of other Islamic states. The case study indicates that existing approaches require significant modification if political legitimacy in Islamic states is to be established. Likewise, the level and type of interaction between coalition forces, and local leaders is compounded through the existence of various categories of top actors at a political and religious level. This quality complicates dialogue, coordination, and reconstruction as an additional layer of players is added to the existing mixture of multiple ethnic groups, secular leaders, formal political parties, civil society groups, and members of the past regime. As the first case study that witnessed a significant and visible involvement of religious actors, it is essential that the rise of top level Islamic actors is given enough analytical consideration. This analysis may yield new possibilities of reaching alternative means of peaceful nation-state-building.

Chapter Four thus aims to analyse the rise of religious actors and build on the ethnoreligious implications of Chapter Three. Chapter Four demonstrates that the relationship between religious actors, as well as towards the religious establishment, often determines the level of influence a top level actor exerts. An important factor is utilising the specifics of the case study in the reconstruction plan, as a result, this thesis concentrates more specifically on the Shia religious establishment. This is due to the hierarchical nature of the sect but also to the prominence of Shia religious actors, post-Saddam. The relatively more formal, defined and

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<sup>3</sup> This is despite the fact that various missions had already been conducted in deeply religious and even Islamic states.

visible nature of the Shia religious institutions, allows for a clearer juxtaposition between the sects. Moreover, this visible hierarchy produces strata of religiously educated actors, whose positions determine the level of socio-economic, moral and hence political influence they yield. In focusing on these actors, a consistent disparity between the high levels of legitimacy such actors wield is spotlighted, in contrast to the U.S. policies and values imposed. Moreover, as Chapter Four demonstrates, unlike the Sunni sect, the Shia religious establishment emphasizes not only the spiritual nature of religious leaders but also, very distinctly, their political responsibilities towards the religious community as well.<sup>4</sup> Further, as Chapter Three demonstrates, top level religious actors have played an important and crucial part in resisting the regime's arbitrary use of power and violence. The al-Sadr family, for instance, were instrumental in Shia revivalism, and re-establishing a sense of pride, identity and resistance to the religious community.

U.S. policy makers were however, widely unprepared for the substantial intensification of the popularity of religious actors. Chapter Four notes that Sistani and al-Sadr represented vastly different views, but, at the heart of the discourse, what they attempted to engage with was the ideal form of Iraqiness. What this 'Iraqiness' entailed obviously differed according to the needs, values, and perspectives of each group in post-Saddam Iraq, largely determined by the relationship of each group towards the state during the Ba'ath regime, and by extension of that relationship, each other. The attitude of the policy makers varied towards these actors and ranged from overlooking, marginalising and antagonising, to eventually one of conciliatory tactics. While policy makers increasingly came to the realisation that Grand Marja Sistani commanded extensive socio-political influence in Iraq, they also became aware of al-Sadr's propensity towards violent confrontation and inflammatory values. More crucially, despite the inflammatory nature of Sadr's rhetoric, there was little regard by the

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<sup>4</sup> The Shia leadership (Ayatollah's) have dominated the religious discourse within the confines of state-building activities. An Ayatollah differs greatly from the less educated, less revered Mullahs studied in the emerging Afghanistan literature. For instance Metz (1989) observes that in order for a religious student to become an Ayatollah it is essential that they study in one of the prestigious madrasehs (religious schools) in Qom or Masshad in Iran or in Najaf in Iraq. Although there is no specific timeframe for the mastery of the necessary subjects, a student's preparation takes up to fifteen years, and, even then, there must be an unequivocal recognition by a notable Ayatollah in the community. Metz continues to observe that, in contrast, less exemplary students who "[L]eave the madrasehs after completing the primary level can serve as prayer leaders, village mullahs, local shrine administrators, and other religious functionaries. Those who leave after completing the second level become preachers in town and city mosques. Students in the third level of study are those preparing to become (Ayatollah's). The advanced students at this level are generally accorded the title of *hojjatolislam* when they have completed all their studies" (1989, 171).

U.S. for the legitimacy of some of the claims being made by al-Sadr and his anti-colonial followers. The response to such actors was one of accommodation towards the former and violent suppression of the latter. While this may have appeared as the logical response towards two different actors with vastly different perspectives, the marginalisation of al-Sadr effectively represented the marginalisation of what was, arguably at one point, the most popular, perspective of the ideal form of Iraqiness and the state. While Sistani adopted a moderate and reformist, though still staunchly Islamist agenda, al-Sadr represented a popular nationalist and anti-neo-colonial perspective. The approach of the international community to al-Sadr, effectively demonstrated the marginalisation of a large number of Shias, giving rise to the increasingly popular view that the reconstruction was not acknowledging the legitimate demands of a large group within Iraq.

In turn, as Chapter Four demonstrates, the U.S. led mission run by selecting Manichean perspectives on who to include or exclude, and which groups were reliable or unreliable, entrenched group identities even further. As a result while certain groups were labelled as reliable and others unreliable, the security situation on the ground deteriorated. Identity papers, determining one's religious affiliation, often meant life or death, or the capacity to access scarce resources, staying alive, or to travel safely from one check point to another. As a result, communities and individuals increasingly sought the security of their own groups, further deepening group boundaries. Religious actors, therefore, gained a greater level of control and influence over their respective communities, and were able to direct and coordinate decision and policy-making. The legitimacy of the reconstruction and the U.S. led effort, therefore, continued to suffer.

The analysis of individual actors, particularly at a religious level, reaffirms an increasingly popular and rising trend within the sphere of development - that of identity politics and its connection to ethnicity and culture. The role of culture and ethnicity, in conflicts and their resolutions, is crucial. Consequently, the study of individual actors at a political or religious level can only hasten the synthesis of a more in depth theory of ethnicity within reconstructions. The nature of ethno-religious conflict ensures that group borders and identities are emphasized. As a result, conflicts exacerbate group identities contribute to their evolution, entrenchment and radicalisation. Yet, despite this, the sphere of reconstructions through liberal peace theory has avoided a more holistic examination of identities, aside from the traditional view of 'ethnicity' and 'culture' contributing to violent armed conflicts. Rather, what this thesis has highlighted is the role of identity politics at a cultural, ethnic and



religious level in conflict resolutions. Moreover, identity politics are a reflection and response to the political environment of a conflict. The level of violence adopted, the level of border entrenchment as well as the responses of groups, are all reliant on the political context of a conflict. The nature of identity politics in Iraq thus demonstrates important policy lessons for future reconstructions. The dominant conflict in post-colonial Iraq resided along ethnic conflict lines. Specifically, this conflict took shape between Arabs and Kurds. While there were internal tensions between Sunnis and Shi'ites, this tension did not acquire the level of aggressive resistance and oppression as that between the regime and the Kurds, largely because the Shias demanded greater political access as opposed to secessionist aspirations. As a result, Sunni and Shia visions of Iraqiness aligned much more closely though conflict persisted. However, the nature of the conflict during this era ensured a relative marginalisation of sectarian divisions. The post-Saddam era and the ensuing conflict shifted the ethnicity and cultural dynamics of Iraqi society aided by the selective policies the U.S. led coalition forces applied; and as such, the conflict increasingly reflected sectarian divisions. While the Arab-Kurd division still existed, it was no longer emphasised to the level of sectarian violence, with the shift emerging from the nature of the conflict itself. The Kurds support for the reconstruction remained conditional on their continued autonomous status, leaving much of northern Iraq outside of the reconstruction discourse that plagued the rest of Iraq. Retaining their autonomous status conferred the Kurds freedom to engage the reconstruction process with relative confidence. Consequently, the autonomous nature of northern Iraq remained untouched, and any further discussions could only lead to additional gains despite continuous diplomatic and military pressure from Turkey. Further, the possibility of succession was roundly removed from the reconstruction discourse, leaving the Kurds clearly confined to the borders of Iraq.

The question remains: why did religious actors become far more influential in decision making and policy development in Iraq than other secular domestic and international actors? Iraq demonstrates that in post-colonial state's authority, power and legitimacy still belongs, largely, to the realm of the traditional. Secular political elites consistently fought for public attention in direct competition with that of religious actors. Such elites determined the nature of the reconstructions, the level of violence and reconciliations. This further complicates the success rate of liberal peace theory in such societies because it requires a significant shift that produces the essential 'social engineering' required to institute an organic development of democratic norms. As Tony Blair argued about Iraq, the "crucial point about these

interventions is that they were not just about changing regimes, but about changing the value systems governing the nations concerned. The banner was not actually 'regime change'; it was 'value change' (Blair 2007). This suggests that the policies of the international donor community in promoting a set of predefined and Eurocentric policies fail to appreciate the cultural intricacies and sources of legitimacy and power in post-colonial states. At a national level, notions of 'state' and 'nation' have gained increasing and relatively high levels of acceptance in post-colonial states. At a local level however, traditional and conservative values, narratives, symbols and rituals still compete with the state's authority and legitimacy. To assume the universal nature and acceptance of 'nation-state' is to limit the discourse on reconstruction at the local level. Yet, this division between policies implemented at a state and national level, often supersedes policies and decision making at the local level, thereby bypassing the source of legitimacy development in recipient societies.

Chapter Five continues some of these themes, and focuses on the international and regional element of the reconstruction. Through a study of Iraq's closest neighbours, including Iran and Turkey, the chapter continues the theme of identity politics, and the influential nature of religious and ethnic affiliation that continues to challenge the sovereignty of states. Despite this, some of the more pessimistic implications of the Iraq war, proposed by experts such as Vali Nasr (2006a; 2006b), have failed to produce a clash of sectarian violence. Regionally, a state of Hobbesian anarchy emerged, and national self-interest and security seeking policies determined the nature of state policies. While sectarian tensions did increase somewhat, Iraq's reconstruction demonstrates the subordination of identity politics to national self-interest. In the case of Iran, ideological interests and exportation were subordinated, or often used as a vehicle towards greater national security. Regionally, the common trend has been one of insecurity and hostility, which has played a significant role in the transitional process in Iraq. Sub-national and supra-national interests and identities have also come to the fore, which produced an inherently unstable regional environment. The exportation of liberal democratic values by the U.S., combined with threats of similar missions conducted in the region, particularly within Iran and Syria, reduced regional incentive towards cooperation, and increased instability and fear. More importantly, this trend increased anti-western and anti-colonial sentiments in the region, leading to increased support for Iranian regional dominance. In turn, this has increased Saudi fears that Iran's rise in regional influence will reduce Sunni Islamic hegemony, and directly challenge Saudi authenticity and claims of Islamic legitimacy.

Chapter Five also considers the implication of American foreign policy, raised in Chapter Two, and its impact on regional stability. The imposition of American values through democracy importation in Iraq has produced a volatile environment, leading states such as Iran to seek increasingly radical security seeking measures. Iran's increasingly aggressive nuclear program is a direct outcome of this process. However, the greater contribution of the chapter lies in highlighting the limitations within the field. The aggressive U.S. stance has produced negative regional outcomes, and threats of further invasion did not coerce belligerent states, such as Iran or Syria, towards increased cooperation. The outcome has been contradictory. This result indicates the absence of positive incentives and integrationist policies when large scale reconstructions are being conducted. Therefore, there is little attempt to allow neighbouring states to adopt a positive role within a neighbour's reconstruction. Liberal peace theory assumes that appropriate governing institutions, as well as market freedom, will allow greater levels of positive and peaceful interactions with neighbouring states. It largely fails to consider the transitional process from authoritarianism towards democracy as a complex process that entails negative interference from neighbouring states. Reconstructions entail coercive measures and threats, which produce a negative security environment, leading fearful states to engage in destabilizing and spoiler activities such as providing arms and supports to militant nationalist groups. Hence, this chapter indicates that, just as the state-centric nature of domestic reconstruction of states produces an inadequate level of attention on building a nation, a similar process is reproduced regionally. In other words, the focal point of such missions is the domestic reconstruction of recipient societies. There is little attempt to accommodate regional fears and historical legacies of colonial rule, as well as the difficulty that post-colonial or weak and struggling regional states have experienced in enforcing their sovereignty and legitimacy. Thus, this thesis posits that, just as the historical legacies and experiences of a recipient society will influence the success of the transitional process, a similar development is present regionally. Regions produce an internal balance and old conflicts, regime types, along with values and norms reach a level of systemic equilibrium. A new conflict erupting can often have an adversely negative impact on the domestic regional environment, exacerbate fears and generating adverse reactionary measures. More significantly, an externally imposed interference can have an additional layer of disruption, particularly when such a mission is widely deemed illegitimate by the international community, or when there are strong interests that derive the agendas of the mission, and when it is led by states who have a history of engaging in colonial imperialism. Thus, the process of reconstructions often ignores the important concept of raising the

regional legitimacy of the mission, failing to consider regional factors that may adversely influence the reconstruction, and, therefore, does not produce positive measures to counter such a process. This is a prevalent limitation within U.S. led missions, and is linked back to the level of commitment such missions display in utilising historical understanding of the recipient societies in the reconstruction to counter possible complications. The field of reconstruction represents the juncture between the move away from pluralism and the new trend of identity politics; the difficulty that the field experiences resides in its tendency towards integrationist policies when such post-conflict societies increasingly demand cultural self-expression. This is not surprising considering the inability of post-colonial states to effectively address cultural plurality, resulting in cultural domination. In Iraq, Shia demands for cultural autonomy is long overdue. No post-Saddam state can be legitimate, if long suppressed communities do not feel a sense of security and cultural autonomy. Toleration can only occur when all communities involved acquire a sense of cultural and identity protection, where minorities no longer feel an existentialist crisis. Instead, when the field attempts to enforce civic responsibilities and loyalties, it implicitly subverts cultural diversity.

The thesis aims to point to the notion of legitimacy building, and the significance of promoting local ownership in recipient societies through viewing sources of identity, ethnicity and the religious, as a policy tool, to be utilised into the overall reconstruction, instead of being marginalised or ignored. Religion and its relevant actors in Iraq have demanded accommodation along with a variety of important players, such as political actors and civil society groups, to produce a comprehensive and individualised reconstruction policy. The analysis of religious actors as opposed to merely 'religion' is important, for religious analysis and discourse have often centred on the 'how' and 'why', but not necessarily on the 'whom'. Where the 'who' is discussed, as noted in Chapter Four, it tends to be restrained to the analysis of fundamentalist organisations, terrorists, insurgencies and collectives as opposed to the role of individual actors. As a result, a skewed account of religion and religious actors is presented in the existing accounts of Iraq's reconstruction. A more comprehensive account sees the role of religion and religious actors, such as Sistani and al-Sadr, as the result of a history of state oppression, colonisation, nationalism and ethnoreligious marginalization.

Further, a more balanced view considers the legitimate elements of these religious actors values and aspirations for the new Iraq and aims to adopt a more realistic, culturally based and context specific account of emotionally charged terms such as 'terrorist', 'insurgency'

and ‘spoilers’. It may very well be the reality of the field that future reconstructions will occur in deeply religious Islamic states. It is, therefore, essential that the international community, and its norms and approaches are adjusted to locate a balance between reconstructing the state-centric and institutional elements of such weak states, as well as aiming to build stronger nations by accommodating local traditions and actors. Situating a balance between the local, and the traditional with the international and the modern state-centred values is a difficult task. However, a crucial step is the accommodation of extremely powerful religious actors, rather than marginalization. What is now known through Iraq’s reconstruction is that marginalization breeds discontent, insurgency, and terrorism; what is less accepted is that, perhaps, accommodation promotes legitimacy, dialogue, nation-building and compromise. Developing more than a rudimentary awareness of the cultural, historical, traditional and religious contexts of the recipient society is the first crucial step towards such a new approach, which this thesis aims to cover.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Introduction:**

The aim of this literature review is to locate the central arguments of the thesis within the existing field. It also aims to map out the wider established discursive and institutional spaces in which reconstruction theories and practices are located, and continue to expand and develop them. The chapter will provide a brief over-view of the fields in which ‘development studies’ have been traditionally located in; as well as the dominant trends and current characteristics of reconstructions which largely replicate themselves in a state-centric approach to conflict ridden societies. An analysis of the literature on state failure will situate this argument deeper within the literature and problematizes reconstructions. What will become apparent through this process is the extensive body of literature that already exists, which has attempted to address existing gaps in knowledge. Yet, despite this process, significant gaps in knowledge remain and are yet to be adequately addressed by the existing literature. The chapter will then provide an analysis of the dominant views within the field in relation to complex political concepts such as ‘sovereignty’ and ‘legitimacy’. The argument will narrow further to consider the role of religion and religious actors within the reconstruction field by situating it within an analysis of Identity Politics.

The failures of cases such as Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as others, start long before preliminary plans are drawn. The dominant trend within state-building is the lack of pre-conflict planning which eventuates into subsequent uncoordinated post-conflict preparation that, in turn, yields little constructive results. The lack of pre-conflict planning may involve a lack of awareness of the complexity and often interlaced sources of conflict or inadequate security forces on the ground. Because of such tendencies, there are more ‘failed’ cases than successful ones, wherein the post-World War II examples of Japan and Germany are widely viewed as the epitome of successful reconstruction. Yet, for various complex reasons, the successes of these two cases have been near impossible to replicate. The urgent question, for the international community, is why has it been so difficult to replicate the successes of these cases?

This thesis posts that the schism within the field is instituted through the normative and empirical foundations that underpin state-building activities. Central theoretical values that underpin the field include top-down liberal democratic and market orientated policies imposed on recipient societies, which often entail a significant emphasis on institution and capacity building of the state. Disproportionate emphasis is thus placed on building institutional capacity of weak and failing states with an inadequate level of attention paid to addressing societal rifts, long held grievances and other nation-building policies. This is one of the most clear, pronounced and significant gaps within the existing theoretical and empirical practice of reconstructions. Though prominent state-building scholars have struggled to conceptualize, and to some degree have succeeded in situating where the inconsistencies that plague state-building activities lie, they have largely failed to recognize this particular schism. Scholars, for the most part, have reaffirmed the dominant theoretical and normative values that underpin liberal peacebuilding, and in the process contributed to a repetition of the same debilitating limitations. For instance, Michael Barnett (2006, 89), a prominent theorist in the field, argues that the reconstruction of post-conflict societies has evolved to entail 'liberal peacebuilding', to such an extent that those leading such missions have often repeated the mistakes of attempting to first develop a strong society that could counteract the arbitrary use of state power in the future. Barnett goes so far as to argue that the state-building donor community desires a minimal state, with a strong civil society that would balance state authority. Barnett proceeds to present what he calls 'republican peacebuilding' as the answer to the failures mentioned above. Such a process would entail a strong commitment to institution building, that would promote legitimacy and stability when/as society begins to transfer their consent to such institutions.

Barnett's study presents several problems endemic in state-building literature. Firstly, he fails to recognize that reconstruction processes involve a high level of state-building rather than nation-building as he suggests above. A cursory analysis of the post-Cold War reconstruction missions proves this claim otherwise. Secondly, if reconstruction processes were to entail building a strong nation, through civil society development for instance, would it not naturally lead to a bottom-up form of democracy building which some (Carens 1993) have suggested are the most stable forms of democracy building? Instead, Barnett argues for a top-down form of democracy development, failing to recognize the level of resentment that local communities feel at exogenous actors imposing foreign forms of political institutions. Finally, Barnett involuntarily juxtaposes nation-building with state-building, viewing them as

essentially non complimentary practices; or, rather, Barnett views top-down institution development- state-building- as the sole response to state failure or weakness. There is an obvious failure to view the breakdown of state institutions and structures, in weak or failing states, as a crisis that needs to be addressed by viewing the state as a nation-state, rather than the state alone. Nevertheless, Barnett's argument is representative of the most prominent perspective in the field, and is replicated implicitly or explicitly within the leading literature. This literature views the imposition of liberal institutions as the most effective method of reconstructing weak states and addressing complex inter-societal and society-state relations. This factor will be explored further within Chapter Two.

The field of state reconstruction, whether labelled as state-building, nation-building or other similar terms, was the initial domain of economists. Classical economists such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Thomas Malthus, and Karl Marx produced works that were motivated by the notion of developing nations and promoting greater prosperity through reducing poverty and a more equitable distribution of wealth. In a more modern context, from the twentieth century onwards, Wilsonian views on self-determination heavily influenced, and directly led to the end of the colonial era. This led to the creation of large numbers of new states that joined the international community, but were lacking the appropriate capacity, experience and institutions to function at the same level as the more developed states could. Following the end of WWII, the substantial reforms within post-war Japan and Germany focused on a broad economic and political transformation of these societies. An important work that emerged in line with the economic concerns of development at this time was the works of Karl Polanyi, particularly *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* produced in 1944 (see Wiarda 2004; Dale 2010). This work was followed by other seminal economic works from Joseph Schumpeter, Peter Drucker and Karl Mannheim. All of these theorists contributed to a prominent discourse on the development and transformation of modern nation-states on an economic and political level.

By the 1950s and 1960s, the notion of economic growth for the purpose of social development and modernization was in full force. The discourse on economic development led to the introduction of important journals from the 1950s on wards, including *Economic Development and Cultural Change* (1952), *Journal of Development Studies* (1965), *Development and Change* (1970), among several others (Tribe, Nixon and Sumner 2010). An instrumental work was by Seymour Martin Lipset, originally published as an article in



1959 then expanded further in *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics* in 1960, followed closely by *The First New Nation*, (1963). Lipset's central thesis correlated wealth to democracy development suggesting that the wealthier and the more economically developed a state is the more likely that long term, effective democratic changes will occur. Another influential work that emerged in the 1960s was the work of American economist Walt Rostow. His main theory was proposed in his work *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (1960), which identified five distinct stages of development in the transition of traditional societies towards that of a liberal, modern, democratic state (Haynes 2008). However, by the 1970s, a tentative new trend focusing on informal sectors and elements within states, which were thought to be applicable to various cultures, states and regimes emerged, and challenged the dominance of economic progress within the development sphere (Apthorpe and Krahll 1986). This trend emerged largely from Latin America within the 'dependency theory' discourse pioneered by Rodolfo Stavenhagen (Apthorpe and Krahll 1986) followed by other prominent theorists such as Andre Gunder Frank (1966, 1976, 1984), Walter Rodney (1972) and Cardoso and Faletto (1979). Dependency theory challenged the existing and emerging economic relations and institutions that derived more economic stagnation and underdevelopment in the developing world. More importantly, dependency theory was the first attempt by the so called third-world to challenge the Eurocentric nature of international economic systems (Munck and O'Hearn 1999). This perspective was aided by American imperial over reach, which was more focused on the outcomes of economic development for its own national interest, as opposed to providing assistance for its own sake to poor and weak states. Additionally, American policy depended heavily on economic liberalization and development as a counter measure against the rise of communism during this period. Nevertheless, the arguments as contributed by the economists for development were limited and essentially flawed. On the one hand, the economists assumed the universal nature of the European policies and systems in place and assumed that such policies would inevitably be accepted by the emerging third world nations (Wiarda 2004, 35), particularly in the absence of alternative systems. Furthermore, they believed that only through focus on the economic sphere would the underdeveloped and weak state develop. In other words, such a perspective ignored issues of politics, culture, identity or the context-specific history of the new emerging, often post-colonial, states.

Other disciplines, such as within the sphere of sociology and anthropology, proposed different and competing theories for the development of weak and poor states. Henry Maine

(1861) was one of the first social scientists to view the transition of societies from being informal and traditional towards a more modern and stable structure, by identifying the difference between a 'status' based society as opposed to a 'contract' based form of social organization. Other theorists, such as Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, also contributed significantly to the development of a sociological basis for modernization and development theory. In *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893), Durkheim proposed a theory of positive and negative forms of solidarity in defining the relationship between individuals towards society (see Hamilton 1990; Thompson 2000). Durkheim further clarified positive forms of solidarity into 'mechanical' and 'organic' forms of societal cohesion; where the former was based on the sharing of common values by virtue of their residence in a specific society, where such common values were shared and promoted. On the other hand, the later was based on solidarity between sub-groups within society where certain values, or sub-groups, acted as a form of internal control and restraint on the collective (Hamilton 1990, 61). Max Weber also contributed to theories of social evolution through his identification of different forms of legitimate and legal authority, including the oft cited 'charismatic' forms of legitimacy (Henderson and Parson 1947, 328). The identification of these forms of legitimacy was crucial for social development, because they are illustrative of different forms of 'transitional' arrangements when traditional social structures have deteriorated (Pye 1962, 35). Most modern sociologists, such as Max Weber, Karl Marx, Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, and Emile Durkheim, collectively predicted the eventual decline of traditional social constructs such as religion as an identity marker (Norris and Inglehart 2004, 3).

Another area of contribution that sociologists and anthropologists add to the discourse emerged from the 'cultural relativity' area of study. Pioneered by the work of France Boas (1896) through his theory of 'cultural relativism', followed by the likes of Margret Mead (1928; 1932; 1935; 1942), Alfred Kroeber (1915), Ruth Benedict (1934), George Foster (1942; 1945) and Essene, Foster and Walter (1939) anthropologists proposed a theory of cultural relativity that focused on the necessity of appreciating cultures for their uniqueness. In fact, such uniqueness was to be celebrated and accepted rather than rejected and homogenized in accordance with established Western values and traditions. Likewise, in order to understand cultures, it had to be not only studied at length, but also other elements such as the psychological, historical and environmental factors had to be also taken into consideration. While noting the uniqueness of cultures, anthropologists insisted that cultures produce what they called 'functional prerequisites' that produced certain common trends and

paths towards development, agency and behaviours (Sutton et al. 1950). Sociologists also contributed to the development theory from the original works of Max Weber followed by more modern theorists such as Seymour Martin Lipset (1956; 1979), Talcott Parsons (1937; 1960; 1964), and Karl Deutsch (1954). Parsons, in particular, originated the 'structural functionalism' school of thought which relied on four functional imperatives including adaption, integration, latency and goal attainment, which all combined to propose a 'grand theory' of uniform value systems as the root of social order. Others, such as Lipset, contributed to the discourse through analysing forms of social cleavages and political participation and by hypothesizing that processes such as education, increased literacy, technology and communication, and civil society formation, among other factors, are, in fact, more significant for development as opposed to a unitary focus on economic development. This argument largely implied that foreign investment and direct international involvement would address the limitations of weak and failing states. Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorships and Democracy* (1966), is also an essential reading that spotlights the dangers of power-seeking and rent-seeking local elites. Instead, through adopting a strictly Marxist theoretical foundation that focused on the politics of modernization, Moore proposed that the relationship between landlords and peasants ultimately determined the governing system post-industrialization. He ultimately offered a structural theory of modernization that was an important development within the field. However, the dominant limitation of the cultural relativist theory was its tendency to analyse the relationship between different cultures. Nevertheless, there has been little focus on the analysis of conflict and disparity within cultures. A recent contribution by anthropologist H.L. Moore (1999) has attempted to bridge this gap. More recent studies have noted the important nature of culture in conflicts, leading to the linkage of culture to reconciliation (see, for instance, Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall 2011)

Nevertheless, it has been within the sphere of political science that the field of development has significantly expanded. The field of political science has produced two arenas in which the 'development' discussion has evolved. On the one hand, scholars and theorists have written extensively on promoting state development, while on the other hand the empirical practices of interventions in failing and poor states has produced often contradictory and conflicting practices. Where economists advocated for a more equal distribution of wealth, economic liberalization and poverty reduction policies, the political sphere has adopted a fix-by intervention, or, in some instances, by an illegitimate and forceful method of addressing

unstable states. In the modern context, the Wilsonian notion of political freedom and emancipation of colonized societies produced a lengthy and still evolving trend within the development discourse. Wilson's fourteen point speech set the foundation for self-determination, but also some of the associated problems of state failure, collapse and weaknesses. Wilsonian support for international institutions, designed to produce cooperation and norms of interaction between states, led to the formation of the ill-fated League of Nations (1922) which eventually failed, largely owing to the American refusal to join the league and compromise their sovereignty, as they saw it (Parchami 2009). However, the league's general ineffectiveness, as well as structural limitations in preventing WWII sealed its fate. The subsequent formation of the United Nations (U.N.) fashioned the most prominent institution designed to provide economic and political aid to the developing world. The emergence of the U.N. as an international organisation presented a whole new set of problems and questions for the development paradigm, as evident through the extensive and still expanding discourse on peacekeeping, peacebuilding and peacemaking (see, for instance, Durch 1993; Lewis 1993; Dawson 1994; Allan 1996; Couldon 1998; Cousens, Kumar and Wermester 2001; Reyhner and Paffenholz 2001; Fortna 2003; Whitworth 2004; Sweetman 2005; Sitkowski 2006; Bellamy, Williams and Griffin 2009; Murithi 2009). The U.N. Trusteeship Council played a crucial part in establishing the prominence of the U.N. during the decolonization period (Fox 2008). The system ensured that territories or states that lacked the capacity to self-rule would be ruled effectively for the benefit of the inhabitants. However, as decolonization came to an end, the trusteeship system was eventually phased out and replaced by peacekeeping, peacemaking and economic aid to support newly formed states. The system also established an international norm of direct interference and involvement in the development of formerly dependent territories.

As Wilsonianism produced self-determination among previously colonized people, the number of sovereign states rose exponentially (Smith 1995). Likewise, the end of WWII led to the emergence of the Cold War and the bi-polar world resulted in increased political, economic and military aid to the emerging states as a form of the superpower's proxy wars. As the superpowers acquired satellite states, post-colonial states retained control domestically through the use of force rather than through the promotion of legitimate institutions and processes that were representative of the newly formed nation. The American policy of economic liberalization largely surpassed that of political liberalization during this stage. Non-democratic, authoritarian, dictatorial states particularly within Latin America and Africa

retained high levels of American diplomatic and economic support, despite the widespread abuse of their citizens. Following the triumph of America over Soviet expansionism, the U.S. claimed an unwavering support for democratic values during the Cold War (Smith 1995; Parchami 2009). Some, however, explicitly rejected the hypothesis that democracy exportation was the central and consistent agenda of the United States (e.g. Schmitz 2006). Where interventions occurred during this stage, it was through the auspice of the U.N. whose operations resembled peacekeeping measures. Such interventions often occurred at the request of groups within the recipient society and were more a matter of negotiating peace between warring groups. The early cases of Congo (1960-1964 *UNTAG*), Angola (1988-1991 *UNAVEM I*), Namibia (1989-1990 *UNTAG*), Nicaragua (1989-1992 *ONUCA*), and Cyprus (1964 *UNFICYP*) all fell within the peacekeeping sphere. Peacekeeping, unlike any form of reconstruction, entails only negotiations and mediation, ceasefires, and the prevention of escalation of conflicts (Doyle 2001). In peacekeeping operations, once the conflict ceases the role of the U.N. forces essentially ends. Such policies were designed to retain respect for the territorial sovereignty of the state in conflict, yet also provide an impartial third party that would mediate between the conflicting parties (Doyle and Sambanis 2006). International peacekeeping missions were supported by other international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) who provided aid on the condition of liberal reforms. The combination of ceasefire of conflicts, with economic aid, was perceived to be the ideal approach to rehabilitate struggling and weak states.

The post-Cold War era, however, witnessed the rise of American dominance over U.N. led missions with increased attempts to implement economic as well as political reforms, supported by two important seminal works. The first, produced by Francis Fukuyama, was *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992) and was closely followed by Samuel Huntington's, *The Clash of Civilizations?* (1993) and *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996). Fukuyama, riding on the success of market-orientated liberalism over fascism and communism, argued that the end of the bi-polar world order heralded a new world order for the international system, one based on liberal democratic values as the ideal form of political governance. As a result, "an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism" resulted leading to the "total exhaustion of viable systematic alternatives to Western liberalism" (Fukuyama 1992). The conclusion was the "end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government". In contrast, Huntington proposed an

imminent clash of cultures pitting western democratic civilizations against traditional Islamic civilizations and predicted that a clash of values would emerge and mark the post-Cold War era. Unlike Fukuyama, Huntington did not see conflicts arising from ideological or economic sources, but rather through cultural fault lines. The impact of these theories on American foreign policy was significant, particularly with the rise of the neo-conservatives in Washington (e.g. Bonyanian 2009). As a result, a more aggressive American foreign policy emerged that was focused on transforming the international system in its own image. More importantly, America saw itself as the guardian of liberal internationalism that needed to spread democracy either through U.N. sanctioned missions or through direct interventions. The increasing leadership role that the U.S. adopted in the field further entrenched liberal peace building, though in a progressively aggressive manner.

Several important scholars have contributed significantly to the resulting discourse on state-building within a liberal peace framework. Scholars such as Charles Tilly, Theda Skocpol, Joel Migdal, and Stein Rokkan, among others, contributed to the field through the analysis of state formation and studying the relationship between society and state and democracy construction. Tilly, for instance, analysed European state formation and the role that war, the military and taxation played in such a process (1985). His attention shifted later to forms of political and social mobilization and its significance for socio-political interactions. Skocpol, on the other hand, theorized the state as a rational and organizational actor with multiple competing interests that differed from Tilly's 'military-fiscal' model (Carroll 2006). Alternatively, Rokkan distinguished between the "social boundaries of membership and territorial boundaries" (Cited in Flora, Kuhnle and Urwin 1999, 105). He also noted the differences between state formation within the European system and that of the post-colonial world. Additionally, he criticized the tendency to correlate the state and nation formation processes inherent within the European system, which differed significantly from that of post-colonial worlds' attempts at state and nation-building. Overall, though, as the Cold War drew to an end, the New World Order was faced with the threat of state failure and weaknesses which posed significant humanitarian, military, political, and economic challenges to the world (see Rotberg 2004; Fukuyama 2004). 'State-failure' garnered increasing attention in the 1990's because the decolonization period had coincided with the rise of the Cold War; effectively disguising the weaknesses and dangers of newly formed sovereign states that lacked the capacity to govern efficiently. Weak states were provided with financial and military aid in return for their support of the superpowers. Following the

end of the Cold War, such support was largely withdrawn. Having attained inviolable and unrevocable sovereignty, such states could no longer be consolidated into more capable or powerful territories, leaving the international system ridden with weak and failing states (Hibou 1999, 119). Due to the end of the Cold War in favour of western liberalism, scholars almost unanimously accepted liberal democratic values as the ideal form of governance for weak and failing states, with the imposition of democracy seen as increasingly necessary for stability and peace within the international system. The question with the discipline did not centre on whether democracy was applicable, but rather on different methods of democracy producing policies that would best bring about long term, as well as immediate stability (Chadda 2000; Guttieri and Piombo 2007; Forje 2009). Consequently, the discussion focused on the different types of transitional international administrations (Mansfield and Snyder 1995), alternative power-sharing mechanism (Shain and Linz 1995), issues of security and law and order (Fearon and Laitin 2004), the promotion of civil society and party formation, as well as elections (Doyle 2001, Paris 2004; Plattner 2005). Other significant works such as those conducted by O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) and O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead (1986) focused on regions most at risk of succumbing to the dangers of weak and failing states including Latin America and southern Europe through taking a comparative and critical account of democratization in these areas. These works, however, were largely confined to the west-centric and state-centric view of reconstruction of authoritarian regimes, which has largely occurred via domestic disturbances and movements, in contrast to forceful international interventions.

This new era foresaw a new trend of interventionary state-building and developmental policies emerge with a significant focus on human rights (Carey 2002). Prominent cases such as the humanitarian based international efforts in northern and southern Iraq (1991), in Somalia (1992-1993) and Bosnia (1993-1995) marked a new post-Cold War era with the sovereignty of states being subject to human rights norms. Additionally, the most prominent event since the end of the Cold War for the reconstructionary field has been the events of September 11 which produced the much debated and criticized 'Bush Doctrine' of aggressive and preventative wars with the specific aim of regime change and rebuilding of state institutions along market orientated, liberal democratic policies (Dolan 2005; Kaufman 2007; Maszka 2008).

Theorists, however, present a complex and contradictory method of systematizing the paradigm into a coherent and easily labelled field. Instead, competing views about the field

being labelled as 'state-building' or 'nation-building', 'development', 'peace-making', among a host of other labels, all represent the very same state-centric model of reconstruction founded on market-orientated liberal democracy promotion. For instance, James Dobbins through the notable think-tank Rand Corporation's various publications (2003; 2005; 2007) denotes this discipline as nation-building. In contrast, other scholars (Chesterman 2004; Herring and Rangwala 2006; Zaum 2007) label this discipline as state-building. This discrepancy is an indication of a lack of direction, consensus and the complex nature of principles, norms, and levels of analysis in the field. Despite this, scholars have acknowledged the limiting nature of this discrepancy and their inability to distinguish and pay more attention to the differences between state-building and nation-building (Stephenson 2005). The absence of a mutual consensus as to what to label this discipline suggests that state-building theory is still within its early formative years and further demonstrates the multifaceted nature and existing theoretical confusion. However, more recent data is demonstrating increasing sensitivity to the gap between nation-building and state-building. The most recent USAID (2011) publication on 'state-building' highlights the need to develop a twofold approach to such missions. The first approach adopts a traditional state-centric approach, labelled within the report as a *technical* challenge, and attempts to develop and strengthen state capacity and institutions. While the second approach entails strengthening the relationship between state and society.

Only Edward Azar and Robert F. Haddad (1986) have noted- rather implicitly- not only the distinction, but also the compatibility and linkage between nation and state-building. In a paper written in 1986, they note the importance of the "nation-state-building efforts" of the international community. However, their analysis does not specify what this exactly means in relation to policy building. Indeed, the paper merely refers to the policy building measures within reconstruction through their 'nation-state-building' classification. It is, nevertheless, an important distinction that has failed to attract the attention of later theorists. Karin Von Hippel (2000), for instance, merely allocates a footnote in distinguishing the difference between nation-building and state-building. Hippel claims that both terms have become synonymous for the reason that the term 'state' in the United States is confused for the various fifty states. As a result, the term nation-building incorrectly represents state-building activities. Vincent (2002) agrees with Hippel when he notes that this predisposition arises from the tendency to equate the 'state' with the 'nation'.



Thus, prominent theorists in the field (Fukuyama 2004; Stephenson 2005; Chesterman 2004) acknowledge the discrepancy in the terms nation and state-building, and they generally agree that the two concepts are synonymously, and often incorrectly, used. However, there has been a widespread lack of interest in exploring the implication of separating and perceiving nation-building and state-building as distinct concepts, with distinct policies that interlink collectively to reconstruct conflict-ridden and weak states. Instead, individual scholars utilize either label according to personal preference, compounding the lack of consensus within the field. There has been little concerted effort to acknowledge both nation-building and state-building, as terms with differing purposes. Specifically, nation-building focuses on constructing bridges between communities, as well as reconciliation and arbitration within recipient societies. While the focus of state-building policies is on the institutional and power mechanisms of the state. More crucially, the literature fails to view state-building and nation-building as different concepts that require distinct and separate policies that combine to address limitations within weak nation-states.

Due to this propensity, state-building often takes precedence over nation-building activities, and is essentially seen to encompass the latter. This further suggests that the literature is fraught with the misconception that state-building will inevitably lead to nation-building, or rather a sense of nationhood among the various ethnic, religious and linguistic groups within a recipient state. However, rebuilding a state does not necessary imply the development of a sense of nationalism. The thesis resolutely divides nation-building and state-building as distinct though closely interlinked processes, requiring their own distinct policies. Consequently, the thesis insists on labelling such practices as 'reconstructions'. This label addresses several problems with the literature as well as the empirical practices of such policies. Firstly, the thesis inherently rejects the labels 'state-building' and 'nation-building' as they currently stand in the literature. Instead, by labelling the practice as 'reconstructions', the definition encompasses both state-building and nation-building as two mutually exclusive policies designed to reconstruct institutional weaknesses and social cleavages within conflict ridden societies, weak states and failing regimes. As will be highlighted further below, reconstructions are addressing states that have experienced long term, usually armed, ideological, identity or cultural conflicts that have led to the deterioration of the physical as well as the social infrastructures of the state. As a result, because such armed conflicts and violence play such a prominent role in such states, whether through internationally led interventions resulting in locally inspired resistance, or through civil conflicts, the term

‘development’ loses some of its theoretical utility. The term ‘development’ implies the betterment of a system on an economic and political level, suggesting aspirations to improve the living standards of a society through such measures as improvement in literacy, skilled labour, critical infrastructure, health, and political participation. While economists have noted that economic development can produce a stronger and more cohesive nation through the fairer distribution of wealth and through the promotion of strong institutions, it nevertheless does not encompass peace-keeping or peace-enforcement within violent situations. Therefore, it does not provide policies for reducing or preventing existing armed conflicts, or measures to increase the security and the stability necessary to enable economic development. In other words, development policies apply after the conflict has been resolved. Therefore, the historical and theoretical correlation of the term ‘development’ to the economists noted previously produces strong policy implications for the economic field. Another dominant flaw within the development field is that it also ignores issues of identity and culture that marketization does not adequately address. In contrast to this, in labelling the field as the ‘reconstructionary’ field, the paradigm encompasses both the state as well as the society as the two dominant actors in the processes of ‘fixing’, ‘rehabilitating’ or ‘developing’ a nation-state. More importantly, the term reconstruction suggests the restructuring, reforming and renovating of not only the state, but also societal relations, because it views the destructive nature of violence and conflict, as well as economic and market failures, both at state and social levels as inherent within weak and failing states.

## **2.2. The State-centric Nature of Reconstructions:**

The influence of Wilsonian values in the early twentieth century, the nature of the international system with the dominance of western market-orientated liberal values following the end of the Cold War, as well as the associated international institutions such as the U.N., IMF, USAID and the World Bank, among others, collectively ensured the state-centric characteristic of the current global order. In turn, theorists have attempted to apply the state-centric model to reconstructions producing two dominant characteristics within the literature. On the one hand, a significant part of the literature focuses on the normative function of state-building and the appropriate methods of reconstructing states that have experienced institutional weakness and failures. Conversely, the rest of the literature is consumed with the practical and empirical methods of reconstruction through

democratization and marketization policy implementation. At the heart of such reconstructions are certain assumptions about the desired normative appearance of the international system. More specifically, the state should reflect the widely accepted governance and normative values of the post-Cold War era, with a focus on capacity-building. Thus, through the foreign aid and international organizations, struggling and weak states had the opportunity to partake in the idealized representation of the modern, developed state. In instances of unwillingness to participate in this process, such states were increasingly subject to economic and diplomatic sanctions, aid suspension, economic coercion and other incapacitating measures; even in instances of an inability to reform, the international community increased its coercive and interventionary policies.

At the same time, the end of east-west confrontation increasingly demonstrated that state weakness and institutional failures presented a multitude of complex new dilemmas directly linked to states' capacity. Lack of state capacity led to international and religious terrorism, civil conflicts, widespread diseases, narcotic trade, large numbers of Internally Displaced People (IDP), and refugees, as well as other dangers, leaving more developed states to accept the responsibility for the rehabilitation of unstable states. As a response, the international donor community adopted a 'quick-fix' solution of aiding states through structural adjustment policies, technical assistance, emergency and humanitarian assistance, and in the process, leaving the inherent causes of state failure in place. Carment, Gazo and Prest (2007, 51-52), for instance, argued that such policies "tend to encourage strategies that provide immediate stability, such as strengthening domestic military and police forces, limiting opportunities for international terrorist activities, and suppressing transnational crime." However, such measures largely lacked the capacity to address protracted conflicts and long held grievances between warring groups in such societies. As a result, economic aid and policies lacked focus on long term, sustainable peace and nation-orientated measure, and merely focused on structural adjustments in recipient societies.

Thus, state-centric perspectives evolved from complex aid development, to peacekeeping measures, and more recently internationally led transitional administrations instructing the failed state how to govern in an appropriate manner (Chesterman 2005; Bellamy, Williams and Griffin 2009; Wilde 2001; 2008). Yet, these state-centric measures repeatedly failed to take into account root causes of state-failure, often exacerbated by a history of colonialism. Instead, promoting capable and inclusive state institutions were assumed to be the answer to

complex ethno-religious conflicts (Fukuyama 2004), but, in most instances, this masked the root conflicts for short periods. Essentially, as this thesis argues, the state is not the *sole* problem in state-society breakdowns. At a state level, the problem resides in the modern state's inability to address and accommodate different group interests and values. At a societal level, it is communities and people's interests that collide with the rigidly defined state, its authority and its capacity to deliver services. For instance, the peace process in Sri Lanka has witnessed Buddhist monks who have challenged the "legitimacy and rightful authority" of the state (Brekker 2009, 146), thereby limiting the capacity of the state to address the ethnic conflict effectively. This has resulted in a lack of confidence and trust in the state's ability to accommodate group interests. Even prominent international institutions heavily invested in reconstructions have noted the inherently challenged status of the state: "the very idea of the nation state is a challenged concept. Many people continue to see their identity primarily in term of ethnicity, rather than as citizens in a nation state. A history of predatory government or lack of formal government means people are distrustful, even hostile of the state" (USAID 2011, 21). Edward Azar and John Burton articulated this argument by breaking the distinction down furthermore through highlighting the general state-centric nature of the international system. They highlighted that "the group appears to be a competitor to nation or system. Scholars in the field of international politics seem to have accepted the view that a legitimate role of the state is its historical role of suppressing the group. Furthermore, the group as a unit disturbs the neatness of the models at hand" (1986, 32). This view pits ethnic groups against the state; as a result, the reconstruction of weak states adopts a similar policy and decision making process. By attempting to assimilate, and to replace subcultural values and attitudes, group identities are replaced with civic identities. However, this has proven far more difficult to implement in post-conflict societies than some scholars had anticipated. This has occurred due to a variety of reasons, including the interventionists' inability to understand the multifaceted historical, cultural, and identity issues of some cases. Scholars have also overlooked and marginalized the often antagonistic role that the state has played in response to group interests and pressures, and the impact of the resulting distrust within state-society relations in weak states.

Scholars concerned with reconstructions have almost universally adopted the state as the analytical focal point. As Kenneth Waltz (1959) has noted, the state is but one among other types of analytical systems; nevertheless, there is a strong resistance for scholars in the field to locate other forms of analysis other than the state, resulting in a state-centric model of

reconstructions. According to Daniel Philpott, to question the state-centric model of international systems is to call into question the very “constitution of international relations” (1997, 16). The state-centric model was adopted by theorists such as Michael Mann (1984; 1986), Anthony Giddens (1984) and Theda Skocpol (1985), though it was originally developed by Jean Bodin in 1576. Because the state-centric model insists that geopolitics is the central concern of state (Linklater 1986, 303-307; Sjolander and Cox 1994), reconstructions adopt a power-orientated façade with a particular emphasis placed on reconstructing the security sector (Donais 2008; Ekengren and Simons 2011; Ryan 2011; Schnabel and Ehrhart 2006), law and judiciary (Kouvo 2009; Wyler and Katzman 2010; Bali 2005; Chappuis and Hanggi 2009), and building state infrastructure and institutions of power (Barnett 2006). Essentially, political theorists have largely relied on the state-centric model because they have been unable to locate a more satisfactory theory of organization. This acceptance of the state-centric nature of the international system, however, has served multiple functions, particularly with the rise of ethnonationalism in post-colonial societies. Tickner and Waever (2009), for instance, reason that the state-centric model allowed fragmented nations such as those in Africa and Asia to remain stable entities allowing these new and fragile states a greater chance of accommodation in the international order than would have otherwise been possible.

As a result, prominent theorists have relied on this state-centric model in their analysis. Fukuyama (2004; 2004b; 2006), one of the most prominent theorists in the field, has focused on the necessity of building and strengthening state institutions. For Fukuyama, weak and failing states are the source of many of the world’s current problems, which can be addressed by forceful economic or military interventions. Essentially, the purpose of such interventions should be to “create self-sustaining state institutions and robust market-orientated economies”. Other theorists, such as Aidan Hehir and Neil Robinson (2007), and David Waldner (1999) focus on institutional failures within the Middle East and Africa, thereby endorsing the same policy of economic and political developments. Others (O’Dwyer 2006; Asefa 2003; Krause and Mallory 2010; Rear 2008; Watson 2004) propose different methods of institution development to strengthen the state, prevent war and civil conflicts so as to produce stable states that play the part of responsible members of the international system. None of these theorists propose an alternative means of reconstructing conflict ridden societies without the state being the central focal point for reform. It is argued that a strong state will have the capacity to address domestic issues such as ethnic conflict or

accommodate minority interests more effectively. That is not to imply that these theorists do not address ethnic conflict or long held grievances between communities within recipient societies. Rather, the approach is to 'fix' the state, increase its institutional capacity and then provide post-conflict justice measures. Therefore, nation-building is only secondary, if that, to state-building policies. Instead, this thesis argues that nation-building measures are just as important, and depending on the context of the case, sometimes far more necessary than state-building.

There is, however, increasing awareness and rising criticism of the state-centric nature of international political theory. Keyman (1994), for instance, has argued that the state cannot be analysed solely by its own merits, and points out that the international order views the state-society relations as uncomplimentary and antagonistic, resulting in an “either the state or society” perspective. Instead, Keyman proposes a more holistic “both the state and society” (1994, 153-154) perspective as the fundamental analytical tool and allows political analysis to consider both actors without substituting one for the other and reducing the significance of the other. This perspective corresponds with the Pluralist school of thought that emerged in the late 1980's and early 1990's (see Tan and Waever 2009). This criticism of the state orientated analysis, is largely attributable to the increased challenges that modernization and globalization processes have posed to the state (see, for example, Jovic 2009) prompting others to present a more complex account of the state. Connolly (1991, 201), for instance, has defined the state as “the site of the most fundamental division between inside and outside, us and them, domestic and foreign, the sphere of citizen entitlements and that of strategic responses”, demonstrating a move away from the reductionist Weberian understanding of the 'state'. Weber's definition of the state largely views the state as a means to an end (Suleiman 2003, 24) in terms of authority, bureaucracy and the monopoly of force, but fails to take into consideration issues of accountability and capacity. In other words, it fails to consider 'legitimacy' building as a responsibility of the state. Yet, most of the weak and failing states under discussion did not lack sovereignty in its most widely accepted form; rather, what they largely lacked was legitimacy in the eyes of their citizens. However, the implications of this shift for the reconstructionary sphere have been limited. Even the most critical opponents of reconstructions such as Roland Paris (2004, 2009) and David Chandler (2000) accept the state as the foundation of the field and the basic unit of the international system, in addition to being the most important actor in reconstructions.

This is not to suggest that all theorists in the field have supported working with the centralized state system. For instance, Edward Azar (1986, 34-35) has strongly contested the state-centric model and has labelled it ineffective in addressing the needs and interests of polyethnic and religious societies such as Lebanon or Northern Ireland. The fundamental problem for Azar with the State-centric model lies in its centralized power reducing the capacity of different groups and peoples to have equal access to the state. While the international community has attempted to address states that are plagued by protracted social conflicts, such as those in Cyprus and Northern Ireland, they have largely failed, because the state-centric model does not appreciate the importance of needs and identities of competing groups. As a result, Azar firmly insists that “no compromises are possible when societal needs are at issue” (1986, 34). The solution proposed is a ‘non-power’ centred model, as decentralization allows competing communities to view the state not as a promoter of a specific community or set of interests, but, rather, allowing the state to act as the arbitrator of different community needs, interests and balance differences through decentralization. In contrast, existing state-centric models assume that the state should contain the legitimate source of power, giving rise to the assumption that the state represents a unified ‘nation’ resulting in a lack of conflict of interests. However, such measures have reduced the capacity for group and community belonging, increasing feelings of alienation and marginalization among certain groups who lack appropriate access to the state. Unsurprisingly, clashes of interests have birthed protracted conflicts, seriously damaging societal trust and confidence resulting in ‘deformed’ state-society relations that demonstrate “very little inclination to participatory politics” (Azar 1986, 151).

Subsequently, Azar argues for a move away from the centralized state-system, advocating a shift towards a locally derived source of analysis. Azar reasons that decentralized political structures, essentially manifesting in a federalist system, promise to provide the sort of environment that permits groups to better satisfy their identity and political needs. This system also promotes local participation and self-reliance. More crucially, decentralization provides groups with a sense of control over their affairs. In general, centralized political systems permit local state authorities control over groups’ access to resources such as the educational system, as well as social issues. They increase the sense of identity, participation and security in the broadest sense of these terms. In contrast, decentralized political structures are more appropriate to polyethnic communities as they allow groups to better realize their need, both at a political and identity level. Decentralization, through the exercise of power

and politics at the local level, allows groups to develop a sense of power, agency and control, reducing the interest and capacity for communal violence. More importantly, they do not challenge groups' sense of identity but support and appeases it in return.

Though, Azar does note that decentralized political structures contain inherent problems such as a greater propensity for corruption, authoritarianism and parochialism; but for Azar, the benefits of addressing and not suppressing communities' sense of identity and interests as expressed at the local level far surpass centralized, formal and impersonal political structures that produce protracted conflicts in the first place. Azar (1985, 65) concludes by suggesting that "conflict resolution in protracted conflict situations necessitates an understanding of the importance of open, participatory and decentralized political structures, as opposed to centralized, dominant and exclusive structures." While implementing decentralized forms of power may face difficulties within different cultural contexts, as well as within a centralized state-centric international order, it nevertheless raises an alternative and reasonable method of appeasing and addressing antagonistic identity cleavages.

Smith (1986a), likewise, advocates a move away from the state-centric analysis and proposes a more 'communally centred' exploration. For Smith, this is necessary; and he articulates the dominant problem with the state-centric world order as such: the international system must "break the arid and blind vision of a world of bureaucratic states, to which all other potentially political entities must conform or perish. This means that it is no good forcing statist solutions on to communally divided areas...nor will it help to propose solutions that do not take the respective communities' identity needs and anxieties into account" (Smith 1986a, 78). Smith insists that the response to conflict ridden societies needs to be one of "patient, sensitive analysis", but does concede that if the international system refocuses itself from a state-centric perspective to a society-centric one there is the possibility of self-determination movements flooding the system. Smith persists that "the 'statist' view of world history with its skewed emphasis upon the inter-state system, the 'balance of power' and a world divided into political units and regional economic zones, grossly underestimates the potency of certain kinds of identity and community, and systematically fails to address the roots of successive conflicts 'on the ground'" (1986a, 65). Smith proposes a solution of case specific, context explicit analysis of identity and needs of all parties involved through a complex process of education, arbitration, compensation, and dialogue (Smith 1986a, 80). However, the dilemma with theories on conflict is that they need to be transferable to different



situations, contexts and cases. Iraq, arguably, could represent such a case where desires for group identities and secessionist demands have been part of the modern Iraqi narrative. However, Smith's argument runs across several barriers, including the resistance of internal groups in conjunction with wide regional interests that views a unified Iraq as more desirable. At an international level, Iraq's stability is contingent on the globalized economic market producing large scale resistance of international organizations and states. At a local level, it is difficult to address competing needs when identities, interests, and non-negotiable demands run against the expectations of other groups within society. The problem with Smith's theory lies in its inability to realize the ever increasing levels of acceptance of the modern state within post-colonial societies. Even the most persistent or violent nationalist groups that have traditionally resisted the modern state or have demanded their own separate nation-states have come to accept the durability and persistence of the 'state' leading them to adopt more cooperative and conciliatory policies (Law 2009).

This perspective runs contradictory to the previous notion that the legitimacy of the state is still in contention (see Azar and Burten 1986; USAID 2011). This trend indicates the innately complex nature of state-society relations in weak, struggling or conflict-ridden societies, and spotlights the distinction between the legitimacy or sovereignty of the state being under dispute. Essentially, what Smith and Azar point to is a lack of appropriate attention on state-society relations. The shift in awareness of state-society relations, however, is increasingly being recognized within the reconstruction paradigm. A recent paper published by the OECD (2011, 13) argues that the international community is increasingly gaining awareness of the shift in the role of the state, as well as its relationship with society in order to build more durable states. Nevertheless, the paper remains steadfast in its support of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state, highlighting the persistent commitment to the state-centric world order.

The dilemma is, thus, clear: the literature is firmly predisposed towards the state-centric method as opposed to a society-centric approach. Nevertheless, there are inherent problems in both approaches. The state-centric nature does not provide adequate attention to issues of identity and needs. Instead, it focuses on a power-centred analysis of state-society relations with priority given to intuitional structures and security. Conversely, the society-centric approach questions the efficacy of the state being the centre of analysis and focuses on the oft neglected 'identity' and 'needs' question. However, the essential predicament is that

reconstructions are an approach to address the failure of the basic unit of organization of peoples- the entity of the state. Even the most recently decolonized states from the past few decades have rapidly adapted to the notion of a state-centric system, and have attempted to implement economic and political reforms to strengthen the capacity of the state. Overall, though, there is a strong tendency to revert to authoritarian measures for the purposes of retaining the political structures of the state in place. Internationally, the state remains the central feature of the system, despite the fact that none government and multinational organizations have challenged state sovereignty. Nevertheless, the state-centric nature of the international system has produced significant complications for group based communities in the modern era. As a result, the sphere of reconstructions has experienced more failures than successes. The central argument of this thesis is to situate a state-centric *and* society-centric method, that coalesce into an approach that addresses root causes of state-failure and weakness more effectively.

### **2.3. Weak and Failed States Literature:**

To understand some of the inherent failures of reconstructions, it is important to consider why states fail. More importantly, analysis of state failure points to the dominance of the state-centric international system noted previously. A brief focus on the dominant arguments within the state-failure discourse provides insights into the dominant characteristics of state failure and weakness. More crucially, it demonstrates further insight into the policies adopted, as well as some of the theoretical foundation of reconstructions.

Reconstructions are conducted because there is a generally perceived and accepted notion that some states are behaving contrary to the normative vision of the modern state. The state's incapacity to provide the appropriate resources and services, and its inability to contain internal dissention, produces a problem state that can negatively influence the international system's political and economic stability. This idea poses various other normative and theoretical barriers in the path of reconstructions, because it assumes the universality of certain views such as the ideal character of the state, its legitimacy, its capacity, and its functions. Currently, the discourse and the empirical practice of reconstructions entail three primary limitations. Firstly, the reconstructionary sphere has adopted a Eurocentric appearance of states without an appropriate consideration of the difficult history of state formation, as well as the high levels of violence and negotiation involved. Secondly, in the context of weak states, the majority of which happen to be post-colonial states, the history of

colonial rule is ignored and its significance marginalized. The discourse, consequently, has centred on the rehabilitation of weak and failing states with these inherent limitations. The third limitation arises from the evolving nature and role of the states. The field does not attempt to approach each case with a deep consideration of the unique historical, colonial, cultural, political, identity, or economic characteristics of each. Instead, a generic 'one solution fits all' policy dominates the empirical practice exacerbated by the emerging literature. However, some literature is slowly emerging that is accepting a more complex definition and role for the state. Explicitly rejecting the limited Weberian definition, it advocates a more modern characterization. Stephan, for instance, notes that "the speciality of the modern state cannot be only the monopoly of violence, as this has already been present in previous phases of state evolution, and neither its sovereignty, but rather in its modus of legitimacy which has a rational character" (cited in Ante 2010, 22). This definition presents a more accurate account of modern post-colonial states, as well as the challenges they face—namely one of legitimacy, which will be discussed later.

There are various seminal works that have been published in this field including works by Tim Niblock (2001) and Robert Rotberg (2003). Rotberg's book *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror* popularized the analysis of struggling states. This study also emerged following U.S. interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq and contributed to the complex debate on reconstructions. Rotberg provided a taxonomy of state categories including: strong, weak, failed, and collapsed (2003, 2). This is in contrast to an important earlier study conducted by Jean-Germain Gros (1996) who catalogued and identified five distinct types of failed states. They include chaotic, phantom, anemic, captured, and aborted states. All the identified cases present different symptoms as to the causes of their weakness and decline, including internal and exogenous sources leading to the proposition of context-specific policies for each. Rotberg also identifies a multitude of reasons as to why states are weak or fail, including economic factors, greed, despotism, ethnic, linguistic or religious tensions, institutional failure, and a lack of infrastructure and essential services. Others, similarly, have provided different accounts as to why state failure or weakness occurs. The Fund for Peace Institute (2011), for instance, adds the issue of intervention from external actors such as paramilitary or identity groups, the emergence of factionalized elites that perpetuate identity cleavages, violence and human rights violations, the lack of legitimacy of the state, chronic and sustained human flight, as well as vengeance-seeking group grievances. A variety of other recent works used a combination of these factors to discuss and define state weakness

and failure (Milliken 2003; Kreijen 2004; Bates 2008; Giorgetti 2010). However, some have argued that such definitions have not provided a coherent definition, which has led to confused policies (Easterly and Freschi 2010).

An earlier influential study was Deng and Zartman's (1991) study of African nation and state-building measures, which provided a more holistic view of state weakness and failure. They claimed that state failure was determined by a multitude of causes including identity issues such as religious, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural elements. The combination of these identities in conjunction with political and economic measures has produced antagonistic state to society relations. Finally, the state's inability to address societal demands has reduced its capacity to prevent conflict or effectively address those demands. Others (Akpınarli 2009, 100) define failed and weak states as "the absence of effective government", though the idea of 'effective' can vary significantly within different states.

A strong indicator of state weakness is linked to its institutional capacity. For some, failed states are states that have lost their capacity to deliver services or basic functions (Hauss 2010, 312). Hauss (2010) links state weakness to three distinct factors. They include the relatively new nature of post-colonial states that have experienced vast amounts of societal pressures, but lack the experience and capacity to cater to those demands. Secondly, weak states are plagued by chronic institutional weaknesses. The undemocratic and patrimonial nature of the political elite ensures that an environment preventing institutional reforms and development is produced. The final factor is linked to the significant levels of bureaucratic and elite corruption within post-colonial states. Some have attempted to classify the general gaps within this paradigm. Ghani and Lockard (2009), for instance, have attempted to establish a taxonomy of state failures. They argue that the international community lacks the capacity to understand the function and role of modern states in the current globalised international system. Secondly, the international community lacks the capability to help weak and failing governments to gain the capacity to serve its citizens. As a result, inconsistent and non-cooperative measures are adopted by various donors that are often contradictory to long term peace and development. Thirdly, the international community demands immediate results and lacks the patience and capital to launch long term projects with concrete goals. Instead, missions are driven and limited by budgetary constraints of different governments or organizations. The fourth problem is one of applying a one-size-fits-all solution to different problems. Finally, there is a lack of cooperation between donors leading to sporadic, short and ill conducted missions.

Substantial studies have also emerged that focus on the negative implications of state weakness and failure. Rotberg labelled the reconstruction of weak and failing states as the “critical all-consuming strategic and moral imperative of our time” (2004, 42). The implications of state failure are substantial both in regards to human rights, security conditions, and economic and political development at the local level, which all resonate in the global arena. At the local level, Rajasingham-Senanayake (1999, 65) notes, conflicts produce “cultures of suspicion.” She goes on to note that “[n]eighbours and friends increasingly mistrust each other if they speak different languages, dress differently, or worship different gods.” In Liberia, Somalia and Serbia, neighbours who had, for the most part, lived peacefully with one another swiftly took on a deadly and violent attitude towards one another. Neighbours and relatives took up arms against each other with deadly consequences. In Somalia alone, well over 15 percent of the seven million inhabitants died because of this form of violence (Thompson 2007, 29). Michael E. Brown and Richard N. Rosecrance (1999, 221), on the other hand, have examined the cost of various types of conflicts including the international responses to such conflicts. The authors note that the cost of prevention is far lower than non-intervention presenting a compelling case for interference cost wise. As a result, the authors maintain support for intervention precisely because their analysis has demonstrated positive social, economic, and political outcomes if an intervention is conducted during the early stages of the case.

Others have looked at the moral obligation and role of the state. Nelson Kasfir (2004) argues that state institutions place constraints on individuals. When state failure occurs along with its relevant institutions, society loses not only its legal constraints, but also its moral basis. This, in turn, leads individuals and groups to seek self-interested values such as safety or profits, producing a domino like process of social chaos and anarchy. This view is in line with the classic Realist theory of power seeking individual behaviour. A thought-provoking argument, as espoused by the likes of Thompson (1995) and Kasfir (2004), is the notion that it is the state that sets the moral boundaries of society. As a result, state failure represents a more profound challenge to society precisely because not only does failure suggest the disintegration of governance and its relevant institutions that retain law and order, but also the values and norms that keep society cohesive. This suggests that the role of the state has evolved to entail one of establishing and enforcing societal norms. Thus, state failure and disintegration has far greater and disturbing implications. In linking state capacity to morality, these studies attribute weakness and failure to the state's inability to curb

challenges. In other words, where the state fails to provide adequate and equal economic development within society, despite differences between groups, or where the state fails to curb internally displaced people, establish rule of law, and prevent security, dilemmas result, because the state does not have sufficient capacity, power or resources to address these challenges. This argument does not place equal responsibility, or attention, to how society or different groups within such states contribute to state failure. As a result, the reconstruction sphere has produced state-centric policies that ignore societal contributions to conflicts and views the state as the sole contributor, producer and accountable actor in reconstructions.

Social scientists have attempted to bridge this gap through focusing on social factors that contribute to state failure, resulting in the emergence of two dominant trends within the literature. They involve issues of 'security' and 'greed'. Initial analysis revolved around the 'ancient hatreds' discourse that viewed societal conflicts as a result of long held grievances between communities (see Furnivall 1948; Smith 1965; De Silva 1986; Kaplan 1993). Where the state fails to meet such needs consistently according to the ethnic makeup of its citizens, then particular communities may feel it necessary to assert their desires through violent measures. As the state and its institutions weaken, the groups that are content with the status quo may increasingly adopt belligerent responses to protesting groups, leading to an increasingly violent reaction from both or all groups. Certainly, this view is expressed widely from multiple different disciplines who view social violence in various lights. Richard Dawkins (1976), for instance notes the selfish nature of humans, implying a greater propensity for violent behaviour for the purpose of self-interest. Other discourses emerged within this area that focused on issues of modernization as a result of empirical and theoretical conditions of the developing world. Largely through the works of Walker Connor and Anthony Smith, the sphere of 'conflictual modernization' emerged which argued that increased social and economic interactions between groups and societies would lead to higher probabilities of conflict (Newman 1991). The conflictual modernization discourse emerged following the end of WWII and lasted until the early 1980's largely as a result of the end of colonization policies, as well as the increasing rise of development aid. From 1980 onwards, though, another level of analysis was added to the discourse that involved the 'psychological' study of violent group interactions (Newman 1991; Kaufman 2006). A more modern and still dominant trend has focused on rational choice theory as a means of expressing ethnic conflicts (Bates 1983; Fearon and Laitin 1996; Lake and Rothchild 1998). Advocates of rational choice have viewed issues of predatory elites, information failures or lack of

commitment as the dominant causes of protracted social conflicts and genocide (Kaufman 2006). In contrast, Stuart J. Kaufman (2006) has more recently proposed a more holistic theory of ethnic violence based on 'symbolic violence', though this argument falls within the social-psychological sphere. Kaufman analyses the ethnic conflicts of Rwanda and Sudan leading to the conclusion that it is 'incompatible values' defined as "ethnic myths justifying hostility, operationalized as ethnic myths justifying predatory policy- that is, the insistence on dominance" (2006, 81) that contribute to ethnic and genocidal conflicts. Kaufman continues to argue that different group myths justify violent and hostile interactions leading to protracted conflicts. Supported by both 'fear' and 'opportunity', groups contributed to the production of "hostile mass attitudes" which allowed the notion of extermination of other groups (Rwanda for instance) to be seen and accepted as a viable solution (2006, 82). The body of literature that adopts a society-centric account of state weakness demonstrates that anthropologists and sociologists are still grappling with understanding why groups come into conflict. An analysis of recent ethno-religious conflict in Iraq, however, appears to align more closely with the socio-psychological perspective of symbolic violence. This point will be expanded further on in this chapter.

An important subfield of study within the ethnic conflict discourse focuses on the duration of conflicts, that is, identity conflicts that have lasted for extensive periods of time, effectively labelled by the founder of this subarea as 'protracted social conflicts' (Azar 1983; 1991). The study of protracted conflicts was marginalized during the Cold War period, but, as ethnic conflicts in the Middle East, the Balkan regions of south Eastern Europe and Africa, along with the devastating impacts of Darfur, Liberia, Rwanda, and Somalia, came to the attention of the world, political scientists began revisiting ethnocentric conflicts. Some attempted to address societal divisions through a revision of the existing political system and the redistribution of power that addressed identity issues. Consociational theorists such as Lijphart (1977), however, were focusing on limited conflicts as opposed to protracted conflicts. Protracted conflicts were essentially identity based armed conflicts between various communities within a society that led to perceived, or real, existentialist crises for some (Crighton and Mac Iver 1991). Finally, protracted conflicts differ from consociational situations based on the level of violence involved where each involved group possesses its own paramilitary that exacerbate the conflict. A further difference is that it is protracted conflicts that attract international intervention, whereas most consociational situations have not traditionally attracted similar attention. Azar, Crighton and Mac Iver (1991, 128) explain

that "ethnic conflicts become 'protracted' because of a failure to deal effectively with the underlying identity-related fears of dominant groups."

As mentioned much of the literature assumes that 'security' and 'greed' provide an adequate explanation for state failure and weakness. Azar (1990), however, points to a more complex account of the security issue. His analysis of Lebanon's multifaith and polyethnic nature leads to the observation that "roots of distrust and fear among some Lebanese communities go back at least to the nineteenth century-fears of massacre, subjugation, or marginalization and loss of control...Distrust and fear persist and alienate. Whether there is a realistic basis for intercommunal distrust and fear is not the issue. Memories do not simply go away and those who have been victims of discrimination do not forget as fast as the external analyst, or the mere observer does. What matters is that these anxieties provide inertia and engender resistance to change or capitulation" (1990, 40). This argument revisits the 'ancient hatreds' discourse and alludes to its continued endurance, despite the fact that other theorists have dismissed this argument. The 'ancient hatreds' discourse has, largely, been dismissed in the contemporary world. However, the dominant view attributes ethnic conflict to security and greed. Classic political theory would point to the greedy, power-seeking and security-seeking nature of humans, and the discourse on ethnic conflict is largely dominated by this restrictive perspective. While it is possible that fear and greed are the root causes of protracted conflicts (as Azar alludes to), to dismiss Azar's argument on long held grievances, is to produce a limited discourse and litmus test for defining complex ethnic conflicts. Azar's argument combines the two perspectives effectively, by noting that the initial development of ethnic conflicts arise from fear or distrust, but they eventually evolve into long held memories of pain and injustice, resulting in long held hatreds. This is an important discourse because it highlights two significant points: firstly, that the dominant discourse, entailing the 'fear and greed' argument has obviously produced state-centric policies; as addressing why communities fear each other or feel a sense of discontent and envy as other communities acquire greater access to resources and power can be easily rectified through building institutional mechanisms to redistribute wealth, power and resources more equally; and through security and constitutional measures produce greater levels of safety for all. Secondly, it highlights the necessity of nation-orientated policies because the concept of long held memories of injustice and pain imply that even if greater levels of resource and power distribution is achieved, such communities will still retain a high level of mistrust towards one another. This mistrust reduces the capacity of state-centric policies to accurately and



efficiently end ethnic conflicts. Therefore, any reconstruction plan that fails to effectively take into consideration, and accommodate measures that address such deep rooted mistrusts, is bound to fail.

Despite this argument, this perspective is still far too simplistic and constricted a definition, as it does not take into account altruistic human behaviour. It does not take into account instances of human cooperation, of neighbours choosing to hide friends at great risk to their own lives, or members of groups advocating inter-group cooperation amid cases of genocide and extensive social violence' (Hirsch and Oakley 1995; Fuji 2009). While some (Azar 1986), have noted the non-negotiable nature of identities, the answer may be slightly more complex as to why these values and identities are non-negotiable. Anthropologists (Sigel 1989; McGlynn and Tuden 1991) have pointed out that human interaction and political behaviour is a learned idea, connected to the socialization processes within societies defined by specific historical, political and social contexts (as originally developed by Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, 1983). The causes of conflict allocated to the 'ancient hatreds' discourse, that views the source of conflict as a result of long held hatreds of other cultures (Majstorovic 1997), is often dismissed by arguing that it does not provide an adequate understanding. However, when viewed in this light it seems difficult to understand why in a civilized, rational and pacified global system certain groups would revert to ancient hatreds. Nevertheless, if such inter-group relations are viewed in the light of learned patterns of behaviour s, as well as the importance of symbolic violence and combined with a modern understanding of adult political learning, then it is possible to accommodate both the concept of long held prejudices between certain cultures and religions, but also take into account issues of security and greed.

The dismissal of the 'ancient hatred' branch of conflict analysis is a significant limitation in the appropriate and in-depth study and resolution of protracted conflicts. It is difficult to believe that the Tamils of Sri-Lanka will soon forget the atrocities inflicted by the government on their communities now that the Tamil Tigers have been eradicated. It is difficult to believe that the removal of the Tigers will produce feelings of civic loyalty and nationalism when the root causes of the identity conflict still exists, tainted further by the bitter failure of the Tamil 'freedom fighters'. It is just as difficult for Bosnian communities to forget the level of sexual and genocidal violence inflicted by the Serbs merely because democratic institutions now exist which enforce the sardonic view that Serbs and Bosnians are equal; for victims of Darfur, Sudan and the Rwandan genocide to forget and coexist with

their shared pain and suffering because economic incentives and foreign aid now exist, which supposedly reduce the level of 'greed and security-seeking' behaviours of such groups, does not go far enough in addressing the psychological impact of such collective pain; that the Kurds will forget the Anfal Campaign; that Australian Aborigines will forget the 'Stolen Generation' problem and merely assimilate into their respective communities because appropriate institutions now exist, are all not far reaching enough. Nothing this, it is not impossible for long held conflicts and warring communities to successfully recuperate and recover, as the case of South Africa's reconciliation has demonstrated (see, for instance, Graybill 2000). However, what is need is a different approach that takes into strong consideration this past collective memory of pain. Cases that contain such a train face significant nation-building dilemmas, which the international donor community needs to understand, respect and acknowledge. The marginalization of the 'ancient hatred' discourse has thus demoted the psychological impact of state imposed violence' and protracted conflicts. It is not so much that communities hold on to long held hatreds of other communities that may have imposed violence of various forms upon them. It is more a process of remembering the victims, the pain, indignity, and suffering which collude together to form an atmosphere of fear and distrust that is passed from one generation to another and continues to live in the memory of the community decades after the actual conflict. If the holocaust in Europe directly produced the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the Middle East decades after the event and continues to rightly colour the memory of later generations both in Israel and the Diaspora, then the impact of other conflicts on communities should not be so easily dismissed through 'liberal institution-building'. Because, simply put, it does not go far enough, appease enough, nor reduce the incentive to continue to pass down collective fears, pain and mistrust. The psychological impact of such conflicts, as mentioned previously (Azar 1990) is an important tool in the study of conflicts and their resolutions. It provides insights into how foreign policy-makers must approach communities, nation-build and address protracted conflicts and reconstructions.

Azar's analysis of conflicts, such as the Lebanon war or the conflict in Northern Ireland, also leads to several important lessons, which provide deep insight into the *causes* of long term armed conflicts. Azar agrees with the problematic nature of 'modernization' and identifies multiple conditions such as underlying economic and technological developments; or, rather, the lack of these elements contributing directly to an environment conducive to protracted conflicts. Added to this mixture, multi-communal societies that contain several identities,

which produce complex layers of socio-economic discrepancies and injustices, increase risks the of long term conflicts. Azar argues that the very source of such conflicts is the denial of such factors, including economic development, cultural self-expression, equal opportunities, and access to resources. Essential elements of ‘needs’ may include “*security, distinctive identity, social recognition of identity, and effective participation* in the processes that determine conditions of security and identity...” (Azar 1986, 29). Azar continues by identifying ethnicity as a source of identity as important precisely because it is considered a non-negotiable need. The analysis of ethnicity is further crucial to conflict resolution as it provides insights into the nature of a specific conflict. Further, conflicts can be predictable precisely because they have certain characteristics in common, irrespective of the specifics of a conflict. However, as much as those involved in the conflict may argue that their armed conflict differs from others, the basic underlying causes of conflict as those noted by Azar ensures a level of uniformity important for policy formation.

Overall, though, Azar identifies identity and ethnicity as the most important parts of the formula. For Azar, identity is the key to understanding conflict and its possible resolution. Azar rejects the analysis of conflict at the nation-state level and insists that the analysis of conflicts should entail a study of identities involved and, indeed, is far more revealing than the nation-state (1986, 31). In peeling away the layers of international relations theories and noting the colonial nature of most states, as well as their artificial constructs, identity becomes the more natural form of group and community cohesion. The organic nature of identities is enlightening in conflict analysis, particularly where most societies are a construct of artificial borders, nations and states that do not inspire, or have traditionally been unable to inspire widespread civic loyalties. Instead, such modern concepts as nation-states and sovereignty have been subjected to group identities and loyalties, and, at this level, they have trumped civic allegiance. Alternatively, the larger group-identity of a state is co-opted by the elite whose rent-seeking further promotes the necessity of groups as refuges. Though modern states have attempted to redirect ethnic identities towards the state, they have for the most part, failed to do so successfully or effortlessly. Azar criticizes state power and sovereignty, and labels them a ‘myth’ that has little bearing on the realities of most people in conflict ridden regions and states. This has led to repetitive long term and armed conflicts between states and certain groups that epitomize conflicts in identity formation at the local and state level.

The significance of Azar's hypothesis lies in rejecting commonly accepted theories on conflict analysis at the state, system and individual level as proposed by the likes of Waltz (1959) and Singe (1961). Instead, this research demands a refocus from the individual, state and system level of analysis towards the group as a source of analysis. For this reason, identity politics are and continue to be ignored in the study of conflicts. More importantly, Azar links long term conflicts to notions of identity and ethnicity in contrast to the state-centric analysis that exists on state failure. Unlike Horowitz and others (Coleman and Collins 2004) who argue that identity is subject to transformation and, hence, is not necessarily the sole cause of conflicts, Azar persists that identities and their respective values and norms "will not be traded, exchanged or bargained over" (1986, 30). This is an important distinction, which challenges the conventional contemporary theories on identity. Azar does not necessarily deny that identity is transferable and subject to change; however, of more significance to peace development studies, those who consider themselves as belonging to a specific identity are unwilling to negotiate on their identity. That is, subjects reject the inherent choice within identities that modern identity theory so heavily emphasizes. Azar's argument points to the tension that exists between the two dominant schools on identity: those who insist that identities are subject to change and those who reject such a view and opine that primordial relations are entrenched and do not change. The sphere of protracted conflicts demonstrates the strain between these two dominant discourses. This argument produces a useful medium between the two discourses where the generally accepted view is that identities evolve. However, what Azar indicates here is that in conflict situations certain elements that are often the source of tension between different groups, whether religious, linguistic, ethnic or otherwise, may become entrenched as a part of one's identity, while other parts are subject to changes. In other words, though the choice exists to transform one's identity, that choice is not necessarily always embraced, but indeed as protracted social conflicts demonstrate, is often rejected. Identity then takes on an added layer of significance for members of a group, as resistance to change or conformity often links identity to an existential crisis, whether on a real or imagined level. The recognition of the causes of conflict determines and identifies the roots of the conflict. Conflict resolution, in cases of protracted ethnic conflict, therefore, requires the decentralization of power. That is, existing centralized power structures do not allow for conflict resolution, and, in fact, perpetuate and exacerbate them.

## **2.4. The Sovereignty Discourse:**

Reconstructions encounter a multitude of normative and empirical dilemmas, particularly in the area of state sovereignty. Since the very beginning of their construct, states and their scope of power and capacity have been contested (Writson 1992; Ohmae 1995; Vernon 1971). The very definition of sovereignty has evolved in response to shifting attitudes towards the state and its capacity and functions, leading some scholars to attempt a typology of different forms of sovereignty (Krasner 1985). The discussion surrounding state power and sovereignty is further complicated within the context of reconstructions. Significant studies have emerged that have focused on the relationship between reconstructions and their impacts on sovereignty. The consensus within the field focuses on the impact of reconstructions on the loss of sovereignty, in what is called the ‘sovereignty paradox’ (Thomson 1995; Zuam 2007; Rubin 2006; Chandler 2009). Although, in reality, ‘state sovereignty’ is often challenged or violated, this concept nevertheless helps political scientists, social theorists and international relations scholars to define the international global order according to a state-centric compartmentalization method. Modern states, particularly within the realm of state decline and failure, have proven to be non-rational and non-autonomous entities coerced and pressured by multiple, and often competing, national and international forces (see Hobson 2000). A complex mix of views relating to sovereignty complicates the emergence of a uniform definition. Certain scholars have insisted on an undeviating explanation: that sovereignty is reliant on outside powers recognizing a state as sovereign (Fowler and Bunc 1995). Others have argued that states never really enjoyed sovereignty. The U.N. General Secretary, for instance, pointed out that “it is undeniable that the centuries-old doctrine of absolute and exclusive sovereignty no longer stands, and was, in fact, never so absolute as it was conceived to be in theory” (Boutrous-Ghali 1992, 44). These challenges have reverberated within the sovereignty debate, demonstrating multiple shifts in definition, context and applicability (see Hinsley 1966; Ilgen 2003). None government organizations such as the U.N. have played a crucial part in establishing the sanctity of states territorial sovereignty (Barnett and Finnemore 1999, 713). For post-colonial states, this produced collectivized institutions designed to promote the territorial integrity of states such as the Organization of Arab States (1948), Arab League (1945), Organization of African Unity Charter (1963), and the African Union (2000) (Elden 2006, 11).

Relative to the developed world, sovereignty within the post-colonial world contains a somewhat different value, meaning and development trajectory; which is crucial to the

understanding of the dilemmas faced within reconstructions. Understanding the different types of sovereignty within different political and historical contexts is useful for scholars and policy makers because of its significance for identifying the context-specifics of a mission. Therefore, it provides a valuable insight into how such societies view institutionalized and centralized forms of power in contrast to the developed world. George Sorensen's (1999) dissection of states is an important study within this context as it identifies three types of sovereignty based on specific contexts and periods. Sorensen identifies three distinct forms of sovereignty: the Westphalian system, the Post-Colonial system and the Postmodern system. The relatively weak nature of post-colonial states and their inherited domestic problems has led to an unequal legal status in contrast to modern developed states resulting in a different manifestation of sovereignty. The sovereignty of post-colonial states has been contentious, because not only did such states lack legitimacy, but also because of their inability to develop their legitimacy through political and economic measures (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2000; Parry 2004).

Additionally, the term 'post-colonial' has been marginalized in recent political discourse producing the misperception that the 'problems' of previously colonized societies are well over or, at the very least, are in a process of 'development' or 'transition' (Ahluwalia and Zegeye 2001). Recent discourses are more focused on the functional and systematic failures within post-colonial states (Dibua 2006). Other areas of colonialism, such as the psychoanalytical implications of being a colonized state, are overlooked (see Fanon 2001). For instance, the reconstruction literature scarcely concerns itself with questions of sovereignty or the legitimacy of post-colonial regimes outside of the sphere of the 'transitional administrations' discourse, thereby limiting context specific and appropriate policy-making. In contrast, this thesis emphasizes the post-colonial nature of weak states in an attempt to bridge this gap; and adopts a view of post-colonial states as 'quasi-states'- a term coined by Bull and Watson (1984), but later widely popularized by Robert H. Jackson (1990), because it takes as a given that post-colonial states are still struggling with their legitimacy and sovereignty. Post-colonial states in Africa and Asia, among others, were labelled as 'quasi-states', because, although they were given formal statehood and achieved 'judicial' sovereignty, they, in fact, failed to have some of the more essential features of empirical statehood, such as the political will or strong institutions to develop and provide security (Jackson 1987). Taking this into consideration, the imposition of international norms and values, particularly through forceful interventions presents the field with a far greater set

of problems outside the legal and normative views on international administrations' violation of the sovereign rights of recipient societies. For conflict ridden, post-colonial societies, terms such as sovereignty and legitimacy retain different meanings depending on the development trajectory of the state, as well as societal-state relations. Moreover, locally produced views of these western concepts may directly challenge indigenous forms of 'sovereignty' and 'legitimacy'.

As a result, there is a limited view of different forms of sovereignty, particularly the difficulty that post-colonial states have experienced in this setting. Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart (2008) criticize the limited understanding of state sovereignty, particularly within a modern post-colonial context. According to Ghani and Lockhart, the Weberian notion of state power and sovereignty tied to the legitimate use of force, is out-dated and no longer fits the reality of weak states. Consequently, they reject the top down legitimacy building power of the state and, instead, advocate for a more comprehensive understanding of the role that the state play in the social, economic and political sphere. They link sovereignty to a fundamental state responsibility to service and meet certain obligations towards its citizens and the international community. The importance of this criticism lies at the heart of reconstructions and its efficacy in the modern world. The traditional understanding of the state relied on the Weberian concept of states retaining the legitimate use of force. However, until more recently, states and respective governments were able to utilize this force internally against groups or people considered disruptive. As notions of human rights and increased international interference in states that used violence against their own people gained increasing influence, the state adopted a more complex role. In fact, the traditional Westphalian notion of absolute sovereignty has been increasingly questioned and new challenges have been posed (See Ante 2010). As a result, although, it is still considered undesirable to a degree, reconstructions have become increasingly aggressive in ignoring state sovereignty for the purpose of reforming states. Despite this, the international community does not attempt to reorder the boundaries of states, perhaps because of the colonial implications of such activity. The sanctity of the territorial boundaries of states remains uncontested and has largely come to represent the sovereign right of states. To date, no reconstruction in the twentieth century has led to state disintegration, though states themselves continue to disintegrate as seen through Timor Leste separating from Indonesia and, more recently, the situation in southern Sudan. Instead, state borders are firmly defended and protected. The implications of this trend points to the subordination of political,

economic, and human rights developments subjected to a state-centric system, which simultaneously places extensive burdens on the state to adequately respond to internal issues, despite the fact that many post-colonial states have demonstrated a lack of capacity, willingness and experience in doing so in the first place.

Others such as Dominik Zuum (2007) have raised some imperative normative difficulties with sovereignty within the reconstructionary field. Zuum considers the management of international territorial administrations in the Balkans, East Timor and Kosovo. The purpose of international administrators is to oversee the governing process at an executive, legislative and judicial level, while the international community actively aids the recipient state with building and strengthening its institutional capacity (Durch 2006). For Zuum, the research highlights a paradox: international bodies overlooking the sovereign nature of the recipient state for the purpose of re-establishing its sovereignty. The strength of the research, however, lies with its linkage of sovereignty with responsibility. In other words, the international community violates weak states' sovereignty and 'withholds' it until such time that the state is capable of performing the normative functions of a state in accordance with the views of the international community, before they can be 'licensed' again. This has prompted some to argue that sovereignty should be earned (Elden 2006; Hooper and Williams 2003; Williams and Scharf 2002). Zuum (2007), in contrast, argues that the central function of international administrators is to restore sovereignty, which is lost due to weak or collapsing state institutions, particularly in the security sector. This argument proposes a more implicit normative problem. That is, the international donor community's belief that loss of sovereignty is essentially the fault of the recipient state and, by default, the society (Zuum 2007). By placing the burden solely on the shoulders of the recipient society, the international community can easily withhold, however temporarily, the sovereign power of the state through reforms deemed appropriate by the administrators. This process has inevitably shaped significant criticism. Ralph Wilde (2007), for instance, links the international territorial administration to neo-colonialism. David Chandler (2009) highlights the nature of international norms relating to sovereignty, particularly within international law, and its relations with the state-building paradigm. Chandler notes that international law confers sovereign states with a hierarchical structure designed to determine state capacity. In focusing on capacity, and in the context of weak and failing states, international law intentionally moves away from sovereignty being based on equal political rights. By associating sovereignty with capacity, the reconstructionary field has been able to violate state



sovereignty with the justification of restoring it and reshaping it in its own image. For some, this is obviously neo-colonial and neo-imperialist behaviour by powerful states (Mattei 2003). A number of other scholars have also focused on the sovereignty issue and have raised further significant normative and empirical questions (Ottaway and Bethany 2003; Krasner 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2004; Annan 1999). These debates return to an earlier discussion that centred on the relevance of the state in the international order. Largely through the work of Nettl (1968), the state and its relevance gained increasing momentum, particularly after the end of the bi-polar global order. The early 1990s witnessed the rise of an increasing debate on the relevance and existing presence of states in the international system, prompting some to insist that the state is withering away (Strange 1995, 56). Evans (1997, 64) criticizes such arguments as not only limiting attempts to increase state capacity, but also leading to “meaner, more repressive ways of organizing the state’s role... as the only way of avoiding the collapse of public institutions.” Overall, though, the discussion over sovereignty presents some important questions for effective reconstructions. The dominant trend is that international administrations and transitional governments, as well as, forceful interventions further entrench antistatist and anti-reconstruction sentiments within post-colonial societies, which widely view such activities as neo-colonialism (Hallenberg and Karlsson 2005; Presbey 2007).

The reference to post-colonialism also highlights the tensions between sovereignty and legitimacy. The two terms clearly represent different attributes of the state at a normative and empirical level. Yet, prominent theorists such as Daniel Philpott (1997) have defined sovereignty as the “supreme legitimate authority” assuming the complementary nature of the two terms. In reality, though, the two terms face considerable challenges and do not necessarily have to be complimentary. As Roland Cohen and Judith D. Toland (1988) have argued, sovereignty “may be declared, and recognized internationally”; in contrast, legitimacy needs to be “won” from the citizens of the state. While many post-colonial states gained independence and, hence, sovereignty, they failed largely, and some continue to fail to attain legitimacy in the eyes of their citizens. The recent ‘Arab Spring’ is an indication of a lengthy process of societal-state discourse in the search for legitimacy in the Arab world. This distinction draws an important conclusion: sovereignty is the legitimate right of the state to exist at an international level. Legitimacy however, is the state’s right to exist as granted by those governed by the state. At an international level, the right of the state to exist is unquestioned. The state remains as the basic feature and organizational structure of the

international system. However, domestic legitimacy has often fluctuated depending on the political group in power and their capacity to address the needs of society and deliver services. Sovereignty cannot be revoked; legitimacy, on the other hand, needs to be constantly strived for and sustained by states. The Westphalian system initially bestowed little to no importance to domestic legitimacy, though certain cases, such as the Netherlands and the Swiss Cantons, were already deemed and recognized as legitimate and sovereign states. From 1688, Britain was also recognized as a sovereign state that had attained legitimacy. However, these cases were by the large rare and far between and did not typify the norm in the international system at the time. Rather, legitimacy was awarded and won in accordance with the existence of the state. In the context of post-colonial states, this process is problematic and prone to missteps as in the international order legitimacy requires constant maintenance by the modern state.

A large body of literature is devoted to the limited nature of sovereignty in post-colonial states (Lee 2008; Mangala 2008; Okogbule 2008) that decidedly contributes to the complex and still evolving nature of this debate in the modern international system. Increasingly, theorists have attempted to distinguish between 'national sovereignty' and 'state sovereignty' to bridge the gap between sovereignty awarded by the Westphalian system, and that of domestically and organically produced legitimacy. Hall (1999) has distinguished the two concepts by noting that national sovereignty is akin to a social contract that is linked to nationalist ideologies. Nationalism can be shaped and determined by a mixture of domestic and international factors; nevertheless, they tend to produce “a specific legitimating principle-national self-determination- which has far-reaching consequences for system constitution and transformation” (1999, 12). As a result, this thesis focuses on the distinction between territorial sovereignty as defined by the Westphalian system and a more modern transition within sovereignty, that of national sovereignty (Hall 1999; see also Philpott 2001). In fact, one of its central concerns is promoting, developing and sustaining national sovereignty within the reconstructionary sphere (this point will be developed and clarified further on in the literature review). What the literature has failed to focus on is what Talcott Parson (1951) called the ‘functionally diffused’ nature of traditional societies. In other words, society consists of multiple, competing, and overlapping power-spheres, including the religious, the economic, political and military sphere that are often heavily interwoven, and produce their own unique forms of power, legitimacy and interactions between state and its citizenry. The Westphalian system, that prioritized state sovereignty above legitimacy-building measures,

confers states with “a license for arbitrary power” (Ghani and Lockhart 2008:10). Likewise, the post 1945 system produced international norms and organizations that functioned upon the fundamental belief that all existing states had attained domestic legitimacy. As a result, authoritarian regimes continued to enjoy international recognition and sovereignty to the detriment of human rights. However, efforts by the donor community to import liberal democracy (or ‘liberal peacebuilding’), has endeavoured to bridge this sovereignty and legitimacy gap. This system has largely proven to be a failure in producing nation-building and legitimizing processes. Indeed, some have argued that this process directly increases the chances of violence and prolongs conflicts further (Barnett 2004, 2006; Paris 1997 2002; Richmond 2004; Lens 2004; Meierhenrich 2003). More accurately, legitimacy is linked to the level of support that a state retains from its citizens (Gurr and McClelland 1971). Postcolonial states, conversely, face a more complex legitimacy dilemma, where primordial loyalties are subjected to complex contemporary civil loyalties (Cohen and Toland 1988), which place a great level of pressure on the capacity of the state to attain legitimacy. In this context, relatively new states face a far greater and more difficult task of acquiring acceptance from their citizens. Nevertheless, post-colonial states, and states that have experienced protracted conflicts are still able to acquire legitimacy. However, this is where an awareness of the distinction between society’s unqualified, as opposed to grudging, acceptance of the state’s legitimacy is necessary (Cohen and Toland 1988).

Empowering citizens is central to the development of legitimacy in post-conflict societies (Ghani and Lockhart 2008). In fact, citizens need to become active partners of the state in decision making. Measures such as promotion of human rights, rule of law, civil society development and elections are perceived as processes that promote greater citizen participation and politicization designed to encourage and promote greater state capacity and legitimacy. This results in hastily constructed elections designed to produce fast results. However, Ghani and Lockhart insist that this practice does not produce constructive state-society relations because citizens are removed from the decision making process once the elections are concluded. A more appropriate process would involve increasing societal involvement, rights and responsibilities producing a more invested society. Power sharing needs to be a circular process of continuous dialogue and consensus with power ultimately held by the people. Ghani and Lockhart (2008) conclude that the state-centric nature of the international system is, in fact, an impediment to successful state-building.

Attaining legitimacy and maintaining it is, admittedly, a struggle for modern states. It is often difficult to gauge the extent of society's acceptance of, and loyalty towards the state, accurately; as citizens perform and participate in a variety of supporting activities that may not correctly reflect their acceptance being willing or begrudging in nature (Cohen and Toland, 1988). If state legitimacy is linked to various causal factors such as societal acceptance of legitimate use of force and the idea that state authority must reflect the general will of society, then the concept of legitimacy becomes more complex in post-colonial, struggling and conflict ridden states. Chabal (1993), for instance, emphasizes this distinction in his analysis of African post-colonial states and their legitimacy building dilemmas. Chabal argues that legitimacy takes on two dominant and often contradictory personas; on the one hand legitimacy is linked to the successful capture of power and secondly to its maintenance. This pattern often emerges through nationalist struggles against colonialism, such as those in Algeria, Nigeria, and others where nationalist parties that launched the uprising dominated and seized control of the post-conflict state. Post-independence, though, another crisis of legitimacy would often ensue, as the party in power would frequently adopt policies and political values that did not necessarily reflect societal values. Such a pattern, according to Chabal, creates a twofold dilemma of legitimacy of power on the one hand and the legitimacy of state (Chabal 1993, 79). Although nationalist struggles would initially enjoy widespread support and hence acquire a level of short term legitimacy, the post-colonial state would eventually become illegitimate through its inability to provide the right amount of development and resources necessary or to accurately balance competing communal interests.

Post-colonial scholars have criticized the international systems limited view of state sovereignty and legitimacy outside of the European experience. Burton (1986), for instance, foreshadows Ghani and Lockhart's (2008) argument by focusing on the illegitimate institutions that the post 1945 world order produced. Burton argues that the history of internationally led reconstructions conducted and endorsed by U.N. exacerbated this issue of sovereignty and legitimacy. Burton maintains that the U.N. and some of its founding members were sovereign, though non-legitimate, states. Additionally, these member states adopted a dual policy of interfering in the internal and domestic conflicts of weak states, often by directly violating their sovereignty, while, at the same time, maintaining a strong aversion to interference in their own domestic affairs. More importantly, the U.N. itself lacks legitimacy, as it does not retain a separate arms forces. As a result, it is over reliant on member states, and hence subject to their national interests and agendas, Burton claims. The

U.N.'s legitimacy is also limited by non-interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign states, as well as being obliged to respect the veto power of Security Council members that limits its influence and reach. Burton adds that the U.N.'s lack of legitimacy, particularly through its Security Council, lacking its own separate armed forces, is, in fact, a positive measure for if it did have such a capacity it would merely attempt to enforce the dominant international norms that benefits select powerful states. Likewise, David Chandler (2009) criticizes the E.U.'s reconstruction process in Bosnia-Herzegovina by superseding the country's sovereignty. As a result, the E.U.'s "relationship-management sucks the political life from those societies, institutionalizing existing political divisions between ethnic or national groups by undermining the need for public negotiation and compromise between elites." The lack of legitimacy or the inherent limitation of the U.N. based on the monopoly of power by the permanent members of the Security Council has produced another challenge to the issue of legitimacy building by outside powers.

The literature reflects the struggles with legitimacy-building within recipient societies. Fukuyama (2004), for instance, observes that, in restoring sovereignty and hence 'stateness' that is state capacity and function, the practices employed must involve democratic values with particular attention to the development of market values. Many other notable theorists (Dobbins et al. 2003, 2005, 2007) in state-building literature follow on from this perspective and the presumption that, from each failed state a liberal democratic state will eventually, somehow, emerge because of the presumed universal nature of democratic governance. The majority of theorists in the field accept that democratic importation is an essential if not a non-negotiable process in the reconstruction process. The central reason for this consensus lies with the idea that democracy produces and contributes directly to the legitimacy of the reconstructed state resulting in a more strengthened and robust government post-reconstruction. The literature accepts, to a substantial degree, the universality of democratic governance and its norms. Roland Paris (2004, 2009) and Paris and Sisk (2009), for instance, have demonstrated the dismal failure of liberal democratic exportation to conflict ridden states. In fact, they argue that the implementation of market-orientated democracy has increased the level of violence allowing belligerent groups and actors to redirect their interests along democratic lines reducing the transformative capacity of democratization, as well as reducing societal trust. However, Paris and Sisk do not reject liberal democracy per se, but, rather, advocate a more long term process for introducing democracy through immediate economic reforms supported by security sector development to allow for the

appropriate conditions that would promote democratic governance. Additionally, central to democracy exportation is the universality of its inherent values. The universality of Eurocentric norms is, thus, an inherent part of the reconstruction process. Amartya Sen (1999), for example, emphasizes the universality of democracy by suggesting that the universality of values does not imply that such values are already accepted. Rather, the universality of it arises from the idea that people of different cultures may see merit in the existence of such values. In contrast, Makau Mutua (2008) critically questions the universality of the liberal democratic tradition and its applicability to regions such as Africa. Others have noted the insincere nature of more recently transitional democracies such as Russia (Reddaway and Glinski 2001) raising normative questions relating to the legitimate acceptance of democratic practices, as opposed to external pressures inducing states to adopt superficial democratic policies with little long term prospects of effective political liberalization (See Diamond and Morlini 2005; Huntington 1993; Diamond 1997). This argument indicates the importance of the distinction between willing acceptance, and the legitimizing effect of universal values such as human rights and democracy; in contrast to imposition of these values by force on societies unwilling to replace locally developed versions of social and political practices. As Lucian W. Pye (1962) indicates in his study of Burmese society, transitions from one mode of socialization to another requires time and effort. More crucially, he notes that:

The more rationalistic approaches to nation building tend to treat the problem of cultural attitudes and values almost entirely as a matter of formal education and the learning of skills hence the tendency of those who follow such approaches to grossly oversimplify the problem of change and to interpret the difficulties mainly as the need for greater resources for the imparting of appropriate skills. Only those with a very shallow view of human behaviour would expect significant changes to follow from improvements in this field alone (Pye 1962, 49).

Pye proposes a solution to the existing static and rationalistic approaches and advocates a redirection of social and individual motivations towards secular and economic orientated activities, as opposed to spiritual or ascetic commitments. His solution requires an analysis into the level of individual, and hence collective socialization, and where the particular society under consideration accommodates high levels of individual motivation. Further, if there is space for the realization of individual motivation, what actions and activities are considered legitimate. The level of motivation and associated goals are, however, not adequate for a transitioning society, according to Pye, to bring about effective, long term changes. Rather motivation and goals are directly linked to “associational sentiments and

values affecting collective action” (1962, 51). The level of collective and mutual consideration and willingness to cooperate determines the level of success a transitioning society will experience. This process is largely dependent and determined by the ability of a society to develop and maintain large and complex institutions and organizations. The inability or a lack of collective willingness to collaborate will often lead to the failure of institutions and organizations.

Literature has also developed that takes note of the incompatibility of state-building measures including topics ranging from democratic development to specific cultural contexts. Galtung et al. (2002, 297-298), for instance, have noted that the two-party democratic measures placed in Angolan society by the international powers were “very ill-matched to the complexities” of that community. In most cases, parties form along already established lines—religious, cultural or ethnic identities. They serve to continue to perpetuate such societal distinctions and cleavages, though post-reconstruction this process entails democratic processes such as voting and elections. As a result, forced democratization cements not only the unsuitability of certain measures, but also reduces societal confidence in liberal democratic measures that successfully address long standing conflicts. Even within Western democratic states, indigenous communities have refused to accept liberal institutional measures of conflict resolution and justice. The Native American community in Canada, for instance, has often protested against western laws relating to justice. They have consistently argued for more traditional and culturally appropriate methods of resorting order and justice. Restorative justice measures include activities such as ‘Talking Circles’ in which members of a dispute have an uninterrupted and equal chance of expressing grievances. For anthropologists, such measures are far more effective at integration and lead to a gradual “change in ideology, elevating order and harmony to positive values and replacing open coercion (seen as undemocratic) with control through persuasion” (Haviland, et al. 2008, 288). Azar and Haddad (1986, 1339.) likewise point to a number of postcolonial states that attest to the failure of non-indigenous forms of governance imposed by outsiders. Even more significantly, they question the unitary and statist attitude adopted towards the developing and post-colonial societies.

Likewise, a number of scholars have rejected the universality of elements of the Eurocentric values leading to the ‘separationist’ thesis (see Andrew 1997; Monshipouri and Welch 2001; Langlois 2003), which argues that certain values such as human rights should be separated from democracy, since democracy can be rejected as a west-centric construct. Human rights,

on the other hand, cannot be dismissed as west-centric but are applicable globally. Langlois (2003), for instance, attempts to view this separation from a critical angle and admits that human rights are indeed very much a Eurocentric construct as is evident through the West's much greater relative adherence to human rights. In other words, cultures gravitate towards norms that are inherently aligned with their values. His argument essentially centres on the necessity of the linkage between human rights and democracy. Such arguments, however critical, do not propose any solutions other than a despondent acceptance of the west-centric nature of democracy and its values. There is little attempt with the reconstruction literature to acknowledge that other cultures may have their own locally derived human rights values, which admittedly may differ somewhat from the western version of human rights. Certainly, scholars have attempted to analyse Islamic versions of human rights for instance (Myer 2007). Scholars such as L. Ali Khan (2003), on the other hand, have attempted to bridge the nexus between the universality of such ideas and the cultural relativism argument. Khan proposes a different perspective based on what he labels as a 'free state', that is, a state that still retains legitimate authority, but has renegotiated its sovereign right over its borders allowing the free flow of people, capital, ideas and goods. The 'free state', then, allows for the development of a universal form of democracy that incorporates the diversity of different peoples. Through rejecting the liberal tradition of 'state of nature', universal democracy is more reliant on the 'state of consensus'. This literature serves to demonstrate that there is little interest from prominent theorists in challenging pre-existing theoretical bases and underlying principles utilized in the discipline, and any further development in state-building literature simply builds on these theoretical values, even if in some past instances these very values have seriously challenged, undermined and devastated past missions. In contrast, the utility of producing locally derived values could produce a higher level of legitimacy and an easier, more peaceful transition. This applies to even the most brutal human rights violations such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), as deeply entrenched gender and cultural relations have proven to be successfully limited through appropriate levels of education, as opposed to the imposition of Eurocentric human rights or gender norms (World Bank 1999; Krug 2002).

Overall, though, the literature only discusses the sovereignty issue, and correlates it to the legitimacy gap discourse, through the notion of imposing democracy, or the democracy-building dissertation. In other words, imposing democracy, and enforcing hasty elections and party formation processes is perceived as the means to breach the legitimacy gap in weak, failing and post-colonial states. In contrast, modern states, from the very beginning of the



Westphalian political order, have attempted to define and refine the notions of sovereignty (Croxtan 1999). Modern developed states have thus had a longer history of breaching their legitimacy gap, and have been able through establishing more inclusive and participatory political structures to breach their legitimacy gap and reinforce their sovereignty.

Because of centuries of internal discourse, political reformation, societal education and active political participation, sovereignty and legitimacy in modern states have become almost synonymous terms, and, although strong states may still experience domestic conflict, citizens nevertheless accept the role of the state, its authority and its relevant institutions. More importantly, though contestations may arise over decision and policy-making processes, protests are essentially non-violent. In contrast, in weak, failing and struggling post-colonial states, particularly within Africa and the Middle East, state sovereignty is not a stable and uncontested concept and multiple other factors and values consistently, and to a far greater rate, challenge state sovereignty. As a result, because legitimacy, particularly through imperialism, is often detached from state sovereignty, other factors such as ethnicity and religious orientation demand and receive a great share of society's allegiance. This means that ethnic and religious structures successfully redirect civil loyalties and detract from the state's legitimacy. What this suggests is that the state is often pitted against ethnic and religious structures in attaining legitimacy, and that, more importantly, legitimacy is a limited resource that can be contested and won by either the sovereign state or traditional and sacred loyalties. The state's ability to successfully redirect citizen loyalties away from ethnic, religious and other cultural structures is therefore a difficult process; even then, the most developed and modern state may still struggle with this process. As Chapter Two demonstrates, the U.S. as the most powerful nation-state in the international order, and the leader of the democratic world still struggles with civil religion influencing policy decision-making. Weak and conflict ridden post-colonial states face multiple factors that challenge state authority. These factors cannot be dismissed easily because of the legitimizing element they entail through citizens demands. Where the state has attempted to contest and bring into line such values, significant social strife has resulted leading to an even more challenged and illegitimate state system, along with its relevant political elites and institutions.

The above discussion highlights another gap. A major gap relating to the analysis of legitimacy is the general assumption that legitimacy has a singular foundational source. In other words, there is a lack of understanding that legitimacy within society may be a contested notion and that various communities and groups may have competing notions of

what exactly legitimacy entails. As noted, the dominant view of scholars in the field is that legitimacy is built through societal involvement in the decision-making processes of the government. This, in turn, implies that the state has a stake in its citizens' views. In other words, liberal democratic government is the general response to developing state legitimacy. However, the poly-ethnic and religious nature of such states presents several normative problems relating to the concept of legitimacy. The state has been conferred the right to attain legitimacy, though, ideally, through actively functioning to gain this legitimacy rather than demanding it. The literature demonstrates a persistent refusal by the relevant scholars and policy-makers of the field to accommodate competing values and institutions. As a result, they often overlook the fact that these elements retain genuine legitimacy within the eyes of the citizens, or that their legitimating influences can contribute positively to reconstructions. For instance, research has indicated that religious groups and their relevant institutions, or primordial loyalties to the clan and ethnicity are strong motivators in redirecting citizen's civic loyalties (Marty 1997; 1999) along different and competing lines other than the traditional state. This problem will be discussed in depth later in the chapter.

The central question, then, should be how to promote the legitimacy of the post-conflict reconstructed state. Legitimacy is defined as a "process involving the incorporation of power relations into a moral order or a system of beliefs about how things 'ought' to be done...this means changing capabilities (i.e. power) into culturally sanctioned rights" (Cohen and Toland 1988, 3). A chief outcome of this legitimacy gap has resulted in discussions on promoting 'local ownership' (Chesterman 2004; Donais 2008; Paris and Sisk 2009). This area of literature focuses on the process of promoting the recipient society's ownership of the state-building practice. Local ownership is attained when local leaders are promoted and placed in positions of influence within the reconstruction process. Promoting local ownership is, clearly, a complex and delicate process and competing domestic and external interests need to be balanced. This is especially so in post-colonial states, such as East Timor, which through decades of colonial rule had not attained the opportunity and right to self-rule, let alone the capacity to develop their local human resources to effectively, take over the state-building process. However, significant conflicts of legitimacy have emerged in cases where the international community and administrators have failed to promptly hand over control or within a period deemed reasonable by the recipient society. This, in turn, has promoted a significant literature focused on the 'exit' strategies of such missions (Milliken 2003; Chesterman 2005; Rubin 2006). In some ways, the late handover of power has proven to be just as dangerous as

exiting a mission too soon. Ideally, it is local ownership that possesses the most influence and control over the reconstruction process, however, the international community is still struggling to find the most effective manner in which this can be achieved. Nevertheless, even the most conflict ridden societies that have experienced contracted violence' are capable of developing a sense of ownership over the rebuilding process. Relevant studies, for instance, have emerged specific to Somalia that have demonstrated the capacity of locally developed and owned governance at the local and regional level, despite the failed state status of the country (Menkhaus 2006). It is noteworthy that such developments have emerged despite an absence of international support. Clearly, a degree of successful reconstructions can emerge even in the most hostile cases if the local and indigenous people take ownership of the process, despite lack of capacity and the general abandonment by the international community. If the international community supports such attempts through appropriate and sensitive measures, then state-building processes may prove a less hostile practice. Narten (2009) notes that the lack of returning local 'ownership' of the state-building process reduces the right to self-determination as well as having further negative impacts via developing local dependency on the international donor community or through fostering resistance and spoilers (e.g. Stedman 1997). Perhaps, more crucially, the handover of the reconstruction to local elites may be a complicated process in post-colonial societies as neo-patrimonial elite networks, a hangover from colonial governance, may interfere in this process. It is for this reason that a combination of pre-existing elites, local leaders, traditional leaders, religious leaders, and secular political and civil society activists is crucial in curbing the influence of particular elites over others.

Likewise, Paris and Sisk (2009a; 2009b) identify the issue of local 'ownership' as one of the inherent dilemmas of post-war state-building. They argue that a significant way the international donor community reduces local ownership is through the selection of 'legitimate' local leaders. Other recent articles that have emerged demonstrate a more informed analysis, which takes into account past failures and experiences as well as a generally more informed view of state-society relations. The OECD (2011), for instance, argues that identifying the root causes of conflict and state weakness is an essential part of the reconstruction. Identifying sources of conflict or actors that could possibly contribute to peace building, should be an elementary part of the reconstructionary process. These studies identify the essential need to return the state-building processes to the local population, though clearly this does not often happen according to plan (hence spoilers or the

development of a dependent state on donor aid). Nevertheless, both studies suggest a current understanding of the need to return the right of self-rule to local actors, as well as the need for the international community not to hand pick local leaders, or decide who is within the sphere of 'legitimacy', or who falls outside that distinction. However, it is essential to note that these studies do not necessarily point to religious leaders as possible leaders. They perpetuate the same secular international norms in allowing multiple elites to contribute to the rebuilding process. Local leaders are often labelled 'legitimate' by the donor community when they present similar western values. Thus, other legitimacy-owning actors such as religious actors fall outside this distinction and their voices remain unheard, not because they necessarily do not want or share in democratic values, but because they are often the most vocal in their argument for a more visible role for religion in post-conflict societies. This is particularly problematic following post September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States, where the fear of Islamic resurgence has heightened exponentially and the donor community feels the need to reduce the political influence and visibility of religion in non-western states.

## **2.5. Religious Actors:**

To date the literature has demonstrated two important facts. Firstly, despite the state-centric nature of the international system, both state and societal factors contribute directly to state weakness and failure. The discourse on this subject demonstrates the necessity of reconstructions being simultaneously state-centric and society-centred. The second gap that emerges is the discussion centred on sovereignty and legitimacy. While there is significant emphasis on sovereignty, the discussion does not extend to promotion of legitimacy. Post-colonial states have demonstrated the division between state sovereignty and lack of internal legitimacy. Legitimacy is produced when society largely accepts the state, its institutions and power over society. What is also clear from the literature is the marginalization of locally produced legitimacy through local actors. The proposed hypothesis of this thesis centres on the importance of religious actors and, by that extension, religion itself on reconstructions. As a result, the level of analysis focuses on individuals of religious standing who exercise extensive power and influence over their communities. In other words, high level religious actors such as Ayatollah's, Grand Ayatollahs and the Grand Marja of the Shia faith (who plays a similar role to that of the Catholic Pope) will be analysed along with their organizational behaviours. Secondly, the impact of the views and policies of such actors is

analysed in relation to their religious followers and general religious communities whom they lead. This, in turn, results in a flow on effect, which has influenced policy making decision at the state and regional level within the reconstruction in Iraq. The practical implications of such an esoteric analysis are important in filling a dominant gap in the empirical and normative understanding of the field. The inference of researching powerful religious actors is significant for locating more peaceful and effective measures of reconstructing recipient societies. They also demonstrate an important resource that is yet to be effectively utilized in reconstructions. Such actors can contribute significantly to the legitimacy of a reconstruction; they can also significantly impair policies that they view as being contrary to the sentiments of their followers. In other words, they can considerably shape societal opinion and the popular will, which could be detrimental to the reconstruction. While it is inevitable that the thesis will touch on the 'secularization' discourse, the objective of this thesis is not to solely engage with this discourse but rather focus on the ownership gap as well as the complexity of religiously orientated elites and the effect of their ownership and participation in the reconstruction process. Most essentially the thesis desires a critical analysis of the impact of these processes on the legitimacy factor, and as will be posited, demonstrate that top level religious elites can contribute positively to reconstructions. It also endeavours to initiate a discussion on the positive, rather than the oft cited negative, impact of religious actors on the state and nation-building processes in a conflict ridden environment.

The role of individuals and their attitudes, cognitions and motivations has been studied in a variety of fields including in sociology, politics and economics (see Johnston and Sampson 1994; Johansen 1997; Appleby 1999; Alger 2002). Political science is increasingly gaining interest in the decision making power of individuals such as within electorates or through legislators (Eulau 1977; 1986, 76). David Wood, for instance, examined the role of religion and its leadership within a Palestinian village in Israel's Galilee region. His study concluded that the political activism of Palestinians within Israel could not be analysed through the discourse of official political parties. More telling is the role of important individuals such as religious or cultural leaders and how they relate to issues of authority, power and honour. In turn, such factors determine how Palestinians relate to party politics and membership (Wood 1993, 8-9). The study of such trends demonstrates the significant influence that religious actors possess politically within the region, far beyond the civil-society level of analysis within which such actors have traditionally been analysed. For instance, while Waltz's three levels of analysis are still widely accepted in political science, some have criticized the

limitation of the Waltzian theory of political organization. Hall (1999, 12), for example, notes that Waltz failed to specify the relevant actors in the system. As a result, the level of political organization retains its state-centric nature.

Others such as Frey (1985) note the limitation and marginalization of actor designation in political analysis. Political science for Frey does not focus on people as individuals, rather there is a tendency to concentrate on “collectivities (group actors) wherever feasible” (1985, 127). This argument resonates well within the analysis of Iraq and its reconstruction. Large volumes of work (Danchev and MacMillan 2005; Barakat 2005; Allawi 2007; Eberly 2009; Chantiloupe 2006) have focused on the reconstruction as part of an endemic system failure at the international level. Some such as Paris (2004), Paris and Sisk (2009), Newman, Paris and Richmond (2009) and Chandler (2000) criticize the existing international norms and values and consider it inadequate. Others have focused on the comparison of collective groups such as the Shias versus the Sunnis (Nasr 2006a; 2006b; Chehab 2006; Cockburn 2008; Gonzalez 2009) or the Kurds versus Arabs (Natali 2005; Phillips 2005) and moderates versus conservatives (Cockburn 2008; Gonzalez 2009). Analysis of conflicts and their resolution has utilized and relied on the Waltzian system. Political elites are traditionally analysed in their contribution to conflict, along with other factors, such as policy and decision making behaviours. Conversely, other important actors, such as religious leaders have been ignored, or have received limited attention. Religious elites have been largely analysed as bystanders or reactive and violence-producing elements within the reconstruction. As a result, “idiosyncratic, curbstome, journalistic, and unthinking actor designations are the rule” (Frey 1985, 137). Theorists have noted the important role of individual religious actors. Peter L. Berger (1999, 13), for instance, notes that “in religion...individual personalities play a much larger role than most social scientists and historians are willing to concede”. These limitations have ensured that the study of the reconstruction in Iraq has failed to focus adequately on prominent figures, particularly within a religious context. This is linked to another significant problem, which is the widespread marginalization of religion within not only political science, but also, more importantly, within the context of reconstructions.

The general role that religion plays within reconstructions is limited to the extreme. This marginalization of religion is not limited to the reconstruction field. Experts such as Norris and Inglehart (2004) and Davis (2007), for example, have noted the widespread belief that traditional institutionalized religion is experiencing a decline. Indeed the Enlightenment era

largely proposed the decline of superstitious and reactionary values, religion and other sacred rituals through industrialization, rationalization and urbanization (Norris and Inglehart 2004, 3). However, this decline is also being experiencing in both political and civil spheres, where political parties and civil society groups are facing difficulties in retaining their supporters (see Putnam 2001). This demonstrates a more complex global trend where established institutions across a variety of fields are facing challenges posed by modernization and globalizations processes. Sociologists and political theorists have attempted to understand why only religion has been considered in a state of decline and consequently dismissed (Sharot, Ayalon and Ben-Rafael 1986). This has largely manifested itself in the study of secularism with the consensus that secularism is not only the only appropriate method of accommodating religion, but that it is also universally desired. However, the fundamental problem with secularism is that it attempts to account for the presence of religion as opposed to its absence (Davis 2007, 6) and so it tends to analyse religion and religious related behaviour in a specific and restricted context. Others concur with this view and insist that a role reversal for religion is required within political science and the necessity “to treat religion not as the generator of repression, but as the ‘victim’” (Hatzopoulos and Petito 2003, 1). Indeed, significant pro-secular theorists such as Peter L. Berger (1999) have reversed their relations towards secularization and have argued that secularization theory has largely been falsified and the world is increasingly becoming religious. Researchers have also focused on the demoralizing tendency of modernity as well as the general conflict between religious nationalism and that of secular nationalism, particularly in the post-cold war Third World (see Juergensmeyer 1993; Haynes 1994; Westerlund 1996; Berger 1999; Thomas 2000; Asad 2003). The increasing popularity of religion is also directly linked to a backlash towards modernity, and religious movements are largely produced as “movements of protest and resistance *against* a secular elite” (Berger 1999, 11). Such research suggests that if the literature attempted to focus on the reason why religion has been increasingly marginalized or excluded, then a whole new set of theoretical position may appear. The secularization discourse, hence, is limited in holistically accommodating religion.

Another limiting distinction is in the difference between the consensus that the only way to accommodate religion in multi-ethnic and poly-religious societies is to disassociate the state from any one religion and that of the common societal view that secularism is desired. For Davis (2007, 6), this is linked to an attempt to find absolute ‘truths’ which produces conflict, as such a process tends to produce certain groups or ideas as closer to the ‘truth’ than others.

Kurtz (1995, 238) posits a similar point by noting that religions claim a monopoly over the “exclusive accounts of the nature of reality”. This exclusionary tendency reduces the applicability of the secularization discourse in specific contexts, or rather in highly religious societies. As some have demonstrated, even the most democratic and secular states such as the United States retain a high level of religiosity (Wuthnow 2007; Abrams 2001) attesting to the durability of religion. More significantly, the leaders of religious faith, otherwise noted as religious actors, still retain significant influence, over not only the societies that they reside in, but also at an international level (Formicola and Morken 2001; Haskins and Benson 2008; Loconte 2004). As a result, as Berger (1992, 32) has pointed out, the world, including the so called modern secular states, is “as religious as ever”. Moreover, scholars are increasingly pointing to the increasing flaws in the secularization theory (Beyer 1999; Dobbelaere 1999; Lambert 1999) and have noted its general decline. However, this decline has not correlated with an increased utilization of religion in political analysis, instead religion is often coterminous with other concepts such as ‘ethnicity’, ‘culture’ and “tends to be dealt with as a subset of some other topic, and when discussing that topic, religion is somehow de-emphasized” (Fox 2005, 14). These studies indicate two separate trends: on the one hand, secularization theories are facing significant challenges in modern states; secondly, academics are still ignoring the power of religion in shaping political processes in reconstructions, despite the fact that increasingly religions have played a major role in peace development in south Asia and Africa (Haynes 2009). Where discussed, religion is attributed a negative representation, which re-enforces the West-centric theory of secularism. Nevertheless, religion is gaining increasing influence in modern states. Thomas (2000, 816) argues that modernization has produced “widespread disillusionment with ‘modernity’ that reduces the world to what can be perceived and controlled through reason, science, technology, and bureaucratic rationality”. Thomas concludes that the persistence of religion in the Third World is an attempt to locate “authenticity and development” (2004, 134). The general consensus that religion has been in a state of decline has been exaggerated. Religion continues to play a decisive role even in the most secular societies. As a result, the theoretical utility of using religious actors as the focal point in reconstructions is precisely because of the large political, social, economic and religious capital that they encompass. However, there are significant dilemmas within the field that prevents this trend from occurring. There is a variety of reasons why this occurs. Kay B. Warren (1993), for instance, argues that an appropriate level of analysis of political violence is to initiate such a discourse with the knowledge that theorists “orientalize and essentialise ‘the other’- that is to freeze, simplify,



and polarize cultural differences through the use of totalizing Western dichotomies, such as traditional/modern, religious/rational, domestic/political, and rural/urban” (Said 1978; Clifford 1988; Warren 1993, 2).

Religion has played a significant role in the formation of the Middle East, its political processes, its regional identity, and the conflicts and dilemmas that it has faced as a region. As Haynes (2009) points out the region is the birthplace of the three major religions of the world. In noting the important role that religion plays in the region, Haynes continues to argue that “religion may be intimately connected, and not only in the Middle East, *both* to international conflicts and their prolongation *and* to attempts at reconciliation of such conflicts” (2009, 5). More specifically, religion has shaped the nature of discourses on state formation, state and nation-building policies, and the relationship between state and society within the region (Gilsensan 2000; Arberry 2009; Jawad 2009; Okkenhaug and Flaskerud 2005; Lee 2009). Religious leaders and institutions have played a decisive role in this process (Kimball 2011; Harmon and Todd 2004). Religion has also been widely used as a legitimizing force in conflicts (Droogers 2002). As a result, religion has been the focus of close study by Middle Eastern scholars. However, the idea that religious actors are important has faced two significant challenges. On the one hand, particularly through the 1979 Iranian revolution, religious actors adopted a dangerous, radical, and militarized persona within the region. Conversely, as the Iranian revolution settled and the regime attempted to normalize domestic politics, religious actors lost some of their prominence in the discourse. The image of the Islamic Republic's sober, black clad Ayatollah's still resonates across the world and taints the image of the region. Instead, and particularly in light of recent events within Iran as well as regionally, it was the ‘regime’, the ‘state’ or the ‘government’ of Iran that was challenging international norms and conventions. As a result, while religion retained its influence, the role of its actors was progressively marginalized. The events of September 11 reignited the discourse surrounding the role of religion in the emergence of conflict and violence' and, to a significantly lesser degree, the role of religious actors.

The analysis of religion and its actors faces several predicaments. For instance, the dominant empirical problem with studying religious actors within an Islamic context lies with the lack of a unifying leader or a ‘pope’, and a clear cut hierarchy. The Sunni sect for instance lacks a formal and defined hierarchy of religious leader, while the Shia maintain a complex and formal religious structure that allows for clearer and easier classification. Within the Shia

sect, the Grand Marja is considered the highest level of religious learning, though it is up to the religious community to decide whom they consider their true religious guide. As a result, fierce competition has emerged between the different Shia religious schools and Grand Ayatollahs to accumulate as many followers as possible. Writing on the nature of Islam's structure, Nikki R. Keddie (1988, 159) noted that this absence of leadership has resulted in a complex individual-based relationship between religious actors and the state. While some figures have been politically active, others have refrained from engaging with the state. This relationship may have changed depending on the individual religious leader and the political situation of the day. Additionally, Keddie notes the lack of homogenous religious doctrine within the Shia sect which leads her to conclude that “no absolute statements may now be made about views of all ulama” (1988, 159). Thus, individual religious leaders may have competing views on a variety of issues, and the views of one religious leader does not reflect the view of all others. The study of the perspective of such actors can provide important insights into the reconstruction process, societal views, decision making, and attitudes towards the state. The dominant view of the analysis of religious leaders within the Iraq reconstruction process has largely been a negative process (Cole 2005; Kukis 2008; Hashim 2005); and has failed to produce a critical discourse on the complex nature of the contribution of religious actors.

Scholars within the reconstruction field have largely ignored the social, economic and psychological utility of religious affiliation for post-conflict reconstruction. It is not surprising that the more positive elements of religion have not been explored further within the field considering the generally neglected and negative image of religion; despite the fact that social scientists have demonstrated that religion provides a convenient avenue for political mobilization (Kaur 2005). In societies where participation in political life and party formation are restricted religious associations provide an existing, established and easily accessible institution for mobilization. Yet the role of religion and its relevant actors is largely viewed by political scientists in a negative light and increasingly linked to religious fundamentalism as primordial, traditional and irrational. As a result, political theorists have advocated for policies that limit the role of religion, which is not entirely a new process since 'the wall of separation' thesis has been one of the central features of western, liberal democracies for centuries. Essentially, religion is widely deemed a private affair and its separation from the public sphere is deemed highly advantageous. Thus, a deep rooted perception exists that views religion as exclusively negative, with negligible positive

influences within the public sphere. Thus, one of the first challenges that the field encounters is that the role of religion largely needs to be delinked from religious fundamentalism because this discourse does not accurately capture the positive and alternative roles that religion performs. Likewise, theories on religiously motivated violence have gained increasing sophistication through utilizing social psychology. Numerous studies, for instance (Schmid and Jongman 2005; Walsh and Hemmens 2010), have demonstrated that religiously motivated terrorists are made not born. More crucially individuals who for the most part are pious and moral followers of their religion can be motivated to act violently not because their religion advocates violence but because values, needs and interests may have been threatened. Yet the dominant trend is to view religion as the inherent cause of the violence and threat to peace leading to increased marginalization (Hoffman and Claridge 1998; Cameron 2000). Indeed, scholars have encouraged this through the tendency to point the sources of violence immediately to religion and its actors (Larsson 2004, 17). This process continues to perpetuate the myth that religion is the source of threats to international peace and stability. Certainly, the civil conflict between Sunnis and Shias further entrenched this perspective. However, such perspectives fail to appreciate that religion and its norms are an avenue in which such politically motivated values are expressed. Religion, therefore, is a means to end. Religion merely becomes the dominant behaviour producer, because, often in such cases, it is religion that is the prevailing source of social division. According to this account, individuals engage in terroristic behaviour because they happen to be involved with political communities and groups who advocate a particular perspective in which they see their existence or their values being directly threatened by others.

Nevertheless, even the politicization of religion has provided little incentive for reconstructionary theorists to actively and comprehensively engage with the role of religion and its actors. Despite the fact that politicized religion has become the dominant 'hot issue' of the early twenty first century, it is puzzling why religious actors, aside from the confines of terrorism studies and terrorism in the name of God, have not received similar attention. For the most part, theorists have been content to analyse religion as an unconstructive contributor to conflicts, thereby limiting its conceptual and analytical contribution to peace construction. Juergensmeyer (2003) provides a competing analysis of the psychological causes of terrorist behaviour at a social and individual level. Using the old aphorism 'one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter', Juergensmeyer reflects on the allocation of the term 'terrorist'. He notes that the usage of the term 'terrorist' is subjective, reliant on "whether one thinks that

the acts are warranted” based on one’s perspective or world view (2003, 9). Larsson (2004, 18) largely concurs by noting that the perception of threat is dependent on the viewpoint of the analyst. The greater implication of this is that different societies may have competing and conflicting notions of legitimate methods of political action and even violence. In one instance, religiously based violence may be considered as a legitimate form of political discontent while, in others, this method may be widely viewed as objectionable. This is an important factor in the context-specific identity of the reconstruction process in Iraq where a history of colonial rule combined with autocratic military rule led to the pitting of identities against each other establishing an identity focused society.

Another largely ignored factor within the literature results from the lack of awareness of the extensive socio-economic capital that such religious actors command. Religious actors in the Middle East have a well-established network that serves, in some instances, as a social security network. Moreover, anthropologists have revealed that although economic and political developments have opened up various avenues for participation, in reality, most people choose to engage in informal networks established along ethnic, religious or other forms of categories (Nelson 1987, 119-120; Nelson 1989; see Huntington and Nelson 1976). Denoeux (1993, 124-5) points to the advantages that these informal networks provide, the most important being that they act as a stabilizing force within developing societies. They serve, on the one hand, to provide basic needs such as food, jobs, shelter and accesses to medical care, among other services. As an economic tool, they are invaluable and far more effective than formal institutions because they are more personal in nature with neighbours, friends and kin being linked in a powerful network of patron-client relations. On the other hand, they serve to produce a sense of community and belonging as well as “collective identity-sharing” (Denoeux 1993) to counter development and modernization processes that produce feelings of alienation and confusion. In other words, such networks produce social trust and confidence. Hechter and Okamoto (2001, 202) have demonstrated that informal networks are essential for producing collective action in minority groups. In addition, Stewart (1998), Gopin (2000, 2005), Appleby (1999, 2006), have demonstrated the important work that faith-based organizations and actors have performed in peace development. It is, therefore, unrealistic to marginalize religion and ignore its more utilitarian values. Nevertheless, studies have demonstrated that multi-religious societies produce conflict and social division at a higher rate than more religiously uniform societies (Gort, Jansen and Vroom 2002), prompting others to note that the liberal and secular policy of dealing with

multi-religious societies may not, in fact, work in non-western and democratic, multi-religious societies (Larsson 2004). Indeed, multi-religious societies may consider secularization as the dominant threat.

The role of traditional actors has also been analysed from a non-religious perspective. The power of traditional leaders such as the chieftains and kings of Africa, for instance, have been studied at length by anthropologists (see Bothma 1976; Hammond-Tooke 1974; 1975; 1984; Van Kessel and Oomen 1997; Ray and Reddy 2003.). Hammond-Tooke (1975), for example, focused on the distinction between the power of such traditional leaders residing in their 'command' based on their inherited position, or 'consensus', or through their traditional role being culturally and widely accepted. Ray and Reddy (2003, 127) have noted the significant role that such leaders play as cohesive forces within their societies:

The traditional leader is the epitome of the lifestyle of his community. He is the symbol of unity; he is the father figure; he is the tier of cases and dispute arbitrator; he is the lawmaker; he is the custodian of culture, tradition, and custom; he is the custodian of communal land; he is the overall administrator; and above all he is the commander in chief of the armed forces. He is in a position to mobilize the youth and have them attack his perceived enemies or to defend himself against attack.

Others, such as Kessel and Oomen (1997, 585), have argued that the role of traditional leaders have become more complex and ambiguous in post-colonial states in their relationships with their communities and towards the state. For instance, if leaders attempt to distance themselves from the state and the political process, then they may acquire higher levels of influence and power particularly within conflict resolution and distributing justice. In contrast, if such leaders become involved in partisan politics and state patronage they may, in some cases, lose legitimacy, but acquire other resources that allow them to retain their power within their communities. In most of these instances, traditional leaders have strongly advocated a non-political stance in modern nation-states and have adopted a placid and reconciliatory relationship to the state; for most, this is a rational choice: to continue retaining their traditional position by posing as non-threatening actors to state authority, which could also be construed as a tacit form of consent. Yet, they continue, often by virtue of their very existence, in conjunction with a colonial past, to challenge the legitimacy of the state. As Thornton (2003, 127) stated, it is essential that traditional leaders represent "not just questions of political process, but rather questions of identity and the assertion of local autonomy against the globalizing and modernizing power of the state."

Nevertheless, locally produced leaders are an important part of the cultural, social, economic and political terrain of post-conflict societies. Burton and Higley (1989) attempted to focus on the relevance of elites in newly formed democracies in Latin America and Southern Europe. They hypothesized that transition to democracy or state failure can be directly linked to elite relations between the nation and the state. Yet, elite models may be blind to structural aspects. Indeed in line with other theorists such as O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead (1986a, 17) and Lopez-Pintor (1987), they argue that “democratic transitions and breakdowns are, ultimately, the products of historically contingent elite *choices*”(see also Higley and Burton 1989). The level of unity or disunity between national elites is directly relevant to the stability or instability of the regime. Though the authors contend that consensually unified elites are historically atypical, they nevertheless represent the best odds for state stability and reforms towards democratic governance. Consequently, the best odds of survival for new democracies lie in producing consensus among national elites. While attempts have been made in reconstructions to include ethnic and traditional leaders along with secular elites, religious elites have been relatively ignored. Finally, the value of Burton and Higley's theory lies in their conclusion that newly democratized states can remain stable only if elites transform their attitudes and work towards consensus, though this is heavily dependent on domestic elite interrelations; otherwise, such transitions towards democracy are nothing but mere momentary fluctuations in the regime. General Petraeus (2006) produced a report that notes the importance of local leaders in the reconstruction. However, the emphasis is very much on local tribal and secular leaders. There is, in fact, little attempt to distinguish the multifaceted and layered nature of leadership in Iraq. Petraeus' report argues that “ultimate success is a natural reflection of Iraqi sovereignty and acknowledges that success in Iraq is, as time passes, increasingly dependent on Iraqi leaders”; more specifically, such leaders are the ‘key’ to successful reconstruction (2006, 13). However, the report demonstrates the still prevalent attitude of the international donor community marginalizing religious leaders within the discourse.

It is undeniable that traditional leaders at a religious, cultural or ethnic level can play a significant role in peace development and reconstructions. Lijphart (1977, 147-50) identified Lebanon as a perfect example of a consociational system. He argued that political elites compromised for the greater good of peaceful co-existence. Others (Crighton and Iver 1991; Khalidi 1979) have rejected this view and have attributed it to the significant decision of Muslim Lebanese leadership in compromising their Islamic identity to ally Maronite fears of

being overwhelmed by Islam. The Muslim elite's decision to accommodate Christians to a greater length was attributed to the desire to remove French influence within the country. In turn, Christians were willing to lose the favour of the French if they were assured of their survival and participation in the political process. Yet, religious actors in Lebanon have also played a negative role in state and nation-building policies. However, the area of concern is not so much identifying certain groups as positive or negative contributors to reconstructions, but rather raising the awareness that religious actors are exceptionally powerful resources that are generally ignored, marginalized or otherwise treated with antagonism, and hence the influence of their contributions lost. This marginalization is not an exception in Lebanon, but is widespread. This thesis demonstrates the powerful influences that such actors can command and, in an ever more interconnected, globalised world where religious fundamentalism appears to be the dominant challenge of the twenty-first century, then such actors cannot and should not be ignored.

Even more crucially, religious actors can directly challenge the sovereignty and legitimacy of a state, as was abundantly evident within the 1979 Iranian revolution. Clearly, religious actors use their "authority and charisma to facilitate mediation and reconciliation" (Droogers 2002, 368). Likewise, the Vatican in Latin America became directly involved in regional conflicts and helped to mediate disputes (Berger 1999, 16). Conversely, religious elites can also use their influence to promote additional conflict and justify such actions through religious doctrines. Considering a lengthy history of colonial rule, western domination and the foreign nature of nation-state system structure in the region, states have faced significant legitimacy-producing challenges. Traditional tribal and ethnic groups have been gerrymandered through modern state formation into different states and communities. Governments have struggled to form a unified nation-building rhetoric and identity to include the multiple religious and ethnic communities that they inherited. Moreover, such nation and state-building policies have been framed within an Islam centred discourse (Haynes 2008). Colonialism has also ensured that states within the region have struggled to accept their official borders and often challenge neighbouring states. Iraq, for instance, has traditionally rejected its southern border that separates it from Kuwait, leading to the 1991 invasion and subsequent international effort to re-establish Kuwaiti sovereignty. Regionally there are currently unresolved border disputes between Iran, Oman, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, among others in the region (Goertz and Diehl 1992; Day and Bell 1987; Kechichian 2001). Afghanistan, likewise, has refused to accept the Durand Line shared with Pakistan, leading to the extensive and illegal trans-border

flow of people (Banuazizi and Weiner 1988), negating the nation-building efforts of both states. The porous nature of borders within the region, combined with the artificial states that divide various ethnic and religious groups has led to disproportionate levels of secessionist and irredentist demands (Banuazizi and Weiner 1988). These processes have increased state-society conflicts, because governments have been unable to successfully establish legitimacy in view of their citizens.

More recently, though, some seminal works have emerged that consider the role of religion in the peace-building and development sphere. Indeed, a large body of literature is emerging on the influence and role of religious based organizations or Faith Based Organizations (Marshall 2005; Clarke 2006). In the context of reconstructions, some important recent works have emerged. Gort, Jansen and Vroom's (2002) book *Religion, Conflict and Reconciliation: Multifaith ideals and Realities* represent one such work. Another influential theoretical work was Haar and Busuttil's (2005) study *Bridge or Barrier: Religion, Violence and Visions for Peace*. The authors analyse the relationship between modern conflicts and religion, and posit a variety of important hypotheses that contribute to the discourse. For instance, they note the important role that historical memory plays in shaping religiously motivated conflicts, which usually occurs by conferring conflict with an us/them dichotomy. Additionally, historical memory reaffirms past injustices, whether real or imagined, which contributes negatively to conflict between communities. Likewise, Torek Brekke's (2009) analysis of religious actors in the peace process in Sri Lanka also proves to be an important study in the gap within the literature. Brekke insists that there is far too much emphasis on religious doctrine, and religion as a source of ethnic identity within the existing research on religion and peace development on Sri Lanka. He emphasizes that, in contrast, there needs to be more attention paid to "religious organizations, religious structures of authority and the role of religious organizations and religious leaders in political processes" (2009, 127). More specifically, Brekke proposes that "we need to study the way that Sri Lankan religious leaders and organizations work in times of conflict, how they have reacted to peace-initiatives, whether and how their reactions have influenced their respective constituencies, and how the work of these organizations has implications for political processes in the country" (2009, 127). The importance of Brekke's research within the Sri Lankan peace process is in identifying the two dominant trends within the research. The first, theological essentialism, views the role of religion and its actors within the framework of religious doctrine, such as Buddhist theories on peace. The second resorts to ethnic reductionism, which links religion to ethnicity and so,



therefore, reduces the analytical usefulness of religion, its institutions and power structures, as well as that of individual authority. Brekke recognizes that too little research has been produced in the analysis of individual religious actors and their influence within the political process and peace keeping dilemma within Sri Lanka. One exception is the work of one theorist (Deegalle 2004) who specifically focused on the role of Buddhist monks within the National Heritage Party (JHU) and excludes the role of other religions and their relevant actors in the process.

More importantly, Iselin Frydenlund (2005) produced an important field study of the role of Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka. She asserts early on that “religious actors should be viewed as potential political actors who may either spoil or contribute to a peace process” (2005, 2). Adding to this insight, she insists that religious actors rarely ever function as a cohesive religious unit, but, rather, the relationship of the Buddhist monks towards the state is one marked by a multiple, sometimes competing views. Frydenlund also highlights the important role that the monks play in garnering public support for the peace process because of the vital social and religious role that they play. As a result, they can significantly influence the final outcome. Frydenlund insists that the inclusion of the monks in the peace process is important and cannot be ignored. One example that she cites is the monks' concern over ‘unethical conversions’ where various Christian groups were enticing conversions through economic incentives leading to the rise of the “Anti-Conversion Bill” which was a crucial topic in the 2004 elections. As a result, Frydenlund argues that the monks were far more concerned with these forced conversions than they were with the peace process; which highlights the monks' ability to introduce real change if they so choose, but also their importance in the peace process. In Chapter Three, Frydenlund focuses on the impact of important individual monks in Sri Lankan politics, such as the Venerable Walpola Rahula who argued that the most essential role of a monk was political (2005, 13). As a result, Buddhist monks were spiritually obliged with the responsibility of political involvement for the purpose of advocating communal peace and harmony, in contrast to politicians who value self-interest above social needs. Her analysis in this chapter demonstrates the significant political and social power that the monks wield in policy making decisions, in influencing elections, challenging government positions on socially relevant issues, or through providing religious justification to party politics and decisions as a method of legitimacy enforcement. Similarly, politicians in turn acknowledge important monks and pay their respects through visits and discussion of policy matters, which reiterates the politically important role of the monks. Overall, though,

the Buddhist monks have been persistent in their resistance to any peace plan that would entail federalism. Instead, their vision revolves around a decentralization of power, which is important to the monks as a form of preserving their Buddhist culture and heritage. As one Buddhist monk noted (cited in Frydenlund 2005, 21):

Not one single monk is against peace. But, when at the negotiation table, we have to think again. It is unfortunate if the peace process goes down. It should proceed. But we do not want peace at any cost. We do not want a federal system, but devolution of power.... It is crucial to understand the difference between 'united', which is when different states get into one state, and 'unitary', one state. For example, the United States were separate states later united. In Sri Lanka, we never had separate states – we only have had Sri Lanka. Therefore, the state has to be unitary.

This statement highlights not only the important role of the monks, but, more significantly, their determination to influence policy and decision making processes in line with their own religious values and loyalties. Frydenlund's study is unique and ground breaking in its analysis of the role of individual religious actors, their religious institutional structures, as well as her analysis of the historical role of religion, particularly Buddhism within Sri Lanka. This study, along with those of Deegalle (2004) and Brekke (2009), are important initial steps in analysing the role of religious actors and religious institutions within conflict ridden societies. However, the limitations are also clear. Firstly, these studies are specific to the political environment of Sri Lanka based on the religious make-up of the country. Secondly, while these studies acknowledge the lack of appropriate research in this area with respect to the other religions of the country, they still remain focused solely on the Buddhist religion and do not take an equal interest in or make a comparative analysis with other major religions in Sri Lanka. In contrast, the political, social, historical, and religious environment of Iraq face a different set of unique issues, which sets it apart from that within Sri Lanka. Finally, and most importantly, these studies have focused on the analysis of Buddhist monks within a peace keeping environment where the state is attempting to address a complex ethnic and religious dilemma. While resurgences and periods of protracted conflicts have occurred in the country, particularly through the Tamil Eelam movement, nevertheless, the situation differs significantly to that of reconstructions where an international coalition often intervenes and dictates the peace process, the reconstruction of the country, and its form of political governance along west-centric liberal values. In Iraq, the reconstruction situation is further complicated for the reason that the invasion of the country was widely perceived to be illegal. As a result, Iraq's reconstruction faces a legitimacy crisis, both domestically and

internationally. Whereas Sri Lanka has not faced a similar situation, its legitimacy and sovereignty remain unimpeded. Despite external actors such as Norway becoming a conflict mediator in the peace process, the domestic groups have retained control over the internal dialogue, even where such a dialogue may have taken a violent turn.

Scholars and policy-makers such as Wardak, Zaman and Nawabi (2007), Borchgrevink (2007), and Schetter (2006) have attempted to fill the gap that a lack of proper attention on religious actors has presented to the reconstructionary field. Wardak, Zaman, Nawabi (2007) and Borchgrevink (2007) attempt to focus on the newly emerging civil society in Afghanistan and use religious actors' relationships with the Karzai government to define and explore this process. The major limitation of these studies results from viewing religious actors not so much as political actors, but as influential socio-economic players within the civil society sphere. In addition, these studies are focusing on religious actors who are either directly connected to or do not actively oppose the government. In doing so, politically active religious leaders who oppose the state-building process or who simply disapprove are eliminated from the discourse. However, exclusion from the state-building discourse does not imply that such actors do not play some part in the process. Yet, through this exclusion religious actors are depoliticized and confined to a traditional role (within the civil sphere) of being mediators of local conflicts, providers of social aid or acting as agents of social cohesion within their communities and, hence, contributing indirectly to peacemaking policies. However, within Afghanistan, the role of the religious actors inside the civil society sphere has been confined to social issues such as health, education and the protection of children's rights (Borchgrevink 2007, 48). Additionally, including religious actors that are limited within the confines of 'civil society' and those outside this distinction, polarize religious actors into the stereotypical western classification of Islam and its actors as either 'militant jihadists' or Islam as the 'peaceful religion'.

A more critical analysis of religious actors must include all actors within that distinction, including actors who wish to work with the international community in state-building, those who wish to remain outside the political sphere and distance themselves from this process, or those who directly and actively oppose the international administrators and their activities. To only focus on 'compliant' religious actors ignores a large section of the leadership in Islamic societies who often have large numbers of followers (in some cases precisely because they oppose the international communities in their state). To ignore this particular group as outside

and irrelevant to the state-building discourse is to ignore large segments of Islamic societies and only spells complications for this already delicate and complex process.

The political environment in Afghanistan is also heavily influenced by ethnicity and the influence of powerful warlords, and the situation differs to a large degree to the ethnic and religiously based issues within Iraq. Yet, to reduce the role of religious actors in ultra-religious societies to that of civil service is to ignore their extensive political influence on their respective constituents. The majority of research on the reconstruction process in Afghanistan has ignored the role of religious leaders and has, instead, focused on how warlords and other terrorist organizations have interacted with the reconstruction and post-conflict state (Giustozzi 2004; Nixon 2008), and where they have been analysed as 'warlords' and 'strongman' rather than studied as religious leaders (Giustozzi and Ullah 2006), the research has reinforced the negative, militaristic and antagonistic nature of such personalities.

Additionally, these emerging studies focus on the relationship between the Afghani religious leadership and the Afghani state, rather than between these actors and that of an international administrative government, such as that established in Iraq, in East Timor or Kosovo. The closest correlation examined in the studies by Wardak, Zaman and Nawabi (2007), and Borchgrevink (2007) is confined between that of the religious actors and NGO's or the military. More importantly, Operation Enduring Freedom, from the very beginning, was considered widely by the international community, if not domestically, to be a legitimate effort to address the Taliban and Al Qaeda following September 11. Further, more than a 1000 religious leaders met in a *shura* (religious council) and produced a *fatwa* demanding Bin Laden's exit from the country (Eur 2003, 74), though they did emphasize an aversion to a U.S. led invasion of the country. Even Russia and Iran claimed support for the removal of the Taliban regime (Eur 2003, 75). Other countries, such as Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Emirates, as well as Pakistan, severed connections with the Taliban regime indicating a large degree of consensus among the Islamic world of support for the international effort. Additionally, from the very onset of the operation, more than a thousand prominent tribal leaders, representatives of the former King of Afghanistan, members of the Northern Alliance, as well as exiled activists were gathered in 2001 at the request of the U.N. to propose a transitional government contributing to a higher level of domestic legitimacy (Gladstone 2001; Eur 2003, 75). These factors ensured that the level of legitimacy in the reconstruction process in

Afghanistan differed significantly from that of Iraq. Incidentally, religious leaders began to directly communicate and liaise with the new *Loya Jarga*. That is not to suggest that this process and the internal dialogue led by different factions, identities and views did not face major challenges and setbacks. However, the crucial factor is the different levels of legitimacy, which significantly influenced the role of the religious leaders.

As a result, the very nature of the relationship between the religious elite and the state would differ greatly, where, in the first instance, it might be the role of religious actors as civic servants who oppose certain policies of the state. While, in contrast, the relationship between religious actors and international administrators and donor community would be more political and critical in nature, especially in light of the implementation of foreign, western norms and values in recipient states which call for a less visible role for religion, or aspects of their faith that may conflict with the donors' values and interests. For instance, one emerging trend in both Afghanistan and Iraq is the debate between Islamic Sharia law and western democratic legal principles and the difficulty in finding a working base to accommodate both. Furthermore, the objectives and policies of the international community, as well as the circumstances under which both wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were launched have differed, and this has had an impact on the relationship between religious actors in these societies and that of the state-building community, especially the United States. Secondly, the 'light footprint' policy employed by the United States in Afghanistan ensured that any interaction that developed in this context has been between religious actors directly associated with the Afghani state (rather than international administrators or the donor community). Thus, such literature bypasses the direct relationship between foreign administrators and religious actors. It is the direct relationship between religious actors and international administrators, which sidesteps the state that is the area that requires further analysis. This is because there are more chances of conflict in the expectations between the two, leading to an increased probability of violent conflict. This also demonstrates the nature of reconstructions, the dominance of certain views and the fact that the cultural norms of recipient societies are ignored which challenge the legitimacy of such reconstructions in the eyes of the citizens, leading to consecutive failures in the field.

Additionally, the literature concerned with Afghani religious actors has been restricted to the Sunni sect and its actors, and the Shia minority's voice has been lost in this instance. Hence, there is no analysis or understanding regarding how the Shia religious actors view the state-

building process or indeed their relationship with the post-conflict Afghani state, despite the fact that they constitute nineteen per cent of the Islamic population (Borchgrevink 2007, 21). Consequently, it is essential that both Sunni and Shia voices are heard in the state-building process, because any Islamic society will, by nature, have a variation of both. Nasr (2006a), for instance, highlights the increasing need to pay attention to the internal relationship between the Sunni and Shia relationship, when he notes that the long historical divide and rivalry between the Sunni and Shia's over the claim and recognition to be the true religion of Islam has been reignited in the power struggle between the two in Iraq. This reignited rivalry has added a different dimension and set of tensions to the state-building process in this case, not just within Iraq, but also among regional actor's interests.

Consequently, special attention should be paid to the distinction between the Sunni and Shia divide, because of the different nature of their religious hierarchy, which presents different challenges to the state-building process. As noted previously, among one of the first differences between Sunnis and Shias is the religious structure, which is more formal and defined within the Shia sect than it is within the Sunni community. Shia Islam also emphasizes not only the spiritual nature of religious leaders, but also, specifically, their political responsibility as well. Within this context, the state-building process is essentially the study of Shia and Sunni religious elites in Iraqi society between the United States agendas and policies implemented directly or through coalition members. Hence, this study presents another challenge to the literature presented by the Afghani studies. Firstly, the Shia leadership (Ayatollahs) have dominated the religious discourse within the confines of state-building activities. An Ayatollah differs greatly from the less educated, less revered Mullahs studied in the emerging Afghani literature. For instance, Metz (1989) observes that, in order for a religious student to become an Ayatollah, it is essential that they study in one of the prestigious madrasahs (religious schools) in Qom or Masshad in Iran, or in Najaf in Iraq. Although there is no specific timeframe for the mastery of the necessary subjects, a student's preparation takes up to fifteen years, and even then, there must be an unequivocal recognition by a notable Ayatollah in the community. Metz (1989) continues to observe that in contrast, less exemplary students who:

[L]eave the madrasahs after completing the primary level can serve as prayer leaders, village mullahs, local shrine administrators, and other religious functionaries. Those who leave after completing the second level become preachers in town and city mosques. Students in the third level of study are those

preparing to become (Ayatollah's). The advanced students at this level are generally accorded the title of *hojjatoleslam* when they have completed all their studies (Metz 1989, 171).

Therefore, the studies relating to Afghani religious actors is further limited to the more basic Sunni, community confined religious actors (mullahs) whereas within the Shia community the Ayatollahs are above local mullahs and have greater reverence, doctrinal learning as well as experience in religion teachings and within the civil society. In addition, in Afghanistan, "many Islamic educational institutions such as madrasas, however, are outdated and the quality of education quite low" (Bouta 2005, 24); this is in contrast to Iraq where significant religious leaders and seminaries reside. The Borchgrevink (2007) and Wardak et al. (2007) studies note this low level of quality in education, where mullahs are trained in inadequate local schools. This marks Ayatollahs as relatively powerful political agents with greater doctrinal learning and, hence, more respect and standing, whose cooperation can greatly add weight to the legitimacy of the mission or entirely destabilize the process. This is especially so within the Iraqi case study, where the Shia Ayatollahs have largely dominated and dictated the state-building processes, particularly in the crucial initial stages of the reconstruction. In contrast to the emerging literature on Afghani religious actors, the Iraq case study provides a more diverse analysis of religious actors in a post-conflict society representing the wider interest of the greater community. Although the Shia community dominates the Sunni community, both sects have a prominent voice in various ways in the state-building process in their relationships with each other, as well as the international administrators and donor community currently in Iraq. Consequently, the state-building process in Iraq has led to increased significance, as well as further politicization of religious leaders beyond the basic civil society functions that they normally perform. Yet, many studies are confined within the boundaries of this discourse, as highlighted by the Wardak, Zaman and Nawabi (2007), and Borchgrevink (2007) studies. As well as the politicization of religious leadership in Iraq, the state-building process in this instance has added an extra element of potential for conflict as the Shia community emerged as the clear winner. Additionally, marginalization of Sunni religious leadership occurred due to the coalition's perception that all Sunnis were part of Saddam's internal war machine. This largely resulted in the initial voter boycotts by Sunnis in the early stages of the conflict.

Likewise, the war in Iraq and the ensuing state-building process has led to a polarization of Iraqi society along clear religious (Sunni/Shia) and ethnic (Kurdish, Turkmon, Assyrian) lines, which has added another element to the relationship between state-builders and

religious leadership, where competing political interests are conducted in relation to the other groups interests, and dilute and impact the relationship between these actors and the international community and administrators in Iraq. Group boundaries, in such instances are used as “symbolic tools in political struggles” (Eriksen 2002, 76). Nevertheless, the role of individual religious actors within the Shia sect is important in the study of peace development, and smoother transitions during the reconstruction process, as well as for defining the important needs, interests and attitudes of the Shia majority in the country. Actors such as the Grand Marja Ayatollah Sistani have played a similar role to that of the Buddhist monk Madampagama Assaji in Sri Lanka who has been crucial in the peace process by promoting dialogue between religions (Brekke 2009).

Policy-makers as well as theorists have come to the realization that religious actors play an important part in the reconstruction in Iraq, either as spoilers or as promoters of peace and democracy. Several important studies by the International Crisis Group (ICG) emerged in mid-2006-2007, which were of some significance to the field. One such report, *Iraq's Muqtada Al-Sadr: Spoiler or Stabilizer* (ICG 2006), provides an important historical account of the political activism of the al-Sadr Ayatollahs in Iraq. The narrative extends to the current al-Sadr, his motivations and radicalization, with particular emphasis on his militia army and their violent conflict with the coalition forces. In the very first page of the report it is argued that the rise of Muqtada al-Sadr to a position of power was “surprising and enigmatic” particularly for someone who was “largely unknown” (ICG 2006, i). This is despite the fact that the report emphasizes the al-Sadr’s family legacy in their strong and active opposition of the Iraqi regime. Further on, the report argues that al-Sadr needs to be “treated as a legitimate, representative actor and act as one”, but continues in the next sentence to note that “the most puzzling aspect of Muqtada’s ascent is that he possesses none of the more obvious criteria of political success” (ICG 2006, i). This highlights that there is increasing awareness of the shift in the actor designation and their legitimacy. However, the literature is still limited by the failure to account for the importance of historical and cultural factors. Thus, it is the principal perspective of this thesis that an adequate understanding of the cultural complexities of a recipient society is crucial to the production of effective policies. The level of marginalization and exclusion of religion and the complex role of religious actors, as well as the influence of their institutions is an extension of the ostracism of identity politics in the field. The ICG report indicates one of the most obvious examples of the limited understanding of the complexities of Iraqi culture. More importantly, there needs to be a



greater level of awareness of the motivations behind such actors, for example, whether they are motivated solely by religion, or whether the use of religion is an extension of expressing political “non-religious interests” (Berger 1999, 15).

Another important factor needs consideration: though there is increasing interest in the role that religion and faith based organizations play in conflict resolution and peace-keeping this thesis aims to consider another niche area in such studies: it aims to analyse the influence and impact of top level individual religious elites, as opposed to the influence of institutionalized religious structures. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the analysis of top level religious actors falls outside of the realm of civil society where they are often confined because they provide social goods and services. In contrast this research's focal point is on the distinctly political influence of religious actors. Further, when there is analysis of religion and its role it is usually from the perspective of the collective, the institutions, ‘the Catholic Roman Church’ for instance, which dilutes the individual contribution and role that top level religious actors may play. While particular institutions as collectives can contribute significantly to a conflict and its resolution, this study aims to document the contribution of individual high level actors particularly within the domain of ‘Islam’ where individual ayatollahs can garner significant loyalty and following not only within their own nation states but across the Islamic world. Despite this, it is noteworthy that in garnering such high levels of following, respect and support such religious actors essentially become ‘institutions’ in themselves, generating significant financial, economic, and political capital. Moreover, another important analytical factor that distinguishes the study of individual religious actors from that of faith based organizations is that such organizations are often the target of, or may directly request peace-keeping and peace-building training and education. In contrast such high level religious actors rely on their extensive religious education, individual charisma, economic influence, and personal relations to interfere in the reconstruction and peace-building process. In contrast the utilization of educational tools allows faith based organizations to gather, retain and build on existing training and experiences whereas individual actors often do not have the same privilege. Essentially, it is obvious that there are distinct differences in the contribution that the study of individual, powerful religious actors posit, relative to institutionalized religious organizations, and that they produce different theoretical and empirical implications for peace studies. The uniqueness of this study resides in its specific focus on the Shia elites within the Middle East, particularly within Iraq and Iran.

Revisiting the idea that 'culture matters', there are important factors need to be noted regionally. The region is defined by patriarchal, patrimonial, nepotistic, and hereditary monarchies and republics. Syria, Iraq under Saddam, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Libya, among others in the region, have all experienced regimes with a hereditary hand over of state power. This is predominantly as a result of the cultural norm of loyalty considered as more important than aptitude (The Economist 2001). Wunderle (2008), for instance, notes that it is essential that one approaches the appropriate person in power, which requires an understanding of the intricate authority structures in the region. Incidentally, major complications could arise if the wrong person is approached leading to significant offense to the proper individuals, but also the empowerment of the wrong person. Wunderle declares that “failure to recognize the different sources of authority can disrupt existing governance and resolution structures and can lead to an erosion of coalition effectiveness” (2008, 33). Returning to the ICG’s report, considering the still persistently nepotistic, patrimonial, and patriarchal nature of Iraqi culture in conjunction with the Sadr family’s prestige and history of political activism, there is nothing remotely surprising about Muqtada’s rise to power. In fact, considering traditional Middle Eastern culture, Muqtada may have actually had little choice other than to fill his father’s shoes, not only because of the pressure of his family’s legacy, but also the desire of his family’s followers to have the al-Sadr’s fulfil their legacy. Despite Muqtada’s relative lack of political and religious qualifications, followers loyal to the al-Sadr family, no doubt, would have played an extensive role in grooming the young cleric for the position. This may explain why there have been competing reports about al-Sadr as an ‘Atari playing’ disinterested student and that of a well-informed, capable and intelligent political player in the game (Heazle and Islam 2006, 78; Berman 2009, 57). Other reports by major think tanks such as the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) produced similar reports focusing on Sistani, al-Sadr and his militia, and have produced similar limitations. While the majority of the research in this area does acknowledge the necessity of involving such actors in the reconstruction process, all adopt a negative attitude towards such religious actors. While in Muqtada’s case this may be justified, for Sistani his stance towards the implementation of Sharia Law is enough to lead authors to advocate a precautionary stance.

Nevertheless, the limited literature on the role of individual, top level religious actors within an Islamic context only appeared following the invasion of Iraq. Prior to this, little to no research had been conducted on the influence of such actors and their relations towards reconstruction missions. Even then, the majority of this limited research emerged tentatively.

The predominance of this attitude within the literature perpetuates the continued marginalization of identity factors, such as religion. This exclusion clearly comes at the interest, as well as the cost of significant and influential religious leaders who may view state-building as a process that leads to the loss of their sovereignty over the religious sphere. This has created tensions, or at least a lack of consent and cooperation by religious actors in past cases, most significantly, in Afghanistan and Iraq. Essentially, to reconstruct a state that directly contradicts and works against the fundamental values and cultural norms is a violation of the sovereign rights of the state and the people. Further, if reconstructions conducted in Islamic societies desire a level of success it needs to accommodate existing identity, cultural and religious norms and work to modernize and liberalize traditional cultures gradually. A hasty and colossal shift in a society's foundations often produces strong resistance and spoiler groups. Theorists have also long espoused the necessity of focusing on the features of a society that are emphasized. For instance, if a society is concerned with issues of race, or class or culture then these elements need to be analysed as locally produced discourses on ethnicity (Eriksen 2002, 2). Ethnic identities through periods of change may be considered "psychologically reassuring...which assures the individual of a continuity with the past, which can be an important source of self-respect and personal authenticity in the modern world" (Eriksen 2002, 68). Yet, the U.S. led reconstruction provided no space for religious actors to become directly involved outside of the Supreme Islamic Council or the Da'wa party, despite the fact non-political actors such as tribal leaders or religious leaders are essential and powerful elements within Iraqi society. As Will Kymlicka argued, "people's bond to their own culture" is significant; as a result, they "have a legitimate interest in maintaining this bond" (1997, 107). Additionally, such an "attachment lies deep in the human condition, tied up with the way humans as cultural creatures need to make sense of their world, and that a full explanation would involve aspects of psychology, sociology, linguistics, the philosophy of mind, and even neurology...but whatever the explanation, this bond does seem to be a fact" (Kymlicka 1997, 90). Noting the importance of people's connection to their identity, whether at a religious, class, ethnic or cultural level, it is important to take such factors into consideration in reconstructing a war torn society. Moreover, such factors contribute to increasing legitimacy of a reconstructed state if a people's identity is not challenged. Addressing legitimacy-producing factors such as religion and other forms of identity serves to produce a more stable reconstruction process. Admittedly, conflict-ridden societies tend to contain multiple, often competing, identities and it is a difficult and complex process to address these identity dilemmas. On this account, liberal peace theory seems the

most adequate form of resolving such competing interests. Nevertheless, the field has clearly demonstrated the limited success that liberal peace theory has attained.

## **2.6. Identity Politics:**

An essential argument inherent within this thesis is that the reconstruction process often ignores identity politics. The study and understanding of 'political culture' emerged largely from the work of Gabriel A. Almond who first developed the concept in 1956 (Pye 1962, 45). However, the field of state reconstruction largely fails to consider the role of identities in conflict ridden societies because it lacks interest in diagnosing the root causes of conflicts and is more concerned with building institutional capacity. Moreover, the vision and expectations of the international community for the post-conflict society is often contrary to the values and needs of the recipient societies. As a result, the reconstruction process experiences a surge of identity conflict, as was evident in the civil conflict between Sunnis and Shias, as well as within the Shia community itself. The literature considers not only reconstructions, but also culture, particularly religion, as disposable, replaceable and the root cause of conflicts. In fact, it is different identities, whether ethnic or religious that prevents the formation of a collective civic nationalism from emerging. Fukuyama (2004) sums this argument up when he posits that an essential dilemma in the international community's inability to coalesce economic development with effective administration is precisely because of weak states' inability to draw traditional and informal structures of loyalty (such as ethnic or religious ties) away and redirect them towards formal institutions. However, he acknowledges that "the development of formal institutions is strongly affected by cultural factors" (2004, 30). Despite this he still observes that group identities and loyalties tend to crowd out considerations of other interests" (2004, 65) including of course the interest of West-centric state-building values and norms. The literature largely adopts a similar negative perception of culture and ethnic or religious identities.

Much has been written on the importance of ethnic and religious identities that crowd out other factors such as class distinction. Theorists such as Connor (1977) and Smith (1979, 1986) have noted that although class disparity does play a part in ethnonational conflicts it rarely acts as the root cause of conflicts. The prominent theorists, Azar and Haddad propose a similar answer. Although extreme disparities in wealth may exist in developing countries,

class is nevertheless not the most important contributor of conflict. Accordingly, class distinctions and their exploration will not serve as a “very informative indicator of conflict” (1986, 1338). In contrast, class distinctions have largely failed to normalize society. Instead, identity issues along ethnic or religious lines have predominated, and continue to play a fundamental role in determining intergroup relations. Identities, in contrast, have managed largely to retain their importance in conflict development; while class distinctions have effectively “lost out in their struggle with the more ascriptive and primordial nature of sub-nation-states” (Azar and Haddad 1986, 1338). John W. Burton (1986) argues against this, pointing out the distinction between ‘needs’ and ‘interests’ which are essential in conflicts and their resolutions. According to Burton, traditional views on protracted conflicts are heavily centred on ‘interests’. Groups become violent towards one another if their ‘interests’ are not being met. As a result, Burton argues, it is possible to find a solution to such conflicts through coercive socialization and modernization policies. Socializing communities entails the redirection of their interests in line with a more civic sense of national interest. However, Burton, rejects this ‘interest’ based interpretation as limited and not inclusive enough to explain protracted social conflicts. For Burton, such conflicts represent instead a complex mixture of interests combined with needs and requirements that are not open to negotiation. Consequently, for Burton, it is possible to socialize people away from certain ‘interests’, but not from non-negotiable ‘needs’, for to do so requires acceptance of “behaviours that run counter to the pursuit of security, identity and other aspects of development” (Burten 1986, 53). Bryant Wedge has built further on this ‘need’ based argument by pointing out that such needs may not necessarily be economic needs. Instead, they are “needs of the heart and in the end serve the need of the integrity of the self and social members” (1986, 60). Wedge criticizes peace development theorists who often consider such motivations as ‘non-rational human needs’. Yet, such needs do often include attempts to address past injustices and acquire ‘justice’ and ‘recognition’ to act as facilitators of conflicts. Such needs produce the motivations and behaviours that determine the nature of the conflict.

Another important reason to focus on identity politics is linked to the evolving nature of conflicts. Darini Rajasingham-Senanayake’s (1999), study of the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict was an effort to fill a gap: that of wars and their relationship towards identity formation. Rajasingham-Senanayake argues, that despite the large body of literature that has emerged on war and conflicts, there has been little attempt to see how wars impact processes of identity formation, their boundaries and territories, as well as how war “generates the ethnicization

and polarization of hybrid collective identities” (1999, 57). Instead, the author advocates an analysis of the “dialectical production of identity through violence”, as opposed to the “linear progression of violence: from ethnic tension to riot to armed conflict” (1999, 58). She notes that conflicts establish suspicious and antagonistic trends between different communities. The flow of internally displaced people constitutes a major security threat to the state resulting in a culture of “ethnic enclave mentality” which functions on the assumption that “people of different cultures cannot share the same neighbourhood, village, city, place of religious worship, or public space” (1999, 66). Rajasingham-Senanayake concludes that “understanding the cultural dimensions of armed conflict and how conflict can create polarized cultural logic and transform identities is a prerequisite for conflict resolution” (1999, 66). Likewise, Munck and O’Hearn have also proposed a similar argument where they note that “cultural analysis is central to any understanding of the relations of power and to any strategy of resistance or dependency reversal” (1999, 12).

Munck and De Silva (2000, 1), on the other hand, have demonstrated a significant shift in the traditional conduct of war and conflicts. No longer are conflicts being played out through the use of conventional armies. Instead, insurgencies, mainly as a response to ‘dirty wars’, are increasingly overtaking conventional styles of warfare, which according to the authors, is indicative of a ‘postmodern’ shift in conflicts. Insurgency allows combatants to fight wars without time restraints, thereby increasing their ability to pressure governments or rival groups over long periods of time. Accordingly, because insurgencies do not have access to the same sophisticated weapons as the state, they have developed other methods of challenging the state. More interestingly such ‘postmodern’ conflicts will no longer be fought over territory, but will increasingly focus on issues of identity. Elaborating further on the significance of identities, Munck and De Silva posit that the understanding of insurgencies is directly linked to questions of identity formation, especially political identities. The importance of such formations allows theorists to understand the different forms of subordination to which certain peoples are subjected. Acknowledging the widely accepted notion that identities are fluid, the authors argue that identity formation or presentation is a reflection of such subordinations. Further, their analysis of the Irish conflict leads them to identify multiple components of the conflict, including nationalism, Catholicism and socialism, as well as issues related to that of power sharing. These issues produce complex narratives relating to the content and outcomes of the conflict with each element requiring careful examination.

Others have come to argue that no conflict or war can be accurately analysed and interpreted without a thorough knowledge of the role of culture (Warren 1993). Warren has analysed a variety of conflicts, including nationalist movements, guerrilla warfare, religious fundamentalism, and ethnic nationalism, and has concluded that culture and its associated norms, myths, and symbols play a complex role in such movements. Most importantly, for Warren, culture is important in the study of intrastate conflicts in defining the political and cultural boundaries of the conflict. Culture is even more important for those who are caught up in conflicts as it provides the basis on which discourses surrounding the conflict emerge, whether at a diplomatic or armed conflict level. For this reason, national culture is important in the study of conflict and conflict resolution. The national culture (or in some instances, multiple cultures, but dominated by one dominant culture that is not necessarily the most widely adhered to, nor the most popular), determines modes of conflict, control, peace-keeping, nation-building, development, and resistance; it also denotes policy development and political and economic relations. It denotes the forms of interaction between competing parties within the conflict. It also indicates the type of dialogues, communications and peace building measures undertaken. Nations divided by multiple or competing cultures often face increased levels of internal strife and armed conflict. The types of cleavages developed within such societies, the marginalized groups, the level of integration, acceptance, resistance, domination, and exclusion all determine the internal cross-cultural interactions and cleavages. Culture and its norms provide the foundational starting point for social cleavages; they also determine behaviours and attitudes. Culture also determines how conflicts are conceptualized, as well as how they are critiqued and addressed. Most importantly, culture determines the level of legitimacy of a conflict as well as that of any subsequent peace treaties and processes. Further, what is implicit in Warren's study is how conflicts produce cultures. Whereas, to date, the literature has primarily focused on how culture contributes to conflict, such as through the cultures of terror discourse.

The most effective works that have taken into consideration the cultural complexity of the recipient society have emerged from the work of army personnel. Lt. Col. William D. Wunderle produced an exceptional volume, *A Manual for American Servicemen in the Arab Middle East: Using Cultural Understanding to Defeat Adversaries and Win the Peace* (2008). Wunderle's study is centred on the necessity of the military personnel understating the cultural terrain as a form of outmanoeuvring insurgencies and establishing mission success. Through discussions with field officers, Wunderle presents an excellent critique of

the limitations of the military operation in reconstructionary missions, as well as the current understating of the importance of cultural awareness in military training and doctrine. The book ventures further and provides an in-depth analysis of the intricate ethnic and religious terrain in Iraq. However, the limitation of the volume arises from its lack of further attention on religion: other than a cursory mention of the military's inability to understand the complex relationship between religion and politics, he stops short of taking this line of argument to its natural conclusion. Additionally, there is no mention of prominent Ayatollahs or Mullahs who have influenced the reconstruction process, including Sistani or the radical 'firebrand' al-Sadr. On closer inspection, the volume merely provides a broad overview of general cultural factors, such as the necessity of understanding forms of self-identification which involves understanding Arab names such as "bin Laden" and "Abu Nidal" which translates to the "son of Laden" and "father of Nidal" respectively. Such statements only manage to address basic elements of the cultural complexity in the region. Finally, the volume is directed specifically towards the military, which limits its application to policy-makers and diplomats. A similar, though far more limited text, was produced by Lieutenant General David H. Petraeus, *Learning Counterinsurgency: Observations from Soldiering in Iraq*, in 2006. This report does mention religious actors but also stops short of delving deeper into the religious element.

One of the most limiting factors in the reconstruction of Iraq arose from the lack of knowledge of the social and cultural terrain. The lack of awareness of the cultural factor or, more precisely, the importance of identity issues was largely marginalized in the reconstruction process. It was not until at least three years into the reconstruction process before experts in the field began to note the importance of identity issues at a far more complex level than previously noted by policy advisers in the field. Lieutenant General Petraeus (2006), for instance, presented a report in October 2006 that focused on this particular issue. Petraeus identifies fourteen essential observations learned to date. The observations range from building institutions not just units, the importance of intelligence work, the costs and benefits of operations, and the importance of counter insurgency. The fourteen points also focus on the significance of cultural awareness, as well as the importance of local leaders in the reconstruction process. However, the argument surrounding the culture of Iraq only points out the continuing marginalization of identity and leadership factors. Nevertheless, Petraeus' observation number nine presents an insightful appeal for cultural awareness and reflects on its capacity to multiply the positive outcomes of missions. This



observation insists that awareness of the ‘cultural’ terrain is just as significant, if not more in some instances, as the geographic terrain. More importantly it concedes that “the people are, in many respects, the decisive terrain, and that we must study that terrain in the same way that we have always studied the geographic terrain” (2006). Petraeus argues further on this point, indicating not only the lack of awareness of the importance of the identity dimensions within Iraq, but also the learning process that Iraq has provided in this context. The report, quoted at length here, insists that:

Working in another culture is enormously difficult if one doesn’t understand the ethnic groups, tribes, religious elements, political parties, and other social groupings-and their respective viewpoints; the relationship among the various groups; government structures and process; local and regional history; and, of course, local and national leaders. Understanding of such cultural aspects is essential if one is to help the people build stable political, social, and economic institutions. Indeed, this is as much a matter of common sense as operational is working, it is also clear that people, in general, are more likely to cooperate if those who have power over them respect the culture that gives them a sense of identity and self-worth. In truth, many of us did a lot of “discovery learning” about such features of Iraq in the early months of our time there. And those who learned the quickest—and who also mastered some “survival Arabic”—were, not surprisingly, the most effective in developing productive relationships with local leaders and citizens and achieved the most progress in helping establish security, local governance, economic activity, and basic services. The importance of cultural awareness has, in fact, been widely recognized in the U.S. Army and the other services, and it is critical that we continue the progress that has been made in this area in our exercises, military schools, doctrine, and so on (Petraeus 2006).

It is striking to note that these fundamental lessons have emerged nearly four years into the mission, indicating a complete lack of awareness and interest of the cultural factor prior, or during the crucial initial stages of the mission.

Collectively, there is little attempt to link issues of identity along religious lines, and to involve religious actors within this discourse. The argument is rather implicit, making statements and assumptions about addressing core reasons for conflicts, but shying away from tackling the ‘religion’ and identity issue. The argument is a state-centric analysis of reconstructions that takes into consideration, and for granted, the idea that the state is the fundamental element within the international system; it fails to take into consideration the history and culture of colonial rule or the fact that for many states that experience fragility and conflict, the notion of the nation-state is very much contested and, in some instances, actively rejected and subordinated to regional ethnic and religious identities. Significant empirical studies exist which have demonstrated that the level of inclusivity leads to a

stronger post conflict reconstruction and a more peaceful political transformation (Samuels 2005). The importance of religion to state and nation-building policies, as well as the foundational myths of communities has been entirely ignored by those leading the reconstructionary field. As far back as the enlightenment theorists noted that, “no State has ever been founded without a religious basis” (Rousseau cited in Cole 2008, 130). Instead, state-builders choose to ignore this basis and attempt reconstructions that are focused on entirely removing the role of religion and relegating it to the private sphere; which in a deeply religious society, one that contains the central religious centres of Shia religious learning and the Grand Marja of the Shi'ites, with a deep rooted connection to the revered Islamic history and a site of strong Islamic identity and leadership, the implementation of 'liberal peace theory' is naturally going to encounter significant resistance. This is the crux of the dilemma that the reconstruction of Iraq faces and will face for years to come.

The existing literature on identity in Iraq is further limited by its analysis consisting of intragroup relations and boundaries such as between Kurds and Arabs or Sunnis and Shias. As noted earlier in the discussion surrounding the nature of identity, polyethnic societies, particularly one as complex as Iraq have experienced a dual process of entrenchment of identity politics but at the same time diffusion cross cultural, religious and ethnic boundaries. Fredrik Barth (2000) argues that the assumption that tribes or groups of people have managed to maintain their cultural uniqueness through the ignorance of other cultures and peoples has been dismissed. On the other hand, though, the notion that the “geographical and social isolation” (Barth 1969, 9) have acted as the crucial factor that has allowed ethnic groups to retain their importance and distinctiveness is still widely accepted by social anthropologists. This, however, is no longer the case. Rather, cultural distinctiveness and ethnicity has remained persistent as a result of modernity and access to power and resources has been defined and limited by governments in post-colonial environments. “In deformed situations like this”, Azar and Haddad, note “identity becomes salient and acts as a motor for action and resistance against present and potential threats of discrimination. Communal identity needs, therefore, are powerful motivators for war and peace. How these needs are satisfied or repressed determines much of the history of these societies” (Azar and Haddad 1986, 1340). One of the most influential sociologists, Donald Horowitz (1985) analysed group identities and their interaction, but lamented the lack of agreements and analytical tools to effectively study intergroup relations. A key aspect of Horowitz’s analysis of group relations involved the categorization of societies into ranked and unranked groups such as those in Rwanda,

southern Africa, Japan and Southern Philippines. For Horowitz, the hierarchical nature of a society can be detrimental to conflict analysis. However, Horowitz's analysis fails to consider the complexity and importance of *intragroup* relations. As Iraq has demonstrated, intra-religious relations have significantly influenced the reconstruction process just as much as sectarian relations. Lake and Rothchild (1996; also De Figueiredo and Weingast 1999) have also attempted to view identity conflicts, though their analysis entails a greater awareness of intragroup dynamics. They have hypothesized that ethnic conflicts emerge as a result of collective group fears (see also Coleman, Goldman and Kugler 2007). They identify three different factors that contribute to intergroup conflict: they include information failures, lack of commitment and issues of security. In other words, misinformation between groups leads to emerging fears, producing behaviours that are designed to anticipate the other groups' actions based on the initial misrepresentation. Lack of commitment by groups as well as external actors reduces the possibilities of peaceful resolution. Finally, misinformation and lack of commitment combined with historical memory and security fears leads to groups adopting aggressive security measures that ultimately produces armed conflict. Lake and Rothchild also consider intragroup dynamics by noting that political elites and activists often exacerbate internal fears by utilizing popular propaganda to mobilize the group further (1996, 44). However, they largely fail to view differences within groups. Azar has attempted to explain the importance and saliency of identity politics: identities do not exist in isolation and are part of a complex mixture of individual, community and group variables that determines the nature, norms and values of a people. In other words, identity is linked and in some instances central to many other needs and interests. Incidentally, it is often identities that are the source of division and differentiation within the state. When identity determines access to resources and power, as well as a variety of other interests, which act as the source of state imposed aggression, then identity assumes a far greater role. Azar concludes that identity politics are difficult to resolve and do not contain the same elements as other sources of conflict. Moreover, and more crucially, the international community as well as its institutions do not have the capacity, nor are they designed in the first place, to successfully resolve identity conflicts.

The study of ethnic groups and identities is divided between two distinct schools of thoughts: those who argue that identity is fixed and unchangeable, the 'primordialists'; and those who contend that identities are subject to change and fluidity, often labelled 'circumstantialists' (see Newman 1991; Williams 1994). However, at times this perspective is also labelled the

'Instrumentalist' approach. These two lines of arguments dominate the discourse on ethnicities and identities. As they currently stand, they only provide a limited insight into the causes of violence and protracted social conflicts. The dominant limitation within both perspectives is based on the notion that identities are singular and defined. They ignore the complexities of identities and the fact that identities can be multidimensional and layered. One's identity can be based on ethnicity such as being an Arab, a Persian, or a Kurd; but are further complicated by religious values, by the language and dialect, by the modern nation-state that one resides in, by the political, ideological, environmental, and class factors among others. Consequently, the notion that one's identity is constantly fixed, as the 'primordialists' argue, is a limited account of a complex process. One's environment, political values, religiosity, and class level may change, promoting slight variations in one's values and identity. However, elements of identities can also be fixed and strongly resistant to change. Resistance to identity change is, as noted earlier by theorists such as Azar, even more pronounced in areas that have experienced protracted conflicts where historical memory determines the politics of identity. As such while the membership of a group or individual may shift across class distinctions, one's ethnic identity or religious orientation may be less easily adjustable. Indeed conflicts entrench identities further creating strong us/them dichotomies that produce an environment strongly resistant to identity change. As a result it is essential that the field focuses on this complex process and does not solely attribute identity politics to the more widely accepted argument proposed by the circumstantialists'.

The dilemma with the 'culture' and 'identity' discourse, thus, largely assumes the singular nature of identities. Anthropologists have identified groups through a variety of categories such as ethnonational, ethnolinguistic, regional ethnic minorities, and cultural groups (Levinson 1998). The limited literature that has emerged that attempts to focus on the importance of cultural awareness has failed to see that identities can be manifold. In other words, this thesis acknowledges identity changes, but rejects the notion of an individual's or a group's identity as a singular concept. That is, although there are multiple identities in existence in Iraq, those identities-Kurdish, Arab, Sunni, Shia, Turkomon, and Christians-consist of manifold sub-identities containing religious, cultural, historical and environmental narratives that better demonstrate the complexities of Iraq's cultural terrain. As it stands, the existing literature on state-building, as well as ethnicity, focuses more on group borders and identities in the analysis of conflict management. The essential limitation of such classification is the lack of awareness that, while certain identities may have distinct

boundaries, such as between Arabs and Kurds in Iraq, they themselves are not homogenous and uniform identities. Distinct groups may diverge significantly through environmental factors, such as division between state borders. The significance of cross-cutting cleavages is also important. An ethnic group may adhere to various religions that could create rifts of macro-identity divisions. Conversely, different ethnic groups may share the same religion, which may act as a homogenizing factor. In some instances, the lines between ethnicities and cultural boundaries are quite sharp and distinct, whereas in other instances they are often blurred and complex. An interesting social anthropological study conducted by Michael Moerman (1965) on ethnicity and cultural boundaries using 'conversational analysis' in Thailand produced problematic results and provides good highlights of this example. His research into the Lue people of Thailand led to the discovery that there was little in the way of culture, language, customs, or practices that defined the Lue from other groups, such as the Khaw or the Shan. Moerman concludes that "someone is a Lue by virtue of believing and calling himself Lue and of acting in ways that validate his Lueness" (Moerman 1965, 1215). Much later this concept was popularized by the imagined identities theory by Benedict Anderson (1983). What is missing from the current literature, consequently, is not only an awareness of the urgency of identity politics and the necessity of understanding group interaction, but, more significantly, where there are attempts to introduce group identities as parts of conflicts and state failure they fail to recognize that groups are not internally consistent. While this thesis does acknowledge that identities are prone to boundary shifts as a result of collective mobilization, it attempts to take a different analytical perspective by arguing the importance of intra-group cleavages. Just as analysis of conflict evolved from interstate to intrastate analysis, so too does the literature need to evolve to adopt a more comprehensive analysis of identity and their internal dynamics and cleavages. This identification is important in conflict analysis and their resolutions, as well as for producing policies that could utilize such divergences for peace building and nation-building processes.

Conversely, the 'circumstantialists' noted earlier are also limited in their scope, for they assume that an individual's identity is open to change depending on one's political, environmental, class, and other variables. Using Iraq and its polyethnic and polyreligious societal constitution, it is possible for a Shia Arab's political views to change; his/her belonging to a class may also evolve, for instance, through marrying into an upper class; his/her situation and views may significantly change through environmental factors, such as moving from a rural location to an urban one where increased access to education,

technology and modernity may influence one's perspectives and values. The discrepancy that both 'primordialists' and 'circumstantialists' ignore is the possibility that certain elements of an individual's identity may be fixed and non-negotiable, while others are more open to change. Edward Azar, one of the most influential theorists on protracted social conflicts, proposed that identities are subject to the political environment and one's adherence to religious values may be exacerbated and further entrenched if there are significant religious conflicts between groups in a particular community. Using Lebanon's multi religious and ethnic identity and also Northern Ireland as examples, Azar (1972; 1986) argues that identities are often at the centre of such protracted conflicts, precisely because certain elements, religion, for instance, is considered to be the non-negotiable trait of both societies. In Lebanon, ethnically over ninety percent of people are Arabs (Rolland 2003, 68); however, from that point, society is strictly divided along Muslim (Shia and Sunni) and Christians (Maronites, Catholic and Greek Orthodox). While elements of Arabness may be negotiable, elements of religion and religiosity are considered non-negotiable identity traits. As a result, Azar argues that resolutions of conflicts need to address such non-negotiable traits. Larsson (2004, 19) points to a similar argument when he notes that religion is the basis of people's moral and ethical foundation: "this means that when (rather than if) the conviction of what is right clashes with another conviction of right it is usually impossible to compromise. Compromise would in these circumstances involve concessions of fundamental moral significance, which would be inconceivable." Larsson notes on a decisive, if pessimistic, note that such identity based conflicts could "not be resolved by negotiations" (2004, 19).

In this context, Max Weber's assertion that 'primordial relations' would eventually reduce in significance and be replaced and challenged by modernity, individualism and industrialization has proven incorrect (Eriksen 2002, 2). Instead, modernity, the rise of individualism and industrialization in fact increased ethno-nationalism as it increased disparities between groups regarding access to power, resources, governments, and territories. As a result, "ethnicity emerges and is made relevant through social situations and encounters, and through people's ways of coping with the demands and challenges of life" (2002, 1). Wood (1993) distinguishes the difference between state defined identities and that of individual or locally derived identities. These identities will often entail some degree of discrepancies and will result in conflict between the identities the state wishes to promote with the reality at the local level. Wood's analysis of Palestinian village life in Israel posits important results. By ascribing the state with the right to define and categorize identities,

minorities lose the opportunity to present a different identity. Such groups lose the right to not only define their identity, but also the right to recognition and existence. For Wood, the discrepancy between locally produced identities in contrast to that of state-imposed identities is an important theoretical tool in conflict analysis. Locally shaped identities produce behaviours and experiences that determine the conceptual political consciousness of a group. In contrast, state-imposed identities are far removed from the realities of local life and, while they are important in shaping group views, they are not necessarily the most crucial ones. While most democratic governments have come to some sort of an agreement with minority groups, the Israeli case is more complex. In this instance, the state has not necessarily imposed certain identities. For example, it has not attempted to change the religious orientation of the village people. Rather, it has seized certain characteristics of the villages' identities and, in the process, delegitimized and prohibited them. Such policies, according to Wood, are designed to prevent the possibility of other forms of politicization and allegiances from being developed, other than what the state sanctions. Crighton and Iver note that, "since ethnic conflict is rooted in psychologically potent needs for group identity and group worth, it is far more difficult than issues of class to reconcile in the course of modernization" (1991, 138). Therefore, the policy response has been to dismiss it and focus on state institutions instead.

Although there have been increased calls to focus on the sources of conflicts (for example, USAID 2009; OECD 2007), there have been few attempts to address root causes from a religious perspective. Rather, culture and ethnicity have taken centre stage, and, where religion has been addressed as a source of conflict, its significance has largely been marginalized or grouped within the discourse on 'terror' and insurgencies, which has effectively dismissed its relevance as a source of legitimacy building. At the very least, it has failed to link religion and its relevant actors and elites to the expectations of recipient societies as part of the whole legitimacy-building discourse. Both the empirical practice of reconstruction and the literature still view religion as a negative and largely unnecessary part of the normative reconstructions. Aided by the liberal 'wall of separation' theory, and propelled by recent developments, largely based on the 'end of history' and 'clash of civilizations' discourses, the international community is still demonstrating resistance to the accommodation of religion within this context. Political scientists have divided the discourse on religion into two distinct spheres: the first approach entails the dominant traditional perspective which adopts a reductionist approach to religion and its contribution to

international violence, protracted social conflicts and transnational terror organizations; the second, less widely adhered to perspective, entails a more insightful awareness of religion and acknowledges its relevance as a source of cultural or ethnic identity. However, this perspective is largely aimed at point out American imperial and neo-colonial practices, and the politicization of religion is linked to a critical discourse on American imperial power. This perspective essentially views religion as a negative, unnecessary and undesirable force, a tool used by marginalized groups who lack alternative means of self-expression. Both approaches view religion as expendable and a hindrance to the resolution of conflict. Its nullification through economic incentives and political development is still tacitly, or implicitly, expressed. In this manner the literature views religion (as a source of identity) as a conscious choice actively utilized and politicized by certain groups. Religion is then relegated to a superficial and external element of identity formation and cast aside with appropriate measures and policies for the more desirable civic identities.

## **2.7. Regional Implications:**

The donor community's adherence to liberal democratic values tends to act as the catalyst in fermenting this gap, often because such western values conflict with the local political culture and norms. One of the most prominent aspects of this western liberal view is the idea of the separation of church and state, that is the notion of a secular state, free from religious interference. While this policy may sound theoretically feasible, its pragmatic application has proven anything but smooth and unproblematic. Increasingly, the area where this gap comes to the fore is in the area of religion and what role it should play in the newly reconstructed democratic states. This is particularly so in Islamic societies where religion is not simply a lifestyle choice, but an ideology permeating political, economic and social boundaries. The reconciliation between allowing a role that is acceptable to the recipient state and creating as secular a state as possible is intensely challenging, one that is increasingly difficult to avoid in the current political climate. To date, the donor community has easily evaded the role of religion in recipient states, mainly because, with a few exceptions, the majority of state-building missions have been in non- Islamic states. Secondly, the evolving role of global Islam in the past decade has raised some significant questions for the future role of state-building practices. Additionally, the transitional nature of state-building practice has insured that the donor community is increasingly becoming deeply involved in the reconstruction of



the state's institutions and governing processes, as opposed to the earlier missions, such as in the Congo or Haiti where actions were slanted more towards peacekeeping rather than complete restructuring of the state's political and economic institutions. This shift has also coincided with the increasing role that the United States has taken in state-building missions, as opposed to previous missions led by the United Nations. Such shifts in state-building practices and changes in global dynamics, particularly with religion, imply that cultural norms and values, such as religion, will become increasingly prominent and difficult to avoid.

The limitation of identity politics within the literature extends far beyond the domain of the domestic politics of recipient societies. Rather, the lack of awareness of identity politics is detrimental to peace and reconstruction on a regional basis. The history of colonialism has ensured that the region is riddled with border conflicts with identities often transgressing state boundaries, challenging state sovereignty and generally producing further complications for the state and nation-building policies of the governments in the region. As a result, the literature has little to say about the influence of reconstructions on neighbors in relation to identity. Current literature in this context simply focuses on the impact of domestic politics on neighbouring states such as Iran or Saudi Arabia. Thus the literature does not adopt a more holistic regional approach. While the literature does acknowledge that neighbouring states should contribute to the economic development of recipient societies, it fails to take into consideration the complex nature of cross border and transnational identities in conflict management during reconstructions. A tentative literature has emerged that focuses on the cross border flow of people such as through religious students travelling between Iran and Afghanistan to influence the religious doctrine of Afghani students. There is some literature focused on the process of students travelling to foreign countries including Iran and Pakistan to gain greater Islamic studies (Borchgrevink 2007, 8). The literature, hence, limits the nature of pan-Islamic sentiments within the scope of religious education. Thus, there is a limited attempt to analyse the greater political influence of this process other than to declare that there is some belief within the religious community in Afghanistan that Pakistan's schools are possible "hate factories" (Borchgrevink 2007, 7) and that, "aside from better religious education in Pakistan, the students there also become politicized and are more aware of international developments." (Wardak et al. 2007, 30). One of the most prominent texts that emerged following the war was Vali Nasr's *The Shia Revival* (2007) which focused on the reconstruction's regional impact. However, these implications were limited to the Sunni-Shia politics in the region and Nasr's main argument has been widely contested (see, for instance,

Puelings 2010). This study and other later publications on this matter by the author, do not capture the complexity of the war's impact regionally. Critics (Hodgkins 2007), however, have been quick to mention that Nasr's thesis is flawed in placing blame solely on the Sunni-Shia conflict. Rather, other regional and international factors such as Arab relations with the West, domestic politics in the U.S., as well as the success of reconstructions in the region have just as great an impact regionally as sectarian relations.

The literature largely focuses on the impact of the international donor community on recipient societies and ignores the regional implications of reconstructions (Ehteshami 2003). This is an important gap in the literature since it demonstrates a lack of a consistent and comprehensive regional policy that is developed along with context-specific policies, tailored to the recipient society. Subsequently, while the literature has produced some theories about the flow of spoilers across borders, it has failed to see the stake that regional players may have in the reconstruction of a state in their region. As a result, when spoilers and terrorists crossed over into Iraq to contribute to the general disarray, the lack of appropriate security and military planning was considered at fault (Leonard 2008; Beestermoller and Little 2003). Faulting the military for the lack of security serves to highlight one of the major limitations of the field. The field is characterized by disregard for the impact of regional reconstructions and does not produce supporting preventative regional measures, but instead demands greater border security to reduce the problem. Subsequently, there is little attempt to produce regional policies simultaneously with the reconstruction of the recipient society so as to allow neighbours to become stakeholders in peaceful reconstruction.

In fact, there is a strong need to analyse the neighbouring states' agendas and interests in the state-building process beyond a basic Sunni-Shia conflict overview that current literature provides. The clear winners of the war in Iraq the long suppressed Shia majority over the smaller, historically more dominant Sunni sect, as well as the increased politicization of the Shia Ayatollahs, whose very word could lead to disorder or a smoother path towards state-building, has fuelled debate within the Islamic and Western world over the Shia/Sunni demography and power balance in the Islamic world (Dehghanpisheh 2007); with some debate emerging over the perceived threat of the 'Shia Crescent' and the influence and interest of Iran, long a champion of Shia minorities throughout the Islamic world, in ensuring that a Shia dominated Iraqi state emerges (Nasr 2006a; The Economist 2008). Likewise, the increased prominence of Shias in Iraq who have a 60% majority, and its leadership's close proximity to Iran is worrying to Saudi Arabian interests who fear Shia expansion and

influence in the Islamic world (The Economist 2005). Hence, a basic look at the major regional powers and neighbouring states demonstrates the immense invested interests regional players have in ensuring what type of post-conflict Iraqi state will emerge. State-building literature has identified the significance of neighbouring states in influencing weak state structures and institutions and adding to that destabilization. The thesis will focus in depth on the relationship between Iraq and its neighbouring states and how this relationship has influenced the religious elite's political decisions in dealing with the United States led state-building process in Iraq.

## **2.8. Conclusion:**

The literature demonstrates an inherent problem that prevents successful reconstructions. Firstly, the state-centric nature of the international system, supported by international institutions such as the U.N. and powerful states, ensures a lack of appropriate attention on nation-building measures. Nation-building policies focus on addressing group cleavages that may require a combination of reconciliation, arbitration, communication, and coordination, along with justice for past wrongs. It is one of the central arguments of this thesis that all reconstructions should entail two distinct yet interrelated policies: state centred policies in conjunction with society centred policies. Secondly, the literature indicates a disproportionate focus on sovereignty of recipient states and not enough on promoting legitimacy, not only of the reconstruction process, but also the post-conflict state. Finally, the most common way that legitimacy is prevented is through inadequate attention to identity issues based on ethnic and religious cleavages within recipient societies. In the case of Iraq, an inadequate level of cultural insight inhibited policies that would have reduced or prevented a sectarian conflict. This dynamic highlighted the intrinsic limitations of the field whose implications have extended far beyond the borders of Iraq and have reverberated across the region. The essential implication of the literature resides with the inadequate attention that society centred policies have attracted. This tendency, in fact, allowed for unfavourable sectarian, ethnic and religious conditions to develop in the initial stages of the reconstruction. Adding to this, the illegitimate nature of the reconstruction in a region that has a history of disagreement with the West was bound to produce further security and policy complications. The treatment of culturally sensitive factors such as religion, its representatives, or the distinction between sects further challenged the legitimacy of the invasion and subsequent reconstruction. This

indicates a strong tension between impositions of Eurocentric liberal values which clashes with the immediate needs, expectations and interests of the recipient society. That is not to suggest that such missions should not aim towards liberal democratic values, but rather that the *immediate* needs of the recipient society should be centred more on establishing- often for the very first time- peaceful societal and group interactions; in other words, nation-building policies that establish the desire and incentive for different competing groups to coordinate and develop consensus in relation to the future of the state. Indeed, this may very well involve religious actors in deeply religious societies during the reconciliation, dialogue and discussion process. Iraq has decisively demonstrated the difficulties of ignoring important religious actors, which in some instances, served to strengthen the power and support for such individuals. Where such actors were against the reconstruction and involvement of non-legitimate international task force, they became heavily influential in the insurgency. Further, the preconceptions of the international task force combined with lack of appropriate and in depth cultural awareness led to the marginalization of important religious actors that could have affected the legitimacy of the reconstruction from the very beginning. Biases and misconceptions are by no means an appropriate vindication for placing the lives of innocent and long suffering Iraqi's in the path of further conflict. Awareness of cultural, identity and religious signposts is an essential prerequisite of any reconstructions. Yet, the U.S. led mission, following the dramatic events of September 11, placed preconceptions ahead of a more secure, effective and legitimate rebuilding of an already war traumatized society.

## CHAPTER THREE- THE AMERICAN MODEL OF RECONSTRUCTION

### 3.1. Introduction:

The ill-advised invasion of Iraq and the subsequent reconstruction was largely attributed to the specific foreign policy agendas of a small group of powerful advisers in the Bush administration, the neoconservatives (hereafter neocons). The neocons were deemed as the causal factor towards a return to American imperial and colonial practices. This widely accepted view failed to take into consideration the long record of American involvement in the domestic affairs of weak states and the fact that the neocons were reflecting a long history and tradition of American foreign policy.

It is increasingly apparent that the field of liberal peace theory is no longer the most viable approach towards the reconstruction of weak and failing states and that an alternative method is necessary. Since the end of the bi-polar world order and the demise of the Soviet threat, liberal peace theory has been hailed as the prevailing ideology of the New World Order. The success of the third wave of democracy in the 1970s and 1980s that swept Latin America, Eastern Europe and parts of Asia gave further credence to the utility of liberal peace theory as the overriding global ideology. Liberal peace theory, as identified in previous chapters, involves the implementation of Kantian legacy of procedural democracy, combined with constitutional liberalism, separation of church and state, and market fundamentalism (see Danilovic and Clare 2007). However, the challenges that weak and failing states currently pose, and the subsequent reconstructions launched since, have demonstrated significant gaps and limitations within liberal peace theory in addressing present challenges. Increasingly it is the domain of the secular versus the sacred that is posing the most challenging threat to liberal peace theory (see Barot 1993; Asad 1999; 2003). As the recent *Arab Spring* uprisings demonstrated it is possible that increasing numbers of reconstructions and international interventions will occur within deeply religious societies. It is, therefore, imperative that theorists locate alternative means of reconciling elements of liberal peace with existing traditional and cultural practices in a manner that does not subvert a recipient society's identity but merely replaces the weak institutional structures and enforces processes and mechanisms that promotes liberalisation.

The case of Iraq and its reconstruction demonstrates this challenge exceptionally well. Subsequent to the 2003 invasion of Iraq numerous critical accounts emerged criticising the Bush administration's heuristic invasion and subsequent reconstruction (see Diamond 2005; Fukuyama 2006a; Allawi 2007; Byman 2008). Most accounts focused on the visible shift in American foreign policy from the previous administration, the relatively inactive Clinton government, to a more aggressive form of intervention during the Bush presidency (see Daalder and Lindsay 2003; Kellner 2003; Fukuyama 2006b; 2006c). Few experts in the field provided a more in depth account of American foreign policy within the reconstructionary field, and these were usually confined only to twentieth century interventionism (see Halper and Clarke 2004; Layne 2006). Likewise, the body of literature that traces the long and complex history of American style reconstruction and interventionism is also rather limited. Even now a comprehensive history of early American interventionism is lacking within the field. This significant fissure within the literature has produced a large volume of reductionist accounts of American foreign policy within the field that is largely misinformed of the legacy of American interventionism on the field of reconstruction. Consequently, when the Iraq invasion occurred the Bush Administration's foreign policy was widely viewed as alarming in its alleged break from previous U.S. foreign policy traditions (see Kornblut 2007). The negative theoretical and practical repercussions of this perspective led rise to the argument that the field is merely a tool for the global hegemon to exercise its neo-colonial and neo-imperial might (Zunes 2004; Monten 2005; Layne 2006). More importantly, this perspective permeated the reconstruction process and the policies that were implemented were tainted with neo-colonial implications. While the level of critical discourse contributed to the positive development and reassessments of policies for the field this process redirected attention from the most important agenda of reconstructing a viable and stable nation-state within Iraq.

In an effort to break away from the dominant trend within the field, this chapter attempts to view the rise and development of American interventionism within the reconstructionary field and, hence, identify the greater foreign policy agendas that not only led to Iraq but also its dominant failures. The principal reason for this is that almost all of the accounts of the Iraq war start with a critical explanation of the Bush administrations' policy failures. In this regard, if this chapter were to follow the same trend, it would produce little of interest that has not already been accounted for by other experts in the field. Instead, in breaking with the prevailing trend and viewing the Bush Administration's policies in juxtaposition with

dominant trends within American foreign policy, it will emerge that the Bush Administration's policies that led to the Iraq intervention were actually in line, and most crucially not in discord within American foreign policy. When viewed in this light, the intervention in Iraq, and its subsequent reconstruction, appears less alarmingly divergent than the general nature of American foreign policy. Consequently, the purpose of this chapter is not to focus on the dominant failures of the Bush Administration (since this has been done extensively) but to identify a long history of interventionism and, therefore, the norms that underpin that tradition. This, in itself, is a crucial element of this study, for in so doing, this research moves beyond the cursory administrative failures that prominent theorists are currently consumed with identifying and correcting. Instead, by focusing on the very ideas and values that underpin the foundation of American interventionism and reconstructions, it becomes apparent that failures are linked less with pre-conflict plans; rather, limitations in the reconstruction field are largely linked to U.S. values and international aspirations that directly influences foreign policy decisions.

On a more practical level, identifying the agenda of the United States is crucial because of the interdependent relationship between broader national goals and domestic and foreign policies. As the 2002 U.S. National Security Strategy points, out in an ever globalised and interconnected world the "distinction between domestic and foreign affairs is diminishing" (Security Strategy of the U.S. 2002). Similarly, identifying the plans for post conflict Iraq cannot be viewed in isolation from broader U.S. agenda and concerns. The United States launched a pre-emptive strike against Iraq against a tense national dialogue concerning the war against terror, the perceived threat of rogue states and such states creating or providing WMD to non-state actors and terrorist organizations. As a result, the policies and plans utilised in Iraq; (irrespective of the level of its success during the post conflict part of the operation) are simply a continuation of previous U.S. policies and objectives and cannot be considered in isolation. In *Politics Among Nations* (1948), for instance, Morgenthau finds that the character of a state's foreign policy can only be identified through a close scrutiny of particular policies and their consequences. He posits that, therefore, "in order to improve society, it is first necessary to understand the laws by which society lives." In view of this, it is important to understand the United States foreign policy agenda, as well as the motives behind its implementation. Adding to this perspective, Michael Hudson (2005) likewise states that an understanding of different American presidents and key actors in their administration for example, as well as the domestic constraints and concerns of their time, can be a

significant foreign policy analysis tool. Only through the analysis of political acts performed and actors involved, as Morgenthau points out, can analysts gauge the objectives and consequences of such actions; and hence, through this process, the overall U.S. plan for Iraq can be understood and examined.

In accounting for the rise of American reconstructionary activities, this chapter will establish the dual nature of American foreign policy which has manifested itself in the lacuna between reconstructionary theories and practices. The inability to reconcile the dual nature of American foreign policy has ensured the entrenchment of inherent instabilities in such missions. American foreign policy, or American internationalism, has experienced three distinct phases in recent history. Its initial stages were defined by the Wilsonian vision of a new peaceful world order, followed decades later by a new vision of American liberal republican triumphalism. The third and current stage of Americanism is one of a reconstructionary world order, so grand in scope that it dwarfs the previous American attempts at re-ordering the international system. This new intervention induced reconstructionary world order, despite setbacks and failures, according to experts, was initialized through Afghanistan and wholly adopted with Iraq. However, this chapter will note that interventionism and the use of force is a policy that had an extended, and often celebrated, tradition in American history.

Finally, the significance of this chapter should not be underestimated. While the reconstruction process in Afghanistan and Iraq continues with millions of American tax payers money squandered in seemingly protracted conflicts; thousands of civilian and military lives lost, as well as the palpable disapproval of the international audience, it is essential to note the defining feature of Americanism in the twenty first century: that reconstructionary missions will continue, despite international disapproval, acceptance or rejection of this policy. The ‘arc of crisis’ extending from the Africa to the Middle East, as well as central and South East Asia still constitutes as a significant problem to the stability of the international system. Future missions will persist but will only differ in their administrative elements, particularly in garnering international acceptance and cooperation. Indeed Iraq, and to a lesser extent Afghanistan, are not the end of American reconstructionism. Rather, they are the experimental foundations of a hegemonic power that will situate future American reconstructions in a new ‘American century’.



### **3.2. Wilsonian Internationalism:**

The relationship between the reconstruction field and the United States has always been a unique one, which has set the American Empire apart from previous empires of the past. An empire that has relied, in the words of Edward Said, on the “deployment of power and interests” (1994, 22) to reflect a unique agenda based on the cultural and historical foundations of the U.S. Thus, the United States has conducted interventionary missions of reconstruction since the nineteenth century, ranging from the Caribbean, to Central America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. More crucially, this practice was long in place before the presidency of Woodrow Wilson. Experts, such as Robert Orr (2004, 4) for instance, has identified five distinct reconstructionary periods within U.S. history. These include the late parts of the nineteenth and early parts of the twentieth century involving imperialistic endeavors such as Philippines (1898-10), Cuba (1898-02), Mexico (1914-18) and Haiti (1914-34). The second phase includes the reconstructionary activities after the Second World War involving Japan (1945), Germany (1948), Italy (1948) and Austria (1945-55) among other smaller missions. The third phase occurred in the 1950s and was consumed by the Vietnam War, in an effort to prevent communist expansion. This was followed by another phase during the 1990s which included missions in Somalia (1992-94), Rwanda (1994) and the Balkans (1996-98). Finally, the early parts of the twenty first century saw Afghanistan and Iraq added to a long list of states and territories that have gained the attention of American reconstructionary policies. Often, in the cases previous to the most recent ones reconstructions entailed intrusive and forceful methods of removing ‘tyranny’ and implementing new forms of liberal governance reminiscent of Bush Administration interventionism. These distinct phases, as identified by Orr (2004) highlight an ongoing tradition of intervention and reconstruction in the American foreign policy tradition which acts as a central theme in American foreign policy and identity. Thus, according to Said, the U.S. empire is one based on the “idea of overseas rule- jumping beyond adjacent territories to very distant lands-has a privileged status in [U.S. culture]...this idea has a lot to do with projections, whether in fiction or geography or art, and it acquires a continuous presence through actual expansion, administration, investment, and commitment” (1994, 25).

It is widely posited (Belloni 2007; Ikenberry, Knock and Slaughter 2009) that the history of American reconstruction can be traced back to the diplomatic and visionary endeavours of Woodrow Wilson. However, the American history of Reconstructionary activities in fact originated far earlier than the era of Wilsonian internationalism. The origin of the field is

important in gaining a deeper understating of not only the nature of the field but also possible future directions. The dominant and widely accepted view argues that its origins can be linked back to President James Monroe, in his famous 1823 “Monroe Doctrine”, whereby he warned against European interference in the Western hemisphere, following various revolutionary uprisings in the Spanish colonies (Smith 2010, 2; Smith 1994). While both Monroe and Wilson contributed significantly to the Reconstructionary field, they nevertheless did not originate the practice of direct interference and reconstruction of states. Rather Monroe and Wilson merely contributed to its popularisation and reformation. In fact, the dominant values within Wilsonianism existed in the American identity and tradition long before their revival by Wilson (Hoff 2007). These values were a reflection of wider changes in the relationship between colonial Empires and the peoples they governed. In England, for instance, as a result of the extensive debates resulting in the Reform Bill of 1832, the British empire increasingly adopted a policy of ‘imperial trusteeship’ (Griffith 1998, 10). Because of the intellectual works of Sir James Stephens and reformers such as Lord Durham, the notion of promoting limited self-governance within the colonies emerged. Through allowing limited self-governance, colonies such as Canada and Australia eventually gained independence (Griffith 1998, 10). Thus, the concept of self-governance and its implementation existed long before Wilson's famous fourteen-point speech.

According to Hoff (2007) the crucial concept of self-determination did not originate from Wilson, instead, he served to provide a revival of the “symbolic and mythological hallmark of the origins” of the United States; self-determination was also central to the American identity and sense of exceptionalism and exemplarism (Hoff 2007, 22). This revivalism inevitably led to the first parts of the twentieth century witnessing increased U.S. intervention and Reconstructionary activities, including in Cuba (1917-33), Haiti (1914-34), Nicaragua (1912-1933) and the Dominican Republic (1916-24) (Patterson and Merrill 2010, 162). This process was exacerbated by the rise of American imperialism and territorial expansionism which produced anxiety over European interference (Dautrich and Yalof 2008, 537). Consequently, conflicts in the Caribbean and South America as well as Europe established a practice of occupation and military involvement in the early parts of the twentieth century; a practice that had started to emerge a century before with missions in Mexico (1846-1848) and Korea (1894-96) among many others. This tradition was wholly adopted by Woodrow Wilson who attempted to forge a new international order. However, Wilson extracted elements of the Monroe Doctrine and attempted to amalgamate it with his own vision of a new world order.

Suggestive of the dominant criticism surrounding the Iraq invasion, many of these noted interventions were conducted under little direct threat towards the United States itself. The United States role as the leading global intermediary of international conflict in combination with its sense of exceptionalism as well as its desire to expand its influence produced an often aggressive interventionary position. Hence the Monroe Doctrine established a tradition of concern over the domestic policies of other states, not only those that directly impacted the United States but also towards other states long before Wilsonian internationalism. In fact, according to Smith, Wilsonianism, was “quite in line with basic propositions of United States foreign policy set long before his time” (1995, 85). Civil wars in Mexico and Brazil and the United States' active participation in these events led to the institutionalisation of the Monroe Doctrine as the “groundwork for a broader U.S. role in mediating disputes in Latin America, and the Doctrine became a wedge for the assertion of a peace-building role in Latin-America” (Smith 2010, 3). As early as 1821, secretary of state John Quincy Adams warned against the rise of American intervention as it became more aggressive and frequent in nature. Quincy criticised British colonialism and argued that the expansion of American influence would not only curtail British imperialism but would also engender the expansion of liberal democratic values (Teed 2006, 80). Quincy, however, strongly advocated exemplarism and rejected interventionism to liberate colonial territories. Arguing that such involvement would lead the U.S. to become the ‘dictatoress’ of the world, he warned America not to “go abroad in search of monsters to destroy” (Coffman 2007, 36).

Nevertheless, the ‘Monroe Doctrine’ as well as Wilsonianism have largely produced the intellectual origins of Reconstructions, and were responsible for popularising its inherent norms. Their contributions, however, have been strongly in line with the dominant American traditions of liberal democratic governance, secularism and free trade, with a strong tendency towards their exportation. The connection of the ‘Monroe Doctrine’ to the Reconstructionary field produces several important implications. Firstly, there is a long and clear history of American involvement in disputes that may have had little direct impact on the United States itself. Secondly, this involvement usually took the form of direct interventionism and reconstruction, and, finally, the United States, from its conception, saw itself adopting a mediator role between, and more crucially *within* states. This, in itself, poses fundamental challenges to the reconstructionary field on two accounts. Firstly, it clearly demonstrates that the Bush Administration’s pre-emptive strike, if viewed within the reconstructionary field, is actually not as radically different and divergent from previous American foreign policy

traditions as has been claimed. David Mitchell (2005, 180), for instance, notes that the distinction between the Bush administration and previous administrations lies not in a break from past policy making decisions, but in the methods employed to achieve those interests. A brief account of Wilsonianism, dating back to the Monroe Doctrine reveals an aggressive interventionist stance similar to the one adopted by the Bush Administration. As Mitchell (2005) notes, this policy was reproduced, and broke from the past through unilateralism rather than multilateralism. Further, as Ruland, Hanf and Manske note, the Bush administration's policies were not so much an "aberration than a reincarnation" (2006, 35) of the dominant U.S. foreign policy traditions. Secondly, this conflicts with the alarmist overtones with which some experts have viewed the Bush Administration's aggressive internationalism. Perhaps, viewed in light of the Clinton administration's policies, it is easy to view Bush's policies as radically divergent. However, when placed in the context of a wider American foreign policy tradition, such hype seems sensationalised.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the precedence of the Monroe Doctrine, the Wilsonian era itself is of fundamental importance to the field for a variety of reasons. Wilsonianism contains six key elements (Ikenberry, Knock and Slaughter 2009), which served as the basis for the twentieth century reconstructions of states. Firstly, since traditional methods of security formation such as war were outmoded forms of foreign policy, the new order of the international system needed to be based on establishing and promoting a community of democratic nation-states. This process allowed for the establishment of accountable sovereign states that would take into consideration the needs and values of their citizens before launching into protracted conflicts. This accountability naturally limited the power of states and their ability to pursue security through the old world order. Secondly this process could be expedited through the promotion of free trade, establishing economic ties and interdependence that would act as another barrier against state aggression. Economic development would further produce modernization processes which would contribute to increased civilization of citizens and the development of civil society which, in turn, would limit authoritarian tendencies. Combined with the third element, the establishment of the rule of law, both internally within states as well as between states, this would strengthen international peace and cooperation. State aggression and war

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<sup>5</sup> This perspective is not undermining the necessity of being alarmed over the Bush administrations aggressive internationalism. There are indeed significant justifiable reasons as to why the 'Bush Doctrine' should have been viewed in an alarming light, least of all for the mockery of established legal norms. However, the focus of this argument is more on demonstrating that an analysis of U.S. history of foreign policy activities demonstrates that the Bush administration did not really diverge much from historical practices. While there should be alarm at the Bush administrations disregard for international norms, the alarm should not be based on an understanding of the 'newness' of the administrations policies.

could be addressed through these recognized rules as well as through the establishment of mutual security, where belligerent states would be addressed collectively by the international community. This process would thus act as a preventative measure against state aggression, pressuring states to consider alternative diplomatic practices. The combination of these processes was indeed viewed as an inevitability, along with the rise of globalization movements, which ensured increased interaction through economic and political interdependence. Finally and perhaps most importantly, this new Wilsonian world order could only be established through the direct ownership and leadership of the United States (Ikenberry, Knock and Slaughter 2009, 11-12).

However, this new Wilsonian world order proved far more difficult to implement in practice. Even Wilson increasingly came to realize that the new world order was still contingent on force and that the development of democracy and its continued existence was reliant on the imposition of war. Most notably, the rise of German aggression led to the eventual involvement of the United States. It was Wilson himself who declared war on Germany in 1917 by rationalizing that a war with the Germans was necessary in order to establish peace so that the world can be “made safe for democracy” (Smith 1995, 84). Consequently, the role of war and state aggression was not as obsolete as Wilson had hoped. While Wilsonianism reordered the relationship of states with war, it also enforced its imposition as a direct tool for establishing peace. In other words, war was no longer to be used as a means of state self-interest and territorial aggression. It was to be used by the international community collectively to establish peace and other desirable collective measures. Further, this trend instituted the process of imposing peace and democracy on non-conforming states. War was therefore a legitimate form of diplomacy to bring about change, an agenda which the ‘Bush Doctrine’ exploited to the full. Indeed, U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic as well as Haiti demonstrated that Wilson was not shy about using force to promote his democratic ideals (Ninkovich 2001, 53). This was particularly so in states where the people refused to cooperate with the processes designed to introduce freedom and democracy, or in other words, ‘their own salvation’ (Calhoun, 1993, 31).

Wilsonianism faced another significant setback with the failure of the League of Nations (1919-1946), which was charged with overseeing the new global order. The combination of the end of inter-state war and national self-determination was directly linked to this international body, the League of Nations, whose purpose it was to eliminate conflict, promote peace and self-determination as well as establish a set of rules and regulations for

the conduct of international relations between states (see Duggan 2008; Oppenheim 2009). Drawing on the forefathers of the enlightenment and the peace movement, from Kant to Bentham, Wilsonianism was reliant on the establishment of this League that would embody the peace movement (Howard 2002, 62). The League's triumph would lie in its establishment of the rule of law on an international scale, eliminating the need for instituting security by traditional means. In turn, a new world order would be shaped, based on peace, republicanism, individual and economic freedom and interdependence. Though the League did fail, it was eventually replaced by the United Nations, which attests to its durability, as well as the visionary element of Wilsonianism. Accordingly, a state-centric practice emerged through Wilsonianism which viewed peace as an activity confined to international relations (Balloni 2007, 27). That is, establishing peace according to Wilsonianism was an industry between states. It, therefore, ignored the notion of peace *within* states. In fact, it was only following the end of the Cold War, with state failures such as Rwanda, Somalia and the breakdown of Yugoslavia that a new international agenda permeated the discipline. The new perspective redirected its focus onto the *inter-state* conflicts with a particular concern over human security. However, this perspective appears flawed since an overriding element that underpinned Wilsonianism was the notion of exporting liberal democracy to states still exercising violence, whether internally through civil strife or outwardly towards other states. What is significant from Balloni's assertion above is that states were the dominant actors in Wilsonianism. That peace had to be produced through the direct cooperation of states, and where states did not exist, people had to attain self-determination and enthusiastically adopt a liberal democratic system of governance. Therefore Wilsonianism was very much state-centric, both in the external relations between states and peace development, but, also in the form of governance with a particular focus on democratic state institutions.

An important element of the relationship between liberal peace theory and the United States is the role of democracy promotion. Wilson's flirtations with enforcing democracy started with Victoriano Huerta's (1913-1914) dictatorial rise to power in Mexico, followed by military interventionism in Haiti and the Dominican Republic in response to revolutionary movements in 1915-1916. Showing some hesitation in intervening in Haiti, Wilson, nevertheless reluctantly decided to intercede based on the level of internal violence, though he questioned the legitimacy of that move, noting that America may not have the "legal authority to do what we apparently ought to do" (Cronon 1965, 288). Eventually, Wilson resolved that "there is nothing for it but to take the bull by the horns and restore order"

(Calhoun 1993, 24). However, Cronon went further than merely restoring order. In fact, unequivocally arguing that:

[W]e consider it our duty to insist on constitutional government there and will, if necessary (that is, if they force us to it as the only way) take charge of elections and see that a real government is erected which we can support...This will probably involve making the city authorities virtually subordinate to our commanders. They may hand the city government over to us voluntarily (1965, 289).<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, intervention in the protectorate state of Dominican Republic ensued so as to continue protecting the interests of an American supported government whose existence was being threatened by revolutionaries (Nankovich 2001, 52; Calhoun 1993). These measures hardly produced a foreign policy tradition that is radically divergent from the practices of the Bush Administration close to a century later. More crucially, as the above quote demonstrates, a particular trend was already evident in American foreign policy during Wilson's time. That is, the perceived necessity to interfere in the internal conflicts of sovereign states to restore peace and order, the need to reform governments, and impose democratic constitutionalism and, finally, if necessary, this would be produced through forceful interventionism. An idealist streak, which still exists in American foreign policy, is also evident in Wilson's final statement; that is, it is always hoped that the recipient society would welcome such measures and indeed voluntarily accept hand over of their affairs to the United States. In turn, the implications are that the U.S. has a unique expertise and knowledge in the appropriate form of governance, and this assumption should not only be a natural right of interference in others' affairs but also be accepted by all unequivocally.

Nevertheless, criticism abounded following the Wilsonian attempts at liberal imperialism. The correlation between democratic governance and its 'civilizing' effects led to prominent opponents of this tradition. James Fitzjames Stephen and Henry Sumner Maine, both prominent ideologues for instance, articulated suspicions and directed criticism towards the underlying suppositions behind liberal imperialism (Mantena 2010, 22). Others, such as Ramsay MacDonald, a prominent British statesman, argued that liberal imperialism could serve a positive purpose, so long as such interventions were conducted for the sole purpose of aiding the recipient societies, thereby setting the precedence for 'benevolent imperialism'.

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<sup>6</sup> It is interesting to note that Wilson assumed that the people of Haiti would welcome democratisation, and the U.S. as the representative of that ideal, voluntarily. This sentiment was repeated in Iraq in 2003 by the Bush Administration. Yet the outcome of such missions have demonstrated that while there is a desire for an organic democratic development, the imposition of democracy by an outside intervening force is, almost always an unwelcomed, and often, a none-voluntary process.

Indeed, for MacDonald's interventions were essential and a necessary tool for peace building (cited in Porter, 2008, 39). An alternative view (see Falk 2004; Reus-Smit 2004; Hansen, Toft and Wivel 2009) argued that such interventionist and imperialist endeavours were part of a more self-serving domestic policy trait that not only directly challenged the notion of 'benevolent imperialism' but also served as a means of domestic cohesion. American conceptions of 'peace', therefore, are in a constant state of reactionary evolution as new crises pose new unforeseen challenges, requiring vigilant modernization and renewal of the American World Order. This American World Order is fixated on the reordering of the international system in search of an intangible 'peace' through traditional methods of security. Interventionism is, thus, not so much concerned with benevolence or even imperialism, but rather a process to maintain domestic stability directly through foreign policy forays that may appear imperialistic. Reminiscent of Theodore Roosevelt's famous idiom "speak softly and carry a big stick", Martin Coward (2005) notes that, American foreign policy has birthed a dual relationship that has been excessively reliant on a "guns and butter bargain", whereby "foreign adventures are permitted so long as permanent growth is maintained domestically". In fact, a symbiotic relationship has emerged that is sustained by this very process, which is that "guns make the butter" (see Burnstein 1996). Coward's (2005) analysis of David Harvey's *The New Imperialism* (2003) yields him to posit that American foreign policy has traditionally retained an inherent mistrust which serves a greater purpose of unification of a "heterogeneous polity through an antagonistic relations with real and imagined others." While American foreign policy has consistently relied on the definition of outside threats as a means of internal domestic unification, it has nevertheless produced a tradition of incursions into sovereign states in order to deal with threats, imagined or real. The rise of American hegemony, therefore, correlated directly to a prominent paranoia over global threats to its power. This was most evident during Wilson's Presidency, particularly in light of the shifting trends that were emerging within the international system at the time. The new Wilsonian world order was framed within the discourse of a violent international environment devoid of rule of law or order. This argument used European expansionism as a case. However, eventually, fears over European expansionism led to Wilson's "desire to spread law, order, and constitutional democracy as the chief justification for intervention" (Ninkovich 2001, 52). This trend was adopted by other consecutive administrations that continuously used the perceived threat of European, British, French, German or Japanese expansionism as a means of rationalising their own expansionism. Nancy Mitchell (1999), for instance has argued that American leaders, including Wilson and others such as Theodore



Roosevelt, intentionally overstated European threats “as a smoke screen for their own expansionist schemes” (Gilderhus 2005).

Another feature of Wilsonianism entailed a distinctly Jeffersonian secularism with the removal of the influence of religion on political constraints. In fact, Wilson was weary of the influence of the Church on political decision making precisely because it detracts allegiance away from the state. In this regard, Wilson was a strong advocate of “civic religion” (Pestritto 2005, 42). Woodrow, however, was not averse to religion *per se*; rather, he viewed politics as a form of “missionary work” and more importantly, “an extension of Christian values into the public realm” (Jamison and Eyerman 1995, 181). The implications of the ‘wall of separation’, has strongly permeated American foreign policy, most clearly within the Reconstructionary field. Consequently, a strong missionary and evangelical zeal exists within American political culture. This enthusiasm is evident through the type of foreign policy activities undertaken. None, as Wilson suggests above, is more important than the exportation of secular liberal peace to non-democratic states. George Bush, for instance, justifying the war in Iraq, stated that “the liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world it is God's gift to humanity” (De Vries and Sullivan 2006, 274). Notions of regime change, sanctions, international boycotts and embargos as well as nation and state-building activities have played a strong role in popular American political culture. However, the inherent missionary fervour that propels such policies is strongly curbed when it comes to the reconstructions of states. The reconstruction of war torn states has traditionally entailed a strong state-centric tradition with a heavy emphasis on rehabilitating state institutions as well as reforming and expanding them along a westcentric secular, liberal model. Traditionally, there has been little tolerance or space within the field for religion to actively play a role, if at all. This is, despite the fact that religion, particularly through faith-based organisations, is increasingly playing a predominant role in international peace keeping missions. On a more global scale, religion, through religious fundamentalism, has also revived an area of political science that was long thought outmoded. Yet, this has meant a natural aversion to, and a stronger fervour to minimise the role of religion in reconstructions by the relevant powers. However, as Said notes, as imperial and neo-colonial forms of domination has advanced in the last two centuries, so too has “resistance to it also advanced” (1994, 26). An obvious, historical and identity entrenched response within the Middle East has been one of religious revivalism as a form of resistance to domination. However, changes to the forms and methods of resistance that has increasingly incorporated religious activism have not produced a level of interest in

religion in the field of reconstruction. The dominant and prevailing trend is one of aversion to adoption of any responses other than a secular-orientated form of reconstruction and regime promotion. Additionally, this process has not involved important policy changes to accommodate and take into account the positive role that religion, and its relevant actors and institutions, can play for the production of peace. Consequently, religion is confined within a negative domain in political discourses (Chidster, Tayob and Weisse 2004, 97). Alternative arguments for a more positive role for religion have emerged, but they tend to be widely regulated to a minority position in the discourse (see for instance Diener 1997; Turam 2007). Collectively, however, the exclusion of religion is indicative of the U.S. led policies lacking necessary reforms and modification to address changing global trends. This is reflected back into recipient societies in which a one-size-fits-all model is imposed irrespective of the fact that religion could play a positive role in reformation. This argument is relevant even for those states where religion has been the dominant source of conflict. Yet, the field continues to be dominated by a western, enlightenment centred historical legacy that combines a “British, French, and American imperial experience”, and is one which has a “unique coherence and a special cultural centrality” (Said 1994, 25). The successful imposition of this 'special cultural centrality' on non-western, non-democratic societies lies at the heart of the challenge posed to liberal peace theory.

Wilsonianism is also significant in demonstrating the dual nature of American foreign policy. On the one hand, there is a tendency to establish policies on values and altruistic notions such as democracy and human rights, while needing to retain national self-interest. Certainly, Wilson’s interests in the territories and states, in which his administration became involved with, did not merely involve altruistic motives. For instance, in recognising the significance of the Panama Canal in Central America to the United States, Wilson resorted to political pressures, financial incentives and force, to achieve national interests (Smith 1995, 64). Likewise, while espousing self-determination and sovereignty for colonial territories, America did not shy away from acquiring a large body of protectorates that proved to be of economic significance. Cuba, for instance was significant because of the potential military base that Guantanamo provided, not to mention its crucial port to the Caribbean trade routes (Gilderhus 2005). Likewise, the outright imperial annexation of the Philippines was unabashedly espoused for its proximity to the Chinese market. Haiti, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic were acquired for similar purposes. Such self-serving policies led Keynes to class Wilson, following the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, as “the greatest fraud the

world has ever seen” (Colas and Saull 2006). Likewise, for Mark Gilderhus, the guise of importing civilisation, democracy and the rule of law acts more as a “kind of public fiction” (2005, 314). In fact, according to Porter (2006) imperialism is hence intertwined in a complex domestic and foreign policy dialogue within United States. During Wilson's presidency this was evident in several ways, from the consistent use of military force to intervene in the affairs of sovereign states, to the annexation of land from other imperial powers including France, Russia and Spain, or from existing sovereign states such as Mexico. Additionally, this process contained an inherent level of racism and disregard for the natives of the lands occupied by the U.S. (MacPhee 2008).

Critics of Wilsonianism have further argued that it contributes to a divisive international order because it propels American foreign policy along Manichean views between allies or enemies, democratic and non-democratic. This process ensures that non-allied non-democratic states immediately fall within the latter category, which did not necessary reflect political reality. Indeed, Wilsonianism focuses foreign policy in a “moralistic and self-righteous missionary crusade, which is a quixotic use of power that can be cruel and self-defeating” (Smith 1995, 86). Latter American leaders have also adopted this tradition. For instance, Ronald Regan labelled the Soviet Union as the “evil empire” distinguishing between communism and liberalism (Israel and Watts 2000).<sup>7</sup> Likewise, Bill Clinton labelled similar states as “rogue states” distinguishing democratic and non-democratic states but also allies and foes within the non-democratic sphere, while George Bush grouped certain states into an “axis of evil” as well as his famous “you are with us or you are with the terrorists” speech (Litwak 2000; Greenstein 2003; Swansbrough 2008). This differentiation between the states that comprised the axis of evil in contrast to other states such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, demonstrates a dual and self-serving foreign policy. Jeremy Pressman (2009) posits that U.S. hypocrisy has undermined the Bush administration’s Middle Eastern policy. Policies such as a soft stance towards Mubarak’s anti-democratic measures in Egypt or the ignoring of the Saudi Monarchy’s illiberal behaviours while criticising Hamas' election into power through democratic measures, indicated that ‘democracy’ is merely a useful policy tool to vet out friends from foes according to U.S. geo-strategic interests. These ideological perspectives used to view states as evil or good, with or against the United States have

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<sup>7</sup> Indeed Regan started a speech in March 1983 on the rising influence of the Soviet Union thus: “there is sin and evil in the world, and we’re enjoined by scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose it with all our might” (Israel and Watts 2000, 365). This is reminiscent of similar values espoused much later by the Bush administration in its approach to the war on terror and the Iraq war.

culminated in a long established tradition of invasion of sovereign states, including Nicaragua, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq (Mirza 2010). Likewise, Robert Kagan (2006) argues that this inclination occurred precisely because a level of internal ignorance and a sense of exceptionalism keeps this tradition afloat. Kagan (2006, 5) notes that:

Americans have cherished an image of themselves as by nature inward-looking and aloof, only sporadically and spasmodically venturing forth into the world, usually in response to external attack or perceived threats. This self-image survives, despite four hundred years of steady expansion and an ever-deepening involvement in world affairs, and despite innumerable wars, interventions, and prolonged occupations in foreign lands. It is as if it were all an accident or an odd twist of fate. Even as the United States has risen to a position of global hegemony, expanding its reach and purview and involvement across the continent and then across the oceans, Americans still believe that their nation's natural tendencies are toward passivity, indifference, and insularity.

In this context, the United States has been wary of accusations of neo-colonialism or neo-imperialism. According to Graham MacPhee (2008), one obvious way in which the United States has shielded itself from charges of imperialism has been through the argument that unlike the European nation-state, the United States emerged as a collective of people not based on nationality, but based on the notion of a political community. Therefore, by virtue of its republican nature, the American people's affiliation is not nationalistic. That is, it is not based on a commonly shared race, language, religion or set of cultural symbols, but political and ideological values. Consequently, territorial expansionism, interventions and reconstructionary activities are not symptomatic of imperialistic desires but occur as the "incorporation of additional citizens within a political framework of equality and recognition" (MacPhee 2008, 204). Nevertheless, increasingly, American foreign policy is thought to embody a form of democratic or liberal imperialism. The key tenants of Wilsonianism which directly contributed to the foundation of the neo-imperialism include four founding features (Smith 2010, 6). They include the notion of self-government as an essential feature of post-colonial and post-conflict societies. Wilsonian self-determination ensures the development of an organic form of nation-state building, since the people of the recipient society are directly responsible and, hence, own the rebuilding process. Secondly, recipient people's interests must be of the most paramount concern for the international community if such missions are to be successful. Thirdly, this success is measured according to democratic processes, including voting and elections, which contribute to the process of peace and legitimacy building. Finally, international conflicts, whether between or within states, need to be addressed collectively so as to ensure a sense of collective responsibility, as

well as to prevent belligerents or those who would directly benefit from the conflict by profiting. However, these tenets have been adhered to in varying degrees. The most prominent feature that has consistently been present in all previous reconstructionary missions is the third feature, that of democratic norms acting as a guide to normal state reintegration into the international system. However, the level of commitment or long term accomplishment of this process has met with varying degrees of success in missions. Notions of self-government have progressively lost their initial appeal, with the U.S. increasingly using international protectorates to undermine self-governance in internationally administered mandates and trusteeship territories.

Widespread decolonization, following the end of World War II, meant the end of direct colonial rule. The fermentation of Marxist ideology within the liberalization struggles of colonized states, emerging within two opposing centres of Marxist ideology, China and the Soviet Union (Griffith 1998, 2), created a new global threat to the liberal, secular and democratic image that the U.S. envisioned for the international system. This ideological development posed a challenge to American hegemonic power and its need to continue to direct, influence and control the international system. However, it certainly did not mean the end of control over South Korea, West Germany or Japan's role as semi-sovereign protectorates under U.S. influence during the Cold War period. Likewise, this meant a lack of concern for the interest of post-colonial or post-conflict societies where self-determination and sovereignty were diverted. The combination of these two features became an increasingly recurrent feature of Reconstructionary missions. Cyprus, for instance demonstrates this process well. The decolonization process in Cyprus in 1960 produced a territory that ignored the resolve of the majority of the population (80% Greek) who wished for unification with Greece (Raic 2002; Diez 2002). Following independence, civil and communal strife ensued, leading to the deployment of U.N. peacekeeping forces in 1964 (Raic 2002, 123). The disintegration of the former Yugoslavia has produced similar measures. The increasing move away from multilateralism towards unilateralism by the U.S. ensured that the final feature of Wilsonianism has lost influence, opening the field to accusations of empire building, neo-imperialism and neo-colonialism. Collective security no longer ensures peace and order, however, according to some (Mitchelle 2005), this does not imply that American multilateralism is obsolete. In fact, multilateralism is a strong feature of American hegemonic influence (Mitchelle 2005, 180) despite the selective nature of the Iraq war. Rather, the Bush Doctrine aggressively presented a unilateral approach to conflict. However, it is essential to

note that this shift is not in direct conflict to Wilsonianism. Indeed, it is a direct attempt to continue Wilsonian interventionism, albeit in a far more aggressive and unilateralist way. Finally, and most crucially the move away from the promotion of self-determination is indicative of the increasing state-orientated nature of 'Reconstructions'; and this occurs precisely because the reconstruction of conflict prone societies is approached with a strong policy of building state capacity. Chandler (2010, 1) notes that this process serves as a "silver bullet" designed to address the weaknesses of weak and failing states, but, more crucially, such measures act as a preventative measure for state failure. In states or territories where protracted violence has developed along clear ethnic or religious lines, the international community's approach has been to introduce power sharing mechanisms to balance inherent differences. There has been a strong aversion to state disintegration into smaller states along perhaps more stable ethnic or religious lines.

### **3.3. Neo-Imperialism:**

The 1989 invasion of Panama is often perceived as the end of formal American imperialism. However, many continue to argue that American unwavering interference continued unabashedly, particularly through interventions, leading some to label such missions as neo-imperialism (see Holmes 2007; Bricmont 2006; Danchev and MacMillan 2005). Scholars have argued that the United States, even before gaining independence from the British Empire, was an expansionist empire in the making (Mirza 2010, 17). Others have strongly argued that the increasing number of protectorate territories, internationally administrated states and military bases around the world are a new form of American neo-colonialism (Kiernan 2005). Still others have contended that the U.S. political system is directly reliant on a strong domestic military industry. Mirza, for instance, notes that "wars are essential to feed America's insatiable military industrial complex and no American Commander-in-Chief could survive, much less get re-elected, without taking care of the Pentagon and the military brass" (2010, 142). Since 2001, for instance, the number of American bases has increased, including in Djibouti, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Qatar (Fakiolas and Fakiolas 2007, 77). The Pentagon has acknowledged that the total number of U.S. military bases outside of American territory number over 725 (Kiernan 2005, 364). What is clear, though, is that there is a variety of domestic, historical and international reasons why the U.S. finds it necessary to continue its current foreign policies of direct and covert interference.

Additionally, America's close relationship and direct influence within the major international financial institutions such as International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, as well as its significant influence over the United Nations, serve to sustain a neo-imperial structure (see Shor 2010, 82). Such trends, collectively, have been increasingly linked to American neo-imperialism, often disguised as a form of benevolent concern over weak and failing societies. The increasing concern over human rights and security in the latter parts of the twentieth century has buttressed this process significantly. As such, for some, neo-imperialism is disguised through 'democracy exportation', peace-keeping, peace-building, nation and state-building discourse (Chandler and Heins 2007; Colas and Saull 2006). Neo-imperialism is identified as the dominance of post-colonial societies by powerful states (Carey 2002, 59). Susan Marks (2003) argues that imperialism does not denote a political form of control over other territories since the end of colonialism and self-determination would have signified its end. Instead, imperialism denotes a system of economic domination and control, whose overriding feature is the "penetration and control of markets abroad" (Marks 2003, 452). Consequently, the end of formal colonialism did not indicate the end of imperialism. Rather, for Mark, imperialism has continued unabated, though, in a less direct way than political domination would otherwise suggest. Stokes and Raphael (2010, 2-3) agree as they note that American foreign policy is strongly linked to the attainment and securing of natural resources, particularly oil, though this process often occurs through indirect tacit measures. In fact, according to the authors, the attempt to transnationalise resource rich states in the South is a central element of American hegemonic and neo-imperialistic interests. This principle has ensured direct intervention and involvement in the affairs of sovereign states, often through the "guise of counterinsurgency", so as to "stabilize crucial oil-rich states" (Stokes and Raphael 2010, 2-3). This process can be defined as "expansive imperialism", whereby the demands of maintaining a capitalist production that is reliant on outside states, such as oil-rich states means that capitalism is conditioned to the pressures of over accumulation (see Askari 2006). An imperial power is therefore forced to engage in what David Harvey (2005) has labeled as a 'spatio-temporal fix'. In other words, in order to continue the process of capital growth and accumulation, the imperial power is obliged to invest in foreign markets, capital and labor. The implications of this argument are that there is little involvement of notions of benevolent imperialism; rather interventionary reconstruction is part of a larger process of securing American hegemonic might. Stokes and Raphael (2010) argue further that America has often actively sought to destabilize elements within such societies that could directly pose a threat to American influence and access to resources. By militarizing "state-

society relations”, it has attempted to restrain “those social forces that have the potential to organize against U.S. oil hegemony” (Stokes and Raphael 2010, 2). This process has occurred through U.S.’s military might, not only in directing such activities, but, also in funding and armoring those very forces. This process has ensured a massive military growth, with the establishment of covert military forces designed to conduct “psychological operations” against disruptive forces in such societies, “none of which were at war with the United States” (Stokes and Raphael 2010, 5). The main inference from Stokes and Raphael’s study is a negative implication for the field of reconstruction. It indicates that such missions are launched and conducted on both large scale and small scales, tacitly or implicitly by the United States for the sole purpose of securing its interests. This may provide extensive support for the argument that those missions that have proven of little worth to American interests such as Somalia or East Timor have incurred little support or political will; though this dichotomy may be an over simplification of a more complex process that entails multiple international constraints and push factors.<sup>8</sup>

This dominant self-serving U.S. policy has been buoyed by the binary moralist rhetoric and realist policies in practice. Hence, while the United States does use liberal moralism as the foundation of its policies, it increasingly adopts realist policies to achieve those ends. Louis Janowski (2004), labelling this process *realpolitik* and moral idealism, views this trend within American foreign policy as a dangerous form of attention deficit disorder. Similarly, Doug Stokes and Sam Raphael (2010, 11) argue that:

Extraregional hegemony- in other words, military, political, and economic dominance over the world’s important regions- has represented the grand strategic objective of the US state in the postwar era; not for reasons of preserving international peace and security, nor for promoting democracy and human rights, but for the purposes of maintaining its extraordinary levels of prosperity and power...To be clear: the primary logic which drives US statecraft has been a desire to secure and maintain the conditions which best serve its own economic and political interests above those of others and above any notion of being a “force for good”. In this context, the effort by the Bush administration to ensure that US global hegemony was maintained- and even extended – in the post-9/11 era should be understood as a continuation (albeit an acceleration) of long standing strategy.

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<sup>8</sup>Another interesting implication however, is the idea that the colonial societies that were less harshly controlled and suppressed by colonial powers have increasingly democratized and have less human rights violations as opposed to repressed states. States such as Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, Guyana and Tobago constitute as the bulk of these societies. Their relative lack of “economic and strategic importance” ensured a more positive attitude towards democratization (Carey 2002, 60), which supports the above notion of economic exploitation by colonial powers.



Such an argument places significant constraints into the path of American arguments that the sole purpose for democratization and regime change is to create a more open, fair and liberal international system. Further, the discourse over neo-imperialism has also given rise to arguments over American empire building. For some, however, it is the finer and intricate details of U.S. involvement in the affairs of weak states that is telling. Schlesinger (2002) and Kelly (2003) for instance, express scepticism over the existence of an American empire. For Kelly, doubt arises from the tendency to correlate empire with hegemony or direct forms of control with indirect or informal means of control. Instead, for Kelly, an empire does not exist since America is not about “moving in and taking over”, rather it is about “holding the door open for capital and trade and proffering local democracy as “self-determination,” as “freedom,” as the local route to equivalent agency, control, and prosperity (2003, 357). Fakiolas and Fakiolas (2007), disagree. They point out the Bush administration's attempt to “take advantage of US unipolarity to its fullest and establish an American-built and American-led international system, a hegemonic world order grounded in strong bilateral ties with loyal great powers and regional partners operating within a non-institutionalized coalition of the willing” (2007, 54). The tensions over the true nature and aspirations of the moral reasoning behind the U.S. involvement in reconstruction poses challenges to the field, since recipient societies, international organisations and other powerful donor states may view U.S. led reconstructions with a mixture of mistrust. This factor reduces the transformative capacity of the field if there is a lack of mutual international commitment and support.

On the other hand, some have even touted the necessity of an American empire for the benefit of the international system. The American empire, according to Niall Ferguson (2004):

not only underwrites the free international exchange of commodities, labor and capital, but also creates and upholds the conditions without which markets cannot function—peace and order, the rule of law, noncorrupt administration, stable fiscal and monetary policies—as well as providing public goods, such as transport infrastructure, hospitals and schools, which would not otherwise exist” (cited in Muthyala 2005).

Likewise, according to Muthyala (2005), empire can be beneficial not merely for the imperial centre itself but also for those who are subjected to that imperial power's influence. Such arguments represent the problematic nature of American hegemonic power and provide an alternative account from proponents of American neo-imperialism. This perspective

essentially takes note of the more positive side of American imperialism, other than a binary and negative account of U.S. hegemonic power. In the process, it presents, perhaps a more balanced and accurate account of American interests: at the same time both self-serving and benevolent.

However, the notion of an ‘American Empire’ posits negative implications for the Reconstructionary field because those who most often direct such missions are tainted with neo-imperial and neo-colonial brush strokes. Michael Rear (2008), for instance, argues that the negative and harmful impacts of American intervention are, in some instances, more damaging than non-interference in civil conflicts. Combining these accusations with the increasing tendency of American disregard for international norms of sovereignty and multilateralism, increasing military bases, particularly within Iraq, as well as an increasing number of international administrations governing post-conflict societies, leaves little doubt within the minds of recipient communities as to the ‘real’ intention behind such missions. On the other hand, authoritarian regimes have utilised anti-colonialist rhetoric to maintain their government’s power. International actors, such as Osama Bin Laden, as well as others, such as Slobodan Milosevic and Saddam Hussain, all resorted to anti-colonial idiom to justify their actions (Carey 2002, 60) increasing the ‘civilisational-consciousness’ of recipient societies. Likewise, the Bush administration's style of imperialism is likened to the old British version, where Christianity and civilization was being ‘introduced’ to the natives. This imperialism attempts to introduce a contractual, market orientated democracy, which is produced in union with a grand U.S. imposed “global moral-religious-social transformation” (Judis 2007). This ideological expansion is reinforced following major global events such as the Second World War, the Cold War and more recently the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and the ‘War on Terror’. Far more crucially, this trend is undercut by the concern over the decline of the American empire, particularly with the fear of loss of access to crucial natural resources. This is important as it suggests that perhaps it is not the administrative side of reconstruction missions that is the cause of failures (though that does play a part), rather it is the underlying imperialistic tendencies of the United States that acts as the dominant destabiliser. Overall, though, a more balanced perspective is provided by Ruland, Hanf and Manske (2006, 35) who argue that American foreign policy contains all three elements; that is, an “empire of liberty”, a “world hegemon”, as well as an imperialistic power which often emerges within the field of reconstruction. This also demonstrates the level of failures, success and limitations within the field.

However, balancing the competing views expressed above, American imperialism appears as the most prominent explanation. The feature that produces this conclusion is a persistent lack of material commitment in the American reconstructionary model. Despite a strong commitment in rhetoric to Wilsonian interventions spanning well over two centuries, the U.S. has consistently demonstrated a lack of real commitment to the success of such missions. The most predominant way this has been demonstrated in past missions is the lack of resources committed. This issue may stem from the widely held belief that weak, failing states and post-conflict societies welcome American interference and greater moral and political foundation. Certainly, “winning minds and hearts” has played a dominant role within reconstructions (Parzivand 2008). This presents a plausible argument as to why the U.S. expected Iraqi people to meet troops with “flowers and kisses” (Lewis 2006, 152). The abundant reports criticizing the U.S. and the international community’s lack of adequate troop numbers, funding, experts, staff and resources supplied highlights this endemic problem. For instance, following the Iraq invasion, widespread civil unrest ensued. The international media and community criticized the low level of U.S. troops in Iraq and the coalition’s inability to prevent social unrest (Cordesman 2003). This lack of will, however, has often been concealed through the human rights discourse which increasingly permeated the reconstruction field during the early 1990’s. While there are those that insist that U.N sanctioned missions are often presented to the member states as optimistically as possible so as ensure the commitment (Fearon and Laitin 2004; also see “Brahimi Report” 2001), it is nevertheless feasible that the lack of material commitment can be attributed to U.S. hegemonic confidence. The strong trend towards lack of material commitment combined with the sanguine launching of missions indicates a deep sense of superciliousness to the detriments of recipient states. The underlying assumption that underpins Wilsonian interventions is a deep seated confidence that, by the very nature of their soft power, history and position, weak nations will be freed from corrupt elites and tyrannical political institutions. Stefan A. Helper and Jonathan Clarke (2005) note this trend when they argue that “indispensable ingredients were the availability of U.S. power and the superior performance of the U.S. free market economic model. But, the key lesson is that America’s most effective weapon was its moral authority; Specifically, this was the sense that America was a force for good in the world and that the other side implicitly acknowledged the truth of this moral authority” (Clarke and Halper 2005, 1). U.S. Reconstructionary missions, hence, retain a distinct element of neo-imperialism precisely because they fail to take into consideration recipient society’s cultural, political and historical traditions. Rather, they operate with the

explicit mission of implementing western, state-centric and contractually based political traditions that require a seismic shift in recipient society's socio-political traditions. This shift, combined with a history of protracted violence, loss of physical infrastructure and institutions, and the psychological impacts of conflict and long standing divisions, presents a difficult terrain in which to reconstruct recipient societies.

Further to this, it is also reasonable to argue that missions are often launched for strategic national interests and that the 'reconstruction' discourse only accompanies such missions so as to provide a facade of legitimacy and altruism, particularly if there are significant human rights violations. Ali Jalali (cited in Hayes and Sedra 2008) argues that the international community's engagement in Afghanistan was not based on a need to establish peace or to reconstruct the war torn society and state. Rather, reconstruction was "an afterthought to the fight against global terrorism, and was driven by the desire to remove the threat to the United States emanating from Afghanistan Territory" (2008, 13). Where there have been attempts at genuine interventions on account of humanitarian issues, the U.S. has retained a minimal level of interest and involvement. When the burden of engagement has proven too large, the U.S. has unabashedly withdrawn, as was the case in Somalia, with a similar story in the Rwandan crises. In Rwanda for instance, following the death of American soldiers, the Clinton Administration was faced with a rising humanitarian crises. Jerald A. Combs notes that Clinton had "no stomach to intervene", and, that he "later issued a presidential directive on multilateral peacekeeping operations that offered no support for the independent UN force he had previously endorsed and called only for multilateral actions that were in line with American national interests" (2008, 332).

### **3.4. The Ideal U.S. Model for Reconstructions:**

Wilsonianism entrenched the idea that the grand U.S. strategy is inextricably and undeniably linked to liberal democracy and how democracy serves U.S. national and security interests. Such incidents of democracy promotion, however, have emerged incidentally, in some instances according to some (Smith 1994). Wilson's occupation of Mexico in 1914, the intervention in Haiti in 1915 as well as the 1916 occupation of the Dominican Republic (Smith 1994) reflected a slow and emerging process of taking over and needing to promote domestic order. These policies gained momentum and eventually took centre stage with the post-war reconstructions of Germany and Japan aimed strongly towards development of

democratic modes of governance. Thus, liberal democracy and its importation, irrespective of the underlying agendas, is a core, if not *the* central theme within American foreign policy, and this has been reflected in the foreign policy initiatives that the U.S. has become involved in. The Marshal Plan of 1947, the promotion of the Organization of American States of 1948, the support for the establishment of the Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 and later initiatives, such as President Kennedy's Alliance for Progress initiative for Latin America (Smith 1994), reflects similar international efforts to promote stronger state capacity and stability through democratic norms. In fact, there is a distinct lack of alternatives, which produces a predictable foreign policy stance. According to Said, the special narrative of the U.S. empire is one that lacks the "political willingness to take seriously the alternatives to imperialism, among them the existence of other cultures and societies" (1994, 22). On a practical, policy producing level, Hudson (2007), for instance, has noted that the relationships between individual presidents, their administrations, in conjunction with bureaucratic bodies such as the Department of State, the Pentagon and the National Security council's consistent competition for foreign policy development and influence plays a major role in further entrenching this process. Indeed, for Hudson (2007), this process produces a domestic environment that is not conducive to the development of alternative policy making formation. Alternatively, it is argued that, in times of national crisis or external threats decisions are often made at the individual-level, which is by the president himself (Mintz and Derouen 2010, 19). This may negate the influence of significant members in a president's administration, or that of various state departments. Nevertheless, ideological expansionism has always been a strong theme, irrespective of internal power structures, within state institutions. Overall, though, the Americans have always adopted the view "that independence is to be wished [for weak, colonized and struggling states], so long as it is the kind of independence *we* approve of. Anything else is unacceptable and worse, unthinkable" (Said 1994, 20). Yet, despite this, in certain parts of the world, including the Middle East, violent and religiously motivated groups are using democracy to gain a greater level of legitimacy among their supporters, thereby presenting a strong challenge to the U.S. and its need to determine not only the democratic processes but also who is considered as legitimate actors to use these mechanisms. The 2006 election of Hamas in Palestinian Authority elections, and the rejection of its legitimacy by the U.S., reflects this contradictory emerging trend. The promotion of democracy in the Middle East may well have unintentionally provided militant Islamic groups greater leeway to acquire further legitimacy (Sharpe 2006, 2). Within the Middle East, however, there are significant barriers that prevent the

entrenchment of democratic norms. According to theorists, the main reason for this resides in the different “competing and overlapping identities vie for primacy” (Sharpe 2006, 2). Local, often Islamic, identities have demonstrated a resistance towards foreign interference, which prevents domestic efforts that aim towards a greater dialogue towards political reform. Nevertheless, the state-centric model of reconstruction has ensured that the U.S. has attempted to reform regimes in the Middle East, primarily through promotion of economic liberalization and free trade (Sharpe 2006).

Democracy promotion plays such an extensive role in the American identity that, following the end of the Cold War, it was argued that liberal democratic governance signified the ‘end of history’ (Fukuyama 1992). A new ‘World Order’ was, therefore, produced, in which democracy was viewed as the ideal form of political governance. The central argument of the democratic triumphalism thesis revolved around the utter discreditation of tyrannical and authoritarian forms of governance, and the triumph of liberal democracy and free markets as the ultimate and most rational choice for states. However, the wider connotation of this thesis hypothesized the final evolution of ideological development precisely because it succeeds in satisfying human needs. This thesis raised significant controversy, but was nevertheless accepted as encapsulating the general dominance of liberal democracy. However, critics have argued that even Fukuyama himself is hard pressed to accept this theory because of the multitude of emerging international trends (Plattner 1992), particularly the predominant failure to introduce democracy successfully to post-conflict societies. Others (Porch 2006) have criticized ‘the End of History’s’ selective and flawed interpretation of past events which challenges the legitimacy and strength of his thesis. Some (Nodia 1992) have forwarded more sophisticated criticism arguing that this thesis disregards nationalism and holds to the principal assumption that nationalism and democracy are essentially hostile concepts, which has significantly weakened the central thesis. Nevertheless, following 1945, starting with the reconstruction in Germany, U.S. resolve to promote democracy led to tangible successes, especially in Europe where states such as Poland, the Baltics and the Czech Republic experienced measurable political reforms (Smith 1994).

Within the reconstructionary field, prominent opponents of this liberal peace theory have emerged. A variety of experts, including Roland Paris (2004), Paris and Sisk (2009), Newman, Paris and Richmond (2009), and Chandler (2002; 2008; 2010) have strongly criticised the utility of liberal democracy as a means of rehabilitation of post-conflict societies. Paris, for instance, argues that liberal democracy is still unverified; since elements

of this concept, such as whether economic liberalism can contribute to the development of a stable peace is still yet to be proven (2004, 151). Even more significantly; his study of protracted conflicts and reconstruction leads to the conclusion that economic and political liberalisation has a strong destabilising impact on such societies. Paris notes that “in some countries, liberalization exacerbated societal tensions, and in others it reproduced traditional sources of violence...this conclusion points not only to weaknesses in the prevailing peace-building strategy as a conflict management method but also to the limitations of the liberal peace thesis itself” (Paris 2004, 151). Chandler (2010) agrees with the destabilising impact of the liberal peace theory, but also criticises its state-centric nature. Chandler notes that the dominant western tradition entails a strong respect for state institutions as the framework that provides the avenue for citizens to pursue their interests economically and socially. In contrast, it is understood that the underlying cause of state weakness and failure is institutional breakdown. Chandler (2010, 5) concludes that “external intervention in traditional terms is no longer adequate” because it subverts the organic formation of democracy, rule of law and civil society formation in recipient societies.

Nevertheless, the U.S. focus on democratisation and liberalization has manifested a state-centric, contractually based, form of reconstruction. This model for reconstruction of states involves a significant level of attention on the promotion of a liberal, democratic and market orientated style of reconstruction that is secular in nature and attempts to remove the traditional and religious from the public sphere. It also aims to redirect traditional religious and cultural loyalties towards the civil sphere through the promotion of party formation and civil society in order to produce a political community. Condoleezza Rice, the Secretary of State during the Bush Administration, presented this state-centric nature of reconstructions precisely when she noted that:

Elections are the beginning of every democracy, but of course they are not the end. Effective institutions are essential to the success of all liberal democracies. And by institutions I mean pluralistic parties, transparent and accountable legislatures, independent judiciaries, free press, active civil society, market economies and, of course, a monopoly for the state on the means of violence (cited in Sharpe 2006, 2).

The necessity of addressing societal expectations, identity cleavages or addressing past injustices or proposing a similar level of interest towards nation-building is perceptibly

lacking. Additionally, there is an underlying assumption that views the promotion of sovereignty as a source of legitimacy formation. Often, experts (Bull 2008) insist that by focusing on developing and strengthening state capacity and sovereignty through promotion of contractual constitutionalism and rule of law, other relative functions such as legitimacy and nation-building will naturally emerge. Fredrick Starr, for instance, notes that the U.S. approach to Afghanistan assumed a dominant trend: that by extending and re-enforcing state sovereignty “both national identity and legitimacy would follow in due course” (2006b, 108). This assumption has also been reproduced in Iraq. Indeed, this tendency is a dominant value within past reconstructions and continues to determine policy and decision making. However, in most of these cases where the power and influence of the state has always relied on authoritarian and repressive measures, the conflict within reconstruction is often linked to the promotion of legitimacy rather than sovereignty (Starr 2006b, 108). According to Starr, the dilemma resides within correlation of sovereignty with legitimacy. In the case of Afghanistan, the U.S. assumed that the promotion of the territorial integrity of the state would ensue in conjunction with promoting the authority and capacity of the state legitimacy (Star 2006b). However, in most reconstructions, it is the legitimacy, rather than the sovereignty of the state that is in question. Hence, reconstructions accordingly need to instead focus on building and promoting state legitimacy and, as a result, reinforcement of sovereignty.<sup>9</sup> Further, in addressing state failure the U.S. views institutional development as an extension of this dual sovereignty-legitimacy dilemma. In other words, there is a lack of understanding that a post-conflict state can exercise full sovereignty with relatively functioning state institutions and bodies and still lack legitimacy. In the case of Iraq, U.S. actions have strongly reflected state-centric and sovereignty based policies, which have affected the level of post-conflict legitimacy of the new institutions. Reflecting on the reconstruction in Iraq and its

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<sup>9</sup> For others a contentious issue is the correlation between human rights and democracy, particularly in the second phase of U.S. reconstructionary history. Some (Nathan 1997), have argued that it is possible for states to view human rights as universal yet reject democracy. As a result, the two concepts need to be kept separate, at least initially within reconstructions. Noting the state-centric nature of U.S. reconstructionary behaviour, this Separationist argument appears tacitly through a lack of attention to nation-building. In other words, little attempt exists at implementing human security and human rights at the depth and level necessary for societies who have experienced protracted violence. Instead, the emphasis is placed solely on democracy building, which essentially leaves inherent identity cleavages in place. However, the utility of power sharing is questionable when society has little interest in collaborating in the first place due to long held grievances. This relationship is further complicated when considering the role of religion in inspiring, and, according to some views, initializing the human rights discourse. Hence, while human rights can be found in local and indigenous cultures, the concept of democracy is foreign and may not necessarily exist in the recipient culture. Often, when attempts are made to impose human rights norms such policies are labelled neo-imperial (Langlois 2003). Certainly, the duality and complexity of this discourse, within an Islamic framework, is apparent when considering states such as the increasingly democratic Indonesia and its aversion to Timorese human rights or the prominent debate within Iran between the need to balance Islamic human rights with modern forms of democratic governance.



lack of legitimacy, Anthony Shadid, one of the most prominent journalists reporting on Iraq, insisted that the “Americans were the final arbiter [of the reconstruction] and, as a result, deprived anything they left behind of legitimacy” (2009).

On the other hand, the significance of “the end of history” on U.S. foreign policy in the post-Cold War era can be linked to the “Zone of Peace” theory within American foreign policy. The Zone of Peace was defined as “a community of democratic nations bound together by a web of political, economic, and security ties” (Cheney 1993, 8). The significance of the Zone of Peace for U.S. foreign policy lies in the fact that it proposes a framework of international cooperation that redirects state military rivalries towards one of cooperation and multilateralism, particularly relative to issues of security (Cheney 1993, 8). Hence, U.S. post-Cold War foreign policy involved a strong commitment to extend liberal democracy across the globe in line with the agenda of maintaining U.S. national interests and security. Former Assistant Secretary of State Kim Holmes noted for instance, that the driving ideals behind American foreign policy were, “peace, prosperity, and freedom — these fundamental principles fuel the unique form of foreign policy known as American internationalism” (Holmes 2003). While idealistic notions of the universal right to liberty and freedom are touted as a fundamental element of U.S. foreign policy, it is also undeniable that it plays a significant part in securing the interests of United States, or, at least promotes a favourable environment for America to maintain its interests and its dominant position in the international system. The United States, in line with its Realist foreign policy stance is in fact unabashedly unapologetic in maintaining the right to secure its interests and hegemonic status. Official U.S. documents such as the National Security Strategy (2002), National Strategy for Combating Terrorism (2003, 2006), and U.S. Defence Strategy (2005, 2006) do not shy away from mentioning U.S. interests and the need to secure U.S. power, security and leadership by the process of spreading democracy and to expand the ‘zone of peace’.

The promotion of democracy and its exportation is, hence, an essential element of the American identity. Through the values of the founding fathers, America’s identity formed from a desire to prove its very existence as exceptional (see Ignatieff 2005a). A dual outlook has emerged that considers this identity in competing views. On the one hand, this identity and sense of nationalism is strongly correlated to an anthology of political ideals and an evangelical sense of spreading these values internationally. Contrastingly, critics have denoted this tradition, as an American fixation to be a global “moral crusader” (see Dolan 2005). Regardless of the alternative perspectives, it is clear that there is a powerful element

within the American political tradition that supports the utility of a strong moral obligation to spread democracy as a national mission. Jean Kirkpatrick (cited in Monten 2005, 113) observes that no modern ideology “holds greater sway in the minds of educated Americans than the belief that it is possible to democratize governments anytime, anywhere, and under any circumstances.”, Perhaps no region more so than the Middle East holds a greater desire for democratisation for the United States. Indeed, this perspective was nowhere stronger, and more evident, than during the George Bush administration, where the rhetoric surrounding democracy building reached an all-time crescendo. Monten (2005) notes that democracy exportation does not merely serve as a tool for American foreign policy; rather, it is central to American national identity and its purpose. David and Grondin (2006) add to this argument by noting that the significance of democracy, as a foreign policy tool, moves beyond this identity and sense of purpose. Indeed, they note that it is not a final end in itself. It is, rather, “a unique way to achieve and advance other goals” (2006, 196). This is evident in much of the U.S. official rhetoric during the Bush administration. Echoing early Wilsonianism, George W. Bush in the 2004 State of the Union address, argued that “America is a Nation with a mission - and that mission comes from our most basic beliefs. We have no desire to dominate, no ambitions of empire. Our aim is a democratic peace - a peace founded upon the dignity and rights of every man and woman” (cited in Mazlish, Chand and Weisbrode 2007, 68), A peace which is also proving elusive due to clashing national interests. Such perspectives and the statement made by George Bush, reflects a prevailing perception which contains “the horrifically predictable disclaimer that ‘we’ are exceptional, not imperial, not about to repeat the mistakes of earlier powers, a disclaimer that has been routinely followed by making the mistake, as witness the Vietnam and Gulf wars” (Said 1994, 26).

Internally, there are two dominant views that the U.S. has adopted in relation to democracy. The first principle is branded “Exemplarism”, which argues that the United States should promote democracy by being a leading democracy whose liberal institutions are continuously perfected and refined (see Brands 1998a; 1998b). Concepts such as “redeemer nation”, “manifest destiny” and “City on the Hill” are essential values that underpin American perceived destiny (Brands 1998a, 30). By all accounts, this perspective is considered a “passive and less ambitious approach to democracy promotion” (Monten 2005). This passivity is widely viewed to be its centrality on the Kantian principle of non-intervention and, thus, advocates a strong stance against activism and interventionism in foreign policy affairs. There is, also, an emphasis on adopting a more isolationist approach since

interventionist foreign policy measures are considered to lead to the erosion and weakening of domestic institutions. Exemplarism's golden age is often seen as existing most prominently during the founding years of the United States, but is then widely viewed to have lost its prominence thereafter. Nevertheless, instances of exemplarist perspective have managed to permeate U.S. politics particularly in the 1990's with the expansion of democratic states. For instance, as outlined by the Defence Strategy for the 1990's, the spread of liberal democracy is conducted through an exemplarist lens. The strategy notes that "our ability to shape the future rests not only on our efforts to keep closed the door to aggression and military intimidation; it rests also on our ability to provide the example necessary for others to take positive, reciprocal steps" (Cheney 1993, 8).

The second principle, which often determines U.S. foreign policy, is labelled as "vindicationism" (Brands 1998a). Those who advocate a more interventionist perspective of democratic exportation are Universalists who strongly believe that democracy and human rights are universal (Monten 2005). This perspective adopts a more hard-line stance by arguing that the United States must move beyond setting a good domestic example and actively pursue a more aggressive spreading of its "universal political values and institutions" (Monten 2005, 113). The vindicationist perspective is also defined by its adherence to the realist school and often adopts a gloomy perspective of human nature and foreign policy. Vindicationism has gained increasing prominence in the twentieth century, during the Wilsonian era, most prominently during the Bush administration, particularly in the conduct towards the Iraq war plans.

Advocates of vindicationism, also labelled neo-Wilsonianism (see Gourevitch 2007), still attempt to vie for prominence in the 1990's over the exemplarists. One such example is evident in the 1992 Paul Wolfowitz Defense Strategy (see Catley and Mosler 2007). The Defence Strategy espoused a stronger U.S. presence in the international system, argued for a larger American hard power capabilities as well as the need to act unilaterally with the right to launch pre-emptive strikes (Tyler 1992). Although the strategy had to be officially retracted, it was nevertheless significant precisely because it demonstrated a prevalent trend in American politics that was more in line with the vindicationist perspective that was in direct contrast to the 'New World Order's' directives. More crucially, Paul Wolfowitz's strategy was widely viewed as a cornerstone in the rise to prominence of the neoconservative group who exercised extensive policy control during the Bush administration's Iraq War. It is widely viewed that the neoconservatives have historically, as well as empirically, been

aligned with the vindicationist principle, and have increasingly come to call for a more aggressive role for U.S. interventionism (Monten 2005, 116). On another note, George Bush's relative lack of foreign policy experience led some to label him a novice (Mitchell 2005, 180) which may have helped the neo-conservatives agendas.

A seminal piece of work that has contributed to the vindicationist school of thought is Huntington's neo-orientalist *Clash of Civilisation*, which served as an important piece of work in justifying the necessity of importing democracy (Tuathail, Dalby and Routledge 2006; Shlapentokh 2007, 5). Huntington's theory significantly influenced American foreign policy and the field of reconstruction following the September 11 terrorist attacks. In *The Clash of Civilisations* Huntington (1993a) proposes a new theory on future human conflict. While Fukuyama's *End of History* postulated the end of ideological clashes culminating in the triumph of Western liberalism, Huntington postulates that the source of conflicts will change. This new conflict will emerge from competing cultures and civilisations and the divergences between them. Huntington (1997) argued that the 'Iron Curtain of Ideology' has been replaced by a 'Velvet Curtain of Culture', which will lead to a reordering of the international system along kin, cultural, historical and religious lines. Identifying six dominant civilisations, he noted the dual trend of the increased level of hostility along cultural lines while at the same time the increased level of cooperation and coordination within civilisations in what he calls "the kin-country" syndrome (Huntington 1997, 35). The increased level of globalisation, interaction and migration has in fact augmented "civilisation-consciousness" to such an extent that the West, led by the United States is, increasingly attempting to entrench its dominant values and restructure the international system in its own image (Huntington 1997, 40). This process entails the use of major international institutions such as the IMF and World Bank as well as the use of its hard power capabilities and economic might. The most obvious implication of this strategy is the increased level of intervention and reconstructionary missions launched since the end of the Cold War era. This process for Huntington has led to increased levels of civilizational hostility between the 'West and the rest'. While suggesting that this process may be a passing phase, Huntington, nevertheless, acknowledges the level of hostility, particularly within the Arab world over Western interference (1997, 32). Certainly, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism is for some a vindication of Huntington's imminence of a clash of civilisations. At the least, this process has increased the level of "civilisation-consciousness" across the globe. Nevertheless, within the reconstructionary field of study, Huntington's theory faces a major challenge. A

significant trend that Huntington failed to inquire into more deeply involves the increased level of intrastate conflict as opposed to interstate conflict. While acknowledging that intra-civilizational conflicts do occur, according to Huntington, they often are not long-term conflicts and find resolution far easier than cross-civilizational wars. However, recent cases in the reconstructionary field demonstrate that intrastate conflict can occur within a homogenous culture. Certainly, the Sunni and Shia conflict in Iraq is testimony to that, with both groups being Arab and Muslim, leading experts to insist that an internal Islamic conflict is not too far off (Nasr 2006a). The conflict within Angola between rival political parties, Cambodia, Liberia, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and El Salvador's civil war indicate a distinct lack of civilizational divergences. In most of these cases a relatively homogenous community existed with local groups and elites attempting to forge new governments and political systems that allowed for a more equal sharing, or, at best, a total redistribution of power from one group to another. In other words, it is possible for long-term protracted conflicts to occur along specific religious or cultural lines. These conflicts usually occur along ideological or economic lines, as opposed to religious or cultural. In fact, as opposed to Huntington's grand theory, the new challenge facing the West or the international system is not one along civilisation or even religious lines, but rather, one of identity formation, often within post-colonial nations. It has been argued by some (Regehr 1992; 1993; Friberg 1992, 62; Lederach 2008 ;) that it is more accurate to label these conflicts as "identity conflicts". Lederach argues that failures in states and their government institutions ensure that the fundamental human needs of the nation are not being met. This process ensures that groups often attempt to forge closer ties so as to share in the resources, power and decision making process of the nation. In fact, there is no need to label such conflicts as ethnic or religious since there is "nothing innately ethnic about them" (2008, 8). Ernie Regehr (1987) also notes a similar view by arguing that "almost two-thirds of the current armed conflicts can be defined as identity conflicts, and some estimates count as many as 70 current political conflicts worldwide that involve groups formally organised to promote collective identity issues" (cited in Lederach 2008, 8).

The alternative argument presented against U.S. led missions is one of multilateral commitment led by the United Nations. The United Nations itself adopted significant elements of Wilsonianism and his League of Nations to influence and determine foreign policy agendas. Like its predecessor, the United Nations also faced a variety of legitimacy crises which challenged its effectiveness and impact, particularly during the Cold War era.

Indeed, between the periods of 1949 and 1990, all U.S. enforced peace building activities were conducted with the specific view of containing Soviet and Chinese expansionism and influence (Smith 2010, 11). The United States, thus, increasingly utilized the U.N. as a tool for peace enforcement. Seminal missions such as Congo and the protection of South Korean independence exemplify this. However, these missions were conducted strategically and selectively rather than arbitrarily, which indicates a calculated self-interest. Even the United Nations finds it difficult to escape the 'imperialist' brush because of its close relations with powerful states and NGO's. Ottaway and Bethany (2003) argue that the breakup of states as well as the failures of weak states posed a variety of challenges particularly in defining sovereignty and international responsibility. The ensuing internal civil strife and conflict in emerging states or failing ones, led to a variety of intellectuals to justify the necessity of interfering in sovereign states for humanitarian reasons. These issues nevertheless raised new fears for some who saw the increasing levels of U.N. led interventions as ushering in a new era of imperialism. In fact, Ottaway and Bethany conclude that U.N. led missions in the 1990s also contained elements of imperial rule (2003, 75). Nevertheless, the U.S. adherence to a state-centric, contractual and rule of law based form of reconstruction is far more pronounced than the United Nations activities in the field (see Dobbins et al 2005).

### **3.5. Conclusion:**

This chapter demonstrates a specific American model of reconstructing weak, failing and struggling states. This model is centered on several core themes that are endemic to a grand American foreign policy vision, which includes the promotion of a secular, liberal democratic model. The necessity to restructure the international system along a distinctly American system of political governance has produced a long tradition of liberal imperialism with varying degrees of success. This grand model is focused on introducing a market orientated liberal and democratic system that advocates a secular separation of state and religion. This, in turn, produces a state-orientated reconstruction policy that views all institutional failures, state collapses and protracted episodes of ethnic and religious violence as sources of weak governance and power sharing mechanisms. While state failure and collapse can largely be attributed to weak governance and institutions, it nevertheless is not always a core source of protracted conflicts. Processes of power sharing and stable institutions can only produce a limited degree of legitimacy and acceptance, if the inherent causes of religious and ethnic

conflicts are not thoroughly and comprehensively addressed. This may indicate why most of these states regress to violence and conflict within a period of five years. Conversely, state failures and collapses have produced colossal long term political, economic and social repercussions for the international system, forcing stable states to increasingly espouse an aversion to the Wilsonian notion of self-determination. This is precisely based on the international fear of state disintegration, which may require addressing secessionist claims. Nevertheless, this notion of self-determination is an essential nucleus of the Wilsonian vision of liberal peace theory. Instead, American led missions have focused disproportionately on rebuilding weak states in their own political image, selectively ignoring their own violent tradition of state formation or the remnants of colonial influences. A state-centric reconstructionary process has emerged that ignores the inherent Wilsonian notion of self-determination for the purpose of promoting state sovereignty. While experts are correct in criticizing liberal peace theory as a viable theory of reconstruction, the dominant trend is still centered on a state-centric and liberal democratic system, indicating a lack of alternatives.

The recent inability of the liberal peace theory to produce a widespread change of political systems in the international system has led the U.S. model to increasingly use force and violence, culminating most recently in the “Bush Doctrine” or pre-emptive strike. For the most part the U.S. has adopted two models of importing liberalism, either through the vindication or exemplarist methods. Yet, the literature demonstrates that the U.S. is most potent in its aims when it resorts to an exemplarist school of thought. This was most evident following the end of the Cold War, where the third wave of democratization occurred. However, when American foreign policy has met the field of state ‘reconstruction’, it has increasingly and most unwaveringly resorted to the vindicationist method of liberal importation which entails strong geopolitical interests. This, in turn, produced a large body of literature that is centered on American empire building, hegemonic might and its possible decline and which has produced the sub-category of discourses that centres on notions of neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism. Consequently, the byproduct of the end of the Cold War and the New World Order, in which the use of soft power, rather than military might, was seen as the new means of producing peace and stability, appears as a more logical rationale as to why the Bush administration's aggressive internationalism was viewed as disturbing. However, a brief analysis of American foreign policy, particularly Wilsonianism demonstrates a stronger penchant for the use of force and hard diplomacy when the U.S. is involved in processes of regime change, or reconstruction. The overriding conclusion is that

the use of force is a fundamental feature of American foreign policy, particularly when taking into consideration a history of paranoia over often perceived or real threats.

Reviewing this tradition, it is not presumptuous to assume that the U.S. will continue to use force and coercion to continue its grand strategy in not only restructuring the international system but, also, in pursuit of its own geostrategic concerns. In the absence of an alternative theoretical body other than liberal peace, it is difficult, but perhaps possible, to propose a different system of 'reconstructions' that can work in line with this grand strategy. This system, as proposed in this thesis, will centre on a bottom-up policy of incremental democratization and power sharing, which in the case of Iraq, refocuses on the traditional Wilsonian concept of self-determination that may avoid secessionism. Iraq (as well as Afghanistan) clearly demonstrates that the field requires an alternative nation-orientated as opposed to a solely, state-centric system that strongly focuses on rebuilding, or, in most cases, establishing for the first time, a sense of nationalism. In fact, it is necessary that both nation-building and state-building occur simultaneously within these postcolonial states. Until collective nationalism emerges as a source of internal unity and cohesion, power sharing mechanisms only contribute to, and often exacerbate existing conflicts. As such, nation-building will require a strong focus on addressing social, ethnic and religious causes of conflict that do not ignore decades of grievances and violence between communities. For this reason, cultural practices and 'natural' leaders of such societies can play a detrimental role in this process. A shift in this context requires the understanding that religion and religious actors, as a source of peace building, have both reactionary and progressive potentials. However, disproportionate emphasis on the reactionary aspect of religion and its actors has reduced attentiveness to their constructive impacts. Recent reconstructionary missions have demonstrated that 'natural' leaders, such as top level religious actors, have contributed both positively and negatively to the peace, and long term stability, of post-conflict societies. The overall trend however is that they demonstrate their extensive and indispensable influence within their societies, which can be harnessed as a positive resource.

However, the increasing concern over religious fundamentalism as well as the American tradition of secularism serves as a natural barrier to the development of a nation-orientated policy. For this reason, the state-centric model ignores religion and attempts to use democratic state institutions to limit religious influences. Though the limitation of religious influences is strongly linked to notions of toleration and power sharing, the experiences of faith based actors and organizations largely support a positive contribution to the



reconstructionary field. Additionally, as will be shown in Chapter Four, religious actors have proven to play a positive role in the reconstruction process in Iraq. Contrastingly, the evangelical and religiously themed American foreign policy has largely shaped Huntington's notion of 'civilisational-consciousness' in the Middle East; which has not only contributed to increased religious, particularly Islamic violence, but also, more widely, an entrenchment of local identities along religious lines. In turn, this has increased religious violence, as hundreds of Saudi Islamic fighters flooded the porous Iraqi borders to fight along their Shia and Sunni brothers. The overall symbiotic relationship between religion and reconstruction in Iraq has further destabilized some of the assumptions of liberal peace theory as well as the reconstructionary field as a whole. The broad conclusion of the American model demonstrates a significant need to refocus state-centrism along nation-building policies that take into consideration sources of identity, such as cultural and religious elements, as a foundation of peace and stability building in such states. This thesis will argue, in the following chapters, that long term stability is directly reliant on local actors and society's ownership of the reconstruction process both at the grassroots level as well as middle and top levels, which requires and indeed necessitates the acceptance of a role for religion and its actors in the reconstructionary field. In fact, this thesis postulates that this is a necessity if the reconstructionary field is to positively impact such societies. Indeed, the lack of cultural, religious and ethnic sensitivity produces fragmented, violence-ridden, corrupt and authoritarian regimes, sometimes with genocidal results. It is even more imperative now that sources of identity formation are taken into consideration as part of a broader attempt, at not only producing stable and strong state institutions but also *nations* which produces the very legitimacy and consent that is so vital to long term stability.

#### **CHAPTER FOUR- POST-COLONIAL IRAQ AND THE FAILURES OF NATION-BUILDING**

#### **4.1. Introduction:**

The second stage of the miscarriage of Iraq's reconstruction directly relates to the Coalition's policy emphasis on structural changes, as opposed to producing a comprehensive strategy that demonstrated knowledge of Iraq's complex ethnic and religious identity, as well as the historical significance of interreligious and ethnic relations. The subsequent reconstruction demonstrated the tension between state-centred policies and the marginalisation of society-centric strategies. At the core of the limited level of success, and the consistent policy and strategic failures of Iraq's reconstruction, is a fundamental marginalisation of identity as a contributing force to peace-building or conflict management. Prominent Iraq experts such as Glenn E. Robertson (2010, 11) and Aideed Dawisha noted that the actions of the U.S. "smacked of poor preparation, scant knowledge of the country, and lack of sensitivity to certain salient social and cultural norms" (2004, 6). As a result, the U.S. faced the dilemma of building a viable nation-state from the remnants of a country cemented by state-imposed terror and suppression for over a century. The proposed policies for the reconstruction entailed the necessity of developing a centralised state with effective institutions, developing and promoting a unified national identity, and finally encouraging democracy building (Dawisha 2009, 3). Despite the emphasis on building a unified nation, the policies implemented by the U.S. were largely state-centric by demonstrating, for example, a heavy emphasis on democratisation.

Essentially, the U.S. led reconstruction process faced the same dilemmas of state and nation-building that the Hashemite Monarchy and subsequent regimes encountered in post-colonial Iraq. The response of various ethnic and religious entities in Iraq presented clear lines of divisions as each faction attempted to gain as much ground as possible to secure their own long-term survival in subsequent elections. In essence, the dilemma of Iraq, not only during the reconstruction process but also from its very beginnings as a state, entailed one of legitimacy building. The modern, post-independent Iraqi state attempted to forge a unified nation from the multitude of autonomous tribal, ethnic and religious clans who, for the most part, strongly resented, and actively resisted centralisation. Clear social and identity boundaries increasingly emerged as a result of the state's attempts to forge a unified people. Government policies however often produced counterintuitive reactions across society, and ethnicity and religion increasingly became entrenched as the indicator of differences.

Consequently, group solidarity was either sustained or subverted by the states favouritism of a particular, and often exclusionary, identity. Much of this chapter, thus, focuses on the policies and historical and institutional legacies of the post-colonial Iraqi state, and assesses their impact on the reconstruction process in light of the re-emerging, violent, identity cleavages.

Identity cleavages have strongly defined the domestic and foreign policies of modern Iraq. Hence, a critical level of attention to identity issues would have been an inherent and natural part of the reconstruction plan. However, following the invasion and the resultant endeavours to re-establish a semblance of governance, it became immediately apparent that the U.S. led mission had little interest in addressing identity cleavages. The 2005 elections, for instance, demonstrated a strong tendency for communities to organise along ethnic or sectarian lines. Indeed, well over 90 percent of the seats in parliament were organised along ethnic and religious boundaries (Sirkeci 2005, 199), demonstrating a decisive tendency to remain within own ethno-religious groups as a means of attaining power and influence in post-Saddam Iraq. Further, the Sunni block, as a whole, boycotted the elections producing a lopsided parliamentary result that did not reflect Iraq's authentic ethno-sectarian makeup. Indeed, the Sunni boycott represented one of the most significant identity fissures, leading to the pervasiveness of violent identity clashes. Overall, limited attempts were made by participants of the January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005 elections to attain support outside sectarian and ethnic identities (Makiya 2008). Indeed, there was little to no incentive to engage in cross ethno-religious political lobbying since the Shi'ites were assured of their dominance, the Kurds assured of their autonomy, and the Sunni's their exclusion. Thus, voters essentially voted for their own groups *en mass* (Dawisha 2010, 26). While there was little incentive to do so, the reality reflected the unwillingness of each faction to cooperate- supporting the traditional, historical legacies of the politicization of identity relations in Iraq- while simultaneously attempting to gain as much ground as possible. According to the International Crisis Group (2006), following the elections, Iraq's dormant sectarianism surfaced, overriding the reconstruction and political discourse on reformation. This process "underscored the newly acquired prominence of religion, perhaps the most significant development since the regime's ouster" (ICG 2006, i). In short, a classic zero-sum game of power and identity politics ensued, significantly curbing incentives for cooperation and peace-building. Consequently, the elections confirmed the key role of identity politics, resulting in extensive negative publicity, advocating a pessimistic view of long term durable peace in Iraq. Thus, the results

of the election led experts to note that “Iraqi politics since 2003 have been a story of identity conflict” (Al-Qarawee 2010, 34). This trend, however, came as no surprise to experts on Iraqi history who understood that lack of democracy was not the only cause of Iraq’s domestic issues. Essentially, the failure of nation-building by the state lies at the heart of Iraq’s past, and clearly its future. Deconstructing post-colonial Iraq, therefore, is empirically constructive as it highlights socio-political, economic, ethnic and religious tensions that have emerged since, and so thoroughly dominated intergroup social relations in the post-Saddam era.

In tracing the colonial and post-colonial history of Iraq, this chapter attempts to present several important arguments. Firstly, that the colonial experience of the state prevented the development of civic loyalties, and instead produced a rebellious nation that actively or tacitly challenged the state and its institutions. In turn, the state adopted a ‘carrot and stick’ policy of dealing with various communities who often presented competing and contradictory visions of Iraq. However, the state largely failed in developing a civic sense of nationalism and has consistently struggled with legitimacy issues. Instead, state policies supported the entrenchment of ethno-sectarian divides that erupted so vociferously to the surface following the 2003 invasion. The reconstruction process is, therefore, a question of identities, across religious or ethnic boundaries, and the necessity of balancing these often competing identities in forging a sense of legitimising collective civic nationalism.

The chapter will, therefore, start by noting that identity matters and is indeed an important social and political marker for policy makers. It will then move on to an historical account of Iraq’s state-building experience. Important sources of possible conflict, such as the Kurds secessionist aspirations, the Kirkuk Issue and the Shia experience of Iraq’s nation and state-building projects will also be addressed. The importance of this chapter resides in providing a historical foundation that supports some of the core arguments within this thesis. Further, identifying social cleavages is an important element in producing policies that attempt to address areas of possible resistance, resurgence and resentment. However, an important point is worth mentioning at this early stage: while the chapter refers to grand identities along ‘Sunni’ or ‘Shia’ lines, it is important to note that not all of these groups are homogenous in nature. Indeed, each group consists of sub-identities, which may be further influenced by location, class, education and gender, among other markers. For the most part, the ‘Shia’ and the ‘Kurds’ remain fairly consistent, as supported by the literature, and have remained largely unified in their respective perspectives. The Shi’ites, though supported the, at times, competing policies of Sistani and al-Sadr, remained for the most part, committed to their own

vision of Iraqiness. The identification of the ‘Sunnis’, on the other hand, poses a more complex challenge, since a large majority of Kurds are also Sunnis. This thesis follows the general standard, as set by the field, in categorising Sunnis as the Arab minority and will refrain from referring to the Kurds as Sunnis. This is largely due to the historical trend of Kurds identifying themselves, as well as by the state, along ethnic rather than religious lines.

#### **4.2. Identity Matters:**

Immediately following the invasion, the religious institutions of Iraq increasingly took a leadership position by mobilising and polarising society along sectarian lines. Religious institutions emerged as powerful agents of identity politics. On the Shia side, such institutions assumed the role of a ‘political agent, information, and ideological centre’, while the Sunnis used religion as a source of ‘recruitment, mobilization and insurgent agency’ (Paya and Esposito 2010, 22). At the same time, the Sunni Arab community increasingly viewed the rise of Shia institutions and religious leaders as an existentialist crisis within the new Iraq. More importantly for the Sunnis, this trend largely challenged the existing and established foundational myths of modern Iraq. These fears were exacerbated by the removal of state patronage, as well as the fact that the Sunni’s had increasingly secularised under the Ba’ath regime and lacked the prominent religious and ideological leadership that the Shi’ites enjoyed. This perceived leadership gap, however, was increasingly filled from abroad, as increasing numbers of Sunni insurgents infiltrated the porous borders of Iraq (Gregg 2010, 62). As a result of past state policies, according to Al-Qarawee (2010, 35), different groups had developed competing narratives about the past and, as a result, developed a ‘different understanding of the present and different perspectives about the future’. The past, in conjunction with modern political processes such as elections, produced increasing levels of reliance on ‘grand’ identities as a source of protection, mobilisation and protest against the invasion. In turn, this raised religion and ethnicity to a dominant position, and other elements of identity such as tribal and clan affiliation were reduced to the background of the identity discourse (Paya and Esposito 2010, 21). The response of the U.S. was to increasingly advocate democratic processes to address rising sectarian conflicts. This approach largely ignored the existentialist fears of different identities, as well as the historical legacies of social and group interactions shaped by the previous regimes.

A negative by-product of the state-centric nature of reconstructions is that they ensure a low level of attention on nation-forming factors such as culture, religion and other identity markers. As a result, a broad-brush approach to identity issues is adopted and implemented. Further, the understanding of ethno-sectarian conflicts in Iraq revolved around the assumption that each identity group is entirely homogenous, thus, negatively affecting the reconstruction. Iraq is divided between distinct, though not necessarily homogenous, ethnic and religious groups: roughly, the Kurds in the north, the Sunni Arabs in central Iraq, and the Shi'ites in southern parts of Iraq. Similar to the 'desirable' and 'undesirable' actors discourse that will be highlighted in the next chapter, policy makers conferred each group with positive or negative personas, which further divided and entrenched existing social boundaries. The Kurds, for instance, were viewed as possible despoilers of the post-Saddam Iraq through secessionist demands, while contradictorily largely labelled as 'friends' of the U.S. led coalition. The Sunni's were, as a whole, considered as Saddam's collaborators, and as a result, dismissed and excluded from the reconstruction. The Shi'ites were relegated into the 'rest' of Iraq, who represented the entity that best represented Saddam's oppression and brutality. In the initial stages of the reconstruction, the Shi'ites also represented the ideal Iraqiness (that of Arab, albeit Islamic nationalism) who would be the loudest advocates of democracy, equality and freedom *because* of their exclusion and oppression at the hands of the regime. The Shi'ites were, thus, an essential element of any 'successful' reconstruction because of their 'Arab' identity and its implication for the greater Middle East. If the Shi'ites accepted and willingly welcomed the democratisation of the country, Iraq would have been the greatest example of American foreign policy success. This is starkly juxtaposed to the Kurds who had actively encouraged the invasion and provided unlimited support to the coalition post-war. However, Kurdish support did not have as great an implication as Arab support for the democratisation of Iraq regionally. At the same time, U.S. fears of Shia resurgence and its implication for regional stability, as well as the rise of Iranian aspirations, posed a greater policy challenge. As a result, the policies adopted reflected these two competing interests: on the one hand, ensuring a level of stability, and a visible façade of democratisation in the country to enable the U.S. led coalition to celebrate the liberation of Iraqis from a repressive authoritarian regime. At the same time, this prevented an overly unified Shi'ite constituency from forming and building close ties to the Iranian regime. The crudeness of the 'power-sharing' mechanisms adopted may indeed be a reflection of this dilemma.

As a result, these distinct identities were utilised to build a democratic state with institutions that actively reflected group cleavages. Increasingly, the argument centred on federalism and the distribution of powers and resources in a manner that reflected the complicated demography of Iraq (see Makiya 2003; O'Leary 2003; Rubin 2002). Consequently, identities, particularly sectarian ones, were not viewed as a nation-building problem, but one of 'power sharing'. Again, the crucial and fundamental concept of building inter-societal 'trust' was dismissed and replaced by one of promoting society-to-state confidence. It was assumed that 'power sharing', through compromise and consensus, would act as the incentive to produce peace and cooperation in the dialogue between the different groups.

Yet, considering the fact that the dominant source of conflict in Iraq rests within group identities, power sharing is a fragile form of peace-building and peace-keeping (on limitations of power sharing see Noel 2005; Shields and Baldwin 2008:362-364); especially in societies who have little to no previous experience with this concept. Thus, power sharing in the early stages of reconstructions will only contribute to and further entrench ethnocentric conflicts, since mechanisms of non-violent conflict resolution have largely been absent to date. Previous cases have demonstrated this fact well. The reconstruction in Sudan, for instance, and the subsequent power-sharing mechanisms implemented only served to entrench "the political divisions that spawned conflict in the first place" (Shields and Baldwin 2008, 362). Other cases, such as Macedonia and Kosovo, reflected a similar outcome for post-conflict societies (Noel 2005, 99). Further power sharing relies on a level of mutual societal trust and respect for law and order, factors which were largely absent from the history of Iraq's political system. Policies addressing identity issues, such as the de-Ba'athification policy, did serve some purpose in appeasing long held grievances but were generally unsuccessful in the wider scheme of reconstructionary policies as it added another level of existentialist crises and fears. Indeed, it served to contribute to the rise of Islamic and sectarian conflicts (ICG 2006), which again may be an indirect outcome of the dilemma that a unified Arab-Shia Iraq would have presented to U.S. foreign policy and national interests. It is important to note though, that increasingly the literature on 'ethnic conflict' is indicating its decline, and ethnic cooperation is seen largely as the norm rather than the exception (see Barot 1993; Litian and Fearon 1996; Gurr 2000; Gilley 2004). The U.S. foreign policy approach has consequently adopted this stance, despite some compelling evidence to the contrary, as affirmation of their persistent support of liberal peace theory.

Another major issue that reflected disregard for the importance of identity politics within Iraq was related to the rise of Shia religious actors. The lack of focus on religion and its actors as a source of peace points to a more significant normative problem in the field. The utilisation of liberal peace theory entails the construction of at least elementary aspects of democratic practices. Yet, the removal of religion as part of the 'identity' discourse, as well as its removal from the state-building process, has ensured that an essential feature of democratic governance, that of tolerance, is effectively eliminated from the literature (on the relationship of tolerance within democratisation and nation-building see Ramage 1995; Van Den Berge 2002; Norman 2006). This is particularly tactless, and a futile policy measure, when groups have been prosecuted purely based on their religious values. Abundant evidence exists which indicates that in such instances, identity cleavages such as religion become the all-consuming and defining marker of group interactions (as evidenced by the crux of the conflict in Iraq resulting in the 2004-2008 civil war). However, the empirical evidence suggests that the field does not address issues of long held grievances and collective pain (see Stover, Megally and Mufti 2005) and assumes that tolerance is attached to the distribution of resources and power. Even post-conflict restorative justice measures are largely designed and centred on the redistribution of resources and power, rather than the establishment of mutual tolerance between the victims and perpetrators of violence'. Naturally, the distribution of power and resources go a long way in placating warring communities but at the same continues to entrench communal distrust and mutual fear. The weakness of this assumption is of paramount importance not only for this particular case but also for the reconstructionary field as a whole. If members of certain communities place little importance on cooperating with other groups who may have directly taken part in their oppression, and when these groups view cooperation as an issue of existentialist crises or an opportunity to repress or exact revenge against the other collective group, the chances of peace, at least in the near future, appear dim. Restorative justice measures such as de-Ba'athification did serve to publically humiliate the Sunni community, reducing their state, institutional and historical grip on political power; however, it did little to increase the nation-building capability of Iraqi society, particularly on a religious level. Instead, it exacerbated Sunni fears, leading to what some experts have called a 'civil war' between the sects (Fearon 2007). Naturally, the Shi'ite's existentialist fears were compounded, leading them to adopt an increasingly violent mode of dialogue with the Sunnis.



Since civil conflicts often erupt as an extension of ethnic and religious identity discourses within post-colonial states, it is essential to involve the reconstructionary literature in addressing the role of 'identity' and 'tolerance' as a means of producing durable peace. This narratives needs to be strongly informed by the historical traditions and contexts of each case. The post-independence Iraqi state, for instance, viewed pluralism as a problematic nation-building agenda and attempted to forge a unified vision of 'Iraqiness' which entailed a strong disposition towards Sunni-Arab identity traits. This policy was a direct result of the institutional legacies of the Ottoman Empire and its highly decentralised governing structure. This was largely due to the extensive landmass that the Empire controlled, which ensured the necessity of decentralisation and power-sharing mechanisms as a survival method. The Empire, for instance, reached as far as the borders of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the west, and the Persian and Arab peninsula and the Russian Empire in the north and east including Egypt and north Africa, and, as a result, was "vulnerable to many pressures" (Kent 1996, 1). Subsequently, the Empire's survival was dependent on the decentralisation of power, treaties, extra-territorial rights, capitulations and other privileges (Kent 1996). Because of the containment of diverse nations within its vast borders, the Empire adopted Sunni Islam as the official religion, thereby cementing all Sunnis within a privileged position (Baran 2010). Effectively, the governing system divided the Empire into distinct political groups along religious lines, labelled *millets* (Baran 2010). Principally, the Empire privileged binary identities: on the one hand, it supported and maintained the multi-cultural makeup of the region to limit nationalist aspirations of groups while privileging a distinct Sunni religious identity in ensuring its continuity. Following the demise of the Ottoman Empire, the privileged position of the Sunni Arabs in the Middle East remains strong and continues to condition the socio-political and economic structure of the region.

The dominance of Sunni Arabs in modern Iraq reflects this beginning, reinforced further by the British Empire in the early twentieth century. As a result, the promotion of multiculturalism attracted little attention, and nation-building relied on a consistently exclusionary and exclusive Sunni identity. From its very conception, through the governing efforts of the British, the state veered away from tolerance towards plurality. Instead, it used attempts at cooperation and lenience as a coercive measure to reduce plurality. Such measures were well established policies of the Ottoman Empire, which favoured a religious identity-based order above ethnicity (Natali 2005, 1). As a result, the Sunni's were favoured with greater levels of access to the empire and power, dominating institutions and resources.

Consequently, legacies of colonialism ensured that neutrality did not gain a strong foothold as part of the nation-building discourse in Iraq. Moreover, this process entrenched identity politics and has ensured that “identity issues have become an element of almost all prevailing ideologies and political choices” (Al-Qarawee 2010, 35). In post-colonial Iraq, identity cleavages along ethnic and religious lines emerged, exacerbated by the state’s patronage or outright exclusion, and in some instances attempts at elimination of competing identities. This history, and state imposed socialisation of intergroup interactions, poses a challenge to the formation of tolerance as the cohesive binding keeping various ethnic and religious groups within the boundaries of an artificially constructed state. In addition, such societies have emerged from long periods of oppression, endorsed by a privileged identity group over marginalised others. Thus, building democratic institutions may produce equality on a political level, however, the literature has demonstrated the significant difference between citizens begrudging or willing participation in the state, and their acceptance of its authority and legitimacy (Reddaway and Glinski 2001; Cohen and Toland 1988). Without the willing acceptable and participation of citizens, building democratic institutions fails, most crucially in producing tolerance and cooperation across group borders. Without this willing acceptance from society, participation in the new institutions is, instead, viewed by all sides as a necessary evil in securing power in the new state. This highlights the normative lacuna in regards to citizens willing or unwilling participation and acceptance of the state. In Iraq, a history of repression, violence and discrimination along ethno-sectarian lines has not produced feelings of congeniality nor entrenched social mechanisms of cooperation. On the contrary, the recent history of Iraq has loosened existing levels of tolerance and cross-ethnic cooperation by elevating one group above others and producing a nationalist discourse around a privileged group. Such policies also entrenched the necessity of acquiring power to the disadvantage of other groups; indeed, in some measures, as the later part of this chapter will argue, it is almost a necessity for long term peace that the reconstructionary process allows the empowerment of previously downtrodden groups to gain increasing levels of power. This is not to suggest an argument against the existence of multi-ethnic states; certainly, enough empirical evidence exists to support the possibility of long term peace for post-conflict societies containing ethno-sectarian divisions. In the early 1990’s, for instance, peaceful resolution to a host of ethnic and identity conflicts emerged, including in the former Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia as well as Moldova (Fowkes 2002, 184). This argument, however, raises difficulties in producing long term peace if only state-centric policies are used to address complex socio-political issues. Groups, in post-conflict societies,

take part in democratic processes and institutions not for the purpose of building civic nationalism or constitutional patriotism but to ensure their own interests. Democratic institutions and mechanisms produce long-term cooperation and nation-building processes but the problem of most post-conflict societies is that of fostering the immediate mechanisms of peace and security through addressing ethno-sectarianism.

Nevertheless, the field of reconstruction has attempted to produce policies to address social and identity cleavages. These policies include Truth and Reconciliation commissions, de-Ba'athification or trial and punishment of human rights criminals (see Cordesman and Davis 2008:545; Howard 2006), but these measures are neither comprehensive enough nor often case specific. Further, these policies are limited to punishing certain groups or individuals and are assumed to produce feelings of assurance and justice for victims. The punishment of criminals and reassurance of victims is a necessary part of the social rehabilitation process; it is, however, not enough for long term peace and nation-building. This will be explored later in the chapter.

Additionally, the lack of state neutrality produced a narrative of institutional failure within Iraq, whereby those excluded from the exclusive sphere of political elites resorted to alternative sub-state ethno-sectarian institutional measures to fill the gap. However, the reconstruction process in Iraq has failed to take into consideration the strength of this institutional failure and lack of state neutrality and its contribution to the de-legitimisation of state authority and power. Hence, the challenge of the reconstruction process lies with the necessity of reversing the decades of marginalisation and exclusion that has fostered conflicting identity narratives. This challenge is also contingent on establishing trust towards the state and its relevant institutions and establishing its legitimacy. Thus, the initial sectarian violence that erupted in Iraq can be situated within this idiom as part of an evolving process of identity formation within the nation. Further, while identities are generally contained within specific boundaries such as religion, they are, nevertheless, always in a process of redefinition (Coleman and Collins 2004; Eriksen 2002). Political, social and economic influences all contribute to modifications in group identities. Hence, while the U.S. administration assumed that Iraq possessed identity homogeneity and cleavages, it failed to acknowledge the shifting balance of power and relations in light of a history of state produced identity manipulations. The intensification of religious identities and their actors and institutions produced the symbols and myths within this process.

If it is widely accepted that identities are in a constant process of formation, identity politics is one of the most important features of Iraq's reconstruction process. Hence, in view of a history of institutional failures and the emergence of quasi-state institutions, the institution-based state-centric policies could only produce limited successes in Iraq. Thus, comprehensive and tangible reconstruction policies need to address feelings of injustice and produce assurances, but they also need to address the underlying causes of ethno-sectarian conflicts, which arguably is a complex process in itself. Nevertheless, case specific policies designed to utilise the social and human infrastructure of the recipient society are required to build bridges across hostile group identities. Building institutions, roads, bridges and schools and holding hastily patched together elections as part of the state-centric policies is a feeble producer of durable peace. Policies need to transition beyond institution building or 'punishment and reward' centred measures and move towards engendering tolerance, cooperation and acceptance at a grass-root, societal level.

Consequently, the failure of the U.S. reconstructionary model outlined in the previous chapter is based on a lack of attention to "the importance of cultural continuity and tradition" and, therefore, "consideration of the historical past is not an 'addition' that can be omitted, but is essential" (Slocum-Bradley 2008, 170) in the reconstruction of Iraq. When the regime was "genocidal, politicidal, and gynocidal" as well as being ethnically and religiously exterminationist (O'Leary, McGarry and Salih 2006 xii), the prominence of group boundaries became increasingly more defined. As Horowitz argues, these forms of violence "produces memories that linger, colouring group relations long after" (Horowitz 2003, xiii). Yet, political science and IR theory comprehend issues of ethnic and religious violence as a rational behaviour involving exclusionary state policies. Although the notion of 'ancient hatreds' as evidenced in former Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka, Rwanda and Chechnya have been widely discredited, the argument that emotions and long held grievances contribute to conflict by producing certain behaviours and patterns of actions is still valid one (see also Coleman, Goldman and Kugler 2007). However, as a consequence of the marginalisation of the 'ancient hatreds' discourse, opinions that noted the violent and revenge based nature of Arab society (see for instance Neuman 2009) in Iraq were viewed as culturally demeaning, blatantly false or, at best, justified as a manifestation of people's demands for resources and power. The large number of Ba'athist killings and riots following the invasion, for instance, were based on a cultural practice of revenge and had little to do with access to resources or demands for power, but more to do with vengeance for past injustices and humiliations. This

violence was a reflection of long held resentments, fears and rage based on a history of cultural humiliation, colonial rule and tyranny and, most importantly perhaps, the inability to get rid of Saddam domestically (Fontan 2009, 202). Further, political scientists are increasingly becoming aware of the important role that emotions play in the production of violence (see, for instance, Coleman, Goldman and Kygler 2007). Theorists such as Steinberg (1991, 1996) have analysed the role that emotions, such as humiliation, have played within presidential decision making and foreign policy towards Vietnam, or the role of shame and humiliation within the Cuban Missile Crisis. In fact, political theorists are increasingly studying the impact of ‘humiliation’ (see for instance Lindner 1996; 2006) and coming to the realisation that humiliation plays a crucial role in conflict production. Experts such as Fontan (2009), for instance, note the influence of humiliation on the violence that erupted in the post-invasion phase in Iraq.

Theories on ethnic violence have also attempted to explain why certain groups exercise brutal violence against other groups. Theorists have labelled the phenomena of ethnic violence differently, with some labelling it as ‘post-modern neo-tribalism’ (Franck 1995) while others have labelled it as ‘the narcissism of minor differences’ (Ignatieff 1999). Other theories have emerged that attempt to explain such occurrences which note the manipulative nature of leaders (Sklar 1967; Brass 1976; Bates 1974; 1983; Milne 1981; Rothschild 1981), or point to the existence of ancient hatreds (Ignatieff 1997; Kaplan 1993); or enmity through rivalries involving access to resources (Callahan 1998). Others have considered the role of modernisation on group dynamics, particularly in post-colonial states (see Bates 1974; 1983; Nairn 1977; Chua 2004). However, these hypotheses do not take into account long held resentments, grievances, anger and shame as motivational tools for human behaviour and collective violence. Emotions such as fear, resentment, rage, and hatred have been shown to directly contribute to ethnic violence in Eastern Europe (Petersen 2002). Some have argued that such emotions contribute to the formation of ideas, behaviours and actions, which determines how individuals and groups produce and reproduce ethnic violence (Peterson 2002). Indeed, emotions contribute to the manifestation of a specific set of behaviours and are important for gaining insights into the motivations behind ethnic conflicts. Coleman, Goldman and Kygler noted that emotional experiences are psycho-socially produced and that emotions such as anger or shame, and the role they play, can significantly “influence people’s experiences of and reactions to social conflict” (2007, 114). Seminal studies conducted by Linder such as *The Feeling of Being Humiliated: A Central Theme in Armed Conflict* (1996),

rejects the traditional rational choice theory as a basis for explaining violent conflicts. Linder argues that “feelings of humiliation between warring parties and towards third intervening parties are a central determinant for violence, and are central to hampering rational solutions leading to compromise and co-operation” (1996, 1). For Peterson (2002), the overriding emotion that emerges from his case studies of Eastern Europe indicates that the resentment narrative is the most dominant. In fact, resentment based on a “sense of unjust group status, provides the best predictive and descriptive fit...Resentment pervasively appears to inflame ethnic animosity and drive outcomes in the timing and patterns of action” (Peterson 2002, 2). This argument is in line with the concept of ‘Identity Salience and Activation’ theory (see Stets and Burke 2000). Identity theorists have noted the salience of certain identity characteristics, and argue that certain individual or groups’ identity characteristics are ‘activated’ during periods of pressure, conflict or change (Stet and Burke 2000). Essentially, emotions determine the motivations, patterns and level of violence exercised. The compressed account of Iraq’s attempts at forging a nation produced below needs to be considered in light of this theory of ethnic conflict.

#### **4.3. Iraq's State-Building Experience:**

The general consensus on Iraq, since its very beginnings, is one of ungovernability (Hudson 1977, 267). The artificially constructed state inherited a violent and repressive identity as a means of survival, employing a ‘carrot and stick’ method. Some have argued that this lack of governance extends to the whole of the Middle East and is not unique to Iraq. Telhami and Barnett (2002), for instance, note that establishing stable states in the Middle East is far more complex than other regions precisely because of the notion of pan-Arab and Islamic sentiments. Consequently, the Middle East has attempted to forge a national identity by directly limiting transnational Arab sentiments. Telhami and Barnett posit that a significant by-product of this process has been that national and state-building projects have been played out on a regional- and not simple a domestic – stage” (Telhami and Barnett 2002, 9-10). However, this view fails to take into consideration the impact of colonial rule in developing competing identities through state formation (see, for instance, Bates 1974; 1983). The nation-building policies of the modern Iraqi state is strongly linked and heavily tied to the region’s historical roots. Most crucially, the inherited ethnic makeup of Iraq reflected long established ethno-religious relations under the Ottoman Empire and the Caliphate system. As

Iraq gained official independence from colonial rule, the hodgepodge of cultures, ethnicities and religious groups lost the autonomy they exercised under the Ottoman Empire and had to forge an entirely different relationship with each other and towards the state. For the most part, this new relationship was forged through conflict with the Sunni-Arab identity again gaining an elite position. Regionally, as more states formed, various attempts were made by leaders of the new states to impose a more unifying identity along either pan-Arab or pan-Islamic lines (Mufti 1996; Doran 2002). In a more modern context, increasingly, nationalist opinions have emerged within Iraq insisting that a uniform national identity existed and that the current academic and political arguments contending otherwise are proposed by “universally non-Iraqis” (al-Istrabadi 2007). Proponents of this perspective insist that the ‘myth’ of Iraq as an artificial state is indeed false and ‘unhistorical’ (al-Istrabadi 2007). Yet, it is difficult to accept sweeping arguments that “over a span of centuries-if not millennia - the people of Iraq have been one, for all their ethnic and confessional differences” (al-Istrabadi 2007).

Such arguments marginalise the complex influence of colonial rule, as well as the state’s nation-building and institutional legacies in further complicating inter-religious and ethnic tensions and entrenching social and existentialist cleavages. Further, they propose a limited argument in relegating the extensive violence that erupted across sections of Iraqi society to that of resistance against the U.S. led invasion. As this chapter will demonstrate, while elements of nationalism exist within Iraq, other factors such as ethnicity and religious affiliation still trump nationalist sentiments in times of crises. This may explain why the various spoiler and militia groups enjoyed such high levels of support within their constituencies (Hubbard 2007, 345).

The relationship and negative impacts of colonial rule on state weakness and failures has been noted by political scientists. For instance, Carrey’s (2002) analyses of the political and civil liberties of post-colonial societies led to the conclusion that such societies are more prone to human rights violations. Carey (2002, 60) postulates that the relationship between colonialism and its exploitative measures should not be discounted in analysing the lack of human rights or the existence of good governance measures. However, the impact of colonial rule has produced far more negative consequences for colonised societies. In addition to human rights issues, it has contributed to the rise of nationalism producing social, economic, religious and ethnic schisms (Isaacman 1976; Liebenow 1986). Authoritarian rule, sectarian

and religious conflict, nepotism, ethnic domination and intolerance and civil wars are the by-products of the era of colonialism under both Ottoman and British Empires. Indeed these effects are a direct result of the non-democratic practices of the ruling colonial powers in such societies (Carey 2002, 61). This legacy was crucial because it established, in positions of power, artificial elites who, in turn, promoted patron-client relations in modern Iraq. The establishment of neo-patrimonial networks, in turn, prevented more inclusive and democratic state mechanisms from emerging, leading eventually to a class of power brokers and oligarchs. This elite class, in turn, resorted to increasingly authoritarian and repressive measures to contain Iraq's multi-national and multi-religious society.

Still, there is a far more significant implication posited by this argument. The normative connotation of this argument is that the developed world should actively attempt to provide aid and assistance to post-colonial third world states in order to correct past colonial injustices. This is a contentious issue since colonialism has produced a specific world view entailing “certain ways of seeing, specific modes of understating the world and one’s place in it” (Carey 2002, 18) for post-colonial societies. This leaves the reconstructionary field open to neo-colonial and neo-imperial accusation with the understanding that certain cultures and peoples are better equipped at ruling others, referred as ‘colonising the mind’ and “commonwealth literature” (see Mcleod 2000; Thiong'o 1981). Within this context, however, the colonial period of British rule significantly altered the structure of Iraq’s state, as well as its nation-building projects.

The formation of a unified and stable Iraqi state was worsened by various issues, including the history of the region, the colonial experience, the existence of multiple ethnicities and religions as well as the rural, nomadic and tribal nature of society (Niblock 1982; Lukitz 1995; Stansfield 2007). Most notably, the three provinces of Basra, Baghdad and Mosel, did not form a consolidated political or economic unit, which significantly hindered the construction of a unified nation-state (Stansfield 2007). In fact, the provinces looked to other states and regions for political and economic relations. Basra, for instance, found a much closer connection to the Gulf and India, while Mosel partook closer relations with Anatolia. Such tendencies created a barrier in the governability of Iraq during both the Ottoman Empire as well as the British colonialists’ experiences.

Crucially, colonial powers often imposed one ethnic group above another, in order to consolidate their rule, as well as using the group in favour to control and dominate others



(Lukitz 1995). For instance, the Punjabi's and Sikh's domination of military and administrative services was promoted and favoured by the British in colonial India. Likewise, the Belgian state promoted the Tutsis over the Hutus who were the majority in Rwanda. The U.S. adopted similar discriminatory processes in the Philippines (Carey 2002, 66). In Iraq, this was a policy adopted by both Ottoman and British colonialists which also involved the election of local sheikhs into official administrative positions, since kin connections superseded all other loyalties (Furtig 2000; Sluglett 2007). In turn, the Sheikhs were rewarded with money and resources, which further consolidated their power over their tribes and clans. This policy produced a specific political culture where affiliations were based on personal relations and loyalties. More crucially, it produced a system of self-censorship that created illiberal power dynamics, which produced a narrative of authority based on suppression of the weak, rural masses by the powerful sheikhs and heads of clans.

Ethnic tensions and armed conflicts are one of the most obvious outcomes of colonial rule on the authoritarian and undemocratic nature of post-colonial states. The tendency of colonial powers to adhere to and promote racist policies entrenched the socio-economic and political dominance of one ethnic group above others (see Stavenhagen 1996). In Sri Lanka, for instance, the root of ethnic conflicts can be traced back to the British Colonial rule and the policies implemented during that era (Samaranayaka 2008, 143). Similar trends can be observed in the African continent, where cases such as Sudan (Mitchell 1997), Rwanda (Saha 2006) and a multitude of others (Christie 1998) can be easily situated. The limited attempt by colonial powers, such as the British and the U.S., to introduce quasi-liberal institutions not only produced limited successes but it also created further disruptions in colonial societies (Isaacman 1976:75). Furthermore, these half-hearted attempts did not entail active economic development policies for the colonised societies, with little investment returning to communities (Chibber 2005; Davis 2001, 311). Indeed, there has been obvious links between the levels of human rights violations in post-colonial societies because of this process. Further to this, the promotion of self-interest by colonial states through the dual policy of promoting democratic and human rights norms while actively supporting authoritarian regimes that impose extensive human rights violations has weakened the 'soft power' of democratic states significantly (Nye 2004; Fry 2010; Petras 2008). This has produced extensive criticism from local elites who see democratic rhetoric as a guise for powerful states to dominate weaker states. Post-independence elites have adopted similar views, using quasi-liberal institutions inherited from colonial powers to consolidate their own authoritarian

rule at the expense of their societies (Mazrui 1986, 273; Mamdani 1996, 40). While the argument that local elites simply replicated the processes of governance of the colonial powers, which often happened to be non-democratic in nature, does have some merits, it is also limited. The colonial experience nurtured nationalist sentiments which post-independence promoted, consolidating sovereignty over human rights and good governance measures. This is particularly important in post-colonial societies where multiple ethnic groups exist, with various groups demanding an equal share in the state, or attempts by one group to dominate another, as was the case with the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda.

The policy of selecting local Sheikhs was more comprehensively adopted by the British imperialists, further restructuring the socio-economic and political terrain of modern Iraq (Tripp 2000, 58). Initially, British interests in Iraq arose due to its useful trade routes and proximity to India, as well as the strategically important Gulf coasts (Tripp 2000, 13). However, soon Iraq was a major source of revenue raising for the British Empire, particularly in the textile industry (Tripp 2000, 68). The discovery of oil in Southern Iran in the early twentieth century complicated the economic interests of the British Empire in the region. The Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 divided Asia Minor between the French and the British (Watson 2003, 200) had a detrimental impact on the Middle East state-building and nation-building projects. The mandates divided the region equally between the French and the British who acquired Syria and Lebanon and Iraq, and Palestine and Transjordan respectively. In 1920, the then British High Commissioner to Iraq, Arnold Wilson was replaced by Percy Cox following widespread revolts, demanding a greater level of autonomy for Iraq. The British in 1921, under the guidance of Churchill, laid down the terms of governance and administration for Iraq as a constitutional monarchy. While Iraqis would be able to self-govern, the expertise and advice of an elite group of British colonialists would consolidate the governing process. In reality, decisions relating to major economic, military and political, as well as foreign policy, were still under British domain and essentially amounted to a veto power over Iraq's sovereignty (Sluglett and Sluglett 1987, 11). For Iraqis, this British practice of inserting key British officials into authority structures made a mockery of Iraqi 'sovereignty' and served to further humiliate an emerging and tentative Iraqi nationalist sentiment. As political scientists have noted, sovereignty is "generated as a product of the political relationship between the people and the state" (Loughlin 2003, 70). Yet, direct colonial influence prevented the establishment of Iraq's sovereignty. Even more

detrimental was the fact that the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty signed by Prime Minister Nuri al-Sa'id in 1930 ensured that the British would have de-facto control over Iraq for the next 25 years.

The significance of the British era in Iraq is often underestimated since Iraq is widely viewed to have experienced relatively limited period of colonialism. Certainly, considering the more extensive periods of colonial rule in India, Asia and Africa, this is comparatively true. Even more crucially, Iraq did not have to launch a long and bloody period of resistance against colonial rule and gained sovereignty in a relatively peaceful manner. Nevertheless, the British colonial period was significant in producing particular patterns of political behaviour, institutional legacy as well as socio-economic structures that have influenced nation-building projects in Iraq. Peter Gowan, for instance, declares that the "political culture of twentieth-century Iraq has been shaped more by British-imperialist social engineering than by the people of that country" (1999, 179). As a result, many of the illiberal and patently self-interested administrative processes of the British were replicated by latter regimes. The British model for Iraq closely resembled that of India, which entailed the promotion of reliable local leaders to aid the British administrators in controlling and administering the provinces. This method of governance was far more interventionist in nature than that experienced in the past under the Ottoman Empire (Burbank and Cooper 2010, 307). Admittedly, the relatively centralised nature of British rule and its policies were largely based on the tribal nature of Iraq as the only indigenous form of governance. However, this process was exacerbated by the British favouritism of Sunni tribes or a stringent selection in "appointing 'suitable' tribal leaders as 'government' shaikhs" (Sluglett and Sluglett 1987, 12). Protests by non-compliant local communities and tribes were often ruthlessly suppressed, as is evident by the British Royal Air Force bombings of Sulaimaniya following Kurdish revolts (Ferhadi 2003; Anderson and Rashidian 1991).

Furthermore, defining the borders of Iraq proved to be contentious from the beginning, particularly with British interests in oil. The status of the Mosul *vilayet* and its incorporation into the new Iraqi state is a good indication of this. For the British, the consolidation of Iraq into a state required the important province of Mosul, thought to contain the majority of the oil wealth. Situated in northern Iraq, Mosul was populated by a largely Kurdish population (Bulloch and Morris 1991, 59-60) and contained the oil rich Kirkuk province. Although the Sykes-Picot agreement initially conferred Mosul to the French, the British insistence that Iraq could not be a self-sustaining state without the *vilayet*, which led to the addition of the province to the Baghdad (central) and Basra (southern) provinces. The British also desired

closer relations with the Sunni majority in the region, and so the presence of Mosul, containing a majority of Arab and Kurdish Sunnis, was necessary to prevent Iraq from becoming a Shi'ite state (Sluglett and Sluglett 1987, 13). Mosul was therefore included as part of Iraq despite Kurdish protests to the League of Nations Committee. With the discovery of oil reserves in Kirkuk in 1927, the Kurds aspirations of gaining the *vilayet* became even more precarious. To maintain close relations with the Sunnis, the British imposed a Hijazi Prince with administrative power concentrated in the hands of the Sunni elites, consisting of merchants and tribal sheikhs, who, in turn, remained entirely dependent on British support to maintain their new role (Kingston 1996, 95).

By 1932, Iraq had gained its independence and the Hashemite Monarchy and subsequent Iraqi governments attempted to reduce the power and influence of tribal leaders, but it soon became apparent that any form of stable society would be reliant on the tribe's direct cooperation and, hence, would require government compromise. Just as the British had attempted to structure Iraqi society and power dynamics through establishing Sheikhs as the official leaders of their clans and territories, so did the Iraqi administration. This resulted in the rise of powerful individuals who controlled vast areas of land and people within Iraq, further entrenching tribal and filial affiliations. New land regulations and registrations, which allowed the sheikhs to develop their own fiefdoms, aggravated socio-economic and power dynamics of Iraqi society further. As a result, the sheikhs became increasingly prosperous and began to "play an essentially parasitic" (Sluglett and Sluglett 1987, 32-33) role creating a vast class divide between themselves and the working class. Sluglett and Sluglett (1987, 32-33) stress that such socio-economic changes were directly caused by British policies within Iraq, hinting at the possibility that, without colonial rule, the indigenous societies in the region may have evolved different socio-economic and political patterns in time. Yet, colonial policies produced a vast divide between the bourgeoisie and rural masses, which ensured that democratic practices did not attract much popular support. This was facilitated by government pressure in screening and censoring the establishment of political parties across religious, tribal, ethnic and clan loyalties (Haj 1997). Indeed, affiliations outside of the norm were widely viewed as threatening the stability and very existence of the new state, particularly as parties' increasingly advocated pan-Arab or socialist<sup>10</sup> political views. Rapid

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<sup>10</sup> The Iraqi Ba'ath Socialist Party, established secretly in 1950, defined itself by three key concepts: unity, liberation and socialism. The fundamental concept that the Ba'athi's were concerned with involved the rejection and resistance of foreign imperial rule, followed closely by the promotion of Arab unity. The socialist element of the party was less pronounced and reflected a European version of National Socialism, however this founding

modernisation, urbanisation and education as well as wider Arab politics in the Middle East, and the prominence of Nassir in Egypt contributed to the increased political consciousness of Iraqis (Haj1997; Tibi 1997). The lack of political experience and mobilisation, however, often produced parties that lacked longevity, a specific political platform or mass support. When political parties were created they were often “short term alliances between groups of fortuitously like-minded individuals. The ideological and moral bankruptcy of the political system was glaringly evident, particularly to those who were excluded from full participation in it” (Sluglett and Sluglett 1987, 18). These processes reflect attempts at forming a more liberal and inclusive political process. Yet, such tentative measures could bear little fruit in light of the authoritarian legacy that the new state had inherited.

One of the most important themes that emerged following independence was the rising power and influence of a small faction within the military. The military was to exert significant influence on Iraqi politics for the next twenty-six years, and consecutive cabinets would rise and fall based on the support of this important clique. This clique also adhered to increasing pan-Arab and Iraqi nationalist values, which were to mark them as the ideologues of early Iraq. The military institution as a whole was central to the development of anti-imperialism and the rise of Iraqi, albeit with a strong Sunni Arab, flavoured nationalism that emerged with the Prime Minister Nuri al-Sa’id (Stansfield 2007, 49). Their power was significant, for instance, from 1937 to 1941, and they “could and did make or break the seven cabinets that came into office in these four years” (Stansfield 2007, 20). Inspired by the Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy nationalisms and increasingly advocating an anti-colonial nationalist stance, the officers became more ambitious in determining the future of Iraq. Indeed, all subsequent revolts and coups issued from these ambitious military men, and personal power struggles between these men determined the political structure of the post-colonial state. As these men formed short term political parties and alliances, they increasingly adhered to Iraqi Sunni-Arab nationalism or pan-Arab nationalism. The evolving role that the military embraced reflected the notion that colonial experiences permeate independence struggles, which sideline deeper issues of popular empowerment. As a result, the pan-Arab and pan-Nationalist ideologies attracted little following and largely lacked legitimacy since the majority of Iraqis were Shi’ites and Kurdish. In Iraq, pan-Arabism, therefore, faced significant challenges in

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basis was eventually replaced by a system of authoritarian populism. The party was, in nature, anti-communist and anti-Marxist and drew significant inspiration from the Nasserites in Egypt to consolidate and promote Arab socialism. Despite this, all moves to merge Iraq with Egypt were rejected by the party. For a basic account of the Ba’ath party see Seddon 2004:84-87; for an account of the Ba’ath party and its implications for the reconstruction of Iraq post invasion see Imam 2004, 53-56.

affording an acceptable political position to the Kurds and the Shi'ites because it presented a "xenophobic and chauvinistic definition of political community that was bound up with rigid notions of ethnic identity and cultural boundaries" (Davis 2005, 56). Other political parties such as the Iraqi Communist Party, which stressed social equality irrespective of ethnicity or religious affiliation, found much greater support among Kurds and Shi'ites.

As a result of changes across the political spectrum of Iraqi society, this period established increasing ethnic polarisation of the community. The army, for instance, progressively polarised across confessional lines, as was the case under the Ottoman Empire (Davis 2005, 56). Other discriminatory reforms by the government included the structuring of the electoral system, which allowed the continuation of Sunni dominance, as well as contriving the cabinet domination by Sunn-Arabs. The Shi'ites and the Kurds were generally marginalised, leading the Shi'ite religious leaders to revolt and increasingly advocate the removal of the Monarchy. This revolt resulted in the mass deportation of Shi'ite religious ulama, creating a leadership vacuum that was detrimental to Shi'ite political consciousness at the time (Romano 2005). The Monarchy's active prevention of political parties and the largely rural nature of Shi'ite communities reduced the incentive to form contesting political parties or movements. Those political parties that were allowed, such as the Istiqlal Party or the National Democratic Party, never gained widespread support (Davis 2008; Kelidar 1979).

Limited civil society groups and organisations emerged following independence, particularly from 1944 onwards. These groups included unions, women's groups and youth and student organisations. The labour unions around the oil fields increasingly demanded more rights and working conditions leading to several clashes and massacres in Kirkuk resulting in state crackdown (Haj 1997, 101) and eventually a ban on all unionisations. Consequently, the inability of consecutive governments and regimes since independence to implement a viable, legitimate and widely accepted state apparatus has produced an overwhelming perception that state institutions are immaterial. In turn, the colonial policies produced informal means of affiliation, nepotism, clientelism and patrimonial networks that emerged to replace state services and institutions, further destabilising the state-building process. This, in turn, shaped locally produced, or promoted existing cultural and religious institutions and behaviours that supplemented and filled the institutional vacuum. As a result, rule of law did not attain much

of a foothold within Iraq. The discouragement and active prevention of civil society formation further reduced social pressures for government reforms.<sup>11</sup>

Yet, the initial prevention of civil society development combined with the increasingly authoritarian nature of state-society relations paved the way for an increasingly ideologically radicalised and ambitious military man to attempt to shape the direction of the nation's future. As is the case with post-colonial states, national liberation movements reform into the dominant political parties that govern post-independence states. In Africa, for instance, national liberation movements have consolidated their rule by "selectively reconstructing narratives of the wars of liberation and inventing new traditions that establish the nationalist parties' exclusive post-colonial legitimacy to rule." (Johnson 2005, 1). The revolutionary groups depose and replace the role of the elites favoured by the colonial powers and the nationalist rhetoric is increasingly used to promote loyalty and societal conformity to the detriment of human rights and democracy development (Johnson 2005). In other words, those who partook in the liberation, or at least active rebellion against the state and colonial powers, become the leading elite post-independence. As in most post-colonial societies, such as Tanzania, the revolutionary elite developed a single-party political system. Under president Nyerere in Tanzania, significant socio-economic and political reforms ensued in a reform package in 1984 (Grawert 2009). However, democratic processes and political reforms were sacrificed for the sake of economic and social development. This trend aligns with existing literature on transitioning societies where a level of authoritarianism is perceived as necessary to consolidate liberalisation (see Przeworski et al. 2000). Recent attempts to reform toward a multi-party system have faced extensive resistance from power elites, especially within the military, whose interests lie directly with maintaining the status quo. The state and the party have, in turn, intimidated citizens and used repressive measures to silence calls for a multi-party system. As Peter notes, the individuals who called for

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<sup>11</sup> Not until the later parts of Saddam's rule did tentative and often secret civil society and resistance groups formed in Iraq. These organisations largely consisted of disillusioned ex-ba'athi members whose activities attracted little attention as the regime's infamous surveillance system had eroded in the later stages of the regimes rule (see Kaldor, Anheier and Glasius 2005, 6). Several examples ensued, including the Hewan (dialogue) Gallery which was headed by an ex-ba'athi artists by the name of Qasim Al-Sabti. Sabti had resigned his position in the party following the regime's illegal invasion of Kuwait. Hewan largely consisted of artists who exhibited their work in a bid to attract foreign customers. The gallery in which these artists worked also consisted of a café, which was the site of gatherings for artists and intellectuals who discussed politics and political theory. Another group which emerged from the gallery was labelled as the Najeen (survivors) group, and consisted of artists who espoused open aversion towards the regime. Despite the execution of various members of these collectives, the members continued to gather and discuss politics in an open rejection of the regime's authority (for more see Kaldor, Anheier and Glasius 2005, 6).

reforms were “arrested, detained or internally deported...it was taboo to imagine or to talk of multiparty in the country” (1997, 14). This was a trend that was familiar to Iraq’s post-colonial past. The brief chronology provided below demonstrates the unstable political terrain of Iraq as consecutive members of the military attempted to impose their own visions of Iraqi identity along pan-Arab, pro-Nasserite, socialist or Iraqi nationalist attitudes.

#### **4.4. Iraq and Identity:**

The end of the first Iraqi government came in a bloody coup of 1936 by Bakr Sidiqi, a General in the military who was backed by Hikmat Sulayman, later named the new Prime Minister. What ensued has been described by some as “an almost comic-book parody of revolving-door military coups and dictatorships” (Aikman 2009, 132). For instance, by 1937, Sidiqi was assassinated in Mosul and replaced in the second military coup in the space of two years. Soon after Sulayman resigned as the Prime Minister, and was replaced by Jamil al-Midfa’I, however, disagreements with the military elite quickly produced another coup. No government stayed in power for long and other coups followed in quick succession, including one in December 1938 by a military group called ‘*The Seven*,’ also known as the ‘*Golden Square*’. Among these elite men, Nuri al-Sa’id was elected as the new Prime Minister. However, he was soon deposed by the group in 1941, following attempts to disband ‘*the Seven*’, and al-Sa’id was replaced by Rashid Ali al-Kaylani. Al-Khaylani rapidly attracted British resistance due to his anti-colonial rhetoric and noncompliance with the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty by refusing passage to British Troops in Iraq. Increasing pressure from ‘*The Seven*’ forced al-Khaylani to progressively advocate pro-Axis sentiments. The British, in turn, perceiving a direct threat to their interests in the country, invaded and forced al-Khaylani to flee to Iran. The British returned the status quo that existed before the coups occurred, and the monarchy was reinstated in 1953. Feisal II became the new King of Iraq. A relatively peaceful period ensued before another significant coup in 1958 brought General Abd-al-Karim Qassim and Colonel Abd-al-Salam Muhammad Arif to power (Ayubi 2008, 266). Iraq was immediately declared a republic and Qassim elected as the Prime Minister. However, less than a year later, another military seizure was attempted by Colonel Abdel Wahab Shawaf, but this failed to remove Qassim in March 1959. Later that same year, an additional attempted coup also failed, with Qassim injured and his driver killed (DeFronzo 2009).



Inevitably, Qassim was finally removed in a bloody coup in 1963 launched by the *Arab Socialist Baath Party* following strong resistance against Qassim's pro-nationalist agendas. This coup was led by al-Salam Muhammad Arif, who was subsequently elected as the new president. Arif was a strong pan-Arabist, pro-Nasserist supporter but failed to gain widespread support among the masses as Qassim had. President Arif was replaced in 1966 by his brother, Major General abd-al-Rahman Muhamad Arif, following his death in a helicopter crash. The Ba'athists soon launched another coup and ousted Arif in favour of General Ahmad Hasan al-Baker, backed by the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC). Saddam Hussein was named his vice president (and eventually replaced Baker in 1979), ironically initiating a new era of long term political stability and the end of military coups. The consecutive number of coups in Iraq, in this fragile early period of independence, reflects a complex process of elites determining the course and direction of the new state. The main divergence occurred between pro-nationalists, such as Qassim, and pro-Arab and Pro-Nasserites, who increasingly viewed Iraq's independence as an avenue for greater regional development. The consecutive coups reflected the various internal dialogues in an attempt to define a unique post-independent role for the country, though these discourses were often overshadowed by the still prevalent colonial practices of the British. However, as Lindner (1996, 1) has noted, not all conflict is undesirable, especially if they are non-violent confrontations, and, in fact, in some instances it is necessary if power imbalances are present. However, the increasingly bloody and violent nature of this internal discourse reflected a rising authoritarianism that was to decisively shape Iraq for the next three or so decades to come.

The above chronology demonstrates several important elements of Iraqi nationalism, political identity and culture. The prominence of military personnel in filling the power vacuum attests to the failure of political parties to gain mass support. Further, it is indicative of the Monarchy's adoption of colonial policies by refusing the formation of parties that represented a variety of interests as such a trend was widely feared, by previous colonial powers as well as subsequent regimes, to spell the end of Iraq itself. As it so happened, it was the military men who had close access to the regime, as well as the capabilities and political education to directly challenge the state. Consecutive coups and counter coups, violent ethnic and religious repressions, bloody pogroms as well as the generally conflict ridden changes in governments, produced a specific political culture heavily reliant on the use of force and coups to oust or stabilise governments. Peaceful attempts at protest against policies or the government was

increasingly faced with repressive and violent ends leading society to increasingly revert to violent measures as a response. The state increasingly resembled a 'police state', exercising rigid control over society to ensure stability and durability during the Ba'athist reign (Perito 2005, 2). The above account of bloody coups was by no means the end of conflict and violence. Saddam's rise to power started several decades of tyranny, authoritarianism, repression, mass executions, torture, and imprisonments, significantly altering the nation-building track.

#### **4.5. The Kurdish Experience:**

The 'Kurdish Question' is conventionally considered a separate issue in the analysis of Iraqi state formation and nationalist movements. While this thesis has also adopted this similar trend for reasons of practicality, both in terms of space and analysis, it is nevertheless important to mention the Kurdish issue here as a means of providing a more comprehensive examination of the rise of Iraqi nationalism, as well as sectarian and religious divisions that have so marked post-independence Iraq. The nationalist movement has been significantly Sunni-Arab in nature, and the Kurds have often been viewed with a mixture of resentment and oppression by successive regimes. Traditionally, the Kurds have been viewed by the nationalists as the spoilers of Iraqi nationalism and cohesion. However, ironically, Kurdish attempts at self-determination consolidated a more cohesive Iraqi Arab nationalism in return, particularly post-2003.

While a thorough analysis of the distinctness of Kurdish identity is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is nevertheless clear that the Kurds constitute a distinct ethnic group to the Arabs, Turks and Persians in the region (Ignatieff 1994; Ahmadi 1995; Coyle 1993; Eller 1999). Attempts to delegitimize the nationalist movements of the Kurds are based on the notion that they lack a cohesive language, culture or history. In contrast, sophisticated anthropological and sociological studies emerged from the nineteenth century onwards that clearly identified the Kurds as a distinct group, although multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious in nature; despite the fact that historical records identify a Kurdish nation in existence as far back as the 10<sup>th</sup> century (see for instance, Izady 1992; Kreyenbroek and Allison 1996; Sweetnam 1994). Well known classics including Sharaf Khan Bidlisi's *Sharafname*, written in the sixteenth century, as well as Evliya Chelebi's *Seyahatname*, written in the 1600s, provided extensive accounts of Kurdish culture, customs, socioeconomic and political

structure. Evidence of Kurdish nationalism exists as far back as the sixteenth century, but this nationalism did not gain widespread participation by the Kurds until the nineteenth century when a key revolt occurred against the Ottoman Empire in 1880-82 (Gunter 2005, 265). With the consequent establishment of a state, the Kurds were the first to resist their accommodation into Iraq, and, by the early twentieth century, Kurdish nationalism had begun to take widespread root in greater Kurdistan. Further encouraged by Wilsonian self-determination, the Kurds saw the Ottoman defeat as an opportunity to forward their nationalist claims. However, lack of modernization had prevented the Kurds natural nomadic and tribal social structure from evolving into an urbanised society, which significantly curbed the nationalist movement. This played a significant role in the prevention of a consolidated Kurdish nationalist ideology developing, as the majority of powerful clans and tribes were often in direct conflict over resources and influence.

The Hashemite Monarchy attempted, at least in rhetoric, to provide limited latitude to Kurdish aspirations. However, by the 1930s, it was apparent to all sides that the Monarchy had no interest in accommodating Kurdish autonomy. At the time of Iraq's conception, a joint Iraqi and British statement was released that outlined the boundaries of Kurdish self-rule, however, this was deferred until such time that the Kurds "arrive at an agreement between themselves as to the form which they wish that government to take" (Jwaideh 2006, 196). The British, nevertheless, were also quick to privately reassure the Monarchy that such concessions would in no way entail separatism or succession, (Romano 2006, 184) demonstrating the dual and competing policies of colonial powers. The British had also established a violent precedence for the new regime as to the treatment of Shi'ites and Kurds through utilisation of disproportionate use of force. Although the British did not use chemical weapons, according to Bulloch and Morris (1991, 61) they may as well have since they actively used the Royal Air Force (RAF) to destroy Kurdish villages. Not unlike chemical bombs, the British used time-delayed bombs designed to explode after the return of peasants as a means of terror tactic (Bulloch and Morris 1991, 61). The latter regimes would often use similar disproportionate levels of violence to curb Kurdish nationalist movements.

In the 1930's, Mullah Mustafa Barzani's rise indicated a more united Kurdish nationalist movement in Iraq. The formation of the *Hewa* (Hope) Party in 1939, and close connections with the Iraqi Communist Party who proposed a more conciliatory policy towards the Kurds, increased the regime's fear of Kurdish separatism and the exacerbation of internal instability (Sluglett and Sluglett 2001). By 1945, Barzani was expelled from Iraq following his attempt

to communicate with the British authorities who, in turn, encouraged the Iraqi cabinet to correspond with the Kurds. The Iraqi cabinet responded by assembling troops along the Kurdish north and forcing Barzani over the Iranian border where he joined the Iranian Kurdish nationalists. The ensuing short lived 1946 Republic of Mahabad in Iran (see Eagleton 1963) was detrimental in increasing repression of Kurds in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria as it highlighted the capacity of Kurdish nationalism to reach its ideals. The Mahabad incident served to produce long term policies between the states in collaborating to weaken the Kurds nationalist movements.

Yet, the end of the Hashemite Monarchy in a military coup, and General Qassim's rise to power, promised a new reconciliatory phase for Kurdish-Arab relations in Iraq. Indeed, Barzani was asked to return from exile in the Soviet Union in order to lead Kurdish-Arab discussions on a peaceful resolution to the ongoing tensions. However, talks soon fell apart and over a decade of Kurdish rebellion ensued, starting from 1961, with General Qassim launching a major military campaign against the Kurds. Saddam's eventual rise to power led to the lofty possibilities of Kurdish autonomy in the March 1970 Manifesto, which promised extensive cultural and political autonomy to the Kurds (Entessar 2010; Bird 2004). The Manifesto emerged following a year of intense military campaign between the Kurds and the Ba'athist regime. When it became apparent to the Bakr government and Barzani that the conflict could continue unabated, both came to an agreement to sue for peace. Peace talks ensued between the two sides in December 1969 and led to the drafting of the March 1970 Manifesto. According to Entessar, the Manifesto was the "most extensive plan that any Iraqi government had adopted to accommodate national aspirations" (2010, 90). The Manifesto entailed three key concepts: the nature of the Kurdish autonomy, the exact structure of the Kurdish autonomous governing structures and the role of the central government and its relationship towards this autonomous zone (Entessar 2010, 90). However, mutual mistrust ultimately led to the eventual collapse of talks and the Manifesto was never implemented. Entessar, however, notes that the collapse of the Manifesto was linked to changing Kurdish aspirations and views towards the term 'autonomy' (Entessar 2010, 90).

Essentially, preventing the unification of a Kurdish identity was one of the most important aims of the state. In order to weaken the Kurdish identity the Ba'ath adopted various policies, including financial incentives to Arab's who married Kurdish women, or to those who would change the name of Kurdish areas into Arab ones (Al-Ali and Pratt 2009, 42). Likewise, the education system, both administratively as well as through the curriculum, was Arabized,

followed closely by the police as well as all civil servants. When 'soft' regime approaches yielded little results, the Ba'ath were not above the use of mass torture, deportation and imprisonment. However, as state repression increased, so did Kurdish nationalism and identity. The Anfal campaign, as well as the chemical bombings in Halabja (Kelly 2008) launched in the 1980's has ironically come to symbolise the most dominant feature of Kurdish identity; one of persecution, resistance, collective pain and a stronger purpose for self-determination.

In attempting to attract international support, the Kurds have traditionally allied themselves with western powers, particularly the United States. This is despite the fact that the international community has provided little support to the Kurds in achieving autonomy. The gassing of the Kurds, for instance, in the town of Halabja was sold to the international audience by the United States through false claims of Iranian responsibility; and only then "brought the destruction of Halabja to the attention of the world's media in a clever and diabolical public relations conspiracy" (O'Leary, McGarry and Salih 2006, xii). Eventually, the brutalities of the regime led to a widespread uprising in 1991 by Shi'ites and Kurds. The ensuing brutality of the regime in crushing the uprising, and the pervasive humanitarian crisis and exodus of the Kurds into the Turkish and Iranian borders pressured the West to impose a no-fly zone in Kurdish dominated north and Shia dominated south (see Dent 2004; Imam 2004). Whereas the Kurds continued to look to their western allies as a source for Kurdish liberation, the Shi'ites of the south viewed the west as a supporter of Saddam; this view further complicated the post-2003 political environment and essentially preventing a unified consensus. Further, the disastrous end of the 1991 uprising in the south entrenched distrust of western powers in the rest of the non-Kurdish population. The Kurds relationship with western powers still acts as a contentious issue and is widely considered by the rest of Iraq as disruptive to the nation-building agendas of the state (see Gunter 1993; Charountaki 2011).

Having gained a level of autonomy, the Kurds faced other critical problems. Lacking such experience, self-rule proved to be a difficult process, with various inter-Kurdish violence' emerging in the 1990's. This was further exacerbated by the economic blockade that Saddam imposed on the north in October 1991 (Gunter 1993, 295). Nevertheless, within a decade northern Iraq emerged as the most stable part of the country. Kurdish identity experienced a renaissance following the establishment of the autonomous region with increased levels of education, urbanisation, and reconstruction of infrastructure, foreign aid, economic integration as well as the dominance of Kurdish as the official language of the region (see

Aziz 2011). Further, Kurdish national symbols, myths and history increasingly returned to the public scene. A flourishing print media emerged, along with multiple universities and private educational facilities, broadening public education and awareness. Additionally, a tentative civil society sphere, including unions and women's rights groups emerged. Perhaps the most crucial of these civil groups has been increased women's shelters, women's rights advocates, and new legislation more favourable to women's conditions (see Al-Ali and Pratt 2009). By the time the invasion occurred, the Kurds had fine-tuned their self-governance skills relative to the early 1990's. When sectarian violence erupted in central and southern Iraq, the Kurds enjoyed relative calm and, in fact, profited from an extensive economic boom through increased economic trade with neighbouring countries such as Turkey and Iran. The Kurdish militia, the *Peshmarga*, were also apt at patrolling the border between Kurdistan and the rest of Iraq, as the ruling clique jealously guarded their hard earned political and territorial rights.

For the Kurds, liberal peace theory has provided little comfort, particularly in a state that they reside in by default. In fact, the Kurdish issue in Iraq effectively spotlights the inadequacies of liberal peace theory. At an international level more recently, measures have been taken by states, as well as bodies such as the United Nations, to address some of the inherent problems of this theory and reduce its impact on conflict-ridden societies where possible. Indeed, latest cases, such as the independence of Timor Leste in 2002 and the recent division of Sudan (Elbagir and Karimi 2011), indicate the intractable nature of identity-conflicts in fragile and failing states. Conversely, in other circumstances, ethnonationalist claims, labelled by theorists as neo-nationalism (see Norbu 1982; McRoberts 1997; Keating 2001; Nairn 2003), are still contained in many areas and continue to prevail in cases such as the Basque conflict in Spain (Totoricaguena 2004), Quebecois demands for independence in Canada (Taucar 2002), Flemish movements in Belgium (see Clough 1968; Goethem 2011) and Acehnese independence movements in Indonesia (Drexler 2008; Martinkus 2004). In the context of ethnonationalism in post-Ba'athist Iraq, the Kurds peaceful coexistence is heavily reliant on the territorial and political gains they have made in the last two decades. Any attempts to reduce Kurdish self-autonomy will undoubtedly have profoundly negative reverberations within the country, and the prospects for its long term peace. The reconstruction process in Iraq further indicates a prominent gap between the visions of liberal peace theory and that of theorists analysing complex ethnic conflicts. Western Liberal theorists often embrace abstract, intangible terms to address issues of ethnicity that permeate the empirical exercises of state and nation-building. Such terms include ideas such as non-discrimination, secular

state and the separation of ethnic identity from the state, civic nationalism, constitutional patriotism, and equality based on citizenship rather than race, religion or gender (Kymlicka and Opalski 2001; Asad 1999; 2003; Asefa 2003) colour the theoretical and empirical exercises of development activities in post-conflict societies. In contrast, theorists of ethnic conflicts have argued that the processes espoused by liberal peace theory are ineffective in instances where war and conflict have hardened ethnic or religious identities (Paris 2004, 2009; Chandler 2000). Decades of conflict and cross-ethnic violence produces specific patterns and behaviours that lead to a zero-sum policy for both sides of the conflict. That is not to indicate that all ethnic conflicts, even long term ones, produce this specific pattern. Nevertheless, empirical evidence of protracted ethnic and religious conflicts and their ensuing pogroms or genocides, as witnessed in Rwanda, Somalia, the Balkans, Uganda, Pakistan, Zaire, among others in the twentieth century alone, indicates a hardening of identity borders. In most of these instances, large scale security challenges entail complete control over a territory at the detriment of the other ethnic or religious group. As Kaufmann argues, ethnic conflicts produce:

intense security dilemmas, both because the escalation of each side's mobilization rhetoric presents a real threat to the other, and even more because intermingled population settlement patterns create defensive vulnerabilities and offensive opportunities...once this occurs, the war cannot end until the security dilemma is reduced by physical separation of the rival group" (1996, 139).

In societies where physical separation is impossible or at least is deemed as an undesirable outcome by the international community, the liberal peace mechanisms noted above are inserted into the conflict in order to address intense divergences in identities and aspirations. In the case of the Kurds in Iraq, the state failed to foster a successful nation-building dialogue with the Kurds, and so Kurdish (ethnic) nationalism succeeded Iraqi (civic) nationalism. Adding to this impasse, Kurdish identity has deepened as a response to some of the more repressive measures taken by the state to address Kurdish nationalism. For this reason, the very existence of Iraq is contingent on the continuation of the autonomous region of the north, which exemplifies the necessary physical separation Kaufmann notes. Kurdish autonomy and the unique position of Kurdish nationalism in the Middle East pose significant challenges towards the modern understanding of state 'sovereignty'. Liberal peace theory's efforts to accommodate shifting demands within ethnonationalist movements have produced interesting variations on (or alternatives to) the traditionally state-centric resolutions of intractable conflicts. Whether these conflicts are resolved through the dissolution of the

sovereign state, as in the case of Sudan or East Timor, or through provisions of significant autonomy and self-rule, as in the Kurds in Iraq, it is clear that 'sovereignty' will continue to face politico-legal contemporary challenges, especially in the form of identity conflicts that require a shift in the empirical and theoretical basis of this concept. Tierney (2005, 162) spotlights an example of this shift when he notes that sovereignty in modernity must evolve so as to accommodate the different peoples that are encompassed within the borders of modern states. Sovereignty, therefore, needs to attain a level of flexibility to accommodate the plurality of peoples in states, with an acceptance of the possibility that each group may propose a different understanding of the legal and political definitions of 'sovereignty'. As an outcome of this hypothesis, Tierney rejects the notion that groups traditionally viewed as demanding separatist agendas within territories such as Catalonia, Scotland or Quebec are indeed demanding such a feat (2005, 162). Rather, what they are demanding is a redefinition of relations and the notion of 'sovereignty' within the state. For Tierney (2005, 164), sub-state nationalism does not naturally correlate to secessionist agendas. However, Tierney's study is limited to developed industrialised modern states with well-established constitutionally based politico-legal systems that can accommodate minority ethno-religious demands.

Despite the extensive gains made, the Kurds still face significant dilemmas in post-Saddam Iraq since their autonomy status can only provide limited provisions. Kurds, for instance, still fear Arab, particularly Sunni, reprisal. Unsurprisingly, a referendum organised by the Kurds during the 2005 elections overwhelmingly (98.76 per cent) supported independence from Iraq (Monshipouri 2009, 113). As a result, the international discourse over the future of Iraq consistently painted a pessimistic picture of Iraq's territorial integrity. O'Leary, McGarry and Salih (2006), however, contest the dominant international view of Iraqi identity. The prevailing consensus within the West, as well as the Arab world, is one based on integrating the various ethnic and religious communities of Iraq into a unified "Iraqi people". Most crucially, O'Leary, McGarry and Salih note the difference between nation-building and state-building when they argue that the international community advocates this line of reasoning. While they admit that reconstructing Iraq into a liberal democratic system is difficult, they nevertheless hope for the possibility of human rights and religious tolerance, but view the multiculturalism of Iraq as utopian and lacking deep sensitivity to the Kurdish people's history of oppression within Iraq. The authors argument is practical and reflects widely held



Kurdish sentiments far more than the policy makers of the reconstruction; their argument is quoted at length here:

[R]ebuilding will not work if Iraq is reengineered around the illusion that it has been, is, or can be one nation...although dual and multiple identities play a role in the past and future of Iraq's peoples, it would be irresponsibly utopian to assume that most, let alone all, of the denizens of Iraq can easily be assimilated or merely integrated into a common identity, especially after their differentiated experiences of Ba'thism. If the genocidal destruction of European Jewry helped produced Israel rather than integrationist-minded Jews, no one should be surprised that the Anfal campaign has produced Kurdistan and Kurds rather than integrationist-minded 'Iraqi Kurds'. If ethnic expulsions and their repercussions produced present-day Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Macedonia, then no one should be surprised that Kurds, Arabs, Turkomen, and Christians dispute the 'right of return', settlements, historical claims to indigenous status, and requirements of truth and reconciliation. If pleasant islands can be as ferociously contested as Ireland, Fiji, Cyprus, and Sri Lanka, then why should any one expect the cramped river beds of Mesopotamia and the freer mountains of Kurdistan to be sites of utopian forgiveness and reconciliation? (O'Leary, McGarry and Salih 2006, xiii)

Others have concurred and posited a similar analysis. Carpenter (2009, 23), for instance, notes that "with the Kurdish population, there is seldom even the pretense of an allegiance to Iraq. Media interviews and opinion surveys show overwhelming majorities in favor of full-fledged independence." These perspectives undoubtedly present a pessimistic view of integrating separate communities within Iraq into a unified state. Nevertheless, transitional justice practices in past cases have demonstrated varying degrees of success and, hence, peaceful integration and assimilation that takes into consideration the Kurds historical role within Iraq and addresses past injustices, should not be considered as wholly impossible. Despite this, attempts at assimilation have largely failed and have solidified Kurdish identity (Byman 2002, 117). Byman concludes decisively that "if anything, Kurdish identity in Iraq is stronger today than at any time in its history" (2002, 117). This does not necessarily suggest Kurdish non-integration. Rather, it suggests, the necessity of a different set of policies, negotiations and dialogue with the new state. Aside from rising Kurdish nationalism and their distinct ethnicity, culture and history, the Kurds also happen to occupy the most resource rich parts of Iraq. Apart from oil, Kurdistan also supplies the rest of Iraq with its vital water source, as well as the majority of fertile land. Northern Iraq is also of symbolic significant for Kurds within Turkey, Iran and Syria, hoping to simulate the Kurdish government's autonomy. Iraqi Kurdistan has, therefore, become an "important centre for the development of modern Kurdish politics and culture for the whole region" (Kreyenbroek and Sperl 1992,

4). As a result, successive governments need to take these factors into consideration when forming policies.

The increasingly economic and political relationship towards Turkey has also played an influential role on Kurdish self-determination aspirations in northern Iraq. However, the sensitive nature of Kurdish separatism has curtailed discussions of federalism in Iraq. Turkish policies towards northern Iraq are also reliant on Shia aversion to separation. For the most part, the Shia majority sees no purpose in partition as it has been the clear winners of the war. For the first time in centuries, the Shias are in a position of power so there is little incentive to advocate partition. Moreover, they retain dominance over the Sunnis whose historical power over the Shias has coloured Sunni-Shia relations in modern Iraq. More importantly, this relationship of dominance and marginalisation relates back to the foundational myths and identity politics of Islamic Middle East. The invasion has provided measures aimed at producing a more empowered Shia narrative and moving away from the traditionally marginalised Shia myths and traditions. In this regard, there is little motivation for the Shias to advocate partition as they are assured of their prominence within a democratic Iraq.

Some have argued that neighbouring countries such as Iran desire Iraq's partition so as to lay claim to its Shia majority (see Joseph and O'Hanlon 2007; Abbasi 2008). While there are merits in arguing that Iran may desire partition so as to annex Shia Iraq, there is little evidence that Iraqi Shias desire such an outcome or that Iran would welcome an independent Kurdish state that would motivate its own large Kurdish minority to aspire to a similar outcome. Indeed, the official rhetoric of prominent religious leaders such as Sistani and others, whose views are tantamount to laws of the land, decidedly argued for a competing vision of Iraq (see Cordesman 2007). Despite this, the Shi'ites have not shied away from demanding a constitutionally guaranteed right to autonomy (Wright and Knickmeyer 2005). The religious leaders have, on an official level at least, rejected an Iranian style theocracy and have actively used religious theology to propose that such a style of government is un-Islamic. A legacy of the religious actors' politicisation within Iraq is that it did not aim towards producing an Iranian style theocracy or even a greater role for religion within Iraq. Rather, it aimed for increased political and religious freedom within the existing system. Moreover, the regional visions of Iran do not necessarily relate to the vision that Iraqi Shi'ites have, particularly as they recognise themselves as ethnically Iraq-Arab. This situates the two co-religionists in a more precarious position and, on some level, challenges the notion of a

unified and empowered Shia crescent by some experts (see Nasr 2006a). Such views provide a simplified account of identity formation and its significance, where religion is deemed as the most important pull factor in uniting Sunnis or Shias. It largely fails to take into account the multiplicity of push and pull factors that determine identity formation. Any understanding of Iraqi politics, as well as its religious makeup, needs to be based on the well-recognized fact that the Shi'ites of Iraq identify as Shia-Arab. Their subordination to and influence from Iranians is consequently sufficiently weakened by Iraqi nationalism. That is not to say that the Shi'ites, within their current heterogeneous makeup, are not in a better position to assert their influence within the region. Regional analysis, however, indicates that nationalist ideology has significantly influenced Shia identity within the Middle East and, although Saudi Shias, for instance sympathise with co-religionists in Iraq or Iran, it is more likely that local influences are just as important in determining loyalty to the so called homogenous 'Shia' crescent'. This argument also extends to the Sunni block within the region. A more informed and balanced account takes into consideration a history of Shia-Sunni relations but also places more stock in the power-balances, strategic, security and national interests of regional players and actors. This argument points to the complexity of contemporary identity politics within the Middle East where a combination of different factors can determine group loyalties to civic nationalism or to exogenous co-religionists or co-ethnic groups. Thus, in some instance, depending on the politico-economic or security factors of a conflict, ethnoreligious groups may choose loyalty towards the state over their co-ethnoreligious groups; or in others they may bypass civic loyalties for support of co-ethnoreligious groups. To argue that loyalty to co-religionists trumps national loyalties and is the dominant source of identity, is to fail to take into account modern politics or the history of state formation and nation-building within the region that has been influencing identity formation in the past century or so.

#### **4.6. The Kirkuk Issue:**

U.S. military personnel increasingly viewed Arab-Kurdish relations as one of the most obvious destabilizing forces within Iraq. General Ray Odierno, for instance, argued that ethnic conflicts, particularly over the sensitive Kirkuk issue, were the "number one driver of Instabilities" (Cited in Carpenter 2009, 27). Ethnic tensions rose to a new high in 2009

leading U.S. military officials to advocate the presence of troops in the city to prevent the eruption of violence (Carpenter 2009, 27).

Kirkuk is possibly the most crucial issue that could pose significant ethno-religious conflict for the new Iraq. The Kurds have demonstrated that social mobilization and economic development has not necessarily led to a relocation of ethnic loyalties towards the state (Walker 1972, 327; Astarjian 2007). If Kurdish claims to Kirkuk city, for instance, are not addressed sufficiently the Kurds could become more vocal. The land-locked nature of their environment between Turkey, Syria and Iran significantly reduces the possibility of a Kurdish state; however, this predicament may not prevent the Kurds from attempting to exploit this fact to their advantage and demand greater control over 'lost territories'. It is widely argued that access to oil is the dominant reason behind Kurdish claims to the city (see for instance Anderson and Stansfield 2009, 77). Kirkuk is deemed to contain the oil resources necessary to fund a future Kurdish state and is the final front preventing Kurdish statehood. In light of this argument, Arab nationalists and the international community assume that it is essential that Kurds are denied control over Kirkuk. This is a limited and ill-informed argument that does not consider issues of identity or the important role that territory plays in feelings of self-affirmation as an oppressed ethnic group.

Group identities do not form in isolation. Rather they emerge in relation to their surrounding environments and are shaped by adjacent cultures, values, and relations that produce a group's unique history, narrative and myths. For instance, Welzel (2009) notes that the depth of identity cleavages directly correlates with the spatial segregation between competing groups. He notes that the more defined the spatial segregation of identities the greater the likelihood of identity conflicts, since spatial stability provides identities with the ability to become further entrenched and pronounced. Since theories on identity politics have demonstrated the significance of territories in identity formation, it is reasonable to assume that the Kurds, who are widely thought to have retained a majority in the province before state gerrymandering, would have a degree of psychological attachments to the land. Further, the regime's response to the Kurdish problem in Kirkuk ensured that the city became a 'stolen' territory in the Kurdish psyche. In turn, Kirkuk's significance was inflamed in the imagination of Kurdish nationalism, as no other Kurdish dominated city attracted such widespread Arabization policies. A case in point is the neighbouring northern city of Mosul, which also contained a majority of Kurds. Since Mosul did not hold hydrocarbon reserves, the state refrained from extensive Arabization policies. As a result, Kurdish access and rights,

at least on a psychological level, over Mosul were not contested nor demanded. It is true that Kirkuk contains vast oil reserves; but Kirkuk, for the Kurds, represents a site of emotional and psychological significance, encapsulating a period of collective myths and narratives in the Kurdish nationalist discourse.

Kirkuk itself has emerged and continues to play a significant role within the post- Saddam identity politics of Iraq. Perhaps, if the Iraq war planners in the U.S. administration had acquired a basic understanding of Kirkuk's past and its relevance to ethnic identities, they would have refrained from launching the war in the first place; precisely because Kirkuk could prove to be one of the most prominent sources of instability in the post-Saddam era. The existence of multiple ethnicities including Kurds, Arabs, Turkmons among other minorities have produced a conflicting quagmire of identity conflict for greater Iraq. Each group claims legitimate ownership of the oil rich province. Although the supergiant oil field Baba Gurgur contains 40 per cent of Iraq's proven hydrocarbon reserves (Monshipouri 2009, 113), the Kirkuk issue is far more complex than simply being a means of acquiring of 'oil' revenues. Kirkuk is also increasingly symbolising the unstable and heterogeneous nature of Iraqi ethnic configuration. Some have ominously argued that "unless and until Iraqi political leaders find the will to forge a mutually acceptable compromise on this issue, Iraq's future in its current territorial configuration will remain in doubt" (Anderson and Stansfield, 2009, 8). Others have strongly admonished the international community's inability to understand the ethnic sensitivities of Kirkuk, as well as its past. Since territories such as Kashmir, Belfast, Jerusalem or Beirut are centres of intense ethnic conflicts, it should have been clear to the U.S. that "Kirkuk might become an epicentre of urban violence if past expulsions, expropriations, forced settlements, and gerrymandering are not properly redressed through demonstrably fair processes?" (O'Leary, McGarry and Salih 2006, xii).

Kirkuk rose to prominence with the discovery of vast oil reserves in the early twentieth century. With the end of the First World War, Kirkuk increasingly became the location for rising and conflicting nationalist movements, as successive regimes attempted to restructure the ethnic identity of the city. These policies, though carried out by different regimes, nevertheless, shared a common theme: the Arabization of the city and marginalisation of the large Kurdish community and, to a lesser extent, the Turkoman minority. The Hashemite regime, for instance, established the 'Haweeja Project', a comprehensive attempt to urbanize nomadic and tribal Arabs and, hence, change the ethnic configuration of Kirkuk (Astarjian 2007; Yildiz 2004). The Ba'ath regime's rise to power and its subsequent policies towards

Kirkuk entrenched ethnic cleavages. The regime's Arabization policy also included renaming the ancient city Ta'meem. Under the Ba'ath gerrymandering of the Kirkuk governorate, this sort of thing occurred several times. The regime reconfigured the governorate by removing Kurdish dominated districts such as Chamchamal and Kalar to the northern city of Sulaimaniya. This effectively changed the demography of Kirkuk significantly. Added to this, multiple waves of Arabization policies ensured that increasing numbers of Arab tribes and families were settled into the city (Astarjian 2007). The Arabization policy did not simply involve the exportation of non Arab communities and importing Arab tribes. This policy allowed non Arab citizens of Kirkuk to choose between adopting Arab identities or exportation to other parts of Iraq. While some refused the Arabization of their identities, others were forced to adopt Arab identity cards in order to retain their properties. Censuses conducted following these policies demonstrated increasing numbers of 'Arab citizens' and a steady reduction of other ethnicities such as the Kurds (Anderson and Stansfield 2009, 42).

Perhaps, more importantly, Kirkuk is also geopolitically sensitive. Kurdish claims over Kirkuk presents several implications for Iraq. If the Kurds were to acquire the district, neighbouring states such as Turkey, Iran and Syria may view such a move as threatening their own stability with their Kurdish communities. In fact, Turkey has unabashedly entered Northern Iraq and threatened the autonomous region following the invasion (Jenkins 2008). For Turkey, the Turkoman minority still residing in Kirkuk is considered a national responsibility, which ensures Turkey's continual interference in the domestic affairs of Iraq. Further, the post-Saddam state placed significant emphasis on ensuring that Kirkuk remained unequivocally 'Iraqi', which roughly translated to adopting Arab identity. The dominant argument used by the Arabs was that the Kurds acquiring of Kirkuk represented further attempts at succession. Consequently, the integrity and very existence of Iraq as a state was dependent on the Arabs insistence that Kirkuk remain non-Kurdish.

The Shi'ites advocacy of democracy, through the prominence of Ayatollah Sistani's *fatwa*'s, led to an increasingly Shia and Arab dominated state. The Coalition Provisional Authority, however, clearly considered Iraq to be an "Arab nation composed of just one nation" (O'Leary 2009, 15). This placed significant constraints on Kurdish aspirations, particularly for their claims on Kirkuk. As grand identity politics increased, through contested territories such as Kirkuk, the competing identity visions of the various communities also emerged. While the Kurds adopted federalism, the Sunnis demanded restoration and the Shi'ites advocated democracy through demography (Jabar 2010, 21). Essentially, group identities are

closely tied to territories, and, in this instance, Kirkuk is claimed by a multiplicity of groups as their rightful land. Anderson and Stansfield (2009, 2) note that Kirkuk is a powerful symbol of ethnic identities. For the Kurds, it has become their Jerusalem, and is a city that represents the site of bloody conflict with the state and a city they have not been able to control. Likewise, for the Turkmen, Kirkuk represents the prominence of the Ottoman era and a period of Turkish prominence in the region. Arabs, on the other hand, view Kirkuk as a symbol of the greater Iraqi experiment, representing a multicultural city that they attempted to replicate on a grander scale. Kirkuk, for the Arabs, represents the idealised myth of 'Iraqiness'. The loss of Kirkuk to the Kurds would significantly challenge this multicultural dynamic and would essentially point out the failure of the nationalist agendas of the state.

The reconstruction process initially attempted to address the Kirkuk issue, through Article 140 of the 2005 Constitution, via a referendum to be held in 2007 (Katzman 2007). However, the postponement of the referendum does not bode well for the stability of Iraq post the U.S. military withdrawal. While access to oil has often been used to argue the various claims on Kirkuk, the prominence of Kirkuk is far more entrenched and complicated than hydrocarbons. Kirkuk represents a clash of identities and expectations relating to the future of Iraq. It represents the aspirations of various groups that hold different levels of power and historical narratives about the ownership of one of the most resource rich territories in Iraq. The significance of Kirkuk, therefore, could very well lead to a 'Kashmir' like conflict and a source of political, economic and identity conflicts in the future.

#### **4.7. The Shia Experience:**

Sectarian politics, between Sunni and Shia factions has marked the post-Saddam era with a strong Islamic element. This, however, should not be considered as a surprise, as some have argued considering the deep entrenchment of religious values as part of the national identity in the Middle East. Further, considering the large scale failure of secular and socialist politics in the region, particularly within Iraq (Monshipouri 2009, 103), religion still commands respect and loyalty as a form of political identity. Since Iraq has adhered to secular politics as a form of social cohesion, and no Islamic groups have been in power, the religion has yet to experience failures and discontent in society at the governing level.

Sectarian conflicts are by no means new within the Middle East. Since the seventh century, Shi'ites and Sunnis have presented competing narratives of the leadership and history of Islam and violent rebellions, wars and insurgencies have occurred as a process. That is not to suggest that sectarian relations have always been marked by conflict, relatively quiet periods in history have demonstrated a peaceful coexistence of Shi'ites with Sunnis as well. Nevertheless, considering the relatively smaller numbers of Shi'ites in the Middle East, most states contain minority Shi'ite communities, which allow Sunnis to dominate and often discriminate against them. In general, the modern form of Shi'ite identity has to be considered in light of a history of Sunni rule, sectarian and theological conflicts as well as their minority status.

The experience of the Shi'ites in Iraq is unique, on the one hand, but also similar to other shi'ite experiences in the region; that is, one entailing repression and marginalisation. The political form of governance that the British colonialists imposed was one of nepotism, corruption and sectarianism which, in turn, produced consecutive unstable governments (Davis 2005, 56). The social and economic reforms imposed by the British increased socio-economic difficulties, with Shi'ites and Kurds largely excluded from the governing process, leaving little room for these two groups to determine their own futures.

As Hanna Batatu notes, the Shi'ites in Iraq were hardly a homogeneous community. Indeed, though they shared similar religious values and customs, they were 'split up' into a number of "self-involved communities" (Batatu 1987, 204). Like most other communities within Iraq, tribal and clan loyalties superseded all other forms of loyalty including religious ones. As an indication of the lack of nationalist sentiments, the Shi'ite rose up collectively in 1915 and expelled the Turkish powers from Najaf. Batatu notes that the city of Najaf did not suddenly transform into a shi'ite "Islamic city-state" (1987, 204), more importantly, there was a distinct lack of strict adherence to religious practices. In most of the provinces, there was hardly "any traces of organized religion" (1987, 204) by as late as 1947. This lack of adherence to religion by the Shi'ite communities could be due to the relatively late conversion of Mesopotamian tribes to Shi'ism, that was only somewhat achieved by the Nineteenth century (Louer 2008, 72). Batatu concludes that the lack of the existence of a solid Shi'ite communal identity, particularly within the rural peasantry, in conjunction with their low socio-economic status directly contributed to their political marginalisation. In Baghdad, the Sunnis formed the majority of the bourgeoisie class that also controlled the civil administration of the state (Batatu 1987, 206).



The revolution of 1920 was the first attempt at forming a unified Shi'ite and Sunni coalition to protest colonial rule. For the Shi'ites this was an important milestone as it demonstrated a "sense of political efficacy among Iraq's Shia" (Davis 2005a, 53). This was promoted through the combination of celebration of Shi'ite holy days by the Sunnis and celebration of the prophet's birthday by the Shi'ites (Nissen and Heine 2009, 152). The results of this cooperation were, however, short lived. The Sunnis in cooperation with the British soon re-established their dominance over the governing of the new state. In 1921, a highly engineered referendum by the Sunnis and the British instilled a Sunni Hashemite Monarchy, which strongly lacked legitimacy and the support of the masses, on Iraq (Curtis 2004, 207). Nevertheless, colonial interests' trumped local consensus and the Monarchy was imposed on the country. The traditional exclusion of Shi'ites as well as other ethnic groups was not entrenched within Saddam's regime but, indeed, has been part of the state-building and identity formation process of Iraq since its very beginnings. Indeed, with the exception of General Qasim's reign, few attempts at nation-building had been made by previous and subsequent regimes. The state itself was acting along a "historical tradition or 'path dependence'" (Davis 2005, 58). Batatu presents a different account by arguing that the Hashemite monarchy, at least initially, actively participated in the nation-building process and attempted to forge a more unified state though with pan-Arab overtones. Accordingly, King Faysal attempted to incorporate the Shi'ites into the military as well as the state civil services (Batatu 1987, 207). However, undoubtedly the Shi'ites were still significantly marginalised in all spheres of life. As a consequence of the strongly Sunni dominated state, other political parties, such as the Iraqi Communist Party, gained increasing prominence.

The first full scale religious resistance to the new Iraqi state, other than the 1920 revolution, occurred in 1923, following what King Faisal thought was a successful renegotiation that saw the British mandate in Iraq reduced from twenty to only four years. However, even before this Shi'ite resistance against foreign rule was prominent (Hairi 1977, 129). Stand out leaders included the Grand Marja, Grand Ayatollah Miraza Muhammad Taqi, later followed by Grand Ayatollah Shari'at Isfahani (Hairi, 1977, 129). Such Shi'ite religious leaders protested loudly and accused Faisal of being a British pawn and an infidel (Daiwsha 2009 23-24). *Fatwa* ensued demanding followers boycott the resulting constitutional elections and hence the treaty. Among the many Shi'ite clergies protesting, Sheikh Mahdi al-Khalisi was one of the most prominent and vociferous. While the King and the British desired an end to the clerical protests they were nevertheless weary of the clergy's significant influence among the

Shi'ites, which could produce a large scale revolt. The resolution occurred through the modification of Iraqi laws concerning citizenship which allowed the Persian Khalisi to be exiled to Iran (Daiwsha 2009). Other notable clerics came to the aid of Khalisi by protesting his forcible removal. In the hope of inciting a large scale Shia revolt, these clerics announced that, as a protest against Khalisi's treatment, they would also leave Iraq. However, the government in turn exported all clerics with Iranian heritage back to Iran and kept Iraqi clerics under close scrutiny (Hairi 1977, 130). The resultant lack of collective Shi'ite protest against this repressive government policy provides some credibility to Batatu's analysis of the fragmented nature of the Shia community in the earlier years.

The clergy, in the process of becoming politically involved, had lost the majority of their funding, property and followers following intense government sanctions. Although the clergy petitioned the government to allow their return into Iraq, the regime only relented following a signed agreement by the clergy which promised that they would refrain from becoming involved in the political processes. Daiwsha argues that this was an important success for the regime as it "had won a significant battle with one of the most powerful and authoritative institutions in Iraq" (2009, 24). While this event did produce a largely non-interference stance by the clergy, nevertheless, Daiwsha's statement is too grand in scope. Indeed, political activity continued in the following decades.

The religious clergy within the Shia community has an extended tradition of resistance and active opposition to the centralised state. One of the most prominent and revered of all these religious actors is the al-Sadr family and its long established legacy of resistance against foreign and state imposed oppression. The al-Sadr family's rise to political fame in Iraq started with Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadr who was the leading figure behind the establishment of the *Hizb al-D'awah al-Islamiyyah* party that actively opposed challenges to the Shia identity, including the rise of Communism as well as the Ba'athist regime. Known as the 'First Martyr' in the Sadr family, he was assassinated by the Ba'ath regime in 1980 due to his political activism and open support of the Iranian revolution (Cockburn 2008, 33). Contradicting the underlying socialist values of the Ba'ath party, al-Sadr argued against Marxist economic values and proposed an alternative Islamic economic system that took into consideration the moral and spiritual responsibility of individuals (Rosen 2006, 12; Calvert 2008, 92). His political and economic writings, particularly his notable books *Our Philosophy* (*Falsafatuna* 1959) and *Our Economics* (*Iqtisadum* 1960), produced the ideological foundation of the party and marked Al-Sadr as a powerful religious, ideological and political

figure (Bengio 1998, 99). Al-Sadr was also heavily influential in causing a 'Shia Renaissance' in the 1960's with attempts at reviving Shia traditions and actively challenging the Sunni-dominated establishment. The activism of Baqir al-Sadr was expounded by the increasing marginalization of Shias, their low socio-political and economic status as well as external influences from Iran and Lebanon (Dekmejian 1995, 119).

Baqir al-Sadr was propelled to further prominence as the al-D'awah party increasingly resorted to violent activism in the late 1960s. The involvement of several leading Iranian clerics, including Grand Ayatollah Mahdi al-Hakim and Grand Ayatollah Muhammad al-Shirazi, increased the regime's paranoia of a Shia counterrevolution leading to increasing persecution of the Shia clergy. Through Baqir's actions, Najaf increasingly became the centre of Shia political activism (Halm 2004, 126). The death of the Grand Marji' Grand Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim in 1970 propelled Ayatollah Abu al-Qasim al-Khoei into the leading role of Shia clergy. Al-Khoei's subsequent adoption of the 'Quietist' method of non-interference in politics drove many to follow the more politically active Baqir al-Sadr, leading to his subsequent arrest and torture by the regime on several occasions. The regime responded through the prosecution of the Shia laity leading to the disappearance, torture, execution and flight of prominent members and supporters of the D'awah party. In the next decade or so until his assassination, Baqir al-Sadr cut a powerful Shia political and moral figure that challenged the Ba'athist authoritarianism. Gaining further prominence after his death, Baqir also left a more important legacy beyond his political activism- a sense of resentment and distrust by his followers of the *hawza* and other Shia clergy who had refused to participate or aid al-Sadr in his anti-regime activism, thereby establishing a deep-seated resentment between the followers of al-Sadr who were traditionally more politically active and the al-Khoei and his successor Sistani's adherence to political non-interference. This resentment was to play a crucial role in the rise of Muqtada al-Sadr post 2003 invasion.

The Sadr legacy was passed on to al-Sadr II, Muhammad Sadiq al-Sadr who was the cousin of Baqir al-Sadr as well as his student. Sadiq was thrust into the political scene by Saddam himself (Cockburn 200, 98; Louer 2008, 259). Following the disastrous outcome of the Iran-Iraq war and the ill thought out invasion of Kuwait, Saddam was determined to produce a grand Marja that would not only counter Iran's religious authority but also serve as an interlocutor between the state and the disgruntled Shia community in Iraq (Louer 2008, 259). Sadiq, however, resorted to a combination of passive and active confrontation with the regime and increasingly gained support within the Shia, though accusations of his

acquiescence to the Ba'athist regime were rife. Sadiq, according to the regime, was supposed to adhere to a non-interventionist form of Shi'ism (Walbridge 2001, 238), but proved a far more difficult case than initially thought. One of Sadiq's first acts of defiance was to revive Friday prayers in Mosques, something that had languished in Shia history, as a means of reaching a wider Shia audience as well as serving to indoctrinate and re-assert Shia identity. The Friday sermons gained increasing popularity as did Sadiq's subsequent thinly veiled criticism of the regime (Alawi 2007, 57). According to Allawi (2007, 8), Sadiq's popularity continued to rise in the mid 1990's especially among the poor and marginalized who:

[F]elt themselves vulnerable and abandoned in the face of the deprivations of the state. The silence of the traditional *Maraji'* in Najaf about the excesses of the government exacerbated the sense of abandonment, while the distant and irrelevant statements of support and outrage by the exile groups offered little in the way of consolation. Now, there was a leader who was prepared to share in the trial and hardships of his people, and who was not afraid to articulate what he perceived to be a more relevant and practical form of Islam.

Al-Sadr II's increasing prominence, the revival of Friday prayers as well as his growing followers led to increasing pressure from the regime who, in turn, attempted to curb his influence by limiting his sermons, closing his offices, arresting and detaining his clerics and causing increasing tensions in the street (Alawi 2007, 60).

Attesting to the power and influence of al-Sadr, al-Rahim notes that Sadiq's activism "stood in sharp contrast to Ayatollah al-Sistani's passivism and Quietism, and proved to be much more popular with the people. Thus, in the second half of the 1990's, Mohammed al-Sadr effectively built a parallel Shia state, with its own Islamic court system, mosques, and social services" (Al-Rahim 2008, 172.) Sadiq's defiance of the regime led to his subsequent assassination in March 1991 along with his two eldest sons Mustafa and Mu'ammal (Alawi 2007, 60). Sadiq al-Sadr's death caused a large Shia backlash in the streets of Baghdad leading to the predictable arrest and death of protestors by the regime. Muqtada effectively became the heir to his family's prestigious and revered line and political activism. However, for the most part the movement remained underground during the latter parts of Saddam's reign. Following the 2003 invasion, Muqtada's movement, similar to that of Hezbollah in Lebanon, emerged on the impoverished streets of Baghdad to provide much needed essential services such as food, aid, garbage collection, security provision and protection to neighbourhoods as well as Mosques (Farmer 2007, 176). His movement also actively attempted to recruit support from the largely poor and unemployed Shia community.

The Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), is arguably the only period where Iraqi nationalism emerged to surpass sectarian divides. Though Saddam successfully manipulated the Shi'ite community in conjunction with conscriptions into the army, the Shi'ites nevertheless did not desert en masse out of loyalty to their co-religionists in Iran (Al-Marashi and Salama 2008, 151). The government adopted a dual policy of appeasement and repression and, although Shia myths and history were freely used by the regime to increase compliance with the war, it simultaneously deported large numbers of Shia clergy and their families. More than 30,000 Shi'ites were estimated to have been deported to Iran alone during the war (Gibney and Hansen 2005, 317). Indicating the brutal policies of the regime, before the Ba'athist rise to power the number of Shi'ite clergy amounted to some 2000 students in Najaf. By 2000, the number of Shia clerics had reduced to around 300, a number deemed largely insufficient for the large Shia majority in Iraq (Kechichian 2001, 56). Additionally, wide scale arrest of clergy occurred following the 1991 intifada. Prominent clerics were arrested including ayatollah Ala al-Din, Ayatollah Izz al-Din, Ayatollah Jaafar, sixteen members of the Bahr al-Ulum clerical family; also arrested was the Grand Marja Ayatollah Khoi along with over one hundred of his followers, with none of the Grand Ayatollah's followers were seen again (Kechichian 2001). Following the invasion of Iraq, large numbers of exiled Shi'ite clerics in Iran returned to the country but faced a variety of dilemmas. This fact will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

In view of the relationship between the Shia clergy and the state, it is difficult to assume that peace will naturally ensue between Sunnis and Shi'ites through democratic measures, particularly in light of the wider scale Sunni-Shia divide in the region. This is further complicated by the U.S. control over the new nation-building measures in Iraq. The U.S. is widely perceived, at least following the failed 1991 uprising, as untrustworthy by the majority of Iraqis. Some have criticised the inherent assumption made by liberal peace theory that the power sharing mechanism and exclusion of identity, be it religious or ethnic, will address long standing grievances and resentments by communities. Przeworski (1986, 99) for instance, indicates that building a unified and cohesive nation from fragmented societies is a complicated process. Identity markers such as class, ethnicity, race or religion are not spontaneous acts of creation, rather such identities are consistently challenged, shaped and shifting in accordance to environmental restraints. Individual interests collide with group interests and identities, alternative means of interest representations, such as unions, churches, and other interest groups, produce challenges to existing identities and impose their

own tacit or implicit identity forming behaviours. Consequently, “the relation between places occupied by individuals in society and their acts is a contingent historical outcome of struggles that confront interests and images, that involve preferences and strategies, that bring victories and defeats” (Przeworski 1986, 99). Przeworski concludes that the political behaviours of individuals and groups can only be assessed in light of tangible historical articulation with these events. For the Shi’ites, their past history of repression and conflict with the state has solidified religious affiliations further.<sup>12</sup> The failure of secular politics, such as the ICP, ensured that the religious clergy became the political leaders of the community. For the Shi’ites, not only religion but also its very expression both privately and publically have become a “powerful cement, binding people together” (Slocum-Bradley 2008, 165).

#### **4.8. Overview of Iraq Nation-Building:**

Iraq largely failed to produce a unified nation perhaps because it did not have to struggle for liberation against colonial rule to the degree certain postcolonial states have. There was no unified nationalist struggle and such endeavours were consistently hijacked by the socialist and pan-Arab parties of the time. The Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and the Ba’ath party both promoted a transnational sense of community that provided significant barriers to the nationalists. As a result, no unified nationalist movement emerged. As Al-Qarawee highlights, “in no less than 40 years of the rule of the Baath party with its Pan-Arab ideology, the idea of an ‘Iraqi nation’ has been formally denied. Iraq has been ideologically rendered a ‘phase’ within a continuous ‘struggle’ to establish the Arab nation. The narrative of Arab

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<sup>12</sup> However, this affiliation falls outside of the traditional domain of civil society activism. While undoubtedly elements of civil activism are pertained in this process, nevertheless, as Chapter Four will demonstrate, the activism that the Shi’ite religious leaders engage in falls largely outside the sphere of civil society activism. This classification is largely reliant on the sources of power that such religious leaders possess. For instance, individual religious leaders such as Muqtada al-Sadr and the Grand Marja as well as various other Shi’ite dominated political parties, possess their own paramilitary groups which they have actively used to pressure and determine the direction of government and coalition policy choices. Further, each camp has used its paramilitary group to replace the government’s dominance of legitimate avenues of violence by providing security and protection to members of their own groups. The distinction that leads to this thesis determining that religious actors and their engagement with the government and decision making processes falls outside of the civil society activism involves the idea that the use of paramilitary groups and resorting to or threatening to resort to violence to determine the government’s decisions challenges the fundamental core utility of civil activism: that is that civil society groups pressure and lobby governments through essentially *peaceful* measures including, the most crucial of all, through *collective* action. Further, the level of moral and religious authority that religious leaders possess, in combination with their command of heavily armed paramilitary groups, positions such actors at a far more powerful location to challenge the government’s authority and legitimacy. In light of the weakness of the central government, these actors are essentially negotiating policy and decision making as relatively equal entities, as opposed to subjects of the state. For a greater understanding of civil society, its limitations and forms of activism see Ehrenberg 1999; Kaviraj and Khilnani 2001; and Anheier 2004.

unity has been socialized and transmitted to the new generations, thereby alienating the non-Arab Iraqis, but also the non-Sunni Arabs” (2010, 35). The result of this legacy has been one of Sunni fear of the Shi’ite majority, resulting in a political culture and national identity based on marginalisation and exclusion of the latter. The Kurds and Shi’ites were relegated to the role of the ‘other’, while the Sunni’s were placed in the dominant position of determining the ethnic and religious boundaries of Iraq’s identity. As indicated previously, sociologists have noted that when a collective identity is threatened by an out-group the cohesion within the group increases substantially (Coser 1956; Simmel 1955).

Authoritarian regimes consolidate their rule by exploiting ethnic, sectarian and class distinctions, and Iraq was no exception. Saddam often attempted to adopt a pre-Islamic national identity as a means of pacification of sectarian conflicts. The adoption of various secular laws for instance, particularly regarding women, inheritance and marriage rights consolidated this (al-Musawi 2006). High levels of living standards, through the oil boom, as well as access to education, produced a large and modern middle class that largely reduced religious tensions. Nevertheless, access to power and resources was largely dominated by the state and its policies attracted marginal success with the Shi’ites becoming increasingly more polarised.

More importantly, the generally identifiable features of nationality such as language, religion and culture are not absolute definitive elements. Rather in acknowledging that feelings of belonging, of ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson 1983) are entirely subjective; rather, the dominant precondition is how a people identify themselves internally (Walker 1972, 4). The Kurds, for instance, have incurred various charges of inconsistent nationalism; even their very existence has been questioned by some, based on their large number of dialects. Nevertheless, these definitions objectify non tangible values that can only be determined, ordered and identified by the group itself. To be sure, what matters is that the group identifies itself as constituting a particular community; which, according to Connor (1972; 1977), raises dilemmas for the multi-ethnic state. That is, more precisely, the Wilsonian notion of self-determination gave rise to increasing nationalist agendas within colonial territories. This trend poses an existentialist challenge to the multi-ethnic state, as it needs to balance political self-expression with maintaining multiple ethnicities, often a dominant identity against other minorities. This challenge has already led to the disintegration of multiple states, including the disintegration of former Yugoslavia. As some European, Asian and African states have been faced with increasing nationalistic attempts by various groups, the international system

has adopted a more conservative attitude. Indeed, the states that produced the doctrine of self-determination and a 'peoples' right to nation-hood have become devout advocates of plurinationalism (Connor 1972, 5) and respecting the territorial integrity of deeply divided societies. In other words, state sovereignty supersedes self-determination, leading to institutionally based 'state-centric' reconstruction of conflict ridden states with an attempt to address levels of access to government and power. Groups within plurinational states are, hence, required to forgo a degree of political rights, such as self-determination or autonomy, in order to ensure the survival of the state itself. It is difficult to imagine that the existing 194 states would be open to a significant increase in the number of sovereign states considering that there are well over 5,000 ethnic groups in existence, some at various stages of progression towards self-determination and secessionism (Chatterjee and Scheid 2003, 11). This has led to increasing use of 'liberal peace theory' as a form of containing different ethnic groups within the boundaries of artificially constructed state borders. However, what has largely escaped most scholar's attention in this field is that power sharing mechanisms do not remove long held prejudices and naturally produce trust. It may alter the physical behaviours of individuals and groups but not necessarily their attitudes and beliefs, at least not the immediate short term. It will undoubtedly take various generations before the collective memory of a group and its desire for self-affirmation is suitably weakened. In some instances, such a moment never occurs, though it is possible for collective sentiments to ebb and flow with the changing political and regional terrain. On this account, Eric Davis (2005) argues that historical memory can contribute to transitioning society in forming democratic practices or hinder it. Historical memory, like that humiliation and fear, is largely ignored by policy makers and theorists in analysing and theorising about transitional societies and democracy formation. Historical memory is identified as the collective shared memory of a community in shaping present policies socially, economically and politically. Another important implication of this trend is that the concept of self-determination "simply conflicts with the concept of sovereignty" (Chatterjee and Scheid 2003, 11). In states where limited attempts have been made in the past to accommodate minorities within borders, such policies produced inadequate success in assimilation because the minority group may have developed and intensified a collective memory of myths, symbols and narratives of resistance for too long. Other states such as Franco's Spain attempted to enforce policies of assimilation as a means of reducing group tensions (See for instance Ghai 2000). All of these responses ignore the essential concept of 'willingness' of minority groups to accept the discourses of accommodation imposed by the state. In general, state responses to the demands of minorities



or competing groups within a nation have ranged from denial, oppression, power sharing, autonomy, ethnic cleansing and even genocide. More essentially, such a discussion reaffirms the complexity and increasing limitations inherent within liberal peace theory as ethnonationalist struggles continue unabated.

Young's (2002) analysis of African nationalist movements and identity formation leads to the conclusion that ethnicity and religion were elements of civil conflicts between warring groups. Ethnicity was important in defining clear lines of group conflict, to identify those 'in' groups as opposed to the 'out' groups. Ethnicity and religion, hence, are vehicles for defining conflicts, their limits and boundaries and groups will often revert to primordial relations for this purpose. However, it is also essential to note that Young's analysis of African post-colonial civil conflicts yields a more crucial result. Young notes that "combat was *not* primarily motivated by ethnic agendas; power was the key object, and resource control its currency" (2002, 547). Young's analysis of identity conflicts in Uganda, Congo-Kinshasa and Rwanda produce the conclusion that genocides and protracted ethnic and religious conflicts emerge as a result of attempts to gain access to resources and power. Ethnic violence was, in fact, merely a tool of expression rather than the dominant source, and identity markers such as religion or culture were an essential key in this mixture. In other words, religion is important for post-conflict societies although not "as theology or identity" (Young 2002, 547). Rather, religion is important in the study of ethnic conflicts as it provides myths, symbols, norms and rituals through which violence and conflict were represented. Yet, this perspective fails to address why these particular myths and symbols were utilised and not others that would have produced conflicts along different lines, such as class or political ideologies. Young's hypothesis above also points to the failure of the 'power-sharing' discourse within liberal peace theory. The recurrence of sub-national demands in modern industrialised states, such as Canada, U.K. and Spain, has demonstrated the increasing limitations of such a theory in modern times (Tierney 2005, 161). Additionally, inconsistencies in power sharing mechanisms produce and contribute to existing ethnic conflicts (see Malone and Cockayne 2006a; 2006b). Rather, a more appropriate theory is one consisting of divisions of power along semi-federal lines with varying degrees of autonomy attached to the ethno-national sub-unit based on functions of government. Elements of self-governance, for instance, are important to identity groups, such as education, public holidays and local policing as a form of promoting self-affirmation.

The modern perspective on identity formation argues in favour of its flexible and transformative possibilities. However, this argument fails to understand that the flexible nature of identity does not necessarily reduce its significance. In societies where particular groups have been excluded from an equal share of resources and power based on their religion or ethnicity, identity and membership of a specific group is of paramount, often existentialist, importance. Although access to resources and power is important, as well as noting the fluid nature of identity, the problem is far more complex than such reductionary conclusions suggest. A significant fissure in the identity literature arises from its inability to distinguish between the relationship and co-dependence of individual identity formation, and that of collective group identities. Authoritarian regimes harbouring multiple nationalities, eschewing their responsibilities, have not concerned themselves with entrenching libertarian values such as tolerance, equality and fairness. This is most evident in the case of Iraq's modern history. In fact, state imposed fear and oppression of certain groups within society entrenches features of one's identity which was attracting oppression in the first place. While it is possible for identities to change, it is also possible that during periods of crisis and conflict they can be further entrenched and amplified. It is then feasible that periods of conflict and violence embeds certain elements of group identities, such as religion, that will become deep-rooted in the collective memory of the group; and directly contribute to its collective myths and symbols that further defines group borders. Certainly, the conflict between Sunni and Shia identities of Islam since the seventh century signify this trend.

Still, it is widely accepted in academia that identities change and are fluid, being impacted by changing cultural, political, environmental and security issues. Since identities change, it is clear that such antiquated affiliations as primordial affinities, appear less threatening and will in time become obsolete. Or, so the literature assumes. Nevertheless, some have attempted to contest this idea by challenging various assumptions intrinsic within it. Lake and Rothchild (1998) argue that identities are not necessarily fixed; moreover, such an account does not explain the variations in the levels or durations of conflict. Jakelcic (2010), for instance, suggests that the literature on identity assumes a degree of choice. That is, that one can choose their identity and discard other features of their identity. This assumption is particularly relevant to the analysis of religion, particularly within the increasingly dominant trend of 'secularisation' theory permeating religious studies. Jakelcic distinguishes features of individual identity that are selected by choice as opposed to those one is 'born into'. Through the analysis of what she calls 'collectivistic religions', such as Christianity in European

culture, she posits that individuals are often born into certain identities. These identities are taken as fact and there is indeed little to no attempt to change one's religious identities. Moreover, such identities have served to protect certain groups in particularly violent periods. For instance, Christianity in post-communist European societies has long survived the collapse of socialist regimes. The predictions of some theorists (Casanova 1994) that modernity and westernization will essentially lead to secularisation and a reduction in religious affiliations have failed to accurately capture this occurrence. However, religion in periods of conflict served as a "powerful source of group identification" in the face of communist oppression (Jakelc 2010). Indeed, for members of certain collectivistic religions, membership is, irrespective of the adherence to its rituals, seen by individuals as "ascribed to them rather than chosen by them, as fixed rather than changeable, despite *and* because of the fact that their religious identities are profoundly shaped by the historical and cultural particularities of their social location" (Jakelc 2010, 1). The importance of this argument lies in its ability not to discard the fact that identity is flexible, but in attempting to locate a suitable medium between one's affiliation to certain 'primordial' elements of identity as fixed and indeed readily and willingly accepted; while other features of identity, for instance political or class affiliation, may still evolve. In this context, as Anthony Smith (1991, 1992) affirms, myths, symbols and traditions serve to further sustain identity boundaries and allegiances. Therefore, the general divide within the literature that posits identities being either fixed or fluid is limited and does not fully capture emerging modern trends that increase one's affiliation to religious or ethnic identities. Further, the overall literature assumes that modernity produces a single pattern of identity change that is viewed as more positive and acceptable to westcentric liberal values. It does not address the possibility of this very process of modernisation, secularisation and westernisation as contributing to a regression and entrenchment of primordial identity affiliations (see Barot 1993). A perfect example of this argument is viewed through the shifting political trends in Turkey, whose secularisation was seen as the 'shining light' of the secularist argument. However, Turkey has more recently demonstrated a return towards moderate Islamism, effectively challenging secularisation and modernization theories.

The instrumentalist branch noted previously views ethnicity as a means to an end; that is, ethnicity is used by select groups, actors, members or elites to advance a particular ideology, or more commonly for the purpose of material gains (Steinberg 1981; Brass 1985). For adherents of this view of ethnicity, such identity categorisations are merely a political tool. In

other words, ethnic identities do not serve a purpose in themselves. Members do not gain advantage or profess loyalties merely for its own merits. Rather, ethnic identity is seen as a means of defining group borders, either offensively or defensively. In this category, emotion is not a primary motivator in identity formation. Instead, it assumes a rational, reasoned purpose for affiliation to specific groups just as affiliation to an interest group or political party does. In this manner, ethnic conflicts are not necessarily distinct from other conflicts and are, in fact, extensions of other forms of conflicts. Critics such as Esman (1994; 2004), however, have argued against this non-emotional explanation by noting that ethnic affiliations are not subject to an individual's will to change. Often, one is a member of a group, and is controlled and directed by the collective as opposed to the individual exhibiting complete control over their identity. In this manner, defining ethnic affiliations as akin to affiliation to a political party produces a limited and generalised definition.

Finally, the constructivists view ethnic conflict within a social paradigm reproduced by certain social systems. Unlike the instrumentalist definition above, individuals or elites do not necessarily control or construct group boundaries and conflicts. Instead, conflicts emerge by the very nature of ethnic groups and affiliations, and, hence, boundaries that produces 'them' and 'us' mentalities and social relations. The constructivist view also reaffirms the necessity of territorial integrity for ethnic groups. Important studies ranging from political science, sociology, psychology, anthropology and IR theory have emerged, including that of Johnston, Knight and Kofman (1988), Anthony Smith (1986, 1991, 1992), Bookman (1997) and Toft (2002), which have increasingly spotlighted the importance of territory in producing and sustaining ethnic conflicts. Toft (2002) for illustrational purposes, insists that without a thorough understanding of the importance and meaning of territory to ethnic groups in a conflict, resolution of violence is unlikely. As ethnic conflict over territories ensues, and more lives are lost, the ethnic group attributes the land increased importance and, over generations, the territory becomes part of the group's myths, symbols and narrative of survival that defines the group and sets its identity further apart. Toft rejects the 'ancient hatreds' discourse on ethnic violence because for her such violence tends to attribute extreme attention to the linguistic, racial, religious or cultural boundaries of groups as producers of violence. In contrast, she notes that such arguments are limited, for most ethnic conflicts are neither ancient nor explain why in different situations warring ethnic groups are capable of cooperating with each other. Finally, the ancient hatred argument does not explain why certain ethnic conflicts produce violence while others do not (2003, 7). For this reason, the

‘security dilemma’ explanation for ethnic violence is also rejected by Toft, because in various protracted ethnic conflicts issues of security or fear were not the primary producers of violence, but rather, a desire to retain or gain territories from other identity groups. Toft concludes that the essential discrepancy in ethnic violence is the importance of territorial integrity and its significance to an identity group. Tierney proposes a similar argument by stating that contemporary challenges to modern sovereign states may require a shift in the historical assumption that states are the sole site of territorial sovereignty (2005, 164). This is an important argument for the case of ethnic and sectarian conflicts in Iraq for a multitude of reasons. Firstly, the possession of rich hydrocarbon resources in Iraq attributes to land possession greater material, security and political power for a group. Secondly, ethnonationalist struggles with the state and myths and symbols of ‘lost Jerusalem’, in combination with decades of direct bloody conflict with the regime, credits greater importance to retaining territorial integrity for the Kurds; simultaneously, for the rest of Iraq, rising sub-state Arab nationalism is directly contingent on regaining the greater territorial integrity of Iraq and unifying it under one centralised Arab regime. Finally, historical state and societal legacies ensures a high level of emotional investment both to territories and to identity boundaries, involving a complex mixture of fear, resentment, anger and distrust which further complicates the ethno-sectarian identity relations in Iraq.

In newly developed authoritarian societies where the regime has actively attempted to assimilate or even forcibly remove conflicting identities, marginalised groups will revert to ‘what they know’. Consequently, an oppressed identity group can possibly modify its values, agendas and goals as a response to oppression, fear and loss of territory. In response, these changes can often contribute to entrenching collective identities and loyalties within the group, rather than producing assimilation. Religion and its institutions and agents serve an important function in this deepening affiliation. As an example, the Orthodox Christian Churches in Russia, Bulgaria or Serbia acted as power political institutions and have been significant in moulding the distinctive identities of various European societies (Jakelcic 2010, 5). Voll (1982, 280) posits a similar argument for Islamic societies. Attempts in Turkey, as well as Iran, to reduce the influence of Islam and secularise and modernise their respective societies yielded little results if at all (Bayat 2007; Hale and Ozbudun 2010). In fact, such attempts in Iran indirectly established the religious ulama as the head of the state, post 1979. More importantly, religion is a part of ethnic identities rather than distinct from it, and indeed, any Kurd, Azari, Turk or Pakistani would be hard pressed to identify their ethnicity

with a “definition of their special identity that would exclude Islam” (Voll 1982, 280). As a result, ethnic revivalism often leads to a revival of religious affiliations rather than their exclusion. For instance, Korean resistance to Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945) led to increasing observance of Pentecostalism in an attempt to distinguish ‘Korean’ as distinct from Japanese identity. Consequently, it is widely assumed that the rise of popularity of Christianity is directly linked to Korean resistance of Japanese colonial policies of assimilation (Mullins 1994, 87-102). Groups which have a history of exclusion and repression can also become ultra conservative and intolerant of members who attempt to remove themselves or adopt alternative identities. Therefore, individual and group identities are mutually dependent, relying on values such as belonging, recognition and emotions which entails a set of historical myths and narratives that sets the said group apart from others (see for instance Coleman, Goldman and Kugler 2007).

However, the above hypothesis may be challenged by the argument that, historically, relations between Sunnis, Shi’ites and Kurds in Iraq were based on acceptance, inter-marriage and co-operation (Fuller and Francke, 2001, 99). As Taft (2003) noted earlier, periods in Iraq’s history has demonstrated cooperation and toleration between the various ethnic and religious identities. The centralisation of the state, as well as the economic developments followed by the large divide between certain groups rise to power in Iraq, however, significantly reduced such cooperation (see Astarjian 2007). This is in direct contrast to the central tenants of liberal peace theory. Liberal peace theory, for instance, often advocates economic development as a means of bridging the ethnic and religious divide which allows for the emergence of a middle-class. This, in turn, leads to the emergence of civil society groups where people form organisations based on interests rather than primordial relations. Consequently, liberal peace theory is heavily reliant on the belief that ethnic assimilation will naturally occur through economic development. Deutsch (1966, 188), for instance, argues that “a decisive factor in national assimilation or differentiation was found to be the process of social mobilization which accompanies the growth of markets, industries, and towns, and eventually of literacy and mass communication.” Economic development leads to the modernisation of society whose identity is redefined along economic and class interests as opposed to tribal, ethnic or religious affiliations. However, this perspective is based on the assumption that economic developments produce modernity which, in turn, contributes to democratic processes that allow various groups to gain equal and fair access to resources and power. It provides little counter argument as to cases where increased

economic development has not produced such power sharing measures and equality. Political reform can only occur if economic development is supported by existing liberal or liberalising institutions and government policies. Economic development without equal levels of political reforms and liberalisation generally leads to a greater divide between groups in multi-ethnic states. Some of the more well developed and economically stable states in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, as well as other Arab Gulf states, have failed to move towards transparency and good governance measures relative to their level of wealth. They continue to promote a particular identity or ethnicity above others and willingly repress competing or dissatisfied groups. This trend is directly linked to the consolidation and centralisation of states and their borders in post-colonial societies.

The majority of these states in the Middle East are also faced with the complication of the 'resource curse, resulting in vast wealth distributed to the few to the economic detriment of the majority (see Humphreys, Sachs and Stiglitz 2007). The consolidation of states territorial integrity and sovereignty has not correlated with an increased affiliation to identity groups in post-colonial states, particularly where authoritarianism arose as the dominant form of governance. At the same time, increased modernisation and economic development produced trends that progressively condensed the autonomy of identity groups and brought minorities within the grips of mainstream society and influence of the state (Connor 1972, 329). Modernisation, therefore, posed a significant challenge to the purity of ethnic, tribal, religious group boundaries which, in turn, produced the entrenchment of identities and group borders as a means of self-preservation. This resistance, however, contributed to increased levels of ethnic and religious disquiet and intolerance, particularly as certain groups gained favourable attention from the state. Theorists of state-building and reconstruction have failed to see that increased access to greater economic development could entrench ethnic identities and solidify them further in light of previous institutional legacies, particularly within resource rich regimes.

Another dominant gap, that Iraq highlights and is often ignored in empirical analysis, is that civic nationalism takes extensive periods of time, conflict management and socio-political and economic negotiations within pluralist societies. The dilemma is one of attempting to forge a sense of civic nationalism within fractured communities whose recent past and identity has produced protracted conflicts. Certainly, some have argued that the early eruption of ethnic and sectarian violence is part of the post-colonial experience of identity formation and sub-state nationalism. What the literature fails to acknowledge is the possibility of the

need to renegotiate a sense of civic nationalism post-conflict and what that may entail. In most instances, it involves a period of conflict where different groups attempt to suppress others, gain power and access to resources, negotiate and renegotiate continuously. The literature, as well as the empirical practices of reconstructions, fails to take into consideration the fact that liberal democracy is a form of political identity at a state, society and individual level. Irrespective of the political mechanisms placed within such societies, if notions of tolerance, fairness and conflict resolution through debate and dialogue have not existed in the recent history of such societies, state level democratic governance will not achieve its aim: that is of providing citizens of a state with an equal and fair opportunity to access resources, power, stability, security, and achieve their individual notion of the 'good life'. It is, then, essential to recognise that just as cultural and religious identities are in a constant state of development so is the political culture and identity of a transitioning state. If one accepts that liberal democracy is the 'end of history' and is the ultimate form of political, social and ideological development for humanity, one also needs to view this outcome as entailing an extensive period of development, socio-political identity formation, societal negotiations and, most importantly, consent of progresses made along the way. Yet, the literature fails to take into consideration this gap; that ultimately liberal democracy is a long term process that is heavily reliant on societal consent if it is to achieve legitimacy.

At best, some have advocated a 'leave them be' or 'do no harm' (OECD 2010; Paris and Sisk 2009, 31) argument to sort out their own political identity rationality that fails to address significant human rights issues in such societies (see, for instance Arther 2009). Reconstructions need to address these inherently clashing perspectives and find a medium that balances the need to produce long term democratic governance with addressing immediate human rights issues. If a panoptical observation of reconstruction involves promoting a democracy whose definitive aim is to reduce human rights violations as well as produce tolerance and stability, clearly human rights issues need immediate prominence within the debate. In other words, democracy implementation in recipient societies traditionally faces many challenges that more often than not lead to the re-emergence of conflicts which produce human rights issues promoting the intervention in the first place. The reconstruction process, therefore, attempts to address conflicts and human rights issues through democracy building. Liberal institution building is seen as the solution to mass human rights violations. Most crucially, it is seen to contain, rather than definitively solve, ethnic conflicts and human rights violations. As a result, a shift in existing thinking is



required, one that entails a dominant concern over the prevention of human rights which is divorced from the implementation of hastily constructed democratic sign posts. In other words, there is little guarantee that democratic institutions will still exist once the international forces have left. As experts of democratisation have noted that "democracy institutionalizes uncertainty" (Przeworski cited in Mainwaring 1989) and hence there is no guarantee of a positive and durable political trajectory (see Lipset 1959; Lijphart 1977). Therefore, specific policies aimed at producing better human rights practices through building bridges between conflicting groups, through truth and reconciliation mechanisms and other positive incentives promoting cooperation and increased respect for identity groups are perhaps more necessary and crucial than building liberal institutions, at least in the short term. To clarify, the reconstruction process requires a shift in its approach where it dissociates stability and security from notions of tolerance, equality and power sharing, with the former being viewed as the initial stages of policy focus and the latter being relegated to a long term goal. This is particularly relevant in societies that have little or no previous experience with liberal values or democratic processes, or, in societies where long term, mass human rights violations could be a significant barrier to long term peace, despite the removal of the regime. This step is necessary as it increases the legitimacy and durability of liberal institutions, since democracy without legitimacy reverts to becoming an ideology of oppression at the hands of few. The aim of state-building, thus, should not be the vindication of the suffering of victims and the oppressed, nor the punishing of collaborator groups. Its aim should be to prevent future *mass* human rights violations and to produce a political system that is able to prevent and resolve future conflict, and retains functioning institutional capacity. That may require a trade-off between the type of democracy implemented, one that is not so heavily reliant on 'liberalism' but is more concerned with entrenching a basic democratic mechanism.

This is where culture, identity and religion take centre stage. If the main aim of the reconstruction is to produce stability and security, and democracy building is their long term project, entailing decades of development long after the exit of the international community, it is important to employ the social infrastructure of recipient societies to produce these short term outcomes. That is, by involving multiple actors across crossbreeds of sectors (social, economic, political, religious, secular, tribal) in debates and in negotiating the identity of post-conflict society. This is essential, as it begins a crucial and tentative stage of building consensus, dialogue and awareness, (though not necessarily immediate wholehearted

acceptance) that the post-conflict society involves a multitude of identities and values. Attempts at forcing democratic measures such as elections and party politics have proven far less successful than anticipated for a multitude of reasons. A lack of experience of democratic governance coupled with the lack of understanding or clarity of what that actually entails, both on a normative and empirical level within recipient societies, as well as a recent history of conflict leads to charges of imperialism and, at worst, resurgences. The tendency of recycling political actors who often contributed, led and promoted civil conflicts in the first place into the 'new' democratic state fails to take into account that such actors lack awareness of liberal democratic governance, or that more crucially, they lack legitimacy. This argument can be extended to include the reconstructionary experts who often equate democracy to elections. Yet, democracy, particularly in a liberal sense, entails a change in attitudes, values and even identities on the individual as well as the societal level. Elections do not promote inherent acceptance of tolerance of differing and competing opinions. Rather, they are viewed by elites as a means to an end, which is often the immediate consolidation of political power. This involves a veneer of respectability and legitimacy through processes such as party formation and elections with the end result entailing access and control of the government. As Malone and Cockayne (2006a; 2006b) argue, successful peacebuilding (a term synonymous with nation-building for them) is reliant on power-sharing, however this power-sharing does not guarantee, and in some instances directly prevents, democratic state-building (2006b, 365). To safeguard against this tendency, it is essential that the reconstruction promotes plurality within such societies rather than promoting a popular and dominant identity such as that of 'one Iraqi people' or 'Iraqiness'. The active acceptance of this, as well as the promotion of top level, mid and grass-root level actors across a cross section of society, will safeguard against the elites manipulation of democracy and elections as a means of gaining power and influence. The presence of military forces, therefore, would only act as a safeguard against eruptions of violence. It would not entail replacing these actors and groups as the 'government' of the day, however short term it may be.

How can top level religious actors contribute to this process? Further, how can the involvement of religion and religious actors safeguard against the prevention of secular civic nationalism? This is particularly important for the international community since the Iranian Islamic revolution has produced negative connotations for the involvement of religion and its actors within the political sphere. However, as the example of the Sadrist phenomenon has demonstrated, the lack of acknowledgement and dialogue between the reconstructionary

leaders and such actors can produce significant dilemmas. Iraq demonstrates that religious actors can be a source of peace promotion as well as conflict. It is, then, essential to involve and take into consideration the views of such actors since they ultimately brand any policies as legitimate or otherwise for the large masses who follow them. The views of religious actors should, ideally, be one among a multitude of sectarian, ethnic and secular voices. The essentiality of this cannot be underestimated, as starting the extensive societal process of accepting that peace and stability is reliant on tolerating and accepting multiple identities and views, even if at times competing. Without actively and aggressively promoting this argument, elections can only exacerbate ethnic and religious fears and insecurities. This view recommends a specific type of interaction between the international community and recipient society. Through refraining from direct interference and providing advice, experts and resources as necessary and on request, the international community may prevent charges of neo-colonialism. Non-interference will allow the military and other armed forces to concentrate on preventing human rights abuses, which will play a significant role in reducing local hostility.

#### **4.9. Nation-building through Transitional Justice Practices:**

It is the central argument of this thesis that existing reconstruction policies are heavily slanted towards state-centric institution building with inadequate levels of attention on nation-building measures. What is essentially missing in such reconstructions is a consensually constructed polity (see Allan 1998). Currently, the international community resorts to transitional justice practices in a bid to produce such consensus (see Barry 1995; Bassiouni 2005). For instance, U.S. Secretary Of State Madeline Albright, pressed that “establishing the truth about what happened in Bosnia is essential to - not an obstacle to - national reconciliation” (Albright 1994). Prevailing nation-building mechanisms, such as Truth Commissions, punishment of war criminals, and demilitarisation policies, work on the basis of a ‘punishment and reward’ system that fails in the long term to produce mutual respect, tolerance and peace. The punishment of war criminals, demilitarisation and other similar policies are merely an initial step in the process of nation-building. Transitional Justice can be defined as the “conception of justice in periods of political transition” (Teitel 2000, 3). The International Centre for Transitional Justice insists that “transitional justice provides recognition of the rights of victims, promotes civic trust and strengthens the democratic rule

of law.” Political and social theory has focused to some degree on the issue of crime and the significance of punishment. Theorists ranging from Hegel, Emile Durkheim, Marx, Nietzsche and Michel Foucault have focused and contributed to the field of punishment. Punishment, for Durkheim, for instance, served as a unifying force within society and reaffirmed the collective conscience (Thompson 2002, 78). For Durkheim, it was the moral contribution of punishment that served the collective, rather than the preventative nature of punishment. Michael Foucault, in ‘Discipline and Punish’, also underscores the importance of punishment for the maintenance of social order. As Thompson notes, “punishment serves the ‘unconscious’ (or ‘latent’) function of reaffirming elements of the collective conscience and so maintaining social solidarity” (2002, 79). Transitional justice in post-conflict societies combines the two dominant traditions within the ‘punishment’ discourse. It combines the classical retributivism, generally attributed to the works of Kant and Hegel, which maintains the moral imperative of punishment, as well as the words of the classical deterrence theory which produces a utilitarian based theory on punishment that serves as a deterrence mechanism (Simmons 1995, 8).

Transitional justice is an effective method of “emotional adjustment for societies” (Pupavac 2004) and is a crucial step in the process of rehabilitation of conflict-ridden communities. Transitional justice serves to demonstrate that the collective memory of political crimes and state imposed injustices has political consequences. Further, transitional justice has contributed to the “criminalization of political violence”, while at the same time “establish a historical record of political violence...to counter denial about the extent and impact of systematic violence” (Leebaw 2008, 101, 107). On the importance of justice and the rule of law, Teitel demonstrates that “the phenomenology of transition points to a close tie in the normative shifts in understandings of justice and the law’s role in the construction of the transition” (2000, 6). Beginning in the 1980’s, transitional justice practices in the Philippines, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, Haiti, South Korea and Guatemala among others have demonstrated the problematic nature of addressing nation-building dilemmas while maintaining focus on the central issue of state-building and democratisation. Lanegran reasons that “democratization requires seeking accounts of the past...however, if the memories of past wrongs are contested with victims lacking recognition, then unity, justice, and the rule of law, which are all pillars of democracy, are eroded” (Lanegran 2005, 120). It is, therefore essential, for societies that have experienced protracted social conflicts, that transitional justice mechanisms are a vital part of the reconstruction process. These policies

aim towards providing victims with justice (which is deemed a necessary process towards building a more cohesive and stronger nation) and responsibility for past wrongs. Various transitional justice mechanisms have, thus, been produced, designed to counter the context specific basis of cases. Transitional processes consequently contain a variety of policies. For instance, they may include 'Lustrations', which involves the purging of the system of corrupt and repressive elements of the previous regime. Lustrations have occurred in a number of past cases including, most infamously, in Nazi Germany. Other mechanisms include financial reparations, as was implemented at a significant level in Chile (see Kritz 1995). The regime adopted a comprehensive and far reaching program of compensation in conjunction with rehabilitation policies towards victims. The monetary incentives included the provision of life-long pensions for special victims, such as those detained in General Pinochet's prisons also included reparations for the amount of time spent in prison in conjunction with lost incomes. These policies were supplemented with special educational benefits, such as the provision of mental health facilities and free accesses to those affected by the state brutality; and, finally, complete exemption from military service (Kritz 1995, 29).

Likewise in other cases, such as in Poland, legislation was proposed to implement a special progressive tax on former government officials based on their level of responsibility in the former regime (Kritz 1995, 31). Other policies, including Truth Commissions, have been conducted in East Timor, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Cambodia. While, in some cases, a variety of different measures have been adopted to address the special needs of a particular recipient society. The United Nations Transitional Authority in East Timor (UNTAET), which also led to the special court, the Special Panels, to try Serious Crimes of the Dili District Court, (SPSC) is a case in point. Another example was The Commission for Reception, Truth, and Reconciliation in East Timor (CAVR) developed in 2001. Transitional justice is, thus, fast gaining increasing attention in the academic world. Works that have focused on the suffering of civilians and the social aftermath of conflicts include Adrian Gregory's 1994 book, *The Silence of Memory*, Modris Eksteins, *Walking since Daybreak* (1999), focus on Latvian post-conflict reconstructions and successive German and Russian invasions; and Diana Lary and Stephen Mackinnon's work *Scars of War: The Impact of Warfare on Modern China* (2001) reflects an increasing levels of attention on the social, psychological and anthropological impacts of wars on societies.

A large and ever increasing body of literature has emerged in an attempt to better comprehend and account for transitional justice measures. Olsen, Payne and Reiter (2010,

980) have highlighted that specific combinations of transitional justice mechanisms can yield a greater level of success. Further, when implemented alone, transitional mechanisms such as truth commissions, applied without other supporting mechanism, can yield minimal success and can indeed have a negative impact on the process. Their attempt to produce a more comprehensive analysis of the utility of various combinations of transitional mechanisms - including truth commissions, lustrations, trials, reparations and amnesties - led to the development of the Transitional Justice Data Base (TJDB). The Database attempted to analyse all forms of transitional justice from 1970-2007. The authors noted that approaches to transitional justice involved a 'maximalist', 'minimalist', 'moderate' and 'holistic' approach by international institutions and domestic actors implementing justice during political transitions. 'Maximalist' approaches adopt the highest level of punishment for perpetrators of political crimes which include trials and other heavily punishment-centred retributive justice practices. Some of its most fundamental supporting documents include The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crimes of Genocide (1948), The International Convention Against Torture, and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1984). In contrast, 'moderate' approaches tend to adopt more conciliatory practices involving truth commissions, which are more victim orientated, and attempt to provide justice through "non-judicial means" (Olsen, Payne and Reiter 2010, 982). Likewise, a 'minimalist' approach uses amnesties as a measure of the peaceful transition and a non-punishment approach towards justice as the most successful approach in promoting democratic and human rights orientated practices. Finally, a 'holistic' approach tends to view the implementation of a singular mechanism, such as amnesties, as insufficient to address past political injustices, and advocates for a combination of various practices to best transition towards democratization. Olsen, Payne and Reiter's scholarship led to the conclusion that the most successful transitional justice measures involved two specific combinations of the various existing mechanisms. They included instances where trials and amnesties were implemented together, while, in others, only trials, amnesties and truth commissions were combined to form a comprehensive method of addressing past political injustices (2010, 982). However, the punishment of past crimes is a complex and problematic process that entails a degree of willing 'forgetting' on the part of society.

Often though, it is punishment-centred justice, also called 'retributive justice', which are implemented as a retributive and deterrence measure. This is also the most common form of transitional justice (Teitel 2000), and is often utilised as a means of prevention of crimes at an

international level for other authoritarian regimes. This is because a prevalent dilemma that arises from imposing transitional justice is the widespread nature of regime supporters in such societies. In previous cases, such as those of the Warsaw Pact, well over half of the population was directly involved in the suppression of, torture, disappearances, and membership of the secret police, and other repressive measures (Kritz 1995, 22). In some instances, the victims are not so distinct and cannot be easily differentiated, while, in others, there are clear lines between victims and perpetrators of state violence. This was the case in Rwanda, for example. Transitional justice thus entails a strong tension between ‘justice’ and ‘prudence’ that requires a balance between these concepts (Arther 2009), as well as an assurance that the appropriate bodies in such societies are punished. As policy makers have noted, the process towards transitioning to a more just society is a delicate and complex one which requires significant attention to outcomes of actions taken. But, some cases have demonstrated that disproportionate retributive actions can significantly damage the chances of a new successor government to move forward, as was the case with the “kangaroo trial and execution” of Romanian former dictator Nicolae Ceasescu, which significantly reduced the new regime’s legitimacy both internationally and domestically (Krtiz 1995, 33).

Transitional justice, thus, represents a clear break from the past and a new commitment towards a more just, law based and ordered society. It’s an attempt to break with the traditions of the past and to challenge the institutional legacies of repressive regimes, replacing it with a more humane, equitable and legalised form of society-state relations. It is often the only way a new regime can distinguish itself as different from the past system, as well as gain the trust and support of citizens: “the ways in which justice is experienced, perceived, conceptualized, transacted, and produced in various localities, ranging from village-level interactions between former victims and perpetrators, to offices of nongovernmental organizations, to the court rooms of international tribunals” (Hinton 2010, 1). Transitional justice is, therefore, problematic as it attempts to subvert one form of political culture with a radically, often unprecedented form of state-society and inter-societal relations. A quick analysis of Iraq’s transition towards societal justice provides not only a strong indication of these tensions but also revisits the inherent tensions between legitimacy and sovereignty, nation vs. state-building and identity politics, noted earlier.

#### **4.10. Iraq’s Transitional Justice:**

The brutalities of the regime, while well-known, were hardly documented by international bodies which makes gauging the extent of the violence difficult. Extreme government paranoia, during the 1980's and 1990's, prevented the appropriate access to victims and documentations of crimes committed by the regime. For instance, some estimates have noted that the Kurdish victims of the Anfal Campaign range up to 182, 000 with a projected 300,000-500,000 lives lost within mass graves (Bassiouni 2005, 105). However, there is no clear indication of exact figures, which leaves transitional justice for victims in a precarious position. What is clear, though, is that the most prevalent legacies of the Ba'ath regime will undoubtedly be its utter disregard for human rights. The government's active engagement in executions, rape, and imprisonment, appropriation of properties, torture and arbitrary arrests was deemed as a justified official state response to societal disquiet. Thus, the number of victim of the regime ranges in the millions, which produces a complex dilemma for post-conflict justice as a large portion of society were active or inactive members of the regime and contributed, or silently endorsed, injustices. According to the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), more than half a million Shi'ites were forcibly removed and 'returned' to Iran. Additionally, an estimated 50,000-70,000 Shi'ites have disappeared. Following the 1991 Shi'ite-Kurdish uprising, thousands more were executed, tortured and held in detention (ICTJ 2005, 5). This inherent disregard for human rights, combined with the divisive and elitist policies of the regime, produced a society devoid of loyalty to the government, (though not necessarily the state) with innate trust issues beyond group boundaries. For this reason, transitional justice, post 2003, was of paramount necessity for the rehabilitation of state-society relations, as well as the promotion of intra-ethnic and religious dialogues as a starting point towards peace. As a result, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) adopted two key transitional justice mechanisms: lustration of the public service of former members of the regime as well as criminal trials (see Dobbins et al. 2009). One of the first measures taken by the newly liberated Iraqi state was to adopt the Iraqi Special Tribunal (IST), on 10th of December 2003, as an active step towards promoting transitional justice. A year later, the Regime Crimes Liaison Office (RCLO) was developed, tasked with gathering evidence against the detained war criminals. Other directives from Paul Bremer included the "establishment of a property claims commission, a central criminal court, and a new Iraqi army and civil defence corps" (Stover, Meghally and Mufti 2005, 833). These measures took a positive initial step towards providing distinct communities with the justice they so desired. This was in direct contrast to the extensive numbers of personal vendettas and executions carried out within society during the initial stages of the regimes removal. Widespread



executions of academics, civil servants and other professionals through the works of individuals or death squads in 2003 (see Allawi 2007) served as the first precursor to the societal violence that would ensue.

It was, therefore, necessary to produce a policy designed to demonstrate to the public that members of the regime would be punished. This was essential in order to distinguish not only the past regime from the present one, but also to demonstrate the capacity of the newly constructed institutions to serve the needs to society. Consequently, a de-Ba'athification program was implemented on 16th of March 2003 in Iraq. The CPA defined the law as serving “to intellectually, administratively, politically, culturally and economically dismantle the Ba’ath Party system in Iraqi society, state institutions, and civil society institutions” (cited in Wyer and Wicken 2012). De-militarization and the lustration of the previous regime in transitioning societies is an essential component of the emerging justice and reconciliation in post-conflict societies (see Droogers 2002; Burrell 2006). However, this relatively new mechanism of post-war justice is problematic and still requires significant fine-tuning to cater to the specific complexities of each case study. In Iraq, de-Ba'athification was a necessary element of transitional justice for Kurds and Shi’ites, and was an essential part of collective national healing. In 2004, the Iraqi de-Ba'athification Council (IDC) was established to oversee this lustration process. However, the dilemma of such a widespread purge led to the loss of experienced and knowledgeable civil servants necessary for the stable functioning of daily governance of the new regime. As a result, national healing came into direct conflict with immediate stability as well as long term development and progress for the state. In time, over 140, 000 individuals were removed from their positions including public administrators such as teachers, university professors, bureaucrats, as well as factory managers (Bakshi 2008). This purge, however, occurred in an indiscriminate manner, and did not distinguish the level of involvement, contribution and support an individual Ba’ath member provided to the regime. Consequently, it is argued that de-Ba'athification contributed significantly to the rise of the Sunni insurgency, leading eventually to sectarian conflicts (Anderson 2004). The drafters of the de-Ba'athification policies lacked the realisation that direct membership of the party ranged from 2-6 million active members, with roughly 12 million non-active supporters, which basically consisted of half of Iraq’s population (Bakshi 2008) consisting of Kurdish, Shia and Sunni members. Further, in a society where access to guns is rife, with a culture of seeking personal justice in light of the absence of effective legal institutions, combined with general rage towards the invasion, the removal of even half of this estimated

12 million would have produced a well-armed, informed and motivated spoiler insurgency. Additionally, the lack of security in the initial stages of the invasion produced large numbers of revenge killings contributing to the sense of instability and lack of societal safety. Considering that the majority of Ba'ath members in society consisted of skilled bureaucrats and civil servants, and that large numbers of highly skilled workers including doctors, engineers and professors fled Iraq for fear of repercussion (Anderson 2004), further contributed to the administrative vacuum. Added to this mixture was the generally heavily armed nature of Iraqi society. This in combination with military training ensured a society with the capacity for serious destabilisation if the de-Ba'athification did not proceed smoothly. It is apparent that the implementation of the de-Ba'athification policy was not adequate to capture the complexity of membership and support, and did not balance the short term vs. long term interests of society.

When it became apparent that the de-Ba'athification policies in place were producing adverse effects on the transition towards peace, the CPA attempted to reverse its position. As criticism of Bremer's de-Ba'athification plan gained increasing international attention, the Iraqi Governing Council established the Higher National De-Ba'athification Commission (HNDC). Eventually, on January 12, 2008, a new law was passed, labelled the Accountability and Justice Law, designed to re-establish low level party members into society. This basically meant that the lower echelons of the party had the ability to appeal to the commission within two weeks, but faced the loss of pensions if they appealed (Stover, Mehally and Mufti 2005, 847). The IDC required the establishment of the Accreditation Review Committees (ARCs) to acquire information on the Ba'athist affiliation of individuals in government positions. This committee was designed to prevent unfair dismissals and counter some of the previous sentences. While strong arguments advocated the necessity of re-instating experienced civil servants back into the public service for the benefit of developing a functional government, at the same time, persistent arguments accused the reestablishment of Ba'ath members of being a political move to appease the Sunni insurgency movement as well as to provide a good-will gesture to the Sunni community domestically and regionally (Bakshi 2008). Essentially, this process significantly reduced the legitimacy of the policy. Indeed, it had gained little in the way of providing justice to victims and had only served to demonstrate that perpetrators of past injustices will continue to occupy a privileged position in society because of the privileges that membership of the past regime had attributed. The de-Ba'athification policy is widely deemed as incoherent, inconsistent and insufficient in producing transitional justice.

The CPA then attempted to focus on publically demonstrating its commitment to transitional justice through punishment of the past regimes political elites. However, this process also entailed significant dilemmas which reduced the legitimacy of the process further. The widespread belief that Iraq's justice system was not adequate to deal with the punishment of top elites was not a sufficient deterrence to the CPA. Likewise, demands by NGO's and other state actors, to utilise the International Criminal Court to bring to justice Saddam and his cronies also fell on deaf ears. As a result, the trial and eventual execution of Saddam and top level members of the regime, occurred with a disregard for the legitimacy of the process and its implication for international norms. This inadequate response to addressing of past injustices created a process that led to the prevention of justice for long suffering victims and families of victims. As the regime collapsed and the United States declared the war as officially over, families of victims embarked on self-motivated attempts to locate lost family members, particularly through the numerous mass graves in Iraq. Lacking appropriate equipment and expertise, family members used shovels and sometimes bare hands to open graves, leading to the loss of evidence "in a manner that would prevent forensic identification of most-if not all-of the remains" (Stover, Mehally and Mufti 2005, 836). In some instances, "villagers used a backhoe to dig up more than 2,000 sets of remains, gouging and commingling countless skeletons in the process, while some families used their hands to dig for bones and shards of clothing and carted them away in wheelbarrows and buckets" (Stover, Mehally and Mufti 2005, 837). Additionally, experts argue that another contribution to the prevention of justice was the loss of significant numbers of official government documents. The looting and pillaging of government offices shortly following the invasion and the coalition force's inability to interfere in the process contributed to retaliatory violence as important names and documents fell into the hands of the long silenced and suffering public. At the same time, the loss of archived and official documents led to the creation of black market demand, as individuals and families of victims sought access to any information in a bid to execute individual justice.

The second transitional Justice mechanism, adopted by the CPA, involved the development of Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal (SICT) designed to hold members of the previous regime accountable. Article 48 of the Transitional Authority Law established the Tribunal, initially called the Iraqi Special Tribunal (IST) (ICTJ 2005, 5). Hania Mufti, the director of Human Rights Watch in London, highlighted the Iraqi courts inexperience in handling such a complex trial process. He also insisted that "Saddam's victims should not be overseers of the

justice system. It should be independent of both the former regime and its victims” (The Guardian 2003). In contrast, NGO’s largely advocated for an internationally held criminal court similar to those such as the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and the East Timor Serious Crimes Unit.

Another preventative measure was the lack of judges and judicial personnel who were experienced enough to address such significant and extensive crimes such as crimes against humanity, genocide and other war crimes. Another critical issue was that Iraqi political and judicial culture was strongly in favour of the death penalty (see Avruch 1998; Eckart 2006; Knickmeyer 2006). Confounding the already complex transition was the crucial issue of cultural relativity and what forms of justice should be attributed to the former members of the Saddam regime (on the cultural relativity issue see Baggini 2003). Other issues involved the quality of Iraq’s judicial system. The quality of judges is in question “nevertheless, direct and indirect political interference in the proceedings has been ongoing... This has been facilitated by revisions to the tribunal statute, which, for example, require that no member of its staff has ever been a member of the Ba’ath party, a standard far higher than those stipulated by ongoing de-Ba’athification mechanisms. Paradoxically, membership of the party was a prerequisite for admission to judicial training” (IRIN 2006).

Saddam’s eventual execution represented another political and policy failure. The execution not only further outraged Sunnis but also failed to respect existing legal norms in Iraq. For example, Saddam’s execution occurred on a major Sunni festival, the Eid al-Adha. This prompted residing judges such as Rizgar Mohammad Amin, a Kurd overseeing the trial, to note that Saddam’s execution on the Islamic holiday was illegal since Iraqi law forbids verdicts or executions within official religious and state holidays (Frayer 2007). As a result of these comments, Amin was replaced, following protests by Shi’ites that he was far too lenient in his position. This demonstrates that, while the execution of the regimes dictator was essential to the victims, this process occurred by subjugating the rule of law to the needs of the victims. In this instance, the punishment of crimes occurred at the cost of respect for the state’s legal norms that directly disregarded the Islamic tradition and identity of the Sunni sect. This does not suggest that the Sunni’s religious norms should take precedence over the practices of other religions or sects; but rather considering the increasing feelings of marginalisation and antagonism that the Sunni’s felt towards the new state, the execution of Saddam represented a crude reminder of their lesser role in the new Iraq. This event served to

only increase feelings of resentment and reversion to violent resistance against the coalition forces and other elements.

Transitional justice therefore needs to demonstrate a balance between careful production of justice and respect for the intricacies of the cultures in which such mechanisms are enacted. Stover, Mehally and Mufti (2005), for instance, have criticised the handling of the transitional process in Iraq. They insist that the CPA made little to no effort to consult Iraqi's regarding its approach to transitional justice measures, and, therefore, the legitimacy of the whole process was significantly derailed. The CPA simply assumed authority over the process and produced ill-produced policies designed to provide relief to Iraq's long suffering citizens. The arbitrary nature of the CPA's practices served as a reminder of the failures of institutions in Iraqi history and perpetuated the sense of mistrust between state-society. In instances where consultation did occur, it transpired directly between Iraq's exiled leaders and the CPA, two bodies with arguable legitimacy and political efficacy in the reconstruction process. Consequently the policies adopted were widely viewed as "an American process operating under an Iraqi façade" (Stover, Mehally and Mufti 2005, 835). Further comments made by Paul Bremer increased feelings of resentment and a sense of helplessness in the aftermath of Saddam's removal. For instance, Bremer was noted stating that "like it or not-and it's not pleasant being occupied, or being the occupier, I might add,- the Coalition is still the sovereign power here" (cited in Woodward 200, 28). The ICTJ (2005) likewise criticised that "transitional justice initiatives [in Iraq] have suffered from poor planning and implementation, legitimacy challenges, lack of public consultation, and contradictory goals."

The existing mechanisms aiming towards justice within traumatised societies entails a punishment orientated justice structure that increases the incentive towards spoiling the political process and reduces the incentive towards compliance. The de-Ba'athification policies implemented in Iraq were a strong indicator of this process. Policy makers have acknowledged the difficult process of implementing justice in societies where large numbers of citizens may have directly complied with the regimes corrupt and inhumane practices through their participation in the political process, in the public office as well as by membership in and loyalty towards the regime and its political junta. While there have been measures taken to compensate victims, not enough measures are being adopted to attempt to re-integrate the compliant members of the regime back into society, since this group often poses as one of the most dominant obstacles towards peaceful transition. Therefore, a post-conflict and transitional justice needs to take into account means of addressing past injustices

and crimes for victims of the regime, but also needs to attempt to negotiate a new role and position for compliers in the new regime. As a result, justice in transitioning societies requires adopting a dual view of long term vs. short term gains by accommodating the distinction between victims and compliers. As it currently stands, transitional justice is limited because of its adherence to the punishment orientated mechanism. Within such processes as lustrations, demilitarisation and vetting the public office of top level regime members, restorative justice punishes a select number while the majority of compliers are 'reaccommodated' back into the newly constructed regime. This was largely the case with the de-Ba'athification of Iraq, as a number of barred former members of Ba'ath party were excluded from participating and acquiring jobs in public office. Paradoxically, this process removed the only source of experienced public service citizens leading to a massive administrative gap in the 'new' Iraq. As a response, the foreign and domestic policy and decision makers, as well as academics, largely criticized this process, labelling it as inadequate and far too severe in measure. The increased level of violence, public dissatisfaction and the resulting civil and sectarian conflict was largely viewed as a fall out of the de-Ba'athification policies implemented. Soon after, large numbers of former Ba'ath members such as university and high school teachers, returned to their jobs. There is, however, little to no analysis of this de-Ba'athification process and its eventual reversal beyond this point and its implications for societal relations and harmony. Analysis is therefore limited to criticism of the arbitrary, harsh and widespread limitations of de-Ba'athification. However, an important element of this policy and its impact over the collective is ignored. While large numbers of individuals deemed as only 'members' of the political party were allowed to return, for the majority of the citizenry the mere connection to the Ba'ath regime is enough to incite distrust, anger and resentment.

To further demonstrate the tensions and limitations in the inadequate level of focus on cultural and identity factors, the next chapter will focus on the elements within Iraqi society that could have contributed to the legitimacy of the new Iraqi government. Nevertheless, the discourse divides important actors along a legitimate/desirable-illegitimate/undesirable dichotomy that has severely impacted the nature of the reconstruction.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: AYATOLLAHS, GRAND MARJAS AND 'UPSTART' CLERICS**

### **5.1. Introduction:**

The U.S. coalition had little grasp of the importance of the religious actors and leaders in Iraq. Certainly, it took more than a year before the coalition realized the socio-economic and political power of such figures to sway and shape public opinion. Experts such as Danan and Hunt (2007) noted that Saddam's strongly secular state apparatus was partly the cause for this lack of awareness of the importance of religious actors in Iraq post invasion. Despite this, theorists have noted that a state's history and legacy determines its level of religious accommodation (Fetzer and Soper 2005). The Ba'ath regime's adherence to a secular state theory was directly reliant on the intense suppression of religious values, particularly that of the Shi'ite majority. Danan and Hunt reflect that analysts had "an under-appreciation for the extent to which religion would manifest itself once repression had been removed" (2007, 6). Such statements spotlight various inconsistencies between practice and theory, but, more importantly, between the tendency to view events, actors and occurrences through the lenses of ill-conceived policies and general ignorance of political trends and culture of a country facing large scale political upheaval. In light of the events of the past decades in Iraq, the regime's internal, as well as foreign policies, gave every indication of a religious identity upheaval once the Ba'athists were removed.

While the policy failures of the U.S. led coalition have been well documented by a range of political experts (O'Brien 2010; Goldenberg 2007; Hendrickson and Tucker 2005), the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate an important and still existing lacuna in Iraq's reconstruction, even though experts and analysts have become increasingly aware of the significance of religious actors such as Grand Ayatollah Sistani or Muqtada Al-Sader, and the amount of literature attempting to understand these actors has significantly risen. Some experts mainly provided a historical account of the Shia religious ulama, as well as a juxtaposition of their political situation to the post-reconstruction stage (see Cordesman and Ramos 2008). Some

viewed such actors as an extension of a tentatively emerging civil society sphere in Iraq (see Myers 2010), while others mainly attempted to provide an understanding of the importance of such actors to better cognize the failures of the reconstruction (Al-Zaydi 2010; Recknagel 2004). The common denominator that all these sources shared was their tacit or implicit acknowledgement and acceptance of the role of such actors as falling within the confines of civil society: that essentially these actors' motivations and agendas could be explained within the confines of civil society activism, precisely because religious actors and institutions are traditionally deemed as civil society actors. As a result, the influences of such actors are marginalized and their political significance is demoted. In contrast, the essence of this chapter and its utility lie in providing an alternative politically-based account of such actors, their agendas and motivations and, in fact, removing them from the sphere of civil society in which they have been conventionally confined. In other words, the analysis of such actors has been limited by their confinement within the civil society sphere. As such their political influence, their ability to shape the direction of the reconstruction process and to directly become involved in political parties and their formation, including policy and decision making, sets them simultaneously inside and outside the civil society sphere. Further, this chapter aims to identify an alternative means by which non-state actors can contribute to the reconstruction process of post-conflict societies. In so doing, the chapter aims to address an inherent shortcoming within the state-building paradigm that acknowledges other sources of peace, rather than simply conflict, as well as providing alternative means of cultural appropriation within the paradigm that is outside of the dominant platform of top-down, state-centred and market-based reconstruction processes that fail to correctly address the scope of the conflict and relevant avenues of progress and development. The underlying assumption of such processes demonstrates that the reconstruction and donor community is heavily predisposed and one dimensional in its approach, failing to correctly examine recipient societies political cultures and institutional legacies, and often coming to incorrect conclusions regarding the sources of conflict, and, consequently, its resolutions. Such inherent blind-sightedness within the reconstruction paradigm limits the transformative capacities of state-building and merely serves to create a negative perception of its efficacy.

This chapter will briefly revisit the state-centric reconstructionary process and aims to demonstrate the gap between theory and practice. The focus will then shift to the identification of various types of 'Actors' who contribute to the reconstruction process. The main focus of this chapter is to highlight the distinction between 'desirable' and 'undesirable'



actors, with a specific focus on religious actors. This section points to the inherent failure of the reconstruction process to identify legitimate actors from spoilers in the initial stages. The discussion will then flow into the role of religion and religious actors as a source of identity formation, social cohesion and leadership. The chapter will then identify and focus on the role of religious actors in Iraq's history and trace the development of religious figures' political position in the pre-invasion and post-Saddam era. Finally, the conclusion will position the overall argument of this chapter within the post-colonial nationalist discourse.

## **5.2. Insider Actors and Outsider Actors:**

When discussing 'actors' as sources of conflict or peace, the literature posits two dichotomies. Firstly, actors are distinguished as either on a 'local' or 'international' level. Secondly they are classified as acceptable, or unacceptable depending on the values they advocate. Thus, local actors are those who are part of the recipient society's community and experience and live within the conflict, while 'international' actors may be the donor community, NGO's, aid groups, and organizations that take part in the reconstruction process: in other words, foreign actors with the means and expertise to conduct the reconstruction. Lederach's (1997) study presents another level of distinction between actors on the national level. That is, top level actors, as well as those on the local level such as within civil society groups; and finally on the grassroots level, which include clan chieftains, local health officials and community leaders, among others. What is essential, though, according to the reconstruction literature is that local actors are encouraged at all levels to take ownership of the reconstruction process, and that supporting these actors to achieve these aims should be the fundamental nature of reconstructionary activities (Nathan 2007; Reich 2006; Saxby 2003). This is based on the notion that "peace-building is a process of building something from within rather than responding to outside agendas" (Anderson and Olson 2003, 33). Yet, the empirical practice of reconstruction proves far more problematic, as the international actors leading the project often grapple with various domestic and international interests and agendas that limit the level of inclusion and involvement of certain types of actors. On the other hand, others have contended that it is far more difficult to determine exactly who can be classified as 'local' actors (Futamura and Notaras 2011). Conversely, on a practical level donors and NGO's may find it easier to deal with readymade elites in local dynamics, rather than coordinate with unknown variables. This process, and its

inherent ambiguities, confers some actors as ‘acceptable’ players in the reconstruction field, with others excluded as ‘unacceptable’ or undesirable groups and individuals who purport undesirable values and expectations.

Likewise, there is an inherent tendency to segregate and vet desirable cultural norms that are more readily aligned with Western norms from unacceptable practices in recipient societies. In most instances, this represents the removal of the traditional practices being replaced with modern, liberal norms within the public sphere. In the perspective of the international donor community, the desirability of a top level actor is directly linked to their adherence to modern liberal values. In some instances, all that is required for an actor to be deemed desirable is lip service to liberal democratic values. In contrast, ‘unacceptable’ actors often represent the undesirable cultural norms which, according to the perspective of the donors, serve as a significant contributor to instability and lack of legitimacy in such cases. In turn, certain groups and interests are often marginalized, spoilers emerge, insurgencies occur and the level of violence spirals out of control. More recently, experts, with the benefit of hindsight, have noted that Iraq’s reconstruction should be “based on an awareness and appreciation of culturally specific epistemology, or ways of knowing, and recognize that any model of peacebuilding must be both multivalent and adaptive to local knowledge and customs” (Appleby 1999, 240). Further increased globalization and liberalization have, to some degrees, rendered the traditional role of the state obsolete leaving non state actors to increasingly produce norms and standards to which states need to adhere (see Peters, Koechlin and Inkernagel 2009). As a result, local actors have also come to influence state decision making and norm setting. The marginalization of local actors can, therefore, play an important role in the level of peace or conflict in a transition. This has not prevented some from cautioning that there will always be a level of inequality between external actors and local actors (for example, Reich 2006), especially where there are issues of resources and funding. As a result, the two different actors should aim to come to an agreement based on their different needs and interests and form a level of equality on this level. Therefore, the issue is not so much an active focus towards identifying and utilizing ‘local actors’, but rather towards producing more “appropriate roles”, while, at the same time, focusing on the “nature and quality of the relationship” (Van Brabant 2010, 11).

Additionally, the donor community often uses its own discretionary criteria to select ‘local’ actors to lead the reconstruction process, largely assuming that the majority of local actors lack the capacity to self-manage the transition. The donor community’s tendency to promote

certain local actors at the cost of others, often over ill informed ideas regarding their popularity and legitimacy, raises another important issue. There is a tendency to recycle leaders who may have contributed or exacerbated the conflict in the first place or use candidates who may have been in exile and out of the conflict for long periods of time. Consequently, despite the fact that the liberal democratic signposts such as elections and campaigns for political representation are utilized by such actors, they often also include illiberal tactics to advance these interests. Notable examples of this trend include the Kurt Waldheim affair which entailed Waldheim, the ninth president of Austria as well as the fourth Secretary-General of the United Nations being awarded a papal knighthood for his exemplary services to human rights, despite the fact that Waldheim had served for the Nazi military in the Balkans (Reychler 1997). Similar cases have occurred within reconstruction missions where corrupt or violent actors have been recycled back into the post-conflict system with the explicit support of the international community. The reinstatement of the former president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, into office, despite allegations of corruption, ineffective government policies and a general lack of legitimacy is also another case in point (Fatton 2002). In turn, the Bush administration, while acknowledging the shortfalls of Aristide as “deeply flawed”, was still willing to “work with him as Haiti’s democratically elected leader” (Bogdanich and Nordberg 2006).

In other instances, actors who may have played a significant role in the peacekeeping process have been actively marginalized and, at times, directly excluded from the process. The U.S. government’s involvement in the Somalia conflict in 2006 is a case in point. When factional tensions led to a spate of violence in Mogadishu between groups loyal to the Islamic Courts Union and a “self-proclaimed anti-terrorism coalition” (Dagne 2011, 18) the international community became involved. As a result of the escalating violence, an International Somalia Contact Group was developed that consisted of the U.S., Norway, U.K., Italy, Sweden, and the E.U., among others. When the Islamic Courts Union attempted to negotiate a peace deal with the Transitional Federal Government, the U.S. actively opposed such a move because of fears that the Islamic Courts were harbouring international terrorists (Dagne 2011; Dannan and Hunt 2007, 6). This is despite the fact that the International Contact Group specified its main agenda as one consisting of “an inclusive process of political dialogue and reconciliation embracing representative clan, religious, business, civil society, women’s and other political groups” (Dagne 2011, 20). Despite the fact that the Islamic Courts Union attracted high levels of domestic support, especially from women due to their social services,

it nevertheless received negative press coverage in the west (Dagne 2011), thereby reaffirming the necessity of removing Islamic religious groups from the peacekeeping process. For Dannan and Hunt (2007, 6) this process prevented “the United States from considering ways to work with the moderates within the Union, or diplomatically capitalizing on the divisions in the organization. This approach only succeeded in bolstering the more fundamentalist wings of the Union, which benefited from Somali perceptions that the United States was ‘anti-Islam.’” Top level religious actors, however, should be considered on par with military and political leaders, for they provide another level of influence that can be used to connect differing groups and parties. In fact, religious actors can posit much relating to the “nature of the ties uniting members of the societies in question and the solidarities and collaborations across different sectors, their systems of reference (or ‘political culture’), the aims they pursue and their motives and circumstances for interacting with outsiders and peacebuilding issues” (Peacebuilding Initiative 2007). The predisposition towards disregarding religious actors in conflict ridden societies is a trend often repeated by the U.S. Garrard-Burnett (2004) points to the Sandinista National Liberation Front movement which toppled the Somoza dictatorship in 1979 as an example of this trend. The American refusal to both accept warnings from the Nicaraguan Church relating to imminent social upheaval and civil conflict, and to also intervene in time led to a successful Sandinista revolution. Part of this process entailed a refusal to see the large number of religious clerics and their strong support for the Sandinista movement, including refusal to work directly with the church to bring a more peaceful resolution to the conflict. Traditionally, the role of religion and religious actors is considered a negative and unwelcomed element of conflict resolution. This is a view further supported by theorists such as Samuel Huntington, who identifies religion as the single most important contributor to clashes of civilizations. This is, perhaps, not surprising since civil conflicts and wars with religious dimensions have been prevalent: Israel/Palestinian (1968) - Jews vs. Arabs; Northern Ireland (1969) - Catholic vs. Protestants; Serbia - orthodox Christians vs. Roman Catholic Christians; Bosnia (1991) - orthodox Christians vs. Catholics vs. Muslims; various other religiously motivated interstate conflicts in India (1982, 1990, 1992), Ethiopia (1976), Sudan (1983), Afghanistan (1992), Egypt (1977), Tunisia (1978), Algeria (1988), Sri Lanka (1983), Lebanon (1975), Philippines (1970), and Bangladesh (1973). Despite the strong religious overtones of these conflicts, religious actors cannot be ignored as sources of peace and conflict resolution. As Kessler (2008, 136) notes, “the puzzle that would resolve the Israeli-Palestinian dispute will be

incomplete unless Hamas is somehow included.” It is essential that the role of religion and its actors is seen not only as a possible source of conflict, but also as a source of peacebuilding.

One possible tactic to reduce the number of surprises in conflict resolution, as adopted by the U.S., entails the direct selection of appropriate actors. In Iraq, the Bush administration’s tendency to impose certain actors above others proved to be contentious and led to much domestic and international criticism. A further notable omission of the U.S. led reconstruction was their inability to identify not only significant actors and individuals who could influence the reconstruction process, but also *legitimate* leaders. The preeminence of statehood ensures that the state-building donor community attempts to focus on actors who contribute to developing a stable state in the aftermath of conflict. Ahamad Chalabi, for instance, was widely viewed as one such actor during the lead up to the 2003 war in Iraq. His involvement in the Iraqi National Congress (INC) and his close relations with key neoconservative figures in the Bush administration made him a favoured post-conflict figure in the new Iraqi state (see Pitt 2003). This was despite various allegations of financial misconduct within the INC, as well as by Jordanian banking authorities who subsequently tried and sentenced him to 22 years in jail in absentia in 1992 (Cockburn 2004). It was alleged by the Jordanian government that Chalabi had siphoned over \$230 million while he headed the Petra Bank. By 2004, Chalabi’s dubious practices led to a warrant for his arrest when Zuhair Maliky, a sitting judge on Iraq’s Central Criminal Court, issued the warrant on the charges of counterfeiting currency (see Bassiouni 2005, 115-116). Though the charges were eventually dropped, the Iraqi government insisted that it had every intention of handing Chalabi over to Interpol on account of the Jordanian arrest issued in 1992. None of these events transpired, yet served to delegitimize Chalabi further in the view of Iraqi citizens. His eventual election as a member of the Iraqi legislative body as part of the Shi’ite list in 2005 attests more to the patrimonial, corrupt and client based nature of Iraq’s political culture, entrenched by the practices of the previous regime. Other notable figures included the exiled secular Shi’ites Iyad Allawi and Nouri Al-Malaki. While Allawi was acting as the Iraqi interim prime minister, one of the biggest thefts in history occurred, consisting of over \$1.3 billion misplaced and mismanaged in contracts (Cockburn 2005) raising significant questions relating to his effectiveness and commitment to the nation’s reconstruction. Nevertheless, he remained a favoured political actor by the Americans. Likewise, sectarian violence increased under Nouri Al-Malaki, with allegations that he was beholden to al-Sadr and his Mehdi army (Crain 2008; Ghosh 2010). Al-Malaki’s repeated refusals to encounter the army and crack

down on the violent paramilitary group produced the wide spread belief that his loyalties lay along his Shi'ite values rather than Iraqi nationality; whilst accusations of patronage and tacit support received from the Iranian regime continued unabated (Spanner 2011). This has reduced his legitimacy further in the eyes of Kurds and Sunni's, as well as those Shi'ites who oppose the Mehdi army and al-Sadr.

If 'local' actors are identified as those "vulnerable to the conflict, because they are from the area and living there", or include "people who in some other way must experience the conflict and live with its consequences personally" (Anderson and Olson 2003, 36) then, arguably, actors such as Alawi, Maliki and Chalabi are far from local since they have spent decades in exile. While exiled political actors can contribute significantly to post-conflict reconstruction, these actors had left Iraq for significant periods of time which had severely reduced their connection to locals. Chalabi, for instance, had left the country in 1956, well before Saddam even came into power, and only returned in 2003 (Anderson and Stansfield 2004, 192). Likewise, Al-Maliki had left Iraq in 1979 and returned only in 2003 (Dawod 2012). Alawi also left Iraq in the 1970s. As a result, most Iraqis did not view these actors as 'local' or legitimate. In 2002, Tariq Aziz, the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq was noted for pointing out to the Americans that, "you guys can have Chalabi!...you can keep feeding him all the prime rib and expensive scotch. He doesn't know anyone here. He hasn't been to Iraq in 25 years" (cited in Thomas and Hosenball 2007, 3). The imposition of long exiled actors who had played a limited role in actively opposing the Saddam regime grated domestically on the nerves of long suffering Iraqis who had risked their lives, as well as their close friends and families by actively working to topple the regime. As a result, Maliki, for example, has continued to face a legitimacy crisis, despite becoming Prime Minister in 2006 and again in 2010 as a member of the Da'wa party (see Al-Ruhaimi 2002). His consistent adherence to a zero-sum political game, heavy handed political actions, and wide-spread accusations of authoritarian and arbitrary arrests of political opponents (Spanner 2011) further problematizes his position within Iraq's political sphere. As an example, he resorted to the use of tanks as a threatening gesture around the offices and residential buildings of his opponents (Myers, Lee and Shadid 2010). Analysts have further rebuffed his legitimacy and have noted that al-Maliki was "largely an unknown" who had minimal "experience in governing, administration, security issues, and political conciliation" (Cordesman and Davis 2008, 262). Nevertheless, the endorsement and backing of these actors by the United State revolved around their anti-Saddam and anti-Ba'ath activities, as well as their general endorsement of

secular democratic rhetoric during their exile from Iraq (Ghareeb and Dougherty 2004, 113). For the Bush administration, such western educated and liberal actors represented the ideal leaders of the newly liberated, reconstructed and democratized Iraq.

Theorists have adamantly argued that “the transfer of power to elected institutions must always be regarded as the goal of a reconstruction process”; they have also insisted that “the participation of local actors in the transition process is crucial” (De Brabandere 2009). While it is undeniable that the participation of local actors is a vital part of a successful reconstruction, it is nevertheless obvious that the level of pressure towards a state-centric and liberal market-orientated democracy ensures that the local actors, deemed acceptable by the donor community, often clash with that of recipient societies’ expectations. The tendency to select local actors to fill the power vacuum presents a strong basis for the hypothesis that state-builders themselves may create situations and conditions that create new conflicts and civil strife (Paris 2004, 57). Additionally, past cases have demonstrated that established local actors may not necessarily desire anything other than the acquisition of power with little commitment to liberal democratization. The tendency to resort to violence, vote rigging and other fraudulent and illiberal measures are still adopted by such actors. This trend is clearly not unknown in the field of reconstruction. Such spoilers have long played a major role in the failure of reconstruction missions in Angola, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Congo, and Afghanistan (Glasius and Kaldor 2006, 24).

The lack of the legitimacy of such actors can also be compounded by the fact that they may have taken direct part in the conflict itself or exacerbated it in some way. For post conflict societies as well as post-invasion societies, this is inherently linked to the violent nature of the political and institutional legacies of such societies which have experienced long standing conflicts, entrenching violence as a means of political expression. In past cases, local political actors have used existing socio-economic, political, ethnic, and religious disagreements as a means of promoting their own interests at the expense of other political parties. Chalabi, for example, long considered the ‘Golden Boy’ of the American neo-cons, began to directly conspire against the joint coalition and United Nations plans for the new Iraqi government. When Chalabi realized that he would not be taking part in the new government plans being devised by UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, he actively sought to destabilize the process. Using \$27 million in American taxpayers’ money, as well as the seizure of Saddam’s intelligence files, ensured him a position in which to intimidate and coerce his opponents, as well as to encourage sectarianism (Cockburn 2004). Chalabi’s popularity had eventually sunk so low

that his ratings were three times worse than Saddam Hussain (Cockburn 2004). This trend is not unique to Iraq. In Angola, both the Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (MPLA) and the Frante Nacional de Libertacao de Angola (UNITA) engaged in such activities during the United Nations-led 1992 elections (Paris 2004, 69). Afghanistan has experienced a similar case with the warlords' struggle for power. This trend is indicative of the idea that actors who espouse liberal democratic norms may not necessarily desire, or know how to implement such values. They often revert to tried and known political processes, including the reversion to corrupt, patrimonial and violent behaviours. As a result, the utilization of liberal norms does not equate to liberal and democratic practices and behaviours by 'acceptable' actors. Conversely, if these so called 'acceptable' actors prove to be some of the most corrupt and incompetent actors, then the chances of 'non-acceptable' actors would arguably prove to be even less fruitful.

The above examples of local actors exacerbating existing conflicts and vying for power suggest that democratic means can be effectively utilized as an added measure of suppression and exclusion of one group over another, ensuring the continuity of existing conflicts. Because of this, attempts at political and economic reform of weak states, often piloted with little awareness of the deep rooted historical grievances, democratic processes such as elections, often act as no more than band-aid solutions to complex and protracted divisions. This is where the distinction between nation-building and state-building is essential, as noted in previous chapters. The tendency for international coalition forces to mandate top-down state-centric political reform, often through party formation along ethnic and religious lines, is the first step towards entrenching and reproducing violence. The temptation of fast elections and the recycling of local actors who are often the reproducers of local grievances ensure an unstable security environment for political and economic reform. For example, this trend was pronounced within the U.N. led mission in Rwanda where political reform consisted of parties formed along Hutu and Tutsi lines, with little foresight for the increasingly violent nature of the grievance between the two ethnic groups (Melvern 2004, 7). A similar process occurred in Iraq where political parties were encouraged to form along sectarian lines (Record and Terrill 2004, 44; Alkadirit and Toensing 2003). As a result, the immediate implementation of democratic norms entrenched and exacerbated identity conflicts. Indeed, as this thesis indicates, it is nation-building policies, by building bridges across conflict ridden communities or deeply sectarian societies, that should be considered as binding in severely divided societies; instead it is assumed that elections and party formation



are the response to divided societies. This is despite the fact that such measures have clearly demonstrated that elections and party formation only entrenches identity politics further and helps to, in fact, produce further violence. In contrast, nation-building policies aim at building bridges between conflicting communities, addressing long held grievances, providing compensation to victims, as well as acknowledging past injustices through measures such as truth seeking commissions. In contrast, the strong promotion of party formation ignores the long existing social cleavages and, in fact, promotes their very entrenchment as parties form along identity lines, with people reverting to primordial ties that produce feelings of security in each collective group. Other groups may feel an exacerbation of existentialist fears leading to the formation of parties and groups according to their own identity group, whether that be along clan, ethnic, or religious lines. This process is hardly conducive to long term peace-keeping and peace-building. Again, a deep level of awareness of the context of each case is essential in forming policies and determining the timing for democratic norms, elections and voting processes. If held too early, such practices further entrench conflict and prolong communal violence. If pursued at a more appropriate and less hastily conducted time after serious attempts at peace-keeping between communities, as well as transparent and consistent dialogue between groups, voting, elections and party formation can very well prove to be the pillars of peace and conflict resolution in such societies.

The key factor to immediate and lasting peace can come from a thorough analysis of the state-building, political culture and institutional legacies of the state. Theorists have argued that the study of culture and its associated semiotics provide great insight into the political culture and history of a nation (Bengio 1998). As noted in Chapter Three, from its conception Iraq inherited significant state-building and nation-building dilemmas. It was, in fact, “beset by a complex web of social, economic, ethnic, religious, and ideological conflicts, all of which retarded the process of state formation” (Jeffries 2003, 147). Further, the imposition of western concepts, such as a territorially defined ‘state’ followed by centralized governing institutions, triggered a decades-long competition for power and access to resources (Jeffries 2003, 147). Later, as the influence of the state continued to consolidate, the struggle involved a lengthy and bloody process of demanding recognition of various groups’ distinct identity. In response, the centralized state apparatus used increasingly brutal and violent measures to address such demands, which culminated in the unprecedented level of violence in the 1980-1990’s. It is, therefore, essential that nation-building entails a greater level of study in establishing legitimacy and promoting local ownership of the reconstruction process through

identifying legitimate local actors, but, more importantly, promoting direct involvement across the whole of society. This basic tenet would have immediately identified someone like Chalabi as unfit for the position of post-Saddam leadership. Aside from his dubious financial past, his long term exile from the Middle East and immersion in the 'luxuries' of the West ensured that he not only lacked legitimacy, but also support on the local level within the communities of the Shi'ites, Sunnis and the Kurds. This process has ensured direct local anger and the continuity of an unstable environment in which a reconstruction process is being undertaken wherein top level and mid-level actors have arisen who have dismayed the U.S. policy makers. This has unwittingly created a situation that, according to some, could possibly lead to an Iranian style theocracy being implemented in an increasingly de-secularized Iraq.

### **5.3. Utility of Religion within Reconstructions:**

The role of religion itself in state-building practices has received little attention, despite the fact that recent missions have been conducted in some of the most religious states. The omission is linked to various normative assumptions surrounding issues such as secularism and state-building precedence over nation-building and, hence, a general disregard towards the culture and traditions of recipient states. Yet, the complexity of the 'secular' and 'separation of church and state' discourse often adopts another level of density when discussing Islamic societies' with persistent accusations regarding the incompatible nature of the two. This is despite the fact that the west is still grappling with developing an appropriate and widely accepted version of the 'wall of separation', that is satisfactory and applicable to various western societies. Charles Taylor (2009), for instance, identifies points of confusion in western secular thoughts in relation to secularism and notes its dogged indistinctness even now. He notes that theorists "often confused total separation of church and state from that of religion and state" (2009, xx). There is, according to Taylor, very much a distinction. The distinction arises from the separation of religious institutions as branches of the state's governing body, in contrast to religious values underpinning or influencing the ideologies behind governance. Within Islam, there is often a strong connection between the state and religion, as well as the religious institutions through the religious ulama. The promotion of religious values, such as Sharia Law as the foundation of the states jurisprudence in Islamic nations is the archetype of the penetration of religion within the state's mode of governance.

In fact, within Islam, its laws and jurisprudence do not distinguish religion as separate from “daily life; it does not separate religion from politics; or politics from morals; or morals from the state” (Khatab and Bouma 2007, 8). Further to this, according to Khatab and Bouma (2007, 8), “in Islamic Law, the activity of individuals and their relation to the state had metaphysical and religious bases.” For this reason, among others, a broadly western ‘secular’ modern state can only be implemented within an Islamic society through careful consideration and with respect to existing politico-religious relationships. The only known in such contexts is that the level of success can only be extremely limited when replacing existing ethno-religious structures with foreign alternatives; particularly in societies where extended conflicts have occurred because of those very institutions.

Further, within this context, there needs to be some analysis into what the relationship between religion and states is in the reconstruction of recipient societies. The reconstructionary donor community arguably needs to adopt what Esposito and Voll call a “renewed awareness and sensitivity to religious identity and values with politics” (1996, 194). Following the events of September 11 and the rise of Islamic revivalism and its significance, religion’s relationship with concepts such as modernity, secularization and westernization have been reassessed. This process has led to what Esposito and Voll call the de-secularization of the world. They argue that the “the global tendency toward de-secularization has challenged the presuppositions of modernization, the progressive Westernization and secularization of societies which had often been articulated as inevitable evolutionary principles of development” (1996, 192). This is particularly important where the general trend within conflict prone societies is one of groups attempting to increase feelings of security, through forms of primordial identity such as clan, religion or ethnicity (Lederach 1997, 13). Further to these arguments, Harpviken and Roislien (2008) argue that religion operates as a normative system of values and beliefs and serves as a source of identity formation, as well as a vehicle for social organization. According to Donald Smith, religion is “the most important expression of the basic ideas, attitudes, and assumption found in the culture” (1970, 169). While religion for Benedict Anderson, is central to the formation of “cultural systems” (cited in Danopolous 2004, 5). Anderson’s definition challenges claims made by Inglehart and Norris (2004).

The utility of religion and its relevant institutions are gradually being recognized as an important source of peace-building. However, this recognition is still limited since this realization has only tentatively emerged within Iraq’s reconstruction. Reyhler (1997, 30), for

instance, identifies six key factors that allow religion, its institutions and actors to influence peace-keeping and peace-building processes: Reyhler (1997) notes the moral legitimacy of religion as a contributing force to conflict resolution. Other factors include the fact that religious institutions can exercise neutrality in resolving certain conflicts. Reyhler (1997) uses the example of the Pope's 1978 successful mediation of the Beagle Channel dispute, because the Vatican had little interest in the territories under dispute. Additionally, religious institutions can advance the cause or the political standing of a politician or a particular event by virtue of the large number of followers and supporters that they command. This process can play a crucial role in the mediation of peacekeeping. Likewise, the ability of such institutions to reach a wide international audience garners more interest in and, hence, more pressure on a conflict to be resolved as quickly as possible. Such religious organizations also wield access to large networks of information and contacts that allow them to gather interest in, support for or activism towards causes. Finally, according to Reyhler (1997), the ability of such institutions to adhere to confidentiality norms allows them to mediate conflicts. Unlike governments that are required to behave as transparently as possible, such organizations can be relied upon to hold sensitive information or to "keep a secret" (Reyhler 1997, 30). Reyhler's categories are similar to other studies that focus on the role of different forms of power and influence. Raven and Rubin (1983), for example, developed a useful taxonomy for understanding the different bases of power. This classification asserts that six different sources of power exist for influencing another's behaviour: reward, coercion, expertise, legitimacy, reference, and information. Clearly, religious actors with the diverse social, economic and political roles in which they engage, particularly within conflicts and peacekeeping activities, can easily exert a complex combination of Raven and Rubin's taxonomy of power. This is particularly important since a whole body of literature has emerged that focuses on religion's role in mediating peace and conflict resolutions. As Chadwick (2002, 105) highlights, religious organizations and their peace-building efforts are increasingly becoming institutionalized, with an increased level of diversity in the role that such institutions play in conflict management. In turn, increased levels of training support and programs exist that promote the diversification of the roles played by religious organizations.

The significance of this trend provides an important framework which reconstructionary processes could utilize and take into account, depending on the level of religiosity of the recipient society. Consequently, such sources can be useful elements of peace

implementation or at least a means to identify the underlying causes of conflict for the purpose of policy formation. Yet, there is a general lack of understanding and acceptance of the differing political-cultural-religious history of these 'other' states and the significant role such factors play; it is assumed that the 'secular' nature of western states is the ideal end whose imposition will lead to the superlative form of state-reconstruction and development for weak, failing, failed, and otherwise undemocratic states in general. However, attempts to impose liberal economic and political values have inadvertently led to the exacerbation of local tensions in recipient societies and have, in some cases, increased the likelihood of long term instability. That is not to suggest that non-democratic societies, particularly Islamic ones, are naturally incompatible with such liberal values. In fact, there is a large body of literature that questions this assumption (Esposito and Voll 1996; Abootalebi 2000; Diamond, Plattner and Brumberg 2003; Bayat 2007). However, when secularism is equated closely with modernity (Asad 1999, 179) it is difficult not to equate a 'firebrand' cleric such as Muqtada as the equivalent of the Iranian revolution's Ayatollah Khomeini and envision a strict and puritanical theocratic state that imposes harsh restrictions on basic human rights. Again, the dilemma is exactly that - how to marry secular and liberal norms with local traditions and values so as to produce a widely accepted and legitimate post-conflict state. In such a discussion, there is often an inherent danger in reverting to cultural relativist debates which impart moralistic and ethical judgments. However, an analysis of the reconstruction literature demonstrates the discomfort the international donor community feels with regards to illiberal local values. Yet, as the following discussion of top local religious actors in Iraq will demonstrate, the donor community can ill afford to ignore or exclude these actors, as well as the values they represent, during reconstructionary missions.

Where religion has attracted attention within the reconstruction literature, the discourse has revolved around the empirical concept of religious violence, fundamentalism and its various impacts as a motivational tool behind political behaviour (Glazier 2009). Clearly, significant evidence exists that explicates where religious actors and relevant institutions have attempted to influence the outcome of a conflict. Reyhler (1997), for instance, notes the negative role that the Vatican has played in certain conflicts. He identifies the concord of the Vatican with the state of Portugal in the 1940s as an example. Other cases include the Vatican agreement with Spain's dictator Franco in 1941, as well as support provided to authoritarian regimes in Latin America. In other instances, the Vatican has produced contradictory policies towards conflicts. For example, in Haiti, the Vatican refused to sanction or support Jean-Bertrand

Aristide as a presidential candidate. Conversely, they supported and actively recognized the regime's military despite its heavy-handed practices (Reychler 1997). Likewise, within the Islamic world, the relevant religious institutions such as those in Iran, Saudi Arabia and others have actively supported 'authoritarian' regimes and their governments. As a result, significant literature has emerged focusing on the hypothesis that certain religions are more prone to violence than others (Jurgensmeyer 1993; Fowden 1993). The consensus is that monolithic religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam tend to be more authoritarian and, hence, more prone to violence (Jurgensmeyer 1993; Fowden 1993). More specifically, Islamic fundamentalism has been rationalized away through the modernization discourse, where Islamic societies that have achieved an incomplete level of modernization are widely viewed as more violent. Turkey, for instance, widely considered as the pillar of Islamic democratic governance is celebrated for its liberal economic policies that have led to widespread modernization and development (see Baran 2010). The reconstruction process in Iraq has involved a similar intellectual analysis where the motivations behind religious violence have attracted substantial attention; yet there has been a limited attempt to frame that discourse within the wider rhetoric surrounding state-building and nation-building. While numerous studies have analysed the role of violence as a contributory force behind state formation, there has been little attempt to connect the role of violence, particularly religiously motivated violence, to the process of state-building. Just as Mukherjee (2009) argues that ideas and values surrounding the term Islamism are context specific and that the term has different meanings and connotations depending on the political and institutional legacy, history, and geographical location of the case, so too are state-building cases unique where the basic values of political culture, history and religious norms differ from one case study to another. The cultural, religious and historical complexities encountered by the state-building process in Afghanistan differ quite drastically to those encountered in Iraq, despite the fact that the common denominator is Islam as the official religion of both states. It is, therefore, essential to view each case as unique in itself, requiring substantial analysis of the cultural-historical-political intricacies of each case before a mission is launched. The difficulties of state-building lies in divergences in the normative analysis and empirical practices relating to the state and raises uncomfortable questions relating to the agendas of the wider international donor community in assuming such reconstruction responsibilities.

Yet, in light of the increased spotlighting of religious violence, particularly after September 11, religious organizations, principally Islamic ones, have a long and difficult road ahead if

they wish to establish themselves in peace-building and conflict resolution with the explicit consent and approval of the international community. Nevertheless, they do intend to play an influential role in guiding and supporting their communities where conflicts arise. Abu-Nimer (2001, 686), for instance, notes that the most important challenge facing religious actors and institutions is one of facilitating “a change from the participants' narrow, exclusionist, antagonistic, or prejudiced attitudes and perspectives to a more tolerant and open-minded attitude.” On this account, Reyler (1997, 35-36) contributes further to the idea of promoting a more positive attitude towards the inclusion of religion into peace-building activities. According to Reyler, well over two thirds of the people in the world belong to one religion or another; such organizations also exert a significant amount of soft power over followers, which puts them in an influential situation to impact peace-building activities. Likewise, they have the financial as well as moral and ethical capacity to mobilize people towards causes, promote forgiveness and reconciliation, or at least strongly advocate for it (on the role of religion and reconciliation see Droogers 2002; Burrell 2006). Moreover, religious organizations can fulfil functions that traditional diplomatic processes are not equipped to do. Finally, such organizations have direct access to actors in the field, as well as victims and other relevant players. Reyler (1997), however, acknowledges the negative impact of religious organizations by noting that such institutions do play a role in perpetuating violence, as well as being reactive players in conflicts. Such organizations also lack effective cooperation with other religious organizations. Finally, perhaps most crucial of all, is the fact that such institutions lack relevant training and experience to be able to provide adequate support in the field. Reyler's account of the positive as well as the negative interpretation of religion's contribution to peace-keeping is of some significance. Yet, the fact remains that his analysis views the role of religion and its transformative power focuses on the collective power of religion, as well as its institutions. There is a distinct lack of analysis on the relevance of specific religious actors. The nature of religion and its role in Iraq's reconstruction point more towards the influence of individual religious actors, rather than the religion itself or its relevant institutions. Thus, while there have been attempts to view the role of religion in reconstructions, there has been little attempt to theorize as to the direct influence of prominent actors. Likewise, while there have been attempts to understand the agendas of the individual religious actors, there have been minimal and limited attempts to view their influence within the confines of the reconstruction sphere as rational political actors instead of merely outspoken elements of civil society.

#### **5.4. Islamic Religious Hierarchy:**

It is possible that the lack of attention to the complex relationship between rebuilding state institutions and reconstructing some semblance of nationhood in Iraq led to the rise of religious actors who filled the power vacuum. Indeed, the process of social control shifted from the state towards the religious centres of Iraq, where the traditional values of the state in retaining an army, mobilizing society, the establishment of judicial rule and collecting taxes were redirected and re-established through these religious actors effectively acting as what William Reno (1999) would dub a 'shadow state.' This trend serves to challenge the generally accepted notion that religious actors are limited within the confines of civil society activism (Wardak, Zaman and Nawabi 2007; Borchgrevink 2007). When the state apparatus collapsed following the 2003 invasion, it was largely the religious institutions as well as prominent religious actors that called for the provision of food, water, health and sanitation facilities, the redistribution of resources as well as the provision of security in an increasingly volatile situation. As Pollack notes, al-Sadr's Mehdi army stepped in and "developed a social-services network that could provide the average Iraqi with the protection, medicine, supplies, assistance and even money and jobs that they so desperately needed" (2006).<sup>13</sup> Such services at times of political instability play an important role in consolidating own-group loyalties and ensuring a sense of stability and safety. As the violence raged, feelings of stability and security increased through own-group relations and increasingly other groups were considered with suspicion, fear and resentment. On the other hand, Funke and Solomon (2002) argue that local actors who assume power following state failure tend to profit personally from institutional weakness of the state and, through corrupt means, gain extensive personal wealth at the cost of a weakened society. In contrast, what is presented here by religious actors is a case where local leaders have attempted to apply religion as a source of social solidarity and nationalism so as to keep the Iraqi state from disintegrating. Though relationships between 'public violence' and religious ideologies are also perceptible in Iraq, and it may be that some religious figures have profited from this process, it is also highly

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<sup>13</sup> This trend was not typical to al-Sadr. In fact, other religious clerics have performed similar roles. For instance, in Karbala, Abdel-Mehdi Salami, also a Shi'ite cleric, controlled a group of 25 clergymen who essentially oversaw the functioning of basic services, security, prevention of looting, and other lawlessness. Taking control of banks as well as religious dominations they have effectively established a functioning government and have paid the salaries of civil servants. In Kut a similar story has developed. Sayed Abbas, and in Baghdad Mohammed Fartousi have played similar administrative and security roles (for further see Shadid 2003).



plausible that these actors serve as a source of social solidarity, legitimacy, peacekeeping, and nation-building.

Religious actors can be seen as those distinct individuals or elites who are often situated in positions of power within the religious community or religious group. Religious actors often represent an elite group of high religious learners whose positions as leaders within the religious community and/or religious groups is directly dependent and reliant on their religious indoctrination and expertise. In contrast, a political actor can be identified as a member or leader of a political party, as well as legislative and other governing bodies, or significant organizations that contribute to the reconstruction process. This group also may include military leaders and heads of paramilitary groups. Mshari Al-Zaydi (2010), however, identifies a religious figure as “a man who has devoted his life to religious learning and to safeguarding the perpetuity of that learning by passing it down from one generation to another. In a nutshell, he is more of a ‘mediator of time’ who conveys the testaments and teachings of our ancestors and forefathers to modern-day generations. He is a man who addresses the religious concerns of believers and their social problems at times” (Al-Zaydi 2010). Their position is also based on the existence of a support group, either through the religious group or more widely through the religious community. Their greater religious expertise positions them in an authoritative arrangement in relation to the wider group or community and is sustained through imparting religiously based advice, providing the community with necessary religious teaching, as well as generally acting as a charitable foundation supporting community members. In times of crises, it is often the local mosque which is the location of gathering, information sharing and debates. The importance of mosques often directly challenges the development of secular civil society groups, since the mosque acts as such an important centre for information sharing, knowledge, indoctrination, and education. The role of the mosque prevents the development of, and fills the vacuum left by secular civil society. As such, the mosque acts as a religiously based civil society.

On the other hand, theorists such as Lederach (1997) have provided a classification of actors by dividing them into top level actors, mid-range level actors and grassroots actors. Religious actors can sit on any, or all, of the levels of leadership defined by Lederach. In these instances, actors such as Sistani, al-Hakims and al-Sadr are top level actors who wield significant influence and are representatives at both mid and grass root level. Each actor, such as Sistani or al-Sadr, has demonstrated the power of top-level actors to influence the political process at an individual level. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986, 9), focusing on non-Islamic

societies, note that Latin America and south Europe state-building cases have demonstrated “the vital significance of political leadership and judgment, of the role of single individuals in complex historical processes.” Further they note that, despite high levels of foreign interference both in the form of state and their direct involvement by non-state actors such as the U.N. and NGOs, the most dominant and influential actors are always the domestic actors (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 9). The authors here also point to pathways to liberal democracy where negotiation is the method for transition and the actors are moderates of both old regime and civil society. Thus the international donor community carefully sifts undesirable actors and their participation. The essential elements as identified by Lederach (1997, 40) relate to the visibility and profile of the leaders, and the ‘position’ they take regarding policies and reconstruction process which may limit their flexibility, power and influence. These factors combined ensure that such top level actors are “actively sought by this level, both to represent the concerns of a leader’s constituency and to secure his or her own position of influence” (Lederach 1997, 40). Despite the fact that Lederach identifies religious leaders on par with military and political leaders he does not elaborate further on them. Rather, he focuses mostly on political and military leaders in reconstructionary processes and widely marginalizes the relevance of religious actors. This again points to a lack of awareness of the significance of religion as a basis of peace building, as well as a source and reference for developing reconstructionary policies that permeate such societies at different levels. However, a dominant reason for Lederach to ignore religious actors may perhaps be linked to the organizational nature of the Catholic Church. At this level of analysis, the Pope would largely be considered as a top level religious actor, with mid level and local actors playing at grass root level in communities and states. In contrast, it is possible within the Islamic world to have various top level actors who are also religious actors because of the existence of a number of top Grand Ayatollahs. This distinction is clearly linked to the organizational nature of various religions.

It is often argued that Islam does not contain a formal clergy. Yet, this assumption is far from fact. According to Harpviken and Roislien (2008, 356), however, the manner in which a religion is structured provides for various levels of religious permeation into society as well as the significance of its relevant actors. This is the case whether there is a high level of clerical hierarchy or whether the religion lacks leadership, as well as the level of dependence that the adherents of the religion feel towards the religious organization and its hierarchy. One of the primary differences between Sunnis and Shias is the religious hierarchy, which is

far more formal and defined in nature within the Shia sect. Dakake notes that “Shi’ism embodies a completely independent system of religious and political authority and historical interpretation that profoundly informs its views within the various religious disciplines and is perpetuated through its own highly structured intellectual and religious hierarchy” (Dakake 2007, 1). Others (Khaliji 2006, 2) have warned that the analysis of the Shia religious structure is problematic and western scholars “should exercise caution in applying Western conceptual apparatus of modern social sciences.” In this context, Khaliji notes that the application of concepts such as ‘organization’ or ‘institution’ to the Shia clerics and their religious structures is problematic as the system is not so institutionalized in the traditional sense of the term. Rather, the process is directly reliant upon a complex, unwritten, oral tradition of networks of alliances, relationships, and access to power, teachers or students. The process of reaching a position of leadership is further complicated by the level of economic and social power of an individual Ayatollah. Above all, it is essential not to perceive each sect as a homogeneous and uniform group. Other important elements of identity including nationalism, ethnicity, history, and position within pre-modern and post-modern Iraq have all played a role in shaping competing religious views between Sunni and Shi’ites, but also within each sect.

Ideologically, Shia Islam emphasizes not only the spiritual nature of religious leaders but also specifically their *political* responsibility. As Sadat (2009, 37) highlights, the “Shia imamate, in contrast to the Sunni caliphate, is a religious office as well as a political one.” The structure within the seminary clearly denotes the level of religious learning that a candidate possesses.<sup>14</sup> Progression to the next stage is subject to the attainment of higher levels of learning, and based on the level of commitment and intellectual ability of the student. The gradation of titles reflects not only the level of formal training and teaching that a religious actor may possess, but also the “scale of social influence and power” (Khoury 1990, 183). However, in order for a religious student to become an Ayatollah, it is essential that he is educated in one of the prestigious madrasahs (religious schools also called *Hawzas*) in the Islamic world. There are currently three locations that act as such schools: Iran contains the prestigious madrasah’s in Qom and Masshad, while Iraq contains the prominent Najaf seminary (Louer 2008). The Najaf seminary has existed since the eleventh century and

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<sup>14</sup> The hierarchical structure within the Shi’ite faith roughly involves the Grand Marja (also Grand Marja al-taqlid translating literally to ‘source to imitate’), followed by *Grand Ayatollah* (great sign of God), Ayatollah (sign of God), *Hojat al-islam* (authority on Islam), *Mubellegh al-Risala* (carrier of the message), *Mujtahid* (graduate of religious seminary), and *Talib ilm* (religious student). See Moussavi 1985 and Halm 2007. The essential key characteristic that determines a Grand Marja and Ayatollah from the rest of the clerics revolves around the ability to “formulate independent interpretations of the religious law”. For more, see Louer 2008.

houses six of the twelve Shi'ite saints (Shadid 2003). The Qom seminary, which was established early in the twentieth century, has gathered an equal level of success, because the large levels of funding that the Iranian government provides (Khaliji 2006) ensures that it remains one of the dominant centres of religious learning.

Although there is no specific timeframe for the mastery of the necessary subjects, a student's preparation may take up to fifteen years, and even then there must be an unequivocal recognition by a notable Ayatollah, sometimes several, in the religious community. A Grand Ayatollah is, hence, clearly an individual of great doctrinal and spiritual learning with deep understanding of Islamic law who has gained the right to interpret Islamic texts and produce *fatwa's* and religiously binding laws. But, more importantly, he is also a well esteemed and respected member of the religious elite who has garnered the acceptance of his peers, as well as having established a wide following in the community. Such actors are clearly powerful and influential members of their communities.

Further, these actors play a variety of roles that function as a source of social cohesion. On a theoretical level, religion and hence religious actors are a significant force for identity formation. Religion not only provides a means for individual identity formation, but also a means of collective social identity (Harpviken and Roislien 2008). On another level, these actors serve a significant function in organizing society and contributing to the rule of law. Such actors are also the means through which a faithful Shia will attain salvation. As Khouri (2006) notes, salvation within Islam is achieved in a different manner compared to Christianity, where salvation is attained through the private and internal acceptance of the Messiah. In contrast, within Islam, salvation "is officially and externally sought through the observation and application of divine law" (Khouri 2006, 167). This inclination within Islamic jurisprudence allows religious actors to play a far more prominent role within Islamic societies. They are indeed the spiritual, economic and political guides within their societies, interpreting Islamic laws in accordance with the particular situation and conflict of the day and providing recourse to millions of followers. As a result, religious actors rely not only on their knowledge, but also on their ability to attract and retain an extensive following (Roberson 2003, 43).

The uppermost level of the religious hierarchy within the Shia is the Grand Marja *al-taqlid* (the source of emulation) who is an individual of the greatest and highest level of learning

and acts similar to the Catholic Pope. It is the duty of each Shia member to follow and emulate a religious leader of great learning. The Grand Marja acts as the “trustee responsible for supervising the affairs of the Shi’ites during the Occultation” (Marty and Appleby 1991, 433), he therefore enjoys the dual role of “chief legal expert and spiritual model for the Shia” (Walbridge 2001, 5). The Grand Marja also draws his monetary funds from his followers through alms and religious taxes. Consequently, the greater the following of the Grand Marja the more likely it is that he will have access to extensive funds to finance his expenditures back into the community. There are various ways in which the religious taxes can be used to enhance the influence of the Grand Marja in the community. One notable expense is on students and their accommodation where the number of religious students attracted corresponds with the prestige and reverence that the Grand Marja entices. This process has ensured that the ulama have gained increasing wealth and social status within their communities, often leading to strained relations between Iraq and Iran as both states compete to house the most prestigious seminaries. Further, the redistribution of alms and religious taxes back into society is not only an “investment in power and prestige”, but also reflects the attitudes of the Shia ulama; for, “whereas the Sunni ulama take part in the management of welfare donated by the power elite, the Shia ulama carry on these projects as if they themselves were the power elites” (Khouri 2006, 184). Within the Shia community, the word and opinion of the Grand Marja is deemed final; hence, Grand Marja’s often issue *fatwa* as their final ruling over a particular matter.<sup>15</sup> A Shia Grand Marja, therefore, has the ability “to wield great influence and a strong Grand Marja can be a powerful unifying force” (Walbridge 2001, 4). This marks religious actors, particularly those of greater doctrinal learning, as relatively powerful political agents who, thus, wield more respect and standing and whose actions can greatly add weight to state-building legitimacy, or thoroughly destabilize the process.

However, the lack of attention that these actors have received points to the endemic problem of inadequate nation-building policies. Sachedina (2006) has noted that the state-building processes in Afghanistan and Iraq have failed to take into account the importance of religious values and norms in contributing to democratic development and reconstruction. Indeed, the concept of religion is shied away from precisely because religion tends to contain

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<sup>15</sup> In contrast, within the Sunni sect lower learning clerics can issue *fatwa*, whereas the issuing of *fatwa* in Shia community is more restricted to higher learning religious leaders precisely because of the very nature of the hierarchical system in Shia. Yet, lesser mullahs often issue *fatwa* despite the prerequisite religious learning required. For more, see Joseph and Najmabadi 2005.

exclusionary modes of citizenship that counteract the nation and state-building behaviour of the donor community. In contrast, religious actors such as Muqtada al-Sadr and Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani have played a far more complex role, directly contributing to the nation-building and state-building process in Iraq, both negatively and positively. Despite this, key religious actors were given little analytical attention and received even less endorsement or support in the initial reconstruction stages, since, for the most part, they did not fall in line with the official semiotics and rhetoric of the donor community's state-centric expectations. Indeed, this represented the dominant experience of religious actors in Iraq.

### **5.5. Top level Religious Actors:**

Despite the relatively lower number of Shi'ites in Iraq in comparison to neighbouring Iran, Iraq contains a large number of top level Shia religious leaders. The literature on Iraq's reconstruction provides conflicting evidence as to the number of Grand Ayatollahs in residence in Najaf.<sup>16</sup> The most learned and senior of them all is Sistani, who, as the Grand Marja , is the official head of the seminary in Najaf. Others include: Ayatollah Mohammed Said Hakim, Ayatollah Sheikh Bashir al-Najafi, Ayatollah Mohammad ishaq al-Fayyadh, Ayatollah Mohammad al-Yacoubi, Ayatollah Muhammad Taqi al-Mudarrisi, Ayatollah Sadiq Husayni Shirazi, and Grand Ayatollah Kazeem al-Ha'eri-Yazdi. The Ayatollahs are connected to each other via a complicated network of family, mentors and associates, which has helped to create a tightly knit religious community. The Ayatollahs tendency to move from one seminary to another also provides challenges as to which Ayatollahs resides in which seminary. This fluidity of movement ensures that the Grand Ayatollahs of Iranian origins are in residence in Najaf, just as Iraqi Grand Ayatollahs reside in Iranian seminaries, engaging in the exchange of teaching and religious learning. Grand Ayatollah Kazeem al Ha'eri-Yazdi, for example, is of Iranian origin, but currently resides in Najaf. Despite this, he is presently Muqtada's mentor and possible financial associate. Grand Ayatollah Sadiq Husayni Shirazi, on the other hand, is of Iraqi origin, but currently resides in Qom. This may explain the conflict within the literature regarding the actual number of 'Iraq's Grand Ayatollah's. However, some of the most prominent Ayatollahs, irrespective of their origins,

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<sup>16</sup> The majority of sources insist that there are either four (Elhadji 2006; Ajami, 2006; Heazle and Islam 2006; Marr 2007) or five (Segell 2004; Arjomand 2009; Amineh, 2010) Grand Ayatollahs. However, there are suggestions of even greater numbers, perhaps close to eight at least but it is difficult to determine the exact numbers due to the high tendency to remain concealed in adhering to their religious duties.

number no more than five in Iraq. Consequently, it is not so much a matter of the limited number of Grand Ayatollah's in Iraq as the literature alludes, rather that particular Grand Ayatollahs are the most prominent and active in the post-Saddam Iraqi state and its reconstruction process.

Ayatollah Al-Sistani is undoubtedly the most prominent of these actors. Though originally Iranian by birth, he has chosen to reside in Iraq since 1951 and assumed the leadership of the Shia community after the death of Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Abu al-Qasim al-Khoei in 1992. Sistani's influences on the U.S. policies have been significant in demanding reform, transparency and action from the Coalition forces, but in also serving as a moderating force among the Shi'ite community. Most importantly, millions of his followers looked to him and his *fatwa* regarding the appropriate position towards the U.S. coalition's policies in Iraq, as was the case in 2003 and 2004 (Puelings 2010, 9). Likewise, Sistani's successful negotiation of a ceasefire between the interim government of Iraq and Al-Sadr points to his relative power where other secular politicians had failed. When al-Sadr and his followers were accused of killing rival Shia cleric Majeed Al-Khoei in early 2003, an arrest warrant was issued. Al-Khoei was killed in Imam Ali Mosque when Al-Sadr's followers attacked the Mosque in protest, leading to intense fighting between Al-Sadr's followers, the Mehdi Army and U.S. troops in the cities of Najaf and Kufa (see Wood 2003). The conflict escalated when Sadrists surrounded al-Sistani's home and attempted to threaten and intimidate him. Ayatollah Al-Sistani's negotiation with Al-Sadr led to a ceasefire and more productive settlement, the end of which was aimed at increasing the peace and security level of the cities of Najaf and Kufa. While the negotiation absolved Al-Sadr of murder charges, it also served to stop the conflict by leading to the exit of multinational forces from the city and empowering local security forces to maintain peace and security. The negotiations between the two clerics led to further promising peace-building activities, such as compensation provided to the families of the victims of the conflict, reducing the weapons within Kufa and Najaf and agreements regarding holding open and transparent elections as measures for lasting peace. It is doubtful that these measures could have been achieved had Al-Sistani as the prime Grand Marja not stepped in as the middle-man between the state and the Mehdi Army. Moreover, noting the increasingly violent nature of the Mehdi army, Sistani issued various statements about the role of the military. He insisted that "weapons must be in the hands of government security forces that should not be tied to political parties but to the nation"; moreover he added that such military forces should be based "on sound, patriotic

bases so that their allegiance shall be to the homeland alone, not to any other political or other groups” (Cordesman and Davis 2008, 263). In this manner, the role that Sistani has played has largely fallen within the confines of a political actor, determined to influence decision making and force power holders to produce specific policies. Moreover Sistani’s actions fell within that of a negotiator and mediator of conflict between the state and society and the state and various spoiler groups. His ability to successfully pressure the interim government and the coalition forces into producing policies that were deemed best for Iraqi society leaves little doubt as to the extensive power of Sistani. He is, however, most influential in impacting the level of social solidarity in Iraq, which has extended beyond the Shi’ites and has permeated the rest of Iraq.

Al-Sistani has also been particularly vocal in calling for elections and demanding the members of the interim government be elected rather than appointed (Myers 2010). In 2003, Sistani opposed Paul Bremer’s plans to select a government through a caucus or representative system, because of the strong impression that leaders would be selected by Bremer himself (Goldenberg 2004). He has also specifically noted that Iraqi citizens have a right to vote for political parties and leaders that represent their interests, rather than have an unelected government body imposed on them. He argued for “the importance of Iraqi national reconciliation, the usefulness of increased UN presence and assistance, as well as more frequent contacts with the Grand Marja-iyā, and above all the need for the Iraqi people to be able to participate in fair, free and inclusive elections” (de Mistura 2008). Sistani was also quick to quench talks of Shia retaliation as Sunni insurgent attacks increased in 2004. When he called for demonstrations against the coalition forces’ postponement of elections, up to 100, 000 people participated (Wong 2004; Ratnesar 2004). More telling, however was his call for the protesters to return to their homes peacefully without resorting to violence when negotiations soured. He also successfully advocated the supervision of the United Nations in the 2005 Iraqi elections. Later, Sistani forced the US to create an Iraqi constitution following elections, rather than before.

Experts in the field have noted that Sistani’s style of political activism follows the Quietist trends of non-interference. In reality, Sistani’s involvement in the political sphere has been active, crucial and deliberate in ensuring that desirable policies are obtainable. In fact, close analysis demonstrates that, with the exclusion of the use of guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics that Muqtada’s army was so willing to employ in times of crisis, Sistani has proven just as involved in the politics of the post-Saddam reconstruction process. Further, Sistani’s



adherence to the Quietist school may have been largely due to the high levels of government pressure during the Saddam era. For instance, following the death of Sistani's mentor, al-Khoei, the seminary was under intense government pressure leading to a mass exodus of religious scholars to Iran. The few that remained faced extensive threats, executions, deportations, assassination attempts, torture, and lack of freedom under the regime (Rahimi 2007; Paya and Esposito 2011). Sistani was further limited from teaching for nearly eleven years when he was placed under house arrest (Khalaji 2006, 3), which would have also severely limited his political and ideological reach to students and followers. As such, Sistani's supposed adherence to the Quietist method may have been involuntarily imposed and, at best, adopted as a measure of survival during the repressive Ba'athist regime's reign.

In contrast to the street savvy Muqtada, Sistani has chosen his political position with more tact and has only become involved in the most crucial matters that could have significant influence over the lives of the Shia community in Iraq. Such tactics ensured that his foremost position as religious leader of the Shia community remained unchallenged and his word retained its significance and weight. In contrast, Muqtada's lack of corresponding religious learning, his easy reversion to violent measures and threats, as well as his constant commentary on the reconstruction activities of the coalition forces served to weaken his political position in society. On the other hand, prominent experts (Keegan 2010; Myers 2010; Rubin 2010; Palmer and Palmer 2008; Alawi 2007) have insisted that Sistani lacked interest in becoming involved and that he consistently shied away from direct immersion in the reconstruction, as demonstrated by his refusal to meet prominent Iraqi politicians and U.S. policy makers. Yet, it is premature to assume that Sistani's refusal to publically meet coalition forces and representatives in person naturally implied a lack of interest, concern or involvement in the political process of post-Saddam reconstruction. According to analysts, his refusal to meet Ambassador Paul Bremer is used as a prominent example of Sistani's desire to remain outside of the political sphere (Farmer 2008, 182). However, this did not prevent him from communicating with Bremer regarding the appropriate political moves that the coalition needed to take that would accord with Sistani's expectations. On the contrary, in contrast to Muqtada's often awkward political moves, he has remained a stoic and powerful force whom the coalition forces could not afford to ignore, Sistani has done so without tainting his position as the Grand Marja of the Shia community. Rather, his refusal to be seen with the coalition has served to enhance his popularity and standing, proving to the Shia community that his foremost alliance and concern is with them.

The argument that Sistani adhered to a non-interference policy is inadequate in light of the extensive and powerful involvement of this top level religious actor. The reality actually points to an astute politico-religious actor who designated his contribution to the reconstruction selectively, with careful consideration to his position as the leader of the Shi'ites, not only for the millions of Iraqi Shias, but also for Shi'ites globally. His political position also reflected a careful balancing of decisions, involvement, guidance, and *fatwa* issued that reflected the sensitive geopolitical situation of the region, particularly in light of Iraq's nervous neighbours Syria, Iran and Saudi Arabia. Puelings (2010, 9) notes that, although Sistani is largely viewed as adhering to the Quietist branch, this does not mean that he is "apolitical". Indeed, Sistani's tactic of selective involvement in only the most important and crucial political decisions was balanced with a desire to refrain from producing a theocratic regime, as was produced in Iran. As a result, Sistani's interventions reflected three key factors: the first involved that of the regional implications of the Grand Marja's high level of interference in the political process. Secondly, the religious and theoretical implications of the Grand Marja's interference in the affairs of the state would have created great expectation in Iran, leading to increased pressure and covert interferences in Iraq to produce a similar regime. Finally, Sistani's foremost interest relies on promoting the position of the majority Shia in Iraq in light of balancing the precarious position of Shia minorities in the Middle East. It is unlikely that, had Sistani promoted a stronger position towards the so called 'Shia' revival, that minority Shia communities in the region would have been better off in being inspired towards demanding a greater level of political involvement from their respective governments. Instead, governments increased domestic pressure on Shia minorities in fear of such a development in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain (Human Rights Watch 2009).<sup>17</sup> This is particularly in light of the fact that Shi'ite political activism in the second half of the twentieth century has increasingly moved towards one of national struggles and attempting to gain political inclusion, "rather than serving a transnational [Shia] cause" (Puelings 2010, 9). For Sistani, the improvement of the position of Shias in Iraq represented a two-fold advantage. On the one hand, it served to counter balance the theocratic version of Shias, as represented in Iran to the Shia and Muslim world. Instead, Sistani presented a more tolerant multi-religious version of modern Iraq in consistently calling for inter-sectarian

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<sup>17</sup> An apt indication of this example arose much later during the 2010 'Arab Spring', where various states that contained large Shia minorities faced significant sectarian conflict. An example of this arose in the Gulf state of Bahrain where the repressive Sunni regime of King Hamad Al Khalifa faced major uprisings during the Pearl Revolution. The Shi'ite demand for political reform and greater participation has since attracted little attention with the regime continuing its repressive human rights violations (see Black 2012). The regime in turn has accused Iran of interfering in the domestic affairs (see Andoni 2011).

dialogue, cooperation and, most importantly, peace. Secondly, in allowing the Shias in Iraq to gain a greater socio-economic and political position in Iraq, Sistani served to demonstrate to other minority Shia communities, as well as the various Sunni regimes, that it was possible to have sectarian peace and harmony without reversion to violence and the oppression of fellow Muslims. In this manner, Sistani's reach has been global. The limited literature produced so far has failed to recognize the greater implications of Sistani's careful and orchestrated involvement in Iraq's reconstruction. Further, it has failed in recognizing Sistani's deliberate call for peaceful protest and non-violent political activism as a reflection of his passive political stance not only as a top level religious actor but also as a powerful political force in post-Saddam Iraq. It is also evident that given the nature of Sistani's position in Iraq and the greater Shia world that had he produced a call for violent resistance against the coalition forces and rejected the democratic reconstruction, his followers, numbering in millions, would have arisen to the call.

Fundamentally, the Grand Marja has demonstrated considerable tact and diplomacy in balancing a variety of interests and ensuring the best possible outcome for the Shia communities in Iraq, as well as neighbouring regions. In this manner, his cautious actions, rather than lack of involvement, demonstrate a careful consideration of competing interests. Sistani's greatest achievement lies in calling for peace among Iraqi communities, as well as between Sunni and Shias. This factor, combined with his consistent calls for democratic processes with respect to religious jurisprudence, sets him apart from the stereotypical violent, fiery Islamic religious leader often advocated by western media and literature. More importantly, his religious madrasas, highly equipped with educated, technically savvy followers, also wield millions of dollars of donation and funding. Sistani, thus, could indeed prove to be dangerous with his access to a vast network of students, followers, scholars, as well as his own paramilitary, Ansar Sistani, at his beck and call. This was the case in 2006 when sectarian violence threatened to erupt. The coalition forces and the government's inability to curb sectarian tensions in Sammara following the bombing of the Askariyah shrine, led Sistani to argue that the government "is called today more than at any time in the past to shoulder its full responsibilities in stopping the series of criminal actions that have targeted holy spaces. If the security apparatuses are unable to safeguard against this crisis, the believers are able to do so, by the aid of God" (Cole 2006). This statement hints at Sistani's awareness of his power and influence and his ability to challenge the state into increasing its capacity to provide security and services.

Crucially, Sistani's influence is backed by his vast donation network which he inherited from his predecessor Grand Marja al-Khoei, serving as a means to provide charity and welfare to the needy (hence, garnering further support), fund students' religious studies and their accommodation, and finance the schools that provide such education, as well as other charitable works within the Shia community. Paul Vallely (2004) admonishes the coalition forces for their failure in taking Sistani more seriously in the first crucial stages of the reconstruction process. He notes that:

[H]ad they been more diligent they would have worked out Sistani's influence much earlier. They should have noticed that Sistani receives millions of dollars in donations and controls a network of schools, mosques, clinics and other social welfare institutions. They should have observed that when, in the early days of the occupation, Sistani spoke out against looting, it died down rapidly in Shia areas. And when he issued a fatwa against the black market in petrol, queues at petrol stations immediately shrank by 75 per cent.

While various religious figures such as Sistani or Al-Sadr have gained prominence as individuals it is essential that they are deemed more than that. Sistani, for instance, commands his influential website, Sistani.org, as part of an umbrella organization: Aalulbayt's Global Information Centre attracts thousands of visits and emails each week. Indeed, each Grand Ayatollah is viewed as an institution in itself (Recknagel 2004). Instead analyses of Sistani often present him as a frail religious leader preferring the solitude of his humble quarters to that of being the political leader of the Shi'ites in the post-Saddam era. As Recknagel points out, as "leaders of institutions with vast networks of social services, al-Sistani and other top Iraqi Shia clerics are in constant touch with the concerns – both spiritual and worldly- of their community...they have thousands of students, of novices, of agents, of representatives, and they have the best feedback in the world ...This is an institution that we are talking about. We are not talking about a person living in a small room" (Recknagel 2004). Furthermore, Sistani, his stature and his institutions act as a fully functioning civil society body that filled the vacuum the post-Saddam state was unable to fulfil.

Another crucial factor is the significant level of rivalry between the Grand Ayatollah's, which has played a role in determining the official political stance of these religious elites. The influence and power that each Ayatollah accumulates has ensured a high level of rivalry within the seminaries, a process which has at times destabilized the unity of the clerics' stance towards the coalition forces. Moin notes that "[r]eligio-political rivalry is as intense

among the Shi'ite clergy as in any political party and sometimes borders on the childish, with grand Ayatollahs refusing to speak to each other. With their lines of loyalty that resemble those directed by tribal chieftains rather than spiritual leaders, the great Shi'i religious centres have always looked like a confederacy of fiefdoms" (Moin 1999, 147; see also Wehrey 2009, 158; Litvak 2002). Rivalry between the clerics in the Shia world plays a crucial part in the behaviour, level of activism and influence of those clerics (Walker 2004, 194). This competitiveness may be linked to the removal of centres of religious learning from Iran to Iraq following the invasion of Iran in 1722 by Sunni Afghan tribes (Louer 2008, 71). As Chapter Two demonstrated, as a result of the fall of the Ottoman Empire the religious clerics in Iraq enjoyed considerable initial independence from the newly formed state. These religious leaders consisted of an essentially "loose self-regulated milieu revolving around individual scholars": this, in turn, led scholars to behave "as free electrons competing for financial resources, religious influence and, sometimes, also political power" (Louer 2008, 71). In addition to this, the students of Grand Ayatollahs are not co-dependent on their teachers and have the distinct ability to change teachers based on their learning or financial support to students. In turn, teachers gain further prestige based on the quantity and quality of their students (Louer 2008, 74) and thus need to remain in touch with the needs and concerns of their communities and followers. These factors may explain the institutionalization of rivalry within the Najaf seminary and between the Iranian and Iraqi seminaries.

The rivalry between clerics such as Sistani and Muqtada is also evident as they vie for greater control over the Shia constituency. Indeed, in some instances, such rivalry has reached violent measures with certain Ayatollahs being eliminated from the process. The assassination of several top clerics serves to demonstrate the significance of religious actors in the post-conflict reconstruction phase, as well as an intense internal struggle for power and influence. For instance, Abdul Majid Khoei, the son of Sistani's predecessor, and Ayatollah Sayed Mohamad Baqir Al-Hakim were two prominent religious actors who were eliminated early in the reconstruction process. Numerous threats and assassination attempts were made on others, including al-Sistani himself (Ignatieff 2005). Various associates of Sistani have been targeted and murdered, including his close aide and representatives Sheikh Rahim Al-Hasnawi and Grand Ayatollah Sheikh Fadil al-Aqil, his bodyguard Kazim al-Budayri, as well as his financial manager Abdullah Falak (BBC 2007; Moubayed 2007). A bomb also exploded outside of one of al-Sistani's foundations, the Al-Mustafa Cultural Institution, in al-Hillah (Ridolfo 2007). While a variety of sources can easily be located to explain the

attempted murders and assassinations of the clergy, it is also feasible that the intense internal rivalry with the seminaries could have played a part. Further, the intensity of the violence directed towards the religious leaders represents a shift in power balances as the Grand Ayatollahs vie for power in the post-Saddam era, and for greater control and influence over the country.

On par with the al-Sadr family, the al-Hakim family is also a powerful group in Iraqi society and politics. The current head of the family is Grand Ayatollah Mohammed Said al-Hakim, who is also the uncle of the murdered Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, as well as Ayatollah Ab dal-Aziz al-Hakim. Like Sistani, al-Hakim was a student of Grand Ayatollah al-Khoie. Additionally, Al-Hakim's grandfather was also the prestigious Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Mohsin Altabatabaie al-Hakim, while his father was another distinguished Ayatollah in the seminary. In 1983, Al-Hakim's family was detained by the Saddam regime for refusing to abide by the regime's propagandas and policies. While al-Hakim suffered torture many of his family members were executed. Despite his exalted family history, al-Hakim has lost some prestige regarding his family members, particularly Baqir's exile in Iran during Saddam's reign. Several attempts have been made on his life since 2003 (Romero 2009). His nephew, Ayatollah Sayed Mohamad Baqir Al-Hakim, was a prominent outspoken opposition figure of Saddam's Ba'athist regime. In conjunction with Al-Sadr, the late father of Muqtada Al-Sadr, he formed a political party called the Islamic Movement in the 1960s (Alawi 2007, 44). His political stance and views led to repeated imprisonment and torture by the Ba'ath party, as well as a life sentence that was later overturned on account of intense societal pressure on the Iraqi government. He was also strongly linked to, and played a prominent part in establishing a resistance movement, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq (SCIRI)<sup>18</sup> and was heavily prosecuted, which, in turn, led to the death of over sixty family members (Cockburn 2008). Baqir's return from exile was marked by widespread celebrations in Iraq and his political activism was marked by significant criticism, fatwa's and decrees towards the U.S. state-building and reconstruction attempts. Moreover, al-Hakim continued to oscillate between political activism and the Quietist branch. At the outset, he voiced his dissatisfaction with the U.S. occupation, but later opted for political participation through the SCIRI which chose to participate in the Iraqi Governing Council and took an increasingly moderate stance towards the Americans. However, the SCIRI's foundation in Iran, despite consisting of exiled Shia citizens, is still widely viewed by Iraqi's as an

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<sup>18</sup> The organisation was reformed IN 2007 into the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC).

extension of Iranian propaganda in Iraq. As a result of this, the party reformulated itself in 2007 into the Islamic Supreme Council in Iraq by removing the word 'Revolution' in an effort to distance itself from the Iranian regime and its religiously motivated regional aspirations (Puelings 2010, 9). Though al-Hakim advocated a separation of mosque and state, he later emphasized the importance of having an Islamic Iraqi state (Abhyankar 2008, 318). However, his assassination in August 2003 effectively removed a powerful rival to the existing Shia clerics, leaving Sistani and Muqtada as the sole heirs and most prominent voices of the Shia community.

As is the norm in non-democratic societies, following al-Hakim's assassination, his brother, Ab dal-Aziz al-Hakim, was elected as his replacement as chairman of the SCIRI in Iraq. Demonstrating close relations between SCIRI and Iran, Ab dal-Aziz al-Hakim visited the country following the invasion to discuss Tehran-Baghdad relations, as well as to thank the Iranian regime for its support of SCIRI during the Ba'ath regime era (Cockburn 2008). When Prime Minister al-Maliki announced his national reconciliation plan to disband ethnic and sectarian militias in favour of a unified national Iraqi security force, Ab dal-Aziz al-Hakim was one of the first to endorse the plan (UNAMI 2006). However, for the clergy, the disbanding of the militia groups did not entail their own paramilitary group, the Badr army, from being dissolved. The expectation was that the rogue military group al-Mehdi would be disbanded because of the level of undisciplined violence to which it resorted. Al-Hakim then actively criticized al-Maliki and his plans, noting the failure of the Coalition and Iraqi security forces in ensuring local security. The justification for the continuation of the Badr army was linked to their ability to provide security to Iraqis, in light of the governments general ineffectiveness to curb sectarian violence'. Restructuring the Badr army into 'popular committees' dedicated to humanitarian and security work, al-Hakim argued that the responsibility of maintaining security on the ground should be handed over to the national army and that the coalition forces and other militia groups should refrain from interfering in their work (Yaphe 2008).

In contrast, Grand Ayatollah Bashir al-Najafi and Grand Ayatollah Mohammad Ishaq Fayyadh are two of the less outspoken members of the seminary, though no less influential. Like Sistani and al-Hakim, Fayyadh al-Najafi was also al-Khoei's disciple and is rumoured to be not only his favourite student, but also his most brilliant (Tucker 2010, 453).<sup>19</sup> More

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<sup>19</sup> Yet Sistani's eventual rise as the Grand Marja may point to internal seminary politics.

significantly, he is also, arguably, the most learned of all the Grand Ayatollahs including Sistani himself. Despite this he has been granted a limited role both within the Shi'ite world as well as a level of involvement in the reconstruction process because of his Afghani origins. Although there are arguments that there are no clear cut rules as to who can become a Grand Marja, other than the endorsement of one or several Grand Ayatollahs, the selection process is nevertheless an intensely political one, underpinned by traditions and nationalist sentiments. In fact, the traditions within the seminary dictate that a Grand Marja should either be of Iranian or Iraqi decent (Khalaji 2006). This is practically an inevitability considering that both states are the site of the more revered Shi'ite history, shrines and seminaries, not to mention that the two states together comprise the largest body of Shi'ites in the region. It is, therefore, very difficult for Shi'ites of other nationalities to attract a majority of worshipers and attain a higher social position within their communities. Khalaji (2005) argues that "[o]nly this tradition can explain why a well-educated jurist like Fayyadh cannot be the centre of Shi'ite attention, although academically he may be on the highest level". However, Fayyadh is not content with a sideline role in Iraq's reconstruction process. When al-Maliki, in early 2009, defected from the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) to form his own rival party, al-Fayyadh was one of his most outspoken critics. In criticizing several key ministers and allies of al-Maliki, al-Fayyadh noted that "there are people in the executive authority who have betrayed the country, who have stolen public money to create sectarianism in the country like education minister Khudair al-Khuzai" (Aljazeera 2010). While it may simply be a matter of necessity, al-Fayyadh's statement points to his sense of Iraqi nationalism as well as his anti-sectarian values, despite his Afghani origins. Likewise such statements, produced at the level of al-Fayyadh's religious status could be viewed as inflammatory and supportive of resistance of secular state leaders by the hawza's followers.

Similarly, Grand Ayatollah Bashir al-Najafi is of Pakistani origins. According to his official website, Al-Najafi was born in the city of Jalindher in India in 1942, but soon after migrated to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan after its independence. Though there are suggestions of his desire to be more politically active, his origins have limited his following in the al-Najaf seminary (Khalaji 2005) similar to al-Fayyadh. However, al-Najafi's political views have not prevented attacks on him on several occasions, both during the Saddam regime and following the invasion (Kechichian 2001, 59). More conservative in views than Sistani, al-Najafi has openly criticized the coalition forces and argued shortly after the invasion that "most of the grievances Muslims are facing all over the world are caused by international oppression that



is led by the United States and its henchmen” (Ridolfo 2003). Following the dominant trend within the seminary, al-Najafi, in a published statement through his son Sheikh Ali al-Najafi condemned violence and sectarianism as un-Islamic. Noting the fact that Sunni and Shias had lived peacefully side by side for centuries, he reasoned that “[t]hose who arouse sectarianism in Iraq violate the directions of the prophet and his orders with regard to cooperation and refraining from killing the Muslim or allowing for his blood, money or honour, which are behaviours that are remote from the spirit of Islam” (United Press International 2008).

Collectively the Grand Ayatollah’s have proved to be a strong moral, politically aware and active force behind Iraqi Shi’ites. However, it is immensely difficult to locate the official position of these religious actors on an individual basis. The seminary often attempts to present a unified front, leading to one of the top Grand Ayatollahs, frequently Sistani, to express official views on policies. Even then, one or another representative will normally present a statement or opinion on behalf of the Ayatollahs. However, statements are still subject to verification, which is also a difficult, if not a deliberately impossible process, on behalf of the seminary. On occasion, one of the other Grand Ayatollahs will express an opinion, though there is little doubt that such opinions are forwarded with extensive consultation with other Grand Ayatollahs in the seminary.

## **5.6. Muqtada al-Sadr:**

Analysts have argued that, while Sistani has carefully used his religious credentials to trump his lack of Arab-nationalist ones, al-Sadr’s movement, in contrast, is framed and operates more as a political movement rather than solely as a religious one (Marshal and Chu 2004). Muqtada has two clear advantages over other politically active clerics, particularly Sistani, which he has used to visibly influence the reconstruction and policy making. On the one hand, his family lineage as noted in Chapter Three, and his connection to the prophet’s family is unblemished and well documented (Farmer 2008, 175) providing him with a level of legitimacy within the Shia community that is unparalleled. This lineage is in direct contrast to Sistani’s Iranian heritage. Al-Sadr has, thus, created a powerful mix by combining Arab nationalism with Shia Islam making him an influential player in the mixture of religious and political elites in post-Saddam era. Al-Sadr has prudently accentuated his Arab nationalist credentials over his religious records, precisely because he is still a low ranking cleric, principally in contrast to al-Sistani’s stellar religious credentials. Indeed, it has been widely

noted that “al-Sadr’s call to his followers is not strictly religious, but uses religious symbolism to activate a sense of patriotism” (Tartar 2005, 188). This emphasis on nationalism is undoubtedly a matter of necessity considering Muqtada’s limited religious training. Despite the fact that Muqtada insists on emphasizing his Arab and Iraqi roots to demonstrate Iran’s lack of influence on him, he still exploits his Shia roots as a means of gaining a more advantageous position in the political sphere and garnering further support. When al-Sadr was quizzed about his position towards Iran and its Islamic revolution he noted that, “I am the extension of my own reference, that of my father. If the two lines are similar, which is a fact, then our goals are also similar. There is no harm in my being an extension of the Khomeini revolution” (Ridolfo 2004). Such comments hint at aspirations at a regional level and beyond Iraq at a political and religious level. Nonetheless, for the moment, he is merely a low ranking cleric, a *Hojat al-Islam*, which severely limits his influence within the region. His success in gaining supporters in Iraq is consequently attributed to his tactics, which include “a mix of militia strength, well-tuned street politics and social outreach” (Hendawi 2007). While it is argued that Sistani has largely remained outside politics, al-Sadr, on the other hand, has deliberately sought to destabilize the coalition’s state-building effort by mounting a violent opposition, as well as by directly attempting to build links and alliances with political parties and leaders both domestically and regionally. In 2003, for instance, he announced plans to create a shadow government that would oppose the occupation forces and their presence in holy cities of Karbala and Najaf (Arslan 2005, 151; Feldman 2004, 39).

The second advantage arises from Muqtada’s popularity as he is most prominent among young Shia men; this has boosted not only his following, but also his personal paramilitary group, the Mehdi Army or *Jaysh al-Mehdi* (JAM), rumoured to be as big as 60, 000 strong (Cordesman and Davies 2008). The army was created in 2003 from the masses of disaffected Shia men, but the army’s almost spontaneous development attests to Muqtada’s personal charisma and influence; and perhaps attests to Iraq’s long violent history, in which the army consisted largely of trained Shia men who had easy access to firearms once the Saddam regime toppled. Further, unlike the paramilitary of the SIIC, which consists of educated middle class followers, the Mehdi army consists largely of the lower echelons of Shia society (Puelings 2010, 9). The Mehdi army gained prominence in April-March 2004 when heavy fighting broke out against coalition forces, leading some experts to draw parallels with the paramilitary group with al-Qaeda as the most dangerous organization in operation in Iraq

(Jackson 2007). From the perspective of the coalition forces, the Mehdi army has acted as a destabilizing force and has advanced Sunni fears of persecution, as well as effectively demonstrating to the Shia community the coalition forces' inability to protect them. More importantly, the militia group has established "an example and created a legacy of violence towards any U.S.-backed central government" (Hubbard 2007, 21). The army views itself as representative of the oppressed Shi'ites, protecting them against Sunni tyranny, as well as challenging the coalition forces into decolonizing Iraq. However, considering the sequestered nature of the army it is difficult to assess its capabilities and its membership. Some branches of the paramilitary group have proven to be quite effective, while others can be viewed as nothing less than street thugs and local criminals banded loosely together. Allegations that the army extorted money from the local economy to fund itself provide strong testimony to this (Tavernise 2008). On the other hand, the Mehdi army has also exercised significant political power over the emerging democratic processes in Iraq. Maliki's alliance with the army, for example, effectively propelled him to power in 2006 when he was elected as Prime Minister as a member of the Da'wa party (Cordesman and Davies 2008, 262). Until his endorsement by the Mehdi army, Nuri al-Maliki lacked legitimacy and credentials in the eyes of the majority of Iraqis.

However, the paramilitary group has also lost significant support among the more secular, urbanized middle-class Shia because of the heavy handed nature of their activities. Attacks on women who did not wear hijab or wore makeup, cinema operators, progressive intellectuals, sellers of alcohol, individuals wearing 'western' attire, and sectarian and ethnic conflicts, as well as regular kidnappings and assassinations were activities in which the Mehdi army regularly engaged (Dunn and Futter 2010; Kaldor 2009; Feldman 2004). It is doubtful, though, to what extent these activities were managed by the upper echelons of the army's leadership and Muqtada himself.

Al-Sadr, on the other hand, has effectively manipulated the Mehdi army in line with his own political aspirations. When necessary, the paramilitary has come close to being dissolved or temporarily sent underground, as was the case between 2008-2009 following implications of its involvement in the 2006-2007 sectarian war (Moubayed 2010). The 2008 period saw a decline in the paramilitary's violent activism following al-Sadr's move to split the movement into two branches. The biggest wing was segregated into a political and civil service branch, consisting of the majority of al-Sadr's followers (Cordesman and Ramos 2008, 3). The smaller branch was constituted of the elite fighters of the army designed to fight the

continued occupation of Iraq. Nevertheless, the Mehdi army soon replaced al-Qaeda as the most prominent threat to the U.S. military and its reconstruction agendas in Iraq (Jackson 2007).

Yet, Muqtada al-Sadr still remains an enigma by successfully taking advantage of Sistani's allusive isolation and responding with a more militant form of religious activism. His ability to understand and respond to street politics has ensured that his following has grown substantially and his prestige continues to grow. Competing views of his personality and intelligence further adds to his mystery. Muqtada is often dubbed a fanatical "firebrand" cleric, or inaccurately dubbed as an "upstart" (Heazle and Islam 2006, 78); others have snidely made references to his lack of will, intelligence or actual influence. Vali Nasr, for instance, alludes to his limited intelligence, noting that he was more interested in playing video games rather than his religious studies (Berman 2009, 57). Yet, despite these allegations, al-Sadr has remained at the forefront of the political process in the post-Saddam era. He has also not refrained from challenging co-religionists. During 2006-2007, the Mehdi army came into direct and violent confrontation with the SCIRI's paramilitary group, the Badr Brigade, as each attempted to gain increasing influence and control over the political process (Puelings 2010, 9). The clash occurred between the two paramilitary groups due to the assassination of the provincial head of police, as well as an influential member of the Badr Brigade, prompting the Mehdi army to attempt a political takeover. The events culminated in a bloody clash in the southern city of Amerah in October 2006. In turn, the Badr brigade attempted the kidnapping of the younger brother of a local Mehdi commander and demanded the Mehdi army hand over those responsible for the death of the head of police. These events indicate the high level of "lawlessness" and the prevalence of political power struggles (Hubbard 2007), as well as the ineffective nature of the central government.

Sadr's activism has also evolved into a more complicated and calculated standpoint. Some of his initial moves, including his alleged involvement in the 2004 murder of Sayyid Abdul Majid al-Khoei, initiating sectarian violence, and direct and open confrontation with the coalition forces hinted at the violent lengths to which al-Sadr was willing to go. In 2004, when the CPA attempted to crack down and reduce Muqtada's influence by shutting down his newspaper, his militia reacted with excessive violence by taking over police stations and other local government building (Feldman 2004, 39-40) effectively demonstrating the strength of the militia and the ineptitude of the government and coalition forces. Overall though, this initial reversion to violence has evolved into more diplomatic behaviours and has

given away to more subtle politics involving alliances, deals and sponsorships of local leaders, as well as the adoption of an increasingly more stoic, unavailable and mysterious persona. Adopting al-Sistani's tactics, he has appeared less in public since 2007 and has issued most of his messages through his emissaries, allowing him to retract some statements while remaining elusively silent on others. This tactic has naturally made it hard to guess the authenticity of his messages. Demonstrating cautious paranoia, he has resorted to rotating and changing his representatives every several months so as to remain elusive and imperceptible. His ability to adapt, evolve and respond with a combination of force and diplomacy when necessary has made him a formidable religious actor, as well as a political broker during the reconstruction process.

Overall, Muqtada's popularity, influence and power has ebbed and increased with the political tide of the reconstruction process. When the inevitable tension between the Sunni and Shia community led to outright conflict in 2006, it was the Mehdi army that stepped in and provided security to local Shia communities, much to the relief of citizens and the chagrin of the coalition. To these communities, al-Sadr is a hero (Raghavan 2008), with some even labelling him as a messiah, despite increasing parallels being drawn with al-Qaeda. His popularity has also increased in Najaf, Bagdad and Sadr City, as well as other Shia dominated regions of southern Iraq. Muqtada has also gained some powerful enemies who are keen to remove him from the post-Saddam political scene and effectively curb his influence. The Shia coalition party, the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA) and Al-Da'wa, particularly under the prime ministership of al-Maliki, as well as the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC), largely view al-Sadr with suspicion, but with a begrudging acceptance of his influence (Feldman 2004, 39; Kukis 2009). Inter-Shia conflict eventually led to al-Sadr's 2006 withdrawal of his ministers and the removal of his support from the Shi'ite-dominated government this was repeated at various times during 2007 and later (Cockburn 2008, 192), a move calculated to demonstrate his power as well as his disapproval of the direction that the Shi'ite coalition was taking. His continued adherence to this policy effectively served to destabilize the fragile political peace as well as the emerging government, often at crucial times. When tensions increased between the Maliki government and al-Sadr leading to a government launched incursion into al-Sadr dominated lands, he was quick to use the threat of violence and declare his lack of support for the provincial elections by deliberately declaring support for independent candidates so as to curb the influence of dominant Shia groups and politicians (Cordesman and Ramos 2008). The dominant lesson that emerges from an analysis of

Muqtada al-Sadr's rise to political power is that the lack of legitimate secular political actors will lead to the birth of alternative local leaders to fill the leadership vacuum. Further, al-Sadr's rise to power has reflected the historical and cultural practices of Iraqi and, in fact, regional culture, in which powerful family legacies are fulfilled by surviving sons. While, for foreign analysts, al-Sadr's sudden rise to power proved to be a decisive coup d'état, for the majority of Iraqis it was rather the inevitable outcome of traditions long practiced, yet unknown to the powerful foreigners who had invaded their country with the hope of saving it.

### 5.7. Shi'ite Political Activism:

The differences between Shia and Sunni sects can be stark in some situations. For one, the Shias have established a separate religious jurisprudence in line with the Shias' unique history as the long oppressed and marginalized Muslims of the Middle East. Their deliberate perpetuation of the victim status by invoking the martyrdom of Imam Hussein serves as an important identity marker for Shi'ites (Louer 2008). Shi'ites have argued that "you cannot understand Shi'ites if you don't understand the lessons of Hussein's death...Hussein taught us not to fear death because you can achieve victory even through death, as long as you fight injustice and stay true to your principles" (Ambah 2007). The Shia sect itself is divided into smaller branches, which includes the *Twelver Shias* (Ithna-'ashariya), the *Ismaili Shias* also known as the *Sevener Shi'ites* as well as the *Zaidiyya* (Takim 2006). Further to this, lesser sub-branches have developed which include the *Alawites*, the *Druze*, *Ahl-e Haqq* and the *Alevis*', attesting to the heterogeneous nature of Shia Islam. Twelver Shias are the largest and most prominent community within the Shia world and their beliefs centre around twelve divinely ordained Imams who are the direct decedents of Imam Ali, the prophet Muhammad's nephew and son-in-law (Halm 2007; Momen 1985). The final imam, Muhammad Ibn Hasan ibn 'Ali, also known as al-Mehdi (the 'Guided One') is thought to have disappeared into a state of occultation<sup>20</sup> roughly around the middle of the tenth century and it is assumed he will return as a final Messiah (Brunner and Ende 2001, 182). Adopted in 1501 by Shah Isma'il Safavi in Iran as the religion of the Iranian state, the Twelver branch,

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<sup>20</sup> There exist two dominant schools of thought within the Shia community as to the nature and significance of the Imams' occultation. The *Akhbari* school of thought considers the disappearance of the twelfth Imam as something of little importance since the Imams had provided sufficient guidance and religious decrees for followers. Further, the Islamic practice of *Ijtihad* serves to fill the missing gap that the Imam had left. On the other hand, the *Usuli*, on the other hand, have relied on not only *Ijtihad* as a form of religious guidance, but also the important practice of using reason and debate between learned scholars to formulate Islamic laws. For more information see Louer 2008.

including its religious scholars, gained increasing prominence (Litvak 1998, 12) and currently constitutes the largest Shia branch. Other significant numbers exist in Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain, Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan (Meisami and Starkey 1998, 713). However, the Shi'ites have generally faced prosecution and been labelled as infidels by the regimes in which they reside. As a result, Shi'ites often occupy lower social and economic positions while experiencing high levels of political exclusion (Puelings 2010). This distinct, repressed history of Shi'ites has produced a specific relationship between Shia Islam and its political culture, particularly with the religious leaders of the community. In turn, religious leaders have attempted to guide Shi'ite communities in line with their political terrain, oscillating between encouraging political activism or advocating non-involvement and conformity. As a result, two distinct forms of political schools have developed that define how such religious figures deal with politics and the state: these two dominant perspectives are labelled as the Quietist and the 'Activist' branches.

Before branching further into this discourse it is essential to point out an important element within the reconstruction process. The al-Sadr and al-Sistani camp have often been juxtaposed and compared along competing political frameworks that have relied on a less than sophisticated level of theoretical and analytical discourse. Primarily, the discourse has been strongly influenced by the 'Quietist-Activist' form of political Islam by analysts who have written extensively on these two religious actors. On a basic level, the literature focuses on these two schools of thought so as to explain the political actions or pacifism of the religious actors. It is argued that the Quietist strain is based on the principle that only the Mehdi has the divine right to impose justice and, in his absence, political injustice must be endured. In contrast, the Activist strand argues that the absence of the Mehdi ensures that no ruler has unqualified legitimacy and so injustice should be challenged directly (Coughlin 2006, 91). Followers of the 'Activist' strand emulate the prophets' early career as a source of their activism and attempt to "reproduce the prophetic sequence of opposition, struggle, migration, and advance from the periphery to the centre" (Lewis 1986, 142). In the Shia community, the actions of Imam Ali and his son Hussein against tyranny are seen as sources of emulation. The most prominent example of this emulation occurred during the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran where the concept of *Velayat-e Faqeh* (Guardianship of the Jurist) was adopted by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. The Quietist school has generally been traditionally dominant within the Shia political community, though it is essential to note that refusal to directly challenge oppressive rulers did not equate with legitimizing such behaviour

and religious clerics were, indeed, often at pains to demonstrate its undesirability (Lewis 1986, 142). The literature argues that in following the Quietist method, originally adopted by his mentor al-Khoei, Sistani has actively attempted to remain outside of politics and to merely act as a source of guidance. During Saddam's rule, Sistani, as well as other adherents of the Quietist school, used non-activism as a measure of survival and to distance themselves from the Iranian revolution; this served to further abate Saddam's insecurities (Abhyankar 2008, 316). However, as the following discussion will demonstrate, Sistani's so called adherence to the Quietist school has revived a discussion centuries long surrounding the role of religious clerics in Islamic communities.

Nevertheless, at the centre of the discussion surrounding the 'Quietist-Activist' discourse is the role of the state and political leadership. There is some merit in arguing that Islamic movements have essentially evolved so as to become in essence, anti-statist, particularly in those states where the political establishment has traditionally attempted to appropriate religion (Ayubi, 1991, 118). This is certainly true of the Shia movements which have customarily fallen into minority status within Sunni dominated states. In commenting on the sectarian conflict in Iraq a Shi'ite cleric in Saudi Arabia argued that "you can't separate Shi'ite Islam from politics...It's in the nature of Shi'ites to fight oppression, and it's in the nature of governments to be oppressive, so naturally there is a confrontation" (Ambah 2007). On the other hand, Ayubi (1991) argues that the image of Islam has become tainted by fundamentalist and 'Orientalist' overtones so that it is essentially seen to be political from its very conception to its theoretical foundations. Though Islam came about through a process of military endeavours, according to Ayubi, Islam has traditionally very little to say regarding state formation and its governance. Rather, like all states, the Islamic state also inherited the tendency to adopt the dominant religion as a source of legitimating and it is more a coincidence that the leaders of the state were also the spiritual leaders of the community. The implications of this attitude towards the state for the Shi'ite religious leadership are twofold. On the one hand they may choose to remain silent observers of state oppression and bide their time until circumstances evolve to one conducive of religious rebellion. Conversely, the second perspective entails one of direct rebellion against the state which has traditionally been the more difficult perspective to put in practice precisely because of the complex political terrain in which Shi'ite communities were confined within. Thus, adhering to the Quietist branch is simply an astute political decision in the face of intense state repression and violence; but more crucially, what is missing in the literature is the awareness that



adherence to the Quietist branch is only intended as a short-term, intermediary ideology until the situation allows for greater levels of political activism. Thus, the norm is actually adherence to political Activism, and Quietism the exception in extreme situations. However, due to the nature of Shi'ite oppression in the Islamic world, the adherence to Quietism has become far more common, leading theorists to incorrectly assume that religious clerics choose an either/or dichotomy; in other words, a cleric chooses one form of political stance and adheres to it as part of their collective politico-religious doctrine for the duration of their position as religious leaders. Deviation is, thus, perceived to be rare and abnormal. Consequently, simply because a Grand Ayatollah may adhere to the Quietist branch does not suggest that he may not change tactics and revert to Activism when the political situation is more conducive. Thus, Activism and Quietism are an extension of the very same policy of challenging state oppression wherever it may arise. In times of intense state violence the clerics may choose Quietism as a response to preserve lives and, indeed, in some cases, even the whole religious community; while, at other times, direct Activism may be considered as the only appropriate response to state prejudice.

If any ambiguity existed relating to the role of the clergy in the state, Khomeini's lectures in early 1970 (culminating in the 1979 revolution) removed such doubts. Compiled into the book *Governance of the Jurists*, Khomeini argued for the need to involve the religious ulama in state governance. Khomeini's theory revolves around three important positions. The first element notes the prerequisite of maintaining Islamic identity and influence as well as its political power, particularly in light of the negative influence from colonial and western powers that tend to erode its authority. Secondly, it is the duty of the clergy to ensure that an Islamic state exists; which requires significant influence and control over the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government. Finally, Khomeini set out some practical methods by which the clergy could achieve this end. The most important element within this context, which constitutes the core of Khomeini's book and which effectively disputes Ayubi's point as noted above; is that Islam is indeed political and has much to say regarding the position of the state. More specifically, its relationship towards society should be viewed under the guidance of a politically active Islamic clergy. More specifically, he argued that "in just the same way that there are laws setting forth the duties of worship for man, so too there are [Islamic] laws, practices, and norms for the affairs of society and governance" (Khomeini 2005, 4). Thus, it is essential that the leaders of the state have a thorough knowledge of the laws of Islam since Islamic government is a government of law (Khomeini 2005). The

significance of concepts such as justice, community, and leadership from the body-politic constitutes as the core of the state-society theory advocated by Khomeini. Accordingly, for Khomeini, it was essential that the leader of the community be just. However, that justice could only come about if the leader held significant spiritual learning and drew his understanding of justice from his religious education. Essentially, for Khomeini, concepts of justice and leadership were synonymous with religious learning. In this manner, 'knowledge' and 'power' possess a special affiliation within Islam. Historically, the prophet and the Imams laid claim to true knowledge and, hence, power. It is, therefore, the religious ulama who have maintain true and legitimate power and the modern Islamic state should emulate this tradition. This process underlines the importance of the clergy, for they alone currently possess proper knowledge of Sharia (Black 2001, 349) and are in a position to interpret Islamic texts to address the dilemmas of modern nation-states.

This discussion also entails imagined myths and ideas as to the ideal form of the political state. Contemporary Islamic states and political parties have strived to attain the ideal form of an Islamic political community, widely perceived to be during the time of the prophet. While the degree of adherence to this concept can differ radically within Islamic states, say between Saudi Arabia and Iran, it is nevertheless an idealized representation of the superlative model. It is for this reason that the Activist branch tends to contain puritanical strands within it. All the same, the tendency to adopt Quietism is an inherent tendency within Islam and was the dominant form of dealing with authority from the eighth to the eighteenth century (Ayubi 1991, 11). In most instances, Quietism was justified so as to prevent anarchy and retain unity, even in light of an unjust ruler. Sadiki, (2004), for instance, notes that this tradition created contradictory conditions within Islamic communities, for, on the one hand unjust and evil rule was permitted while the need to prevent evil was subordinated. In other words, "the evil of unjust rule became second to the greater evil of Muslim anarchy and disunity" (Sadiki 2004, 83). In this way, the onus was on the community to preserve the 'Islamic' nature of the state, and hence, retain the means of self-preservation and continuity. Thus, for the Shia community, adherence to Quietism is almost a religious obligation in light of the hidden status of the final imam. Indeed, noting the minority status of the Shia community collectively, with the exception of Iran, the clergy resorted to this tradition as a means of self-preservation. In fact, Quietism demands a concealment of one's political convictions, but also, the right to become involved directly in the political process (Alagha 2006, 77). Marty and Appleby (1994, 408-409) note the evolution of Shia political activism:

[G]iven the proper sociopolitical conditions, the activist mentality may be seen as merely dormant or latent within Shi'ite Quietism...recent Shi'ite activism has, as in the past, emerged after a period of relative Quietism in large part because of the central role played by Shi'ite religious leaders and their radical teachings in response to specific sociopolitical conditions. In other words, Shi'ite activism is, in an important sense, a function of the religious leaders' discernment of both the 'signs of the times' and of the possibilities for action present within the historical tradition.

However, as noted previously, Ayatollah Sistani is often considered to be the follower of the Quietist school (Cole 2010; Heazle and Islam 2006). His increased level of activism is seen by leading theorists such as Larry Diamond to be 'atypical' (Jones 2007, 257). All accounts of Sistani have, to date, suggested something similar. That he is a moderate religious actor who adheres to the Quietist branch of Shi'ism, and that he has made certain demands on the Coalition forces but only to bring about democratic norms in the reconstruction process. There is a tendency to shy away from taking a more critical look at Sistani, precisely because he represents such an anomaly to the firebrand image of Islamic religious leaders, which serves little purpose in evaluating Sistani's real motives and impact on the reconstruction process.

Indeed, Sistani's activism is far from atypical, as Diamond's comment above implies. Shia religious actors are charged with remaining inactive during periods of political suppression, as was the case for Sistani during Saddam's rule, a position that was largely imposed. However, when the political situation permitted a higher level of political involvement, Sistani was quick to express inherently political views, and did not shy away from expressing them in the most vocal manner. His hermit-like tendency is also incorrectly viewed as legitimizing his non-interference stance. Realistically, his refusal to meet face to face with the American forces had much more to do with his intention of retaining his religious legitimacy as well as his clear understanding of Iraq's political culture and history, where any form of collusion with the American forces would have attracted negativity in Iraq, particularly as the reconstruction process and its failures increased Iraqi anger. Sistani also wished to avoid the fate of other religious and secular actors whose relationship with Iran, whether real or imagined, continued to challenge their legitimacy within Iraqi society.

This view was balanced by the rising popularity and challenge that al-Sadr posed to Sistani's position as the Grand Marja. That is not to say that al-Sadr was ever in a position to challenge Sistani's religious learning, but to symbolically de-throne him as the leader of the Shia's in Iraq and perhaps more ambitiously in the greater Shia world, particularly with the increase in

anti-American sentiments in the Middle East as the reconstruction process in Iraq continued. Further to this, Sistani's refusal to advocate Khomeini's Iranian style theocracy may not necessarily represent moderate tendencies. Sistani still advocates an Islamic state, where Sharia law is the basis of an Iraqi constitution (Watson 2004, 37). As such, he has effectively refused secularism as the basis of the state though, unlike Iranian-style theocracy, he does not explicitly advocate the leaders of the state being religious clerics. However, this process is in some ways almost unnecessary since the new Iraqi constitution (2005) would have been formed in close consensus with Islamic values, which would naturally entail continuous consultation with the religious clergy. As a result, the religious clerics would have exercised significant control in the formation of the constitution and in ensuring that Islamic values were enshrined within the document.

Sistani's moderation has been further balanced through the confidence of knowing that the Shia community hold a majority in Iraq, and that any future Iraqi state will ensure the interests of the Shia are not only well insulated but also imposed on others, ironically, through democratic measures. Viewed in this light, Sistani appears as an astute and practiced politician, certainly far more capable than the blundering Chalabi. His adherence to the Quietist branch has also served to increase his standing, precisely because his position has found support among the urbanized educated, middle-class and secularized Shia Arabs who desire stability over conflict. Sistani's *soft power* (Schuchter 2004, 274) is a significant force in Iraqi society, and that makes him far more powerful than any political actor, such as Chalabi, Allawi or other contenders of power. Indeed, the Grand Marja is so influential that there have been accusations that this redirects the civic loyalties of Shias away from their government. For instance, the Saudi government has accused Sistani and other powerful Grand Ayatollahs such as Sayyid Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah and Ayatollah Mohamed Hadi al-Mudarassi of interfering in the formation of Shia loyalty to their regime (Wehrey 2009, 30).

Overall, in the analysis of both religious actors, Sistani and al-Sadr have attracted supporters of polar views, which works against them by presenting a skewed account of both actors and their contribution to the reconstruction process. Sistani's moderate, quietist, non-interference and relatively liberal views are juxtaposed starkly with Muqtada's violence, his lack of religious education, his fluid personality and his youth. Generally, the literature tacitly views Sistani as a positive and moderating force (Fontan 2009, 137; Schuchter 2004). Some have gone so far as to label him as a "Gandhian leader who abhors violence" (Moubayed 2007).

Muqtada, in contrast, has been branded as a fiery cleric, carried away by the passions of his nationalist convictions and his family's legacy (Chehab 2006, 156-158). Clearly, these two actors represent different values and needs within their societies, yet at the same time, have demonstrated a problematic mix of contradictory values and actions that renders them far more difficult to categorize easily. The tendency towards romanticism, particularly in regards to Sistani, has produced a limited account of his power and influence. For instance, almost all works on Sistani start by declaring him as the Grand Marja of the Shia community followed by some limited analysis of what this represents for the Shias; that is, as a source of emulation for the followers and as someone who has attained the highest level of religious learning. However, the literature fails to note that the Shia community, by virtue of their distinct Islamic values and their minority positions, are a political community. The Grand Marja is not only the spiritual, symbolic and religious leader of the Shia worldwide but also their *natural political representative* as ordained by a long history of a distinct role that the Shia have played within the region. Globalization and liberalization, with the spread of communication and technology has ensured that the institution of the Grand Marja has gained increasing power and influence in the last few decades (Walbridge 20016). The Grand Marja is also in a position to spend finances that are donated through religious alms on raising troops and paramilitary to not only protect the community but, also, to wage Jihad (Sachedina 1998, 245). For instance, the Grand Marja Shaykh Ja'far during the Safavid period in Iran, empowered the Shah to wage war against the Russian incursion into the Transcaucasus, between 1804-1813 (Halm 2004, 102), through religiously sanctioned *fatwa*. Though internal *hawza* politics can limit the rise of a radical cleric to the position of the Grand Marja, the position itself is institutionalized into a powerful political, economic, social, religious and security apparatus that retains the capacity to impose significant geopolitical influence.

An indicator of this is that, while physically distancing himself from political parties and the reconstruction process, Sistani receives a constant stream of politicians who seek advice and counsel from him regarding policies. Sistani, in turn, has chosen to produce commentary only on the most crucial policies, a move that has increased his standing further. However, when he does express a view it is in essence equivalent to a written law, at least for the Shia majority, which leaves little negotiating room for the other political actors and parties in Iraq as well as the Coalition itself. Effectively, Sistani already plays a similar yet less discernible role to the Iranian regime's Supreme Council's Khāmene'i. While Grand Ayatollah Ali Hoseyni Khāmene'i's position is enshrined in the Iranian constitution, Sistani's position

exists by virtue of his greater learning, soft power and perceived non-interference in politics, which has increased his legitimacy disproportionately as the head of the Shi'ite world. Sistani's advantage lies in appearing to not be interested or involved in the political process, unlike the Iranian leadership, which has demonstrated excessive control over the politics of the Iranian state. This may explain why Sistani has the largest following among all Shia Grand Ayatollahs. Sistani is also shrewd enough to realize that the enshrining of a religious leader as the head of the state is an unpopular move, not only among secularized Iraqis but also within the greater Middle East and the Islamic society, particularly considering the persistent ebb and flow of tensions within the Shi'ite-Sunni world. This awareness could very well be the reason behind Sistani's call for the rejection of sectarianism, as well as repeated calls for Sunni and Shia cooperation. Perhaps more importantly, such a move, or even the endorsement of such a policy, will increase western and American hostility towards the Shias of Iraq, therefore in effect, jeopardizing their current strategic position. Just as the British colonial powers favoured the minority Sunnis, Sistani was well aware that the United States could reverse its policies and elect a similar policy. Sistani was, thus, shrewd enough to realize that holding a majority within Iraqi society does not necessarily equate to greater political representation. His ability to select the causes he wishes to engage in, presents a religious leader not averse to playing a political role, and his tendency to favor expressing views on certain policies of strategic importance may hint at his perceived sense of responsibility towards the Shia community, which may, at a later point, force his hand into a more politically active role. It is, however, a falsehood to assume that the quiet, learned Sistani does not pose a threat in the post-Saddam era, he certainly possesses the capacity and material means as well as already playing the most crucial role rivaling that of the Religious heads of Iran's religious state.

Sistani's careful manipulation of the political process has not always been subtle, as for instance, through his *fatwa* or press releases and interviews. The fatwa issued, rebuffing the coalition's efforts to impose a constitution through a constitutional drafting body, is a case in point. A carefully worded, non-religiously based fatwa ensued from the Grand Marja, successfully demanding a referendum with an explicit 'appeal to the people' in a more democratic way (Arato 2009, 119). As a result, the fatwa effectively appealed to all Iraqis, not just Sistani's Shi'ite followers. Consequently, as Feldman argues, the fatwa's "conclusion and its reasoning were, indeed, essentially indistinguishable from those of any competent international lawyer" (2004, 40). This analysis however ignores the dominant interest of

Sistani as the Marja- the enshrining of Islamic values in the governing and decision making mechanisms, including the constitution. Therefore, the rejection of the constitutional drafting body and a call for democratic process does not necessarily point to a benevolent leader placing the interest of the collective ahead of his own followers. Rather, it points to a calculated move to ensure that the reconstruction and democratization process follows a strictly majoritarian game in ensuring that the majority of Shi'ites attain their religious state. It was, therefore, essential that the Americans lost the capacity to draft a secular constitution that, no doubt, would have used Islam as a 'source of legislation' (Wong 2005), rather than its foundation (hence the carefully worded fatwa). For this purpose, Sistani directly endorsed the United Iraqi Alliance (UIA), which consisted of various Shi'ite political and religious parties including al-Sadr, the Islamic Virtue Party, Bader Organization, Iraqi National Congress (led by Chalabi), Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq and Nuri al-Maliki's Da'wa party (Cole 2009). In the 2005 elections, the UIA won the largest number of seats with 140, followed by the Kurds who gained 75 seats, Iraqi List 40 seats and Sunni Arabs won only 17 seats following large scale boycotting of the election at the behest of the Iraqi Muslim Scholars Association (Pirnie and O'Connell 2008, 14). As Sistani had successfully predicted, "voters *en masse* turned to their primordial loyalties" (Dawisha 2010, 26). This, essentially, allowed the Shia to dominate the elections and the subsequent government.

The outcome of the limited literature that is emerging on the religious actors points to another significant gap in the study of the impact of religious actors. As noted in the literature review, the role of religious actors is increasingly paramount in peace-building activities. Theorists, such as Appleby (1999), have noted this very trend and its significance for ensuring lasting peace in conflict ridden societies. Appleby identifies various distinct types of religious actors in peace-keeping activities. They include: religiously motivated spoilers, faith-based NGOs, local and international religious hierarchies, interreligious organizations as well as local religious communities (Appleby 1999). Such actors perform a variety of activities ranging from diplomacy to advocacy, moral legitimacy, election monitoring, conflict resolution and mediation, education and other awareness raising activities among a host of other undertakings (Appleby 1999, 211).

Another area in which religious actors are prominent within is that of civil society. Defining an abstract concept, such as 'civil society', is a difficult task and something that contemporary political theorists are still grappling with. Further, considering the "vast

heterogeneity” of civil society groups, it is difficult to produce a uniform definition (Anheier 2004). It can be fluidly defined as the area of voluntary association that is outside of the spheres of the state, the economy and the family can be defined as the civil society arena. The rise of civil society groups, consequently, has challenged the dominance of the “two-sector view of market versus state” (Anheier 2004, 1). The importance of civil society organizations lie in challenging the authority of the state and continuously demanding reforms and amendments in government policy and decision making. As a result, the linkages between civil society development and democratization have been admitted by a variety of different theorists (Kaldor 2003; Keane 1998). Yet, civil society groups may develop in order to directly affect state policy and decision making, to raise awareness of policies and their limitations or to attempt to redirect a government’s stance towards a particular strategy. The power of civil society organization is related to their lobbying and direct pressuring of government and their representatives, gained through raising awareness within society by a variety of means, including public protests, publications, educational programs and lobbying. The power of the ‘Occupy Wall Street’ movement, for instance, as a civil society group demonstrates the significant influence that such organizations can wield, both locally and internationally. Other civil society groups, particularly faith-based organizations, provide essential services to societies, particularly in third world countries and conflict ridden states. In other contexts, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon, violent religious organizations have reformed and evolved the role that they played within their communities. Hezbollah's role has evolved from solely being a violent religious organization to a legitimate political party that provide critical social services such as a sophisticated health care system and "free health insurance and prescription-drug coverage" (Childs 2010, 24; see also Alagha 2006; Norton 2007). Yet, here is the distinction between the role of faith based organizations and other religiously based civil society groups in comparison to top level, powerful religious actors such as Sistani (or Muqtada to a lesser degree): these actors fall simultaneously inside and outside of the confines of the civil society organization that the former can be categorized within. The parallels with the religious groups and the organizations are obvious. While different societies can produce different forms of civil society groups, and the type of activism they engage in, it is clear that the roles and activities they engage in fall within an active process of direct pressure through non-violent collective action. However, an essential argument within this thesis is based on the notion that top level religious actors, such as Sistani or Muqtada as well as others such as SCIRI (later the SIIC), retain their own paramilitary groups which positions them in a far more powerful location to challenge



government action. Muqtada retains the Mehdi army, the SIIC Badr brigade, while Sistani owns the militia group Ansar Sistani (Cole 2006). The ability of each party to retain a separate paramilitary group reduces the influence of the government in negotiating new deals and policies, as the threat of violence guarantees such actors a high degree of independence from state authority. This has led experts to conclude that the most important element that prevents the consolidation of state authority is the formation of identity based militia groups that retain extensive support within their constituencies (Hubbard 2008).

Further, according to experts, the various militia groups have negatively impacted the political process and state-building process in three distinct ways: Firstly they have actively and implicitly attempted to destabilize the central government as well as the coalition forces; secondly, they have actively infiltrated official government security forces such as the police force, and finally, they have used extreme violence and 'death squads' to further impose political views and exacerbate sectarian tensions (Hubbard 2007, 348). Further, the existence of these paramilitary groups has effectively diluted the loyalties of security forces, both within the police force as well as the military. The majority of security forces, in cities such as Baghdad, consist of Shi'ites who are put in the difficult decision of choosing loyalty between the state or their religious affiliation. As a result, this "puts great stress on the soldiers, who grew up in a society where respect for religion runs far deeper than for government institutions" (Castaneda 2006). This process has prompted military leaders, such as Lt. Col. Greg Watt to contend that "you can't make a distinction between the Iraq army Shi'ites and the religious militias. You have a lot of soldiers and family members swayed and persuaded by the religious leadership" (cited in Castaneda 2006). Others have noted that as many as ninety per cent of official security forces are loyal to religious parties (Fainaru and Shadid 2005).

On the other hand, the influence of civil society rests in its ability to pressure government into changing policies *without* resorting to violence. Civil society groups do not retain a separate paramilitary to coerce or directly threaten government decision making. Furthermore, the significance of civil society groups resides in their ability to peacefully, through collective action, challenge government policy and decision making. This is one of civil society's most crucial and defining characteristics: being able to contribute to the democratization of a society and the state through peaceful collective action. In contrast,

actors such as Sistani have determined policy decision making and have defined the very parameters in which decision and policy making is produced, while others such as Muqtada have actively used the threat of force and violence to challenge the state's decisions.

## **5.8. Conclusion:**

The Shia clergy have effectively transformed the political culture of Iraq. Sistani and Muqtada, among other clergies, have achieved what Saddam's regime had been attempting to prevent: that is, the politicization and the radicalization of the Shi'ite clerics. Ironically, the U.S. invasion mediated this politicization, something that Khomeini hoped to realize during the 1979 revolution in Iraq, but never did. The significance of this change is often understated, because of the false assumptions made regarding the Shi'ite clergies adherence to the Quietist school of activism. What is of far more significance is not whether Sistani or others like him wish to replicate the Iranian political system, but rather, what it has set in place regarding societies expectations of religious actors in providing security, essential social services, their political activism and directly challenging the centralized authority of the state. One of the most obvious and profound results of this process has been that the clergy will undoubtedly continue to attempt to voice society's concerns, through either violent or peaceful means, especially in the absence of appropriate secular political leaders.

It is fair to argue that Iraq, both the state as well as the nation, is undergoing a re-birth; an attempt to unwrap and restructure its artificially constructed foundations, forged under colonial rule. Just as certain factors become ingrained in the political culture of states following their inception, in this case, sectarian and ethnic divisions, the supremacy of the Sunni sect over other groups, the utilization of violence and coups as a means of political expression and change, as well as entrenchment of corruption and the arbitrary use of state power, so too is the new Iraq being reconstructed under the watchful eyes of the Shi'ite clergy. In a broader context, the reconstruction process has re-politicized the clergy, rendering them as the most powerful elites within the post-Saddam era in Iraq. Following this, it would be very difficult for actors such as Muqtada or Sistani to withdraw completely from the political scene as they both represent different interests within their communities. One can argue that even Muqtada's values and violence is a legitimate reflection of the hostility of being invaded, the helplessness and lack of power within a minority of society, as

well as representative of long held grievances and frustrations towards the U.S. expressed through and towards the reconstruction process.

Sistani emerged from his cocooned non-intervention following the invasion as a powerful force in the reconstruction process. Essentially though, Sistani is most certainly not adhering to the Quietist branch of Shi'ite tradition. Rather, he is active in a non-violent way and has demonstrated great concern for the political well-being of his followers. Yet, al-Sadr's use of violence and al-Sistani's refusal to resort to violence is seen as a vindication of their adherence to the 'Activist' or Quietist branch. There is, indeed, a failure to see the use of violence as merely one of the various vehicles for the expression of activism. Consequently, viewing Sistani as non-activist creates a significant lacuna in the analysis of the reconstructionary process in Iraq, for it effectively eliminates and demotes the influence of one of the most significant top level figures in the Iraq. Indeed, this chapter has demonstrated that the Quietist-Activist discourse provides little theoretical foundation for framing the level of politicization of religious actors.

Returning to the discussion surrounding nation-building and state-building, the role of religion, religious actors and religious violence can be viewed in another light. On this level, the sectarian as well as the inter-religious violence that ensued in Iraq shortly following the invasion, is indicative of the unstable political communities that have been joined together through the penmanship of colonialism (see, for instance Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2000). Some have attempted to view religious and sectarian violence in Iraq through a study of religious content, in grouping values that could be attributed to the reality of political violence, often used in connecting the perceived inherent call for violence, with real political situations (Glazier 2009). Yet, such analyses are limited because they attribute fault to the religion itself, when it is conceivable that any religion could be directed towards violence based on the content of Holy Scriptures. Rather, these manifestations of religious and sectarian violence are more readily connected to inherent difficulties of state formation, where different groups and communities attempt to forge often competing, schismatic national identities. In turn, these elements play a significant part in the formation of a nation's political culture, in the relationship between state and society as well as inter-societal relations (see, for instance, Avruch 1998). As Cole (2004) argues, "nationalism is made not only by unity but by conflict, by struggles and compromises." Gellner (1983) has likewise posited a similar argument. Indeed, the long processes of state formation in Europe produced a similar relationship between violence and state-building (Holden 2004; Glete 2002). State

formation in Europe entailed a process where “nationalist sentiments relate to a myth of origins supplying a psychological focus for the unity of the political community; but any interpretation of origins that has concrete reference to the past is likely to stimulate as much tension as harmony, because of the diversity of cultural differences characteristically involved” (Giddons 1987, 273). Likewise, Rear (2008) argues that the initial stage of violence that erupts during reconstruction missions is similar to the initial state development processes of Western Europe. The violence that erupted between Sunni and Shia militants and inter-Shia is considered to be part of an ‘empirical process of state-building’, and in fact, is a necessary aspect of state reconstruction where post-colonial remnants of conflict are addressed through violence as a method of attempting to develop an “organic political unity” (Dawisha 2008, 253). Other scholars (Rear 2008) have extended this argument further and have noted the necessity of these forms of violence; where ethnic violence plays a crucial role in state-building and obstructions in the violence could have a detrimental impact on the state-building process, far beyond that of the actual violence itself. In this manner, interference “not only perpetuates state weakness or possibly state failure and collapse, it also poses a fundamental challenge to the continuity of the states system and its state-centric premise” (Rear 2008, 66). Sachedina (2002) also concurs with this theory. While others (Cordesman 2003) have warned that core values, such as adherence to Islamic values, are not challenged, since the ‘disestablishment’ of Islam will only serve to destabilize the already fragile state further and will severely challenge the post-Saddam Iraqi state. Cole’s (2004) analysis of the sectarian violence and the influx of external jihadists into Iraq spotlights a different relationship towards the general consensus that religious violence has played in Iraq. He notes that the inwardly projected sectarian violence does not displace Iraqi nationalism, but rather “[s]ectarian groupings in the country do not see their religious identities as superseding their national ones”. The development of the Salhawi group and the coordination of Sunnis to expel Sunni jihadists that had crossed over to Iraq from neighbouring states fittingly reflect this argument. This suggests that the violence experienced in Iraq is not endemic of an inevitable fracturing of Iraq but rather is more closely in line with the attempt to forge a national identity however violently and bloody that process may be. This trend also implies that the terms of a Sunni-Shia argument would evolve into the foundation for the new social contract that will define the future of all Iraqi’s.

One anomaly is the inter-Shi’ite conflict that erupted between Sistani and Muqtada. Both continued to challenge each other’s power bases during the reconstruction, in some instances

resorting to direct violence to delegitimize the other. Lake and Rothchild (1998) note that conflict ridden societies are plagued by ethnic tensions, as state weakness forces different identities to become pronounced. Increasingly leaders utilize myths, symbols, memories and other identity markers to forge a more closely knit community as a means of protection. Yet, in doing so, they increase the likelihood of ethnic or religious tensions as other groups perceive these actions as dangerous to their own survival. The inter-Shi'ite tension however finds explanation in the greater Shia-Sunni politics in the region. As some experts (Nasr 2006) have been quick to point out, the Iraq war indicated a possible Shia revival leading to direct tensions between the Sunnis and Shias. The tension between Muqtada and Sistani was not solely based on responses towards or attempts to set agendas for the reconstruction of Iraq. Rather, the inherent tension lay with finding a post-Saddam role for the Shi'ite clerics and ensuring an improved position for the Shi'ite community, not only within Iraq but also regionally. The discussion surrounding Sistani's adherence to quietist branch and Muqtada's activism have revolved around an internal dialogue within the Shia community in regards to the level of activism required to forward the Shia cause. While works that have been quick to point to a Shia revival have focused mainly on inter-sectarian conflict, they have largely failed to address the internal violence within the Shi'ite community in Iraq. This tension is also part of the nation-building processes noted above. However, often in such contexts it is intra-group conflicts that are analysed. Rarely are there attempts to also comprehend inter-group tensions as an extension and expression of nation-building mechanisms. Considering that the majority of the nation consists of Shi'ites who have developed a unique relationship with the state as well as regionally, intra-group tension within this community is arguably of greater significance than the sectarian or ethnic tensions. It is essentially the Shia community and the extent to which they are willing to compromise and accommodate competing groups and their demands in the post-Saddam era that will determine the nature of Iraqi peace and stability.

In this regard, religious actors have played a very prominent, if not the most crucial, role in this process, either positively or negatively in being able to represent the vast array of interests within the fragmented Iraqi society. According to Migdal (2001), no other element is more important to *stateness* than the ability to organize citizens into political mobilization. Yet, the reconstruction process in Iraq has often been subverted or aided by the ability of prominent religious actors to take over this process of governance. They have effectively mobilized Iraqi society into mass protests either through peaceful or violent measures.

Consequently, for the donor community to demonstrate a commitment to democratic rule in Iraq, it will need to take into account the voice of prominent actors including and indeed especially religious leaders. However, the dilemma for the donor community lies in the conflict of interest that naturally arises when the recipient society demands a post-conflict governance that is aligned with their traditional, customary and historical values, in this case Islamic Sharia law; and their own interests which correspond more readily with liberal democratic norms that unmistakably entail a secular state construct. While it is theoretically possible to reconcile these two competing interests, often the trend aligns more with dominance of western expectations to the detriment of legitimacy. A more viable option that effectively reconciles domestic and donor expectations may evolve from a high degree of compromise between the two. This is often a difficult task to achieve, as most reconstructions to date have demonstrated a high degree of policy failures and inconsistencies that have left recipient societies reeling from further socio-economic and political challenges. These failures have increased anger and resentment within recipient societies, reducing the legitimacy of the reconstruction as well as the possibility of genuine compromise and consensus between the two interests.

Exacerbating this was the initial failures of the reconstruction process that cascaded to latter attempts at governance and development, largely emerging from an ignorance of the basic elements of Iraq's resistance forces that entailed two groups in south and central Iraq- the secular exiled groups and the religious leaders who had actively opposed the regime for decades. It was the complete lack of awareness of the second group that arguably led to various aftershocks of the reconstruction process. This failure is symptomatic of the state-building vs. nation-building distinction, where secular actors that have adopted the democratic rhetoric of the state-building community have been given prominence precisely because they are deemed to contribute to the institution building process that is central to the state-centric reconstruction model. The voices of religious actors have in contrast been silenced or at best ignored because they often pose painful challenges to the processes of institution, legitimacy and capacity building mechanisms of the liberal state-centric model. Moreover, the tendency of the U.S. and other power brokers to become involved in interventions often assumes a large degree of consistency in the recipient society. In other words, these societies are treated as cohesive and homogenous entities, or at least, societies that are in close reach of achieving cohesiveness. As a result, "they have assumed an often non-existent unity and sense of common destiny" (Azar and Haddad 1986, 1339). Such

reconstructions have essentially failed to build a nation and have instead focused on building a state to contain and manage this lack of cohesion. It is possible that the international community mistakes a sense of national identity for cohesion, which has limited the normative and empirical understandings of such missions.

Ultimately, any form of post-Saddam Iraqi governance will entail some elements of Islamic jurisdiction and laws. Various religious actors have increasingly and successfully advocated such a measure. Yet, the reconstruction process and the resurgence movement have been viewed as a vindication of Islam's inherently violent roots (Spencer 2007; Akbar 2002), rather than an expression of a legitimate demand for representation and self-expression, however misguided the resultant political activism may have been. This chapter, in contrast, has attempted to demonstrate that the use of religious violence in Iraq is linked to local forms of legitimacy building and is indeed part and parcel of a successful reconstruction process as different communities attempt to forge their own sense of social consensus regarding which form of Islam the end state should adopt, if any. As Barnett (2006) notes, the concept of legitimacy is fluid and culture specific so that legitimacy, in accordance with Western states values, may directly conflict with local notions surrounding legitimacy. Esposito and Voll (1996:193) likewise argue that "democracy is in reality a contested term...[and] is capable of multiple interpretations and applications." Referring to the contentious formation of democratic governance in the west, Esposito and Voll (1996, 193) warn against the tendency to replicate western versions of democratic governance within recipient states:

Contrary to the belief or presuppositions of some, the Western experience of democracy reveals a rich mosaic rather than a single paradigm. Similarly, the history and implementation of democracy in the West reveals the extent to which the emergence and development of democracy, or democratic values and institutions, was itself a "messy" process fraught with the tensions and conflicts that accompany all great periods of historical and social transformation; it was the subject of great debates and revolutions, of rhetoric and bloodshed, championed by democrats and demagogues. Acceptance of the contested nature of democracy, its diversity and dynamics of development, enables the recognition that there can be alternative and rival uses of the term. Thus, democratization need not simply be the adoption of Western democracy (in some monolithic form) but can equally be the adaptation of Western democratic forms or the formulation of indigenously rooted forms of political participation and empowerment. Similarly, recognition of the extent to which the formulation and legitimacy of western democracy was not only the creation of something new but also the product of a reinterpretation or reformulation of older concepts, beliefs, and institutions opens up the possibility of other cultural and religious traditions generating and accommodating democratic forms of governance.

In light of this insight, the question hence is: how conceivable or stable will a newly reconstructed state be if the donor community does not take into account the expectations of Islamic communities?, as is the case in Iraq, in so far as that religion does not only provide moral guidance but also serve as the founding values that underpin governance; and that it is seen essentially by the community as a “form of public policy” (Khoury 1990, 166), thereby eliminating the need for alternative and ‘foreign’ forms of policy. Yet, the eruption of periodic sectarian violence in Iraq should not be viewed as an absolute prediction for the future of the country. As Will Kymlicka (1989, 165) argues, it is “only through having a rich and secure cultural structure that people can become aware, in a vivid way, of the options available to them, and intelligently examine their value.” However, as Chapter Five demonstrates, the level of domestic security required to establish such a transformation is severely limited by the state and supra-state interests in the region. Thus, the regional instability which resulted from the significant socio-political engineering that occurred as a result of the invasion, has also played a detrimental role in nurturing identity conflicts.



## **CHAPTER SIX- EXOGENOUS ACTORS AND IRAQ'S RECONSTRUCTION**

### **6.1. Introduction:**

It is evident that weak and failing states pose a significant threat, not only to their own citizens, but also to the regional order as well. Security dilemmas, for instance, often permeate neighbouring states, while the flow of refugees disrupts the markets and stability of neighbouring states. Likewise, as the state's capacity is impaired its ability to keep law and order, to contain security issues or to honour its security or economic bargains with exogenous actors compromised. Additionally, weak and failing states often reside in the most unstable, un-democratic regions of the world, thereby exponentially increasing the possibility of adverse flow on effects to their non-democratic, authoritarian neighbours. In some instances, the flow of people and values across borders breeds dissent across neighbouring states, and increases the chance of neighbouring regime's eventual fragmentation and failure. For the international community, failing and weak states are akin to a diseased organ within an organically connected body. As a result, the international community, involving prominent states, international bodies and NGO'S have become increasingly vested in preventing state failure. Interventionary wars, such as those in Afghanistan or Iraq, are subsequently conducted, though for vastly different reasons. As a result, substantial literature has emerged which insists that interventions and reconstructions require long term plans and commitment, both domestically as well as regionally, by involving neighbouring states in a positive and constructive manner. An isolated treatment plan, focusing solely on domestic institution

development, can only have a limited impact where neighbours often perpetuate conditions that contribute to armed conflicts.

Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to highlight that the empirical reconstruction of struggling states is not merely a question of fixing the domestic and internal limitations. Rather, as the literature highlights, state failure is often a regional dilemma whose repercussions reverberate across neighbouring states. Consequently, to successfully reconstruct a struggling state, the international donor community needs to actively pursue addressing regional political, economic and security limitations. It is clear that fragile states become weak as a result of the complex combination of sub-state and supra-state challenges, usually involving identity conflicts along ethnic or religious lines. However, the literature to date has failed to identify that just as state building policies require a corresponding nation building plan, so too there needs to be a corresponding regional development plan to support the internal reconstruction of the weak state.

More importantly, state failure is attributed to an institutionally based state-centric diagnosis of struggling states. The view that the weakness of state institutions, which fail to address domestic weaknesses, solely contributing to eventual state failure, is deeply entrenched in the field. While the role of neighbouring states and actors is acknowledged as a contributing factor, the policies adopted to address state weakness do not extend to neighbours, essentially leaving a large proportion of the conflict unresolved. This is particularly crucial in the Middle East, since certain conflict sign-posts such as identity, religion and culture run across state borders, ensuring a high level of regional investment in conflicts in neighbouring states.

So far, the objective of the thesis has been to note the failures of the reconstruction process in Iraq, which largely emerged because leading powers did not take into account Iraq's unique history and subsequent culture. The reconstruction, therefore, repeated mistakes of past missions and attempted to impose liberal-democratic values on a society ill-prepared to receive political transformation to such an extensive degree, hence it fundamentally challenged Iraqi society's political and governance experience to date. Further, it was arguably a political transformation that Iraq's neighbours were not equipped to accept, and most importantly, were unwilling to allow Iraq to adopt. Instead, experts embarked on a complex and multifaceted, often orientalist and west-centric debate about the nature of Iraqi society and its capacity to accept liberal democratic values. Debates about the nature of Arab or Islamic societies being essentially contradictory to liberal democratic values emerged as a

dominant trend (for a discussion, see Gerges 2005). Others added further fuel to this debate by linking the rise of religious fundamentalism to the failure of the reconstructions (Hoffman 2006; Hashim 2005). Some counter argued that such trends were predictable, as American neo-imperialism led by neo-conservative had resulted in widespread international, and more to the point, Arab discontent over American foreign policies (Imam 2004). Where regionalism was discussed, Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia, among others, were noted for their interference in the reconstruction process (see, for instance, Giraldi 2008; Obaid 2006). Islamic identities, it was noted, particularly sectarianism, prompted such states to interfere. Yet, these analyses do not adequately capture the complexity of Iraq's reconstruction and the varying interests of its neighbours in its transition. What was essentially missing from the discourse was an understanding of the intricate and recent colonial history of the Middle East, and that transnational identities on a religious, ethnic and ideological front supersede borders of sovereign states. What this suggests is that the Middle East shares a common culture, a culture largely dominated by a Sunni-Arab identity that struggles with other endogenous identities: Persian, Turkish, Shia. Nevertheless, a common and shared recent history of western domination, imperialism and hypocritical policies governs collective memory, acting as a powerful homogenising force. On this account, to reconstruct Iraq was tantamount to reconstructing the whole region, particularly a state that, until recently, still aimed for a leadership role and championed pan-Arab and Sunni-Islamic values.<sup>21</sup> More importantly, to the greater Middle East, Iraq represented an Arab state that was still defiant of western hegemony. Consequently, to argue that the reconstruction process in Iraq rested on the region, its history and its political legacies, as well as its economic and cultural norms, is an understatement. Iraq's reconstruction, therefore, equates to changing that recent history and collective memory; it equates to challenging the political processes within the region. It equates to challenging the Arab and Islamic identity. Most importantly, it equates to re-opening shared wounds relating to a history of western imperialism, humiliation and marginalisation, economic failures and western powers deliberate support of authoritarian regimes, as well as the most spectacular evidence of Islam's failure- the existence of Zionism at the very heart of the Muslim region, and the subsequent stunning defeat of the Arabs in the 1967 war. To presume that Iraq's reconstruction would, hence, be a simple, isolated and speedy mission, points to a profound level of regional ignorance.

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<sup>21</sup> Indications of this can be seen through widespread protests following the arrest of Saddam Hussein by the CPA, with protesters emerging from cities such as Baquba, which were not previously considered as a pro-Saddam area (Janabi 2004). The protests, chanting that Saddam represented the dignity of their nation, had chosen to forego condemning Saddam, and, instead demonstrated contempt for the occupation (Janabi 2004).

The importance of this chapter lies in highlighting various policy failures with the reconstructionary field as part of a greater policy-development failure inherent within the discipline. Failures are linked to the greater discussion on identity politics through an analysis of cultural and religious identity cleavages. Theorists on war and conflict, for instance, have emphasised the necessity of shifting thinking on regional conflicts (Azar 1990). They have pointed out the necessity of a shift in assessment and approaches to such conflicts, so as to produce more judicious policies (Azar and Burton 1986). Increased economic and trade links, along with the modernisation of technology, communication and the relative ease of cross border travel, have created ever more salient links between neighbouring states and regions; the nature of the international system and modern warfare ensures that civil conflicts continue to reverberate across neighbouring states and regions. For others, the study of the causations of war or their over inflation is important if causation is linked to responsibility (Cousins 1987, 133). Within the reconstructionary field, when wars occur, whether on an intrastate or interstate level, it is the responsibility of those leading such missions to ensure reduced risk and regional fall out. As Deng and Zartman (1991, 5) note, “conceptual understanding of the reasons behind conflicts is important to conflict management and resolution because it helps policymakers identify root causes and suggest formulas for mediators to use to reduce disputes.” This is where the regional context takes precedence.

This chapter attempts to visit some of the existing theories on the influence of neighbouring states and apply them to the reconstruction field. It will raise key issues relevant to the region that could (and have) significantly influenced the mission in Iraq. Case studies, such as Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia among others, will be raised to highlight the impact of the war on each state at a domestic and international level, as well as some of the responses adopted by each regime in order to adjust to the new regional order. In some instances, covert or tacit policies were adopted by neighbouring states to prevent changes to the existing order. Neither all states nor all issues are raised here. However, the chapter hopes to raise some of the more common issues, so as to point to the regional implications of the Iraq reconstruction. The importance of this chapter links back to the ideas that were raised in Chapter Two, and relates to the liberal peace building ideologies of U.S. hegemonic power. In doing so, it revisits the important observation/conclusion/proposition that reconstructions contain an isolated body of policies designed to address state weaknesses at an institutional level. Again, values that prevent the establishment of durable peace (once these institutions have been established), including the all-important notion of identity politics, are ignored and not incorporated into

the body of policies produced. The repercussions of this limitation, as will be seen in this chapter, often echo across the region, which is all the more important for regional peace and stability, since the Middle East is dominated by authoritarian political structures.<sup>22</sup>

## **6.2. Theories on Influence of Neighbours:**

The influence of exogenous actors and events are a significant force for an effective reconstruction process, or may contribute to promotion of insurgencies. The empirical practices of reconstructions demonstrate limitations in pre-conflict planning. The lack of awareness of, and interest towards the intricacies of the domestic political culture and the history of the recipient state promotes limited policy development, failing to address such issues as a regional dilemma and not solely isolated domestic events. This policy exists tacitly through the tendency to ignore local conditions and identities, with the imposition of a 'one size fits all' policy of democracy-building. Likewise, the regional implications of regime changes or interventions have attracted attention from theorists. Scholarly work by the likes of Huntington (1993), Diamond (1999), Grugel (1999), Parajulee (2000), and Wejnert (2005) have focused on the influence of diffusion on the spread of democratisation within a region. According to Parajulee, diffusion depicts the snowballing effects of democratic values permeating neighbouring states (2000, 143). The most prominent of such studies was produced by Huntington, following the third wave of democratization. According to Huntington, diffusion produced the spread of democratisation across Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia. Factors such as urbanization, rising education and literacy levels, a growing middle class, economic development as well as the rise of liberal societal values, all contributed to diffusion of democratic norms (1993, 106). However, the majority of these studies focus on the rise of democratisation as an internally driven, endogenous process that retained an inherently organic and legitimate façade which may have been influenced by the rising trend of democratisation in neighbouring states. The dilemma inherent within this study, however, relates to the imposed nature of democratisation in forced interventions and regime changes. Arguably, these cases propose different challenges and dilemmas for the diffusion of democracy within a region. Such activities are often viewed in isolation, involving the reconstruction of a sovereign nation-state that lacks the appropriate institutional

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<sup>22</sup> However, at the point of writing, the Arab Spring is currently posing an incipient challenge to this established regional order and the Middle East may differ significantly in months to come.

capacity to function and address internal problems, and thus experiences protracted civil conflicts. The influence of neighbouring states, their involvement in the internal conflict of the recipient society, the region's security behaviour, and their investment in maintaining the status quo or promoting changes that reflect national interests is often neglected in the literature.

The literature on regionalism argues that states develop a region-specific form of security building, or insecurity and conflict. The Middle East, with its diverse authoritarian regimes, had reached a level of symmetry before the 2003 Iraq invasion. System theory has noted that every political structure or system, however imperfect it may be, often reaches a level of equilibrium (Harpviken 2010). As Theodore Lowi (1963, 570) points out, "once the internal processes of an organization have become routine and its relations to the outside world have become stabilized, a form of inertia appears to set in. The prevailing patterns are seen as good by the members." More importantly, once this equilibrium is entrenched it becomes harder to adapt to change, and hence "identification involves a good deal of resistance to change" (Lowi 1963, 570). Even regions which contain weak or failing states, also manage to reach a form of equilibrium where competing interests, groups and supra-state identities reach a level of balance understood by all parties involved. Wars and subsequent reconstructions often disturb that equilibrium, but outside actors who institute such missions, fail to balance the need to reconstruct with also a region-wide agenda in place. However, this is not to suggest a call for further 'western imperialism,' or to indicate that missions should be conducted across a series of neighbouring states - as the Bush administration was hinting in the initial stages of Iraq's invasion, by highlighting the other members of the so called 'axis of evil' (see Shay 2005). Studies have demonstrated that such coercive diplomacy has, in fact, increased, rather than decreased, these regimes' hostility towards the U.S. (Davies 2008, 394). Consequently, the argument within this thesis advocates for a more regionally sensitive policy of reconstruction, that attempts to provide neighbours with a voice, and, in some instances, a part to play in the reconstruction process of their troubled neighbour. Regionally, Iraq's war was largely perceived to be an invasion (McWhinney 2004), and, if the reconstruction is to achieve a minimal level of legitimacy post-withdrawal, that legitimacy-building agenda needs to encompass the whole region. If neighbours perceive the reconstructed state as a farce and illegitimate, they are in a perfect position to spoil the reconstruction, unless appropriate incentives are provided. Incentives may very well take the form of monetary aid, may simply involve inclusion in the debate and reconstruction process, or may entail active involvement,

direct contribution, and investment in the reconstructed society so as to prevent the probability of spoiler policies being adopted by neighbours. Policies need to be directly reliant on the specifics of each case study and the recipient state's relations with each neighbour.

Previous cases have demonstrated that missions generally take place in volatile regions, with a high probability that neighbouring states will be non-democratic in nature, as was the case with Iraq, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Timor Leste, Namibia and Rwanda. A significant discrepancy, hence, arises from the onset of the mission - outside powers that deploy liberal-democratic values to a region that views its non-democratic, authoritarianism with satisfaction, or at least with a level of acceptance. To challenge one state and consign it to a radically different socio-economic and political structure, not only threatens the very foundation of that state, but the region as a whole, promoting region wide resistance. In this instance, Iraq is bordered by six neighbours, Syria, Turkey, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. With the exception of Turkey, all of Iraq's five other neighbours are non-democratic, Islamic and resource rich. Yet, even Turkey's democratic credentials are questionable and widely considered as problematic (see Carkoglu and Kalaycioglu 2007). All of Iraq's neighbours share common elements including transnational identities such as Islamic (Shia-Sunni) and ethnic (Arab, Turkish), and retain minorities (such as the Kurds) that ensure a high level of security and national investment in the affairs of Iraqi domestic politics. Likewise, Iraq's neighbours share similar policies towards specific regional issues, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, with minor degrees of moderation (see Lea and Rowe 2002). For all, recent memory is dominated by a colonial narrative. The Middle East is, therefore, a region heavily invested in itself and heavily involved in the domestic affairs of each state, and can indeed ill afford to behave in any other manner. In the Middle East, sovereignty, a fairly recent phenomenon in the region, is directly subject to fluctuations in the regional and political situation.

Research has also indicated conflicts often attract external actors and, in some cases, such actors continue to nourish such wars. The civil conflict in Angola (1975), for instance, attracted Soviet, Cuban, American and South African involvement (Furley and May 2006, 4). World War I and II both contained multiple parties and their durations were directly reliant on the number of states that became involved. Similarly, the Cold War developed the important process of proxy wars and satellite states, as part of the balancing act in geopolitical conflicts. The Israel-Arab conflict, likewise, contains multiple parties, producing

an impossible mixture of views in peace proposals. What is clear is that no intra-state or inter-state war can occur in isolation. Instead, multiple endogenous and exogenous factors influence the nature of a conflict, its duration, its level of violence, its peace terms and subsequent reconstruction. In some ways, the most important element in this process entails the influence of outside non-state and state actors. This is especially so in situations involving reconstructions because controlling the complex variables within the domestic environment of a recipient society is already a deeply problematic process. However, the problem is complicated exponentially when belligerent exogenous actors whose interests are threatened by the reconstruction, are also involved.

As Deng and Zartman (1991, 418) emphasize, “without external sources, armed confrontation would be constrained, and conflicts, even if they exploded into violence, would be less destructive.” However, globalisation, industrialisation, economic interdependence and modernisation trends in the contemporary international system have ensured that states are no longer capable of functioning politically or economically in isolation. A state’s neighbours and their policies, economic instability, security, infrastructures, culture, religion, political system and regime type all significantly influence states that share borders or that reside in a region. The conflict in Rwanda is a case in point. As Gasper highlights, “the interconnection of economic issues, identity issues, and physical security; and the interconnections of countries linked through global markets, global tastes and trends, the arms trade, and global media” (2009, 165) all contributed to the conflict. It is, therefore, difficult for one state within a region to experience domestic political, economic or security difficulties without directly influencing its neighbours. Neighbours are also inevitably drawn into conflicts, through involvement in mediating the conflict and reducing its regional impacts (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Mial 2005).

Sometimes, involvement may occur as a matter of necessity. For instance, neighbours are often left to shelter the exodus of people escaping internal conflicts; they are left to house, feed and provide for large numbers of refugees and mediate through the conflict as Iraq’s neighbours were forced to do following the exodus of refugees. Neighbours are also forced to deal with the political fallout, as well as economic implications of their neighbours’ domestic problems, as well as general regional instability. Moreover, states often share common communities, religious or ethnic groups within their borders. Ethnic or religious strife could easily entice co-religionists or co-ethnic groups to challenge their governments. Often, since the international system ensures a high degree of co-dependency, modern sovereign states



cannot afford to refrain from taking a direct and close interest in the domestic affairs of their neighbours,.

Reconstruction, development and liberalisation of a failing state is, therefore, certainly not an easy endeavour. Studies on democracy importation into recipient societies, for example, have consistently demonstrated reoccurring trends. In this context, Mansfield and Snyder (2002) note the violent nature of political transitions following invasions and forced conversions to liberal democracy. Local elites mobilise society along nationalist ideologies to oppose the invasion or political changes. This development prevents the formation of strong institutions, but also extends instability and lack of security. In contrast, according to Owen (2002), states that transition quickly to democracy and produce stable institutions do not experience this trend. Inglehart and Welzel (2005, 215) concur when they note that countries such as Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovenia in Eastern Europe, as well as other states such as Chile and South Korea, managed a relatively quick transition from authoritarianism to democracy. However, Inglehart and Welzel do note that the crucial factors that contributed to such adaptation to democratic norms, in the third wave, involved not only the removal of regime obstacles but also the removal of external support inherent within the Cold War paradigm, as well as the existence of strong 'self-expression values' (2005, 218). Overall though, the initial transitory stages towards democracy tend to attract armed conflict and protracted war due to the weakness of domestic institutions, as well as the difference between entrenched elites expectations relative to the masses. Likewise, parasitic exogenous actors and groups often take advantage of internal instability to advance their own interests and causes. The lesson is that no reconstructionary mission can afford to ignore a recipient society's neighbours and their history of involvement, interests and relations. But, more importantly, this supports the case for transitions to occur as quickly as possible, so as to reduce the possibility of domestically grown or regional spoilers from emerging or from impacting the mission to a greater degree. Producing such a transition, however, is dependent upon an awareness of possible preventers of peace, including social cleavages.

Liberal peace theory contends that democracies are less likely to engage in conflict or war with one another (Russett 1993; Oneal and Russett 1999); a view readily adopted and accepted by the international community in addressing state weakness. Further, interdependency through international organisations such IMF, World Bank, U.N., and NATO, mediate or produce pressures that alleviate the chances of hot wars occurring. In contrast, recent studies (Mansfield and Snyder 2002) have demonstrated that transitional

democracies actively seek and initiate wars with neighbouring states. In other words, transitioning societies are far more prone to conflict with neighbouring states compared to stable regimes, irrespective of the nature of the political system. Though such studies contest the assumption that regime change and transition to democracy always produce war; they also note that it is state' transitioning to democracy, as opposed to those transitioning towards authoritarianism, that are more likely to pursue war and hostilities with neighbouring states (Mansfield and Snyder 2002). The primary reason that explains this trend lies with the tendency for weak state institutions to capture the interests of various political groups (Rousseau 2005). In turn, institutional weakness directly correlates to increased internal and external conflict. Political actors amalgamate divergent political interests and groups under the ideology of nationalism, which often appeals across a cross-section of society. The capacity for nationalist ideologies to collectivise society serves as a preventative block against institutional development and democracy-building. In turn, institutional weaknesses provide limited space for interest groups, political parties and other organisations to mobilize and compete peacefully. Moreover, liberal peace theory promotes a state-centric notion of conflict management. That is, building institutions and democratic processes produces normative and physical constraints against conflict development (Oberg and Strom 2008, 61). However, some have raised doubts over the possibility of democracy taking a foothold in volatile regions such as the Middle East. Bernard Lewis, for instance, proposes that advocates of democracy in the Middle East are “at a disadvantage. Their ideology requires them, even when in power, to give freedom and rights to the Islamist opposition. The Islamists, when in power, are under no such obligation. On the contrary, their principles require them to suppress what they see as impious and subversive activities” (2003, 96).<sup>23</sup> Such perspectives are highly debatable, but nevertheless, represent the complexity of democracy building and transitions towards such a governing system in a hostile region.

External factors can have both a positive and a negative impact on nation-building and state-building activities. In Iraq, despite initial clashes between Sunni and Shiites, nationalist rhetoric succeeded sectarianism. Prominent religious actors such as Sistani and Sadr both called for a unified nationalist ideology, albeit with different agendas and means of promoting this idea. As Mansfield and Snyder (2002) note, nationalist ideologies provide the convenient mechanism of collectivising and mobilising society along an ideology that the masses can accept. However, such attempts often entail an exaggeration of external threats. In

Iraq, this trend produced several positive results. On the one hand, the consolidation of various movements and an increase of nationalist sentiments emerged following the behaviour of al-Qaeda forces in Iraq, which deployed increasingly violent tactics. Zarqawi's violence for instance, led Sunni leaders to advocate a unified boycott of the initial support that the movement enjoyed. Additionally, the eventual rise of the Sahwa (Awakening) movement focused solely on redirecting Sunni anger towards prevention of al-Qaeda produced violence and acts of terror (Abouzeid 2009). Such action and cooperation produced significant nation-building capital, and sectarian relations improved markedly following this strategy. Likewise, the advocacy of external threats by various groups, particularly the Sadr organisation, has limited the aspirations of Iran's involvement, as significant Shi'ite religious and secular leaders such as Nouri al-Malaki, al-Sadr and his Mahdi Army, Ayatollah Sistani, Ayatollah al-Hakim, as well as the Badr Organisation have close relations - through ethnicity or political affiliations - with Iran. To build or maintain legitimacy, such leaders needed to demonstrate distance and political independence from Iran, which also produced nation-building momentum (Heit 2005). The Iranian born Grand Marja Sistani's attempts to appease local and international fears of replicating Iran's religious theocracy is a clear example. Nevertheless, accusations of certain groups or individuals having close connections or silently collaborating with exogenous spoilers is also evident, both in the existing body of literature as well as in the empirical cases (Katzman 2005).

Iraq's reconstruction has, for the most part, produced more negative regional impacts than positive changes. Indeed, previous to the invasion, evidence of limited political reforms existed in most Arab states to varying degrees. The 1980's and 1990's saw a reversal of antireform ideologies, with limited and tentative measures adopted by states across the region (see Hawthorne 2004)<sup>24</sup>. Heavily controlled multi-party elections were held, limited political activity was allowed along with a more liberal media outlets emerging. Likewise, civil society groups began to produce limited changes across the region. Even if concrete measures were not adopted, the region at least began to employ the language of liberal-democratic reform. These measures were supported with regional intellectuals such as Fareed Zakaria, Hala Mustafa, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, Shakr al-Nabulsi, George Trabishi and New Arab Liberals, *Al-Liberaliyyun al-'Arab al-Judad*, demanding increased reforms and producing a

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<sup>24</sup> For a whole body of literature that focused on the liberalisation and political reforms in the region in the past decade, see the following texts: Yousef 2004; Bellin 2004; Dekmejian 2003. Ottaway and Hamzawy 2004. Okruhlik 2005; Brumberg 2003; Lee 2003; Kepel 2004; and Jones 2003.

rich, albeit restricted, debate (see Hawthorne 2004). All of these changes emerged in light of a tradition of western aid that did not precondition political reforms. Subsequently, the U.S. invasion redirected local attempts at reform to the extent that most of these policies stalled or were reversed. Despite this, some scholars have argued that the Iraq invasion has directly inspired democratic movements within the region that culminated in the Arab Spring (see Greenwald 2011). However, the links between the Iraq war and the Arab Spring remain tenuous, at best. Indeed, the Tunisian uprising, for example, personified a violent response to economic repression, which had greater roots in neoliberal market values, as well as the recent Global Financial Crisis (see Hibou 2011). The failed modernization experiment, for instance, as well as incompetent and corrupt banking and financial processes, contributed to low levels of domestic investment. Despite this, the Arab Spring itself illustrates regionalism quite well. Overall though, local regimes view U.S. preoccupation with Iraq and Iran as a means of giving themselves a “reprieve on domestic liberalization” (Wehrey et al. 2010, 17). The lessons from Iraq clearly indicate a need for a more consolidated regional policy that re-enforces the core agendas of the reconstruction process. In this instance, attempts at imposing democracy on Iraq allowed reforming states to digress; indeed, in most of these instances, anti-terror laws have produced more adverse reactions to the detriment of human rights because the U.S. adopted a fragmented democratisation and reform policy within the Middle East. Additionally, the U.S. adopted a policy of aid to regional powers such as the Mubarak regime, without requiring adequate political reforms in return (see Alsoudi 2006; Crawford 2001; Herbst 1992). Valuing regime stability above political reforms produced limited changes within the region and, in some instances, prevented reforms.

Promoting regional accountability and ownership of a reconstruction is problematic. It is difficult to determine competing needs, such as troops, military and logistic supplies between states who have actively promoted internal instability in the recipient society. It is also a complex diplomatic process to allow some states to contribute troops and reject troop contribution from others. For instance, Iraq’s situation may have deteriorated further had Iranian troops been accepted as part of the reconstruction process. Clearly, such a strategy would have been counterproductive. However, on the other hand, it would have been ignorant to prevent Iranian involvement, whether on a troop level or otherwise, to aid in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. As James Dobbins (2007) notes, there is a significant difference between accepting troop contributions from belligerent states and establishing a forum in which such states, irrespective of their role, can have a say. Consequently, Dobbins

proposes three levels of involvement - the first layer should ideally entail the major powers, the second should involve major financial donors, while the third level involves regional powers. Dobbins insists that “without such coordination, international efforts are likely to be disjointed, with the various organizations concerned competing for turf while shirking the riskier or less rewarding tasks” (2007, 284).

Moreover, such conflicts often produce competing groups who look to neighbouring powers to fund and support their movements. Neighbouring states, in turn, attempt to promote and support groups and communities that will directly benefit their own causes, or prevent the rise of another rival group. Ultimately for Dobbins, neighbours cannot be excluded from the process of, or be prevented from, exerting influence on the domestic affairs of their neighbours. Nor, according to the literature, should they be, since they are the states that will feel the outcomes of the conflict most keenly on a humanitarian, economic and political level. Consequently, it is important “to find ways to engage them constructively, no matter how unhelpful their activities may have been in the past. Failure to do so, can condemn to failure even the most generously resourced operation” (Dobbins 2007). The difficulty lies in locating a balance between military and diplomatic roles for various states within the region. Others have noted similar trends. For instance, Lake and Rothchild (1998) have analysed the root causes of conflict, its transmission regionally as well as the sources that lead to ethnic violence escalating. Diffusion occurs as a result of information flow that produces specific responses and behaviours in ethnic groups in neighbouring states. Whereas escalation occurs as a direct outcome of involvement of co-religionists or co-ethnic groups within neighbouring states, territorial demands, as well as the necessity to divert attention from domestic issues or predatory states attempting to gain from the neighbouring conflict, all play a dominant role. As noted theories on conflict management have long espoused the necessity of involving regional actors and organisations in the reconstruction process (Keller 1998). Yet, despite this, in reality *realpolitik* prevents the implementation of regional participation in a reconstruction. While it is conceivable that a lack of capacity or experience may prevent the direct involvement of regional players, nevertheless, it is possible for neighbouring states to contribute through other means, including the provision of resources, administrative staff, logistics, troops, and policy experts, among a variety of other resources.

### **6.3. The Middle East and Regionalism:**

Colonialism in the Middle East imposed an intrinsic defect within the region; the creation of artificial borders through the 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement considerably reduced the possibility of homogenous nation-states emerging. Thus, colonial rule, according to Bernard Lewis, entailed “imperialism of interference without responsibility, which would neither create nor permit stable and orderly government” (1966, 59). Rather, imperialism produced fragmented communities confined within (widely viewed) illegitimate borders by those trapped within these modern sovereign states. As a result, experts have noted the exceptional nature of the region which is “eternally out of step with history and immune to the trends affecting other parts of the world” (Aarts 1999, 911; also Rubin 2002). The rise of Arab nationalism, culminating in the development of the Arab League in 1945, and Gamal Abdul Nasser’s pan-Arab aspirations somewhat alleviated the illegitimacy factor. Yet, Kemal Ataturk’s Turkish vision of secular-nationalism proved far more successful and emerged as the ideal for the region to emulate. Nationalist ideology often serves as a strong unifying force within states, reducing tolerance for interference from outside actors and neighbours. However, greater attempts at regionalism and formation of Arab nationalism, particularly through pan-Arabism failed largely because it lacked the capacity to “transcend local and regional boundaries” (Choueiri 2000, 9), but also because it relied on religion, ideology, and ethnicity, which challenged the centrality “of the state as an object of fidelity” (Anderson 1987, 13). Within the international system, nationalism has served the ‘sovereignty’ discourse well. Nationalism provided a basis on which sovereignty was reliant on nation-states, promoting non-interference, and thereby, in theory at least, increase state capacity. Colonialism in the Middle East, however, prevented this crucial nation-state-building step that western states enjoyed. Instead, post-colonial states were reduced to an amalgamation of a variety of ethnic and religious groups, some of which had displayed hostilities and open conflict towards each other, and were forced into nation and state-building projects within an unstable foundation. The economic implications of partition of communities across various state borders, for instance, added another burden on newly formed or independent states. The promotion of state capacity and legitimacy entailed “simultaneous reorientations in economic links, social relations, and political loyalties” (Anderson 1987, 6). On the other hand, the concept of internal sovereignty, entailing a level of citizenship and patriotic allegiances, as well as external sovereignty, suggesting respect for newly constructed state borders, was a new concept for the region as a whole (Faour 1993, 57). According to Anderson, “the role of tribalism, sectarianism, regionalism, primordial sentiments, and ascriptive identities in the Middle Eastern politics contributed to the view that the state is little more than an arena of

socially engendered conflict, or an instrument of family, sect, or class domination” (1987, 1). These factors have contributed to significant state-society tensions arising from complex economic, political and social reasons. Numerous organizations and secessionist groups have come to the fore and further challenged the authority of the modern Middle Eastern states. In turn, consistent failures by states to address issues of legitimacy, to produce acceptable economic and political reforms as well as to develop institutional capacity to address such weaknesses have increased the likelihood of conflicts. As a result, the Middle East is often labelled as the most militarized region in the world (see Cordesman 2004). The region is significantly shaped by the predictability of certain characteristics including “authoritarian regimes, oil-dependent economies, Islam, and the protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict” (Sorli, Gleditsch and Strand 2005, 142).

That is not to argue that colonial states which inherited such unstable foundations have not succeeded. To the contrary, states such as India, Malaysia, Singapore and others have demonstrated successful multicultural integration to varying degrees (see, for instance, Ang and Stratton 1995). Within the Middle East, colonial legacies entrenched certain traits within the region, including the dominance of certain groups and identities over other identities. Colonial reality functioned within an inherent racist and anthropological knowledge of the superiority of certain groups over others, which played a crucial role in maintaining colonial institutions (Anderson 1987). The result has been ethnic and religious conflicts that have troubled post-colonial societies to date. A less obvious outcome of colonialism for the region has been one of direct interference as part of the “near irrelevance of borders” (Schrodt et al. 2008:1). In other words, the separation of certain identities across borders, positions states within the Middle East to directly interfere for the well being of co-ethnic or sectarian groups. Sub-state and supra-state loyalties limit the influence of sovereign states from imposing their influence on communities. This allows states to interfere in the nation-and state-building policies of neighbouring states creating multiple levels of barriers in the successful completion of such policies. Non-state actors who represent their co-religionists or co-ethnic communities often transgress borders, increasing the likelihood of governments becoming involved in neighbouring states. Additionally, the nature of conflicts is often dictated by regional politics and historical legacies. As L. Carl Brown (2004:i) suggests “the Middle East has a distinct diplomatic culture, shaped by history and geography”. The literature (see for instance Mitchell 2002) itself supports this assumption, as some have argued that certain conflicts are nearly impossible to resolve; rather they mutate or

are superseded by other elements of the conflict. In essence, it is the same conflict slightly evolved, dictated by new elements or regionally contributing forces. Research on conflict reduction strongly suggests that reducing armed conflict is largely linked to involving parties' attempts to address the "pathological and other forces which maintain a hostile situation" (Azar 1972; O'Connor 1969). If this is accurate, then, Iraq's regional neighbours, and their direct interest in ensuring certain outcomes, would indeed be considered as an integral part of its reconstruction.

Clearly, the nature and level of sub-state and supra-state interference in a conflict is region specific. Identifying the "underlying patterns of international relations in the Middle East" (Brown 2006, 13) is an essential first step in developing an accurate approach to conflict resolution. A region, for instance, with a high proportion of democratic governments, is likely to use official diplomatic processes to communicate with its neighbours, and would not risk covert interferences. In contrast, a non-democratic region, containing authoritarian regimes, constitutional monarchies, or theocracies, is likely to engage in covert processes to assure regime survival and interests. Certainly, the Middle East has demonstrated complex inter-regional relations between various states. The complex relationship between Lebanon-Syria, Iran-Iraq, Iraq-Kuwait-Iran and Iran-Saudi Arabia (see Deeb 2003; Wehrey 2009; Donovan 2011), for instance, demonstrates high levels of official and unofficial interferences with each state heavily invested in minute political fluctuations in the affairs of the other. As some experts (Brown 2004) have noted, the regional history and state-building as well as its relations to great power politics has meant that elites often take into consideration a complex array of local, regional and international concerns in policy-making decisions. As a result of this, foreign policy and decision-making processes in the region are a "multipolar process that involves many different states within the region and beyond" (Brown 2004, 14). In what Brown (2006) labels as the 'burdens of the past, Israel, oil and the regions strategic position have also ensured a high level of outside interference in the guise of colonialism and neo-imperialism, further complicating regional relations. Multiple other processes, including a dependency on western powers for security purposes, a tradition of band wagoning, and a high level of resistance from outside powers, all produce a unique environment in which reconstructions could occur. Further, the uneasy relations between state sovereignty and supra-state identities have further complicated the system (Hinnebusch and Ehteshami 2002).

Within this context, it is easy to view the regional trends within the Middle East as one entailing high levels of interferences and involvement in the affairs of neighbours. An



interesting contemporary trend in this area, is that human security theorists are increasingly viewing culture as a factor in producing specific modes of security building. That is, the types of security and the processes involved in providing human security are culture specific, and so, individual societies produce reoccurring themes and trends in security production (Bishai 2000). Anthropological and historical analysis are consequently important in providing crucial insights in how certain societies produce security, or the type of behaviours and norms produced during periods of conflict. The Middle East, in turn, has produced various identifiable security producing measures, which includes interference in the affairs of sovereign states within the region, supra-state covert organisations, direct diplomacy, manipulation of minority groups and secessionist aspirations, band wagoning to pressure non-conforming states and, of course, direct conflict. In turn, this has influenced how certain groups within post colonial and multicultural states produce security building norms. Different cultures produce diverse methods and norms of handling issues of security; such situations lead to one man's terrorist being another's freedom fighter, for instance. Studies on organisational behaviour, for example, have demonstrated that people and actors in different cultures are motivated by different needs in the same type of environments (Champoux 1996). Likewise, studies on human security have highlighted the necessity of different forms of security formation in response to the specifics of the conflict (Gasper 2009). However, the study of security, insurgency and counter-insurgency within the reconstructionary literature produces significant schisms that clash with the reality on the ground. For instance, there is little attempt to acknowledge that the concept of 'terrorism', along with almost all intellectuals and theoreticians on the subject, have a western construct or have emerged from western intellectual traditions, that often has little resonance in other parts of the world - particularly in the Middle East where organisations such as Hezbollah are viewed as freedom fighters, representing a just cause that addresses centuries of western imperialism and Zionism that challenges the unique historical and cultural norms of the Middle Eastern heritage (see, for instance, Norton 2007; Bouckaert and Houry 2007). Some analysts have attempted to marry the cultural relativity model to the intellectualisation of terrorism studies. Halibozek, Jones and Kovacich (2008, 13) for instance, note that "it should always be remembered that a terrorist in one country or religious or cultural grouping may well be considered a freedom fighter in another. As such, the terms should be considered as interchangeable. History has shown that it is the victor that writes the history books and that, as a result, will define how groups are eventually categorized." The discourse here is not centred on terrorism, but rather, this example is an indication of the complexity of commonly

utilised political terms, such as 'terrorism', 'liberalisation', 'democratisation', that contain alternative meanings within different cultures and societies; in some instances these definitions may be radically different from the accepted norms within the Eurocentric paradigm and points to the validity, but also the brutally marginalised, alternative discourse. Within the region, the adoption of a western discourse on the war on 'terror' has been readily adopted by regimes, if only in order to redirect U.S. attention to other states or organisations that could hold American military attention indefinitely. This has not challenged nor debased widely held views that organisations such as al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, Hamas or the PKK are widely viewed by communities within the region as representing legitimate causes or addressing historical inaccuracies. Thus, a solution for identity-based conflicts requires a significant shift in thinking on the part of policy makers that takes local trends into consideration as a basis for policy development.

As an extension of this argument, regional experts have noted the significance of supra-state identities and loyalties as a defining marker in Middle Eastern politics. Indeed, some have called the region a system of territorial states as opposed to nation-states (Kienle 1990, 2). Others have noted the importance of identities in conflicts (Azar and Burten 1986; Nasr 2006a; 2006b). They have argued that such identities complicate conflict resolution further, as they are often difficult to resolve. Identity conflicts are also chameleon like in nature and tend to disappear and re-emerge at other times; or they trigger other armed and violent conflicts (Azar 1985; Azar and Haddad 1986; Azar and Burten 1986). Consequently, those launching interventionary missions need to develop a far more sophisticated and informed diplomacy in addressing sensitive issues within the region. For instance, local resistance to American aspirations for the region is often inaccurately addressed as a continuation of the 'war on terror'. Yet, as Chapter Three demonstrated, local resistance to foreign policies may be a reflection of complex historical and political legacies of colonial rule and cannot be explained away as the terrorist like responses of radicalised elements in Iraqi society. Thus, inaccurate analysis of the situation on the ground often produces counterproductive policies that threaten the security situation and severely impairs long term development. As it is, public opinion towards the U.S. within the Middle East is at an all-time low (Telhami 2003), and branding organisations that have a complex history and connection with supra-state identities and aspirations as 'terrorists' produces a limited discourse within the literature.

Aside from co-religionists or co-ethnic groups that are divided between state borders influencing the stability of its neighbouring state, other factors also contribute to high levels of cross border interference. Owen (2002, 399) adds that adherence to an ideology can act as a strong pull factor across borders and nationalities. In other words, followers of a particular ideology share a sense of unity and affiliation, just as religion or ethnicity produce attachments. The Middle East, within the modern era, has experienced two distinct ideologies capable of attracting regional solidarity. Pan-Arabism and Islamism have been two of the most important ideologies within the Middle East to date. Pan-Arabism emerged during the early parts of the twentieth century through the imperialist division of the region after WWI (see Rejwan 2008; Mufti 1996). Blending a mixture of Arab nationalism, socialism and secularism, the ideologies enjoyed wide success in the early parts of the twentieth century. However, it was only after the Second World War that pan-Arabism took on a more significant role when Egypt and Syria unified to form the United Arab Republic which existed from 1958-1961 (see Frost 1968). Championed by Egypt's charismatic leader Jamal Abd al-Nasir, pan-Arabism produced extensive debate and national dialogue between newly produced states regionally. Contributing to much of its success, pan-Arabism worked through the use of 'symbolic politics' (Hinnebusch and Ehteshami 2002, 8); in other words, pressuring, enticing and threatening other states and their political elites to adopt and propagate pan-Arabism. In most other states, according to Hinnebusch and Ehteshami (2002, 8), such measures would have been considered as direct interference and would have aroused little interest or adherence; however, such measures gained widespread support in the region, precisely due to the importance of supra-state identities. Pan-Arabism attracted a pervasive following in Libya, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and strongly influenced the Palestinians and the regional support for their cause. However, nationalist ideologies in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon began to erode pan-Arab sentiments, and challenged the very foundation of a united Arab region. The defeat of Egypt, Syria and Jordan against Israel in 1967 further reduced the significance of the pan-Arab argument. More crucially, both Syria and Egypt suffered a significant blow as the leaders of pan-Arab ideology, particularly following the 1978 Egypt-Israel peace treaty (Rabinovich 1998).

In contrast, Islamism began to gradually supplant pan-Arabism. Unlike the former, Islamism sought to unify all Islamic communities within the Middle East under one banner. However, Islamism has enjoyed sporadic and disjointed support from elites within the region and has, as a result, come to signify popular discontent within Middle Eastern societies. One of the

foremost sources of pan-Islamism was the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1929. Representing anti-western political and cultural domination, the Brotherhood advocated an Islamic resurgence. Inspired by the *Wahhabi* movement, the organisation aspired to a revisionist school of Islamic thoughts (Youssef 1985, 67). Conversely, the decline of pan-Arabism was directly linked to the strengthening of sovereign states and their influence over their domestic spheres. This trend weakened pan-Arab sentiments regionally, but also negatively influenced the pan-Islamic movement. At the same time, widespread state-building followed by economic development, through oil revenues, provided the nation-building measures required to strengthen nation-state relations (see Barnett 1995, 497-498). These measures also produced increased institution-building, reducing state weakness and susceptibility to military intervention and covert interference from others (Gause 1992, 457). For instance, in the 1950's there were numerous coups in Syria but relative stability in Saudi Arabia, particularly due to U.S. support in preventing the spread of communism (see Hinnebusch 2001; Bamberg 2000, 145). As a result, pan-Arabism lost much ground and pan-Islamism became the dominant ideology of the region for the masses to express dissatisfaction with modern states and governments that failed to represent their respective societies. Pan-Arabism, thus, lost much of its hold within the region following increased western imperialism and the end of Soviet support after 1991. Of the two ideologies, pan-Islamism, or political Islam, has survived and dominates pan-Arab values in contemporary Middle East politics. Pan-Arabism's failure is also attributed to its incapability to include non-Arabs such as Persians, Turks, Kurds, and other minorities within the region. The banner of Islam, however, has proven more conciliatory to ethnic divisions. Islam, as a mode of identity, continues to determine citizens' loyalties to causes, regimes and governments. Religion is, therefore, an essential, if not the most central part of contemporary Middle Eastern politics, society and identities, and cannot be effectively dismissed in producing change or preventing reforms that may be contrary to Islamic values and teachings. Adding to the complex mixture, sectarian violence has also gained widespread interest and acts as a further restraint on policy formation (see Weiss 2010; Cockburn 2008; Nasr 2006a; 2006b).

As a result of the above trends, the sectarian divide in Iraq has not been addressed adequately in the post-Saddam era. While attempts at federalism have reduced Sunni fears of outright Shia dominance, they have not addressed fears of a Shia theocracy modelled on Iranian co-sectarians. Sectarianism, according to some, has returned to the political scene within the Middle East with a vengeance (see Nasr 2006a; 2006b). Some, for instance, predicted

extensive radical Salafi Islamists in Jordan, as well as Syrian and Saudi interference in the sectarian conflict in Iraq. While such arguments have proven largely overestimated (Monshipouri 2009, 111), their significance, however, has not been appreciated by critics. The Shia-Sunni clash is, indeed, important in the region ideologically; it has domestically determined the nation-building agendas of individual states whose policies may have been directly dependent on the size of the Shia-Sunni demography. Arguably, Saudi Arabia demonstrates most sensitivity to this sectarian balance, while, conversely, Iran has the most to gain in advancing sectarianism. Nevertheless, every state within the region has a stake by promoting a particular stance within this context. Sectarianism may have deeply rooted historical and psychological significance to some within the region, but, for most governments, it serves as a strategic tool to advance national or elite interests. Its value as a reconstructionary tool cannot be underestimated, not only for its ability to flare up age old tensions, but, also as a means of entrenching such identities and further bringing to the fore grievances between communities if not approached appropriately.

Due to the nature of sectarianism, exogenous factors will continue to determine domestic politics in the region. Aside from sectarianism, the ethnic diversity of Iraq has attracted neighbouring states anxiety - particularly in regards to the Kirkuk question. Turkey, Syria and Iran, for instance, have invested significant resources and time in preventing a consolidated Kurdish nationalist movement (Monshipouri, 2009, 114). The Kirkuk matter, and its significance to the Kurdish irredentism, is an issue that will be of interest to these states for some time to come. While the reconstruction in Iraq has produced a short-sighted solution for the moment-by consistently postponing Article 140 of the Iraqi constitution which required a referendum to resolve the Kirkuk problem- in the long term, it has postponed a possible quagmire for future stability of Iraq and the region. The U.S., on the other hand, has evaded producing a suitable solution that will address the Kirkuk question during the current reconstruction process. This is not, in itself, unusual since theorists such as Edward Azar (1986) have pointed out that the international community is ill prepared to resolve identity conflicts and often shirks away its responsibilities. The U.S. on the other hand cannot afford to take a more decisive position on Kirkuk and push for a referendum which will undoubtedly prove favourable to the Kurds, as it is likely to increase regional hostility towards U.S. imperialism, create extensive instability and regime backlash as well as increase the aspirations of other minorities in the region for similar treatment. This will also reduce Iraq's legitimacy post-U.S. and produce further interventions from exogenous forces.

Kirkuk will remain geopolitically sensitive until such a time that the new Iraqi state can produce a solution that will be at the same time acceptable to the Kurds and maintain its territorial integrity.

The Arab-Israeli conflict is another policy defining factor and remains at the core of regional resentment towards outside interference. For Muslims, no conflict signifies their domination more than this prevailing issue. U.S. reluctance to enforce a peace solution has created bitter regional resentment and has increased anti-U.S. sentiments. The ongoing conflict has also diminished Muslim faith in international organisations such as the U.N., which are widely viewed as extensions of American neo-colonialism. Indeed, Israeli possession of Muslim land is broadly viewed as synonymous with western imperialism and self-interest (Murden 2002, 49) and reflects the collective shame and humiliation of Islam. The consensus is largely based on a soft approach that the U.S. retains towards Israel (Azar 2011, 69); as a result, often U.S. foreign policy in the region is a reflection of the close U.S.-Israeli relations. In a much discussed paper, originally published in the *Wall Street Journal*, Brent Scowcroft, national security advisor under President Gerald Ford and George H. W. Bush, argued against a war in Iraq not only for its regional consequences; but more importantly for the Arab-Israel conflict and its implication for Arab-U.S. relations. Showing much insight into the identity and cultural forces within the region, Scowcroft (2010, 1759) argued that:

Possibly the most dire consequences would be the effect in the region. The shared view in the region is that Iraq is principally an obsession of the U.S. The obsession of the region, however, is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. If we were seen to be turning our backs on that bitter conflict - which the region, rightly or wrongly, perceives to be clearly within our power to resolve - in order to go after Iraq, there would be an explosion of outrage against us. We would be seen as ignoring a key interest of the Muslim world in order to satisfy what is seen to be a narrow American interest.

On another level significant criticism emerged, supported even by the neoconservatives, that noted that the U.S. did not go far enough to appease Iraq's neighbours. There was inadequate attention paid to this issue by U.S. policy makers, promoting the understanding that U.S. involvement in Iraq only extended to the direct removal of the regime alone (Ellsworth and Simes, 2005). Critics have argued that the promotion of democracy in Iraq:

[R]equired an inordinate degree of naivety and, frankly, ignorance about the real conditions in Iraq and in the Middle East in general to believe that this overly ambitious scheme could work- especially when pursued without any visible effort to promote the Arab-Israeli settlement, and from the position of being the sole sponsor of the Sharon government. An effort to reshape the Middle East according to

American specifications, was bound to face opposition on the ground in Iraq, from Iraq's neighbours such as Iran and Syria, and, to say the least, dampen enthusiasm for helping the United States in Iraq even on the part of the most friendly Arab regimes such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, all of which had causes for concern that they could become targets of the American master plan for restructuring the region (Ellsworth and Simes 2005, 207).

Regional fears were further exacerbated by the Bush administration's consistent reference to the 'Axis of evil', as well as threats to propose similar policies towards Iran and Syria (see Leverett 2005). The policy maker's inability to adequately capture and accommodate regional fears, resentment and humiliation resulted in extensive short and long term cataclysmic changes in the region. The outcomes ranged from widespread regionally displaced people and refugee flows, increased regional instability and transnational terrorist networks, initial reversal of moderate political reforms, increased resentment and attempts at directly influencing the reconstruction of Iraq to increase national self-interest and minimise the influence of rival states. More recently, some have argued that the Arab Spring was a by product of the 2003 Iraq invasion and that the subsequent democratisation encouraged other movements in the region to demand greater reforms (see Majumdar and Jones 2011; for an alternative argument see Smith 2011).

Perhaps the most crucial preventer of a smoother transition to democracy in Iraq, was the official rhetoric of the United States, as well as its policies adopted, past and present. Since the 1947 Truman Doctrine, the United States has been involved within the Middle East with the intention of maintaining a balance of stability and protecting certain parts of the region at one time or another (Brown 2004). The widely held perspective towards the illegitimacy of the invasion significantly curtailed immediate constructive outcomes for Iraq, as neighbouring states such as Iran, Syria and Turkey, among others, utilised this illegitimacy for their own national agendas. What ensued reflects a classical realist game of power balancing, security seeking, band wagoning, coercive diplomacy, and self-maximizing policies, at the cost of regional developments or improvements in Iraq's domestic politics. In light of the identified limitations noted, both in the literature on the influence of neighbouring states as well as the brief characteristics of regionalism in the Middle East, the adopted U.S. policies have demonstrated significant disregard for these essential policy-defining factors. Experts have long forewarned U.S. policy makers of the necessity of bridging this gap (Telhami 2002). September 11 demonstrated that the concerns of U.S. foreign policy towards the Muslim world were reliant on, "security and strategic considerations, not just culture and

ideology” (Gerges 1997, 68). Others have argued that U.S. domestic religious values have paved the way for an increasingly militarised foreign policy stance (Barker, Hurwitz and Nelson 2008). Davies (2008) has demonstrated that the failing of U.S. policy in Iraq has produced low popularity of the U.S. and its leadership both domestically and globally, which has restrained further aggressive U.S. foreign policy regionally. Moreover, other potential targets such as Iran or Syria, have taken advantage of this process and, rather than become more cooperative, have indeed become increasingly hostile. The aggressive nature of the ‘Bush Doctrine’ further entrenched, in the minds of possible future targets, the necessity of conflict avoidance behaviours (Davies 2008). Added to the U.S. commitment to the imposition of democracy, the ‘democracy paradox’ has come into full force in the region, fostering hostility rather than cooperation (Achcar 2004). This, in turn, has led to the widely held opinion that “the essence of US policy over the last three decades has been antithetical to Arab democracy and self-determination” (Schwenninger 2003).

#### **6.4. Refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDP):**

The Iraq intervention produced another wave of refugee crises in the region following the aftermath of the war, and the resulting insurgency and sectarian civil strife. Little evidence exists that indicates U.S. contingency preparations for this outcome, and the refugees were largely explained away as an outcome of the legacies of Iraq’s regime (Libel and Harding 2007). Indeed, NGO's have filled this gap in providing aid and resources. Despite this, as the war did not immediately produce an extensive refugee crisis, large numbers of NGO’s dismantled their refugee crisis plans and removed themselves from Iraq. Yet, as the 2006-2007 sectarian war flared up, large numbers of people escaped the conflict, resulting in the initially predicted refugee crisis. By this stage, however, few plans were in place to address the extensive refugee flows (Marfleet and Chatty 2009). This resulted in over two million internally displaced people, with another estimated two million fleeing to Jordan, Turkey, Egypt and Syria (Marfleet and Chatty 2009). According to the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (2007), Iraqi refugees are widely considered to be the third largest refugee population, after Afghani and Palestinian refugees. For the most part, though, this is perhaps the most negative impact of the war. The existing literature on reconstructions indicates that a flow of refugees is the most likely cause of increased regional instability, reducing economic development and producing civil discontent. More crucially, the flow of Iraqi refugees to



neighbouring states provided ample recruits for al-Qaida, or, at least the potential to infiltrate and radicalise young men that would have previously not been accessible, or as susceptible, to such movements. Even more significant is the finding of studies that have demonstrated that Iraqi refugees view UNHCR with distrust or fear repercussions of requesting assistance, and generally do not approach this organisation for aid (Marfleet and Chatty 2009), thereby limiting the institutional influence and legacy of such organisations in the region. The majority of the NGO's functioning within the region consists of western charitable organisations, which exacerbates the problem and creates further tensions between local Muslim NGOs (Alterman and Von Hippel 2007, 39).

Studies that focus on the impacts of reconstructionary activities on refugee flows are limited, to say the least (Libel and Harding 2007). Although there are studies relating to the causal factors, such as war, civil conflict and invasions, there is relatively little interest in analysing refugee related policies and measures within reconstructionary missions. Indeed, the literature assumes a certain level of social 'destruction' or 'collateral damage', as part of the gift of reconstruction bestowed on recipient societies. State-centralism dominates the limited discourse relating to humanitarian issues. Producing strong constitutional institutions, as well as security-building, is, in itself, viewed as preventative measures on humanitarian issues, such as refugee flows and displaced people. In other instances, it is largely assumed that the international community of NGO's will fill the gap that policy makers fail to address. There is little attempt to view refugee flows as inherent, and part and parcel with the reconstructionary process, and, consequently, requiring pre-conflict preparation and decision making. As Haddad (2008) finds, refugee flows are often viewed as isolated events, removed and separate from the events that create such movements. Indeed, this dominant perception gives rise to the impression that refugee crises are produced only, "when things go wrong" (Haddad 2008, 4). In viewing such movements as preventable through institution building, the field has given little attention to addressing refugee issues. Kushner and Knox (1999, 43) concur, and confirm that the refugee issue is, "rarely at the forefront of policy and more often than not treated as an irritant or a nuisance."

Clearly, the pre-conflict planning stage fails to concentrate on historical conflicts, ethno-sectarian cleavages, and traditions within recipient societies in order to reduce refugee and migration flows within the mission. An analysis of Iraqi political history demonstrates various fault lines that would have undoubtedly produced humanitarian issues, such as mass refugee flows and internally displaced people. Indeed, refugees were produced along

sectarian lines such as Sunni-Shia community borders and Arab-Kurdish borders as well as other minority groups. Similar trends could be easily predicted along ethno-religious fault lines within other cases, such as Rwanda, Somalia, Afghanistan and others. As Haddad observes, “the fact that the way an issue is understood cannot be divorced from history or the political environment is frequently overlooked” (2008, 4) in the refugee related literature. Others, likewise, agree as to the importance of historical experiences on populations (Morales and Sheafar 2002). Certainly, within the region, the memory of the Palestinian refugees, numbering upwards of one million displaced people, still lingers bitterly in the collective psyche of the Arab world who have been left with the burden of accommodating and assimilating them. Consequently, the, as yet unresolved, Palestinian refugee crisis in the Middle East has increased hostility towards Israel and its western allies, as well as towards the Palestinian people themselves, significantly reducing the possibility of peace (Hahn 2006, 99). Likewise, the large numbers of Afghani refugees displaced in the region, but particularly in Pakistan and Iran, have produced similar resentments and socio-economic and political repercussions. As a result, host communities are forced to accommodate refugees, which may significantly restrict resources and infrastructure. Israeli refusal to compensate, but rather, deny the right to return has reduced confidence building measures within the Arab world. More recently, the thousands that have been displaced as a result of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq have been reluctantly accepted by neighbouring states. Some of these regimes can ill afford to indefinitely accommodate the needs of their own populations, let alone an exodus of traumatised or radicalised foreign communities. More importantly, such displaced communities take on specific symbolisms - that is, they symbolise continued occupation (Peretz 1993, 7) and reproduce myths and symbols that represent a shared experience of subordination and occupation.

The invasion eventually produced over 2.7 million internally displaced people within Iraq (Younes and Rosen 2008), while over 2 million have fled the violence, lost their livelihood, or have become refugees in neighbouring states such as Syria, Jordan and Iran. According to Amnesty International (2007), the Iraqi refugees have become, “the fastest growing displacement crisis in the world”. The report further notes that the “international community has so far paid only lip-service to the needs of Iraq's displaced people with insufficient effort made to provide financial, technical and in-kind assistance or resettlement for those forced to flee their homeland. Some states are even taking negative steps, including forcibly returning people to Iraq, cutting off assistance for those denied asylum or withdrawing refugee status”

(Amnesty International 2007). The international donor community, including those leading the reconstruction mission in Iraq, largely failed to accommodate or provide relevant policies and measures to ensure that displaced people and refugees would be dealt with in a humanitarian and timely manner. Considering the rise of religious fundamentalism and widespread discontent over western foreign policy, the lack of a coherent and comprehensive set of policies specifically designed to address this refugee problem points to a significant policy failure. Large numbers of people still reside in makeshift camps, such as the Makhmour camp or the Kirkuk stadium camp, or shanty towns, in the hope that the new government would address their lack of housing (Cordesman and Davis 2008, 426). Instead, the refugee crisis is widely ignored, or viewed as collateral damage in a war that lacked effective post-conflict planning. In turn, neighbouring countries and local NGO's have been left to deal with the humanitarian crisis, which has only reaffirmed anti-Western and neo-imperialist views within the region. The neighbours, in turn, have produced contradictory, and in some instances, aggressive policies to deal with the refugees going so far as to shut down borders, or forcibly returning refugees to Iraq.

Connecting refugee flows, neighbouring states policies and the region's history of accommodating refugees', points to easily predictable trends. On the one hand, refugees tend to have a low chance of accommodating and assimilation in their host states, who, for the most part, adopt hostile and incompetent policies. Radicalisation, anti-western views, marginalisation and displacement produce the right conditions to breed insurgency movements. The well over 2.5 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan, for instance, are fertile recruitment grounds for Taliban and al-Qaeda (Gall 2006). More crucially, regionally displaced people significantly contribute to feelings of resentment and anger towards foreign involvement. Pakistan's involvement in the reconstruction process in Afghanistan likewise, points to the contradictory and inadequate policies involving neighbouring states. While Pakistan is considered as a key U.S. ally in the war against terror, it has actively supported terrorist groups and activities within Afghanistan in a bid to establish a pro-Pakistan government (Grare 2006). As some have argued, "thus, there is a large asymmetry of interests between Afghanistan and Pakistan. What is essentially a bilateral issue for Kabul goes far beyond the Pashtun question for Islamabad. For Islamabad, Afghanistan is one element in a larger game: not only is Afghanistan part of its Indian policy, but it is also to some extent a component of its global standing" (Grare 2006, 3). This example points to the difficulty in coordinating reconstructions with powerful neighbours, but also is indicative of

the almost non-existent regional interest in democracy-building and promotion of human rights. Inability to accommodate refugee flows within reconstructions could very well be one of the most important catalysts for regional noncooperation and resentment of the presence of foreign forces. The following section focuses on spotlighting some of the major dilemmas that regional powers and Iraq's neighbours face in light of the U.S. invasion. The aim of this section is to demonstrate the U.S. inability to foresee and adequately address regional fears over an invasion of Iraq, but also the field's inability to propose a pre-conflict plan that provides positive incentives to accommodate regional fears and reduce possible spoilers or belligerents.

## **6.5. Turkey:**

Turkey is a dominant regional player with much to lose and little to gain from the reconstruction in Iraq, particularly in relation to the long standing Kurdish issue. Although, the Ba'athist regime had lost autonomy over the Kurdish north, it nevertheless used a crippling economic embargo to limit the Kurds. The removal of the Iraqi regime eliminated such economic restraints, opening the doorway for further Kurdish empowerment and even possibilities of secession. As a result, economic incentives in the tune of \$15bn in aid and loans were offered by the U.S. in turn for Turkish support in the Iraq war (BBC 2003). Others remarked that aid to Turkey came, in reality, at the cost of \$20-25bn of American tax payer's money (Danchev and MacMillan 2005, 107). However, historically Turkish support for U.S. policies in the region has been the recipient of large scale U.S. economic aid and boasts the title of having the "longest history of any nation as an U.S. aid recipient" (Gupta 1999, 241). For instance, under the auspice of the Marshal Plan, Turkey received substantial economic and military aid from 1949-1952. As the Cold War emerged, Turkey became an important geostrategic state, particularly regarding its location and received significant U.S. aid in the 1950s and 1960s under the Mutual Security Act (Sharp 2010; Callaway and Mathews 2008, 142). American aid has allowed Turkey to produce a large well funded and trained military that is often utilised to bully and threaten its neighbouring states into submission, in line with Turkish interests, as was the case with the 1998 Syrian-Turkey conflict (see Liel 2001).

Traditionally, Turkish-Iraqi relations had been more cordial than most other bilateral relations within the region. The Sadabad Pact of 1937, the Baghdad Treaty of 1955, as well as more

significant bilateral trade relations during the 1980's, presents a history of economic and strategic alliances and cooperation (see Liel 2001). Iraq's historical reliance on Turkey, as a route to export oil, ensured a high level of co-dependency. Turkey's control of water flow within Iraq can also play a significant role in future relations between the two. However, Turkey's south-eastern Anatolia Project (GAP), designed to reroute the Tigris River and Euphrates to Turkey's south-eastern provinces in 2020, will substantially reduce the water flow by up to 80 percent (Nachmani 2003, 9) boding possible implications for conflict. Likewise, the black-market trade and smuggling flowing out of Iraq to Turkey, acts as an important source of unofficial revenue for the Turkish population. Consequently, it was in Turkey's best interests to retain the region's status quo with a politically and militarily weakened Saddam, whose aspirations to a regional leadership role were all but obsolete. On the other hand, Iraq as a secular state, provided a strategic partner that could counter increased Iranian religiosity and prevented the further Iranian-Iraqi cooperation on principle. The invasion was, thus, highly undesirable and detrimental to the future stability of the Turkish state. Further, if Iraq was to disintegrate, the possibility of Kurdish succession would increase exponentially, while the Shia dominated south could develop substantially closer relations with Iran, trends that were highly undesirable to Turkish interests. Additionally, Turkey, traditionally, has not shied away from using its military power to dominate and intimidate regional players into producing policies or behaviours deemed to be in Turkey's interest. Turkey enacted repeated military incursions into both Syria and Iraq in the 1990's, and likewise, did not hesitate to violate Iraq's territorial integrity in 2002-3, making further threats in 2004 and 2007 (Brannen 2007). Smaller scale incursions and cross-border attacks continue to occur under the 1995 extradition treaty. Further, over 140, 000 Turkish troops amassed on the Turkish-Iraq border in 2007 (Francona 2007), in preparation for an incursion into Iraqi Kurdistan in order to root out PKK guerrillas; this policy appeared heavy handed and produces significant questions relating to Turkish intentions towards Iraq, the Kurdish autonomous region and regional stability (see Aliza 2007). Turkish incursions into Iraq could also set up a dangerous precedent for Iran to interfere in order to protect the Shia majority (Butcher and Freeman 2008).

For Turkey, the Kurdish question is one of paramount importance. Deterrence of Kurdish secessionist aspirations is not only a matter of economic, security or political importance to Turkey, but also a matter of identity. As Danchev and MacMillan (2005, 97) argue, Kurdish demands for self-rule and cultural self-expression "undermines the related foundation myth

of one Turkish citizenship, at once civic and ethnic". For instance, both President Necdet Sezer and the Speaker of Parliament Bulent Arinc, articulated various anti-war views based on normative objectives, including the Islamic right not to interfere in Western crusades or to comply in an attack on a neighbouring Muslim state (Danchev and MacMillan 2005, 98). Turkey has also been adamant in retaining extradition agreements with Iraq, established in 1989 and 1995, in order to pursue PKK guerrillas across the tri-border Qandil mountains bordering Iraq-Turkey and Iran. Turkey accused the new Iraqi government, as well as the Kurdish leadership in Northern Iraq, of tacitly supporting, or at the very least, not taking adequate measures to address the Kurdish problem and the PKK.

Domestically, Turkey has failed to create measures to open dialogue with the Kurds to address their legitimate aspirations for cultural self-expression or to have increased political rights. Although Turkey is widely viewed to have increased its democratic credentials, particularly following the peaceful resolution of the parliamentary decision to provide support to the U.S. in its incursion into Iraq, it has nevertheless retained a dismal human rights records towards minorities, particularly the Kurds and Armenians. This element is widely viewed as a preventative measure against Turkish aspirations to join the EU community (Arikan 2006). Decades of repression and denial of Kurdish identity has positioned Turkey in a volatile position with an increasingly angry and vocal Kurdish demography that happen to reside in the resource rich south-eastern provinces. In this regard, the PKK is not the only problem that Ankara is nervous about. The issue, hence, is not the sporadic violent attacks by a terrorist organisation; rather, the problem is rooted in a large minority, numbering close to twelve million, unsatisfied with their limited civil and political rights. The problem is embedded in the nature of Turkish democracy and questions over Turkish identity and state-building myths becoming sophisticated enough to allow Kurdish self-expression, without resorting to secession. While Turkey is a signatory to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expression, and while it has attempted to increase public television and radio broadcasting in Kurdish, it still prohibits educational programs and teaching of Kurdish languages in schools, indicating that the Republic has a long way to go before it can persuasively resolve the Kurdish issue within its borders (Baycar 2009, 88; Hawramy 2011; Sinclair-Webb 2011). Therefore, Turkey needs to address and tackle the PKK issue in line with a satisfactorily civil, humane and peaceful policy towards the Kurds in Turkey. The Kurds, not only in Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq but also in Diaspora, have sympathetic views towards the PKK and see Ankara's eliminationist

policies as a threat and affront to the wider Kurdish aspirations for political and cultural rights (see Watts 2010).

Strategically, Turkish refusal to permit U.S. troops to move into northern Iraq could have pressured the U.S. to allow a more pronounced and permanent Turkish presence, and hence, influence in Iraqi Kurdistan, opening the way for a more acceptable and transparent Turkish regional control. However, the initial Turkish refusal forced the U.S. to relocate its tasks to NATO allies Romania and Bulgaria, while at the same time the American Air Force temporarily withdrew in protest from the Incirlik Air Base in Turkey (Francona 2007). At the same time though, the Turkish government had to contend with overwhelming popular opinion against a war in Iraq. However, once Turkey committed to allowing U.S. access to its bases, it began to see extensive benefits on an economic and trade level. Iraq rapidly rose as one of Turkey's biggest trading partners. While there are arguments that the economic relations between the two states will act as the strongest assurance of bilateral security (Yinanc 2010), it is also possible that Turkey will attempt to control Iraq through its increased economic relations. With over eighty per cent of food and clothes imported from Turkey, Kurdish and Turkish economic trades stand at \$6-9 billion (Al-Sharikh 2011), thus it is possible for Turkey to impose serious pressures on the Kurds.

Turkey has attempted to normalise its relations with northern Iraq through increased diplomacy, as well as economic and trade relations. Moreover, in 2011 Turkey opened a Consulate General in Erbil, which indicates closer relations (Al-Sharikh 2011). The Turks, on the other hand, attempted to retain their lucrative alliance with the U.S. and retain influence within the new Iraq, while at the same time, pressuring the U.S. to reduce their lobbying for a non-military containment strategy towards the PKK to such an extent that it was largely hinted that unless a more aggressive U.S. stance was taken towards the PKK it would not only threaten Turkey's stability, and the longstanding Turkish-U.S. alliance, but the success of the reconstruction in Iraq (Park 2005, 46). Another unforeseeable outcome of the Iraq war for Turkey has been the rise of the religious backlash and increased adherence to Islamism (see Hale and Ozbudun 2010). The Iraq war arguably revived Turkey's dormant Islamic movement, which has increasingly gained widespread support within the country.

On the security front, U.S.-Turkish relations further deteriorated following accusations by Turkey that the U.S. was covertly supporting and funding the Kurdistan Free Life Party - PKK's sister organisation - in Iran (Tisdall 2007). Likewise, steps initiated by the U.S. to

label the 1915 persecution of Armenians as genocide increased tensions between the two, with Turkey threatening to pull out its ambassadors to Washington, France and Canada (International Centre for Transitional Justice 2006; Lichfield 2011). At the same time, Turkey's other key regional ally, Israel, and its professed support for the Kurds in Iraq, has also created tensions between the two.

More radical opinions have been expressed by regional experts who view the partition of Iraq as a desirable outcome for states such as Iran, Syria, Turkey and even Jordan (Taheri 2010; Joseph and O'Hanlon 2007). Even prominent members of the U.S. administration, including Joe Biden, have argued for a partitioning of Iraq along ethno-religious lines (Riggins 2007; Ferguson 2008, 510). Regional experts, such as Taheri, contend that the partitioning of Iraq provides states such as Turkey with a chance to reduce the Kurd's aspirations for a greater Kurdistan, including Syria, Turkish and Iranian Kurds. By ensuring that "a mini-Kurdish state in northern Iraq would have no choice but to kowtow to Ankara even if that meant continued Turkish military incursion into its territory" (Taheri 2010). Likewise, it is argued that Iran favours a breakup in order to exert influence over the large Shia majority in southern Iraq and create a stronger and larger Shia crescent so as to establish itself as the regional Islamic leader. Syria and Turkey would further benefit by attempting to influence and incorporate Iraqi Sunnis. If partition occurs, Syria will lay claim to the largest Sunni population in the Middle East, positioning it in a more prominent and influential situation regionally. However, such views remain within a minority group, and while the Kurdish political leaders in northern Iraq still voice independence aspirations, such talks have become muted as increased diplomatic and economic relations between Iran and Turkey positions the Kurds in a difficult role - with the need to balance development, retaining the status quo, with Kurdish needs for final independence. More importantly, the Sunnis and Shias have consistently refused the notion of partition, which suggests that partitioning of Iraq would not only attract widespread discontent, but also lack legitimacy regionally.

## **6.6. Iran:**

A by-product of the U.S. presence in the Middle East, sustained by a democracy-building agenda, has been several adverse reactions in the region. Iranian attempts at enriching uranium and producing nuclear capabilities have ironically filled the gap that Saddam's



attempts at attaining nuclear capabilities have left. Buoyed by the increasing domination of the political system by conservatives, the increased marginalisation of moderate Islamists following Khomeini's elections has produced an increasingly ambitious Iranian foreign policy. Ahmadinejad's confrontationist attitude strongly reflected widespread regional anti-U.S. sentiments. In 2001, as the events of the September 11 terrorist attacks were unfolding, the U.S. State Department defined Iran as "the most active state sponsor of terrorism" (cited in Samii 2001). While Iran's uranium enrichment ambitions may have been fast tracked to balance possible future U.S. intervention and regime change in Iran, it is equally likely that such policies reflect increasing Iranian ambitions towards a leadership role in the region. While the Bush administration launched its reconstructionary attempts in the Middle East, hinting strongly at a possible Syrian or Iranian regime change, this policy appeared less likely (prior to the Arab Spring). As O'Leary adds, "the U.S. intervention to dismantle Saddam's weapons of mass destruction has therefore encouraged Iran to develop weapons of mass destruction, while the U.S. military presence in Iraq exposes U.S. troops to any retaliation Iran might consider in the event of a U.S. or U.S. supported attack on Iranian nuclear facilities. In short, the U.S. intervention in Iraq has, inevitably, made the Iranians far more dominant in the region than they were before 2003" (O'Leary 2009, 28). Aggressive rhetoric against Iran has also proven short sighted, as presently there is no regional power that can balance Iran. Consequently, "the most viable state powers in the region are now non-Arab: Israel, Turkey, Iran, and the United States" (Wehrey 2010, 15), creating discontent within the Arab majority. The war has heightened identity politics both in Iraq and regionally. The traditional power balances in the early twentieth century between Iraq and Egypt have evolved to include Iranian and Saudi ambitions for regional leadership. Likewise, there is increasing tension between the Saudi's and the Iranians, particularly following the upheavals of the recent Arab Spring. Regional experts have noted that Iran thrives on regional upheaval and tension and has effectively used the 2003 Iraq war, the 2006 Israel-Lebanon war, the 2009 Israel war in Gaza as well as the Arab Spring to increase its ideological influence and regional standing (Boucek and Sadjadpour 2011).

Iran's possible influence on the region, however, is limited on several accounts. The vision of Islamic jurisprudence following the 1979 revolution is not necessarily accepted by other states. Likewise, Iran's adherence to the Shia faith limits its influence within the Sunni dominated Middle East; this is further exacerbated by the non-Arab, Persian identity of Iran. Some have advocated that the states in the Gulf Cooperation Council could possibly act as a

balancer to rising Iranian regional ambitions and nuclear capabilities (Knapp 2010, 49-59). Nevertheless, Iran attempts to actively influence its neighbours and central Asia. Iran, for the most part, has demonstrated its involvement in the region and extension of its power globally, more as an opportunistic and defensive measure than to an ideological level, though ideological expansion cannot be entirely ruled out. On this account, the removal of the Ba'ath regime should have been viewed as a positive change in the regional order, as it was the removal of one of Iran's dominant rivals. Instead, the removal of the Saddam regime has posed far more difficulties to the Iranian regime, including the removal of one of the most important factors that has traditionally been used by Iranian leaders to explain the lack of economic and political developments domestically. In other words, the Iranian regime widely held the Iraqi government and the 1980-88 war responsible for economic failures (Ehteshami 2003, 119). But, more importantly, with the addition of the 'axis of evil' and the 'Bush Doctrine', Iran increasingly viewed a change to the regional order as being hostile to its own interests. As Ehteshami notes, "why should Iran help overthrow Saddam when rapid success may have facilitated U.S. efforts then to overturn the regime in Tehran?" (2003, 123). The obvious nature of U.S. strategic interests have led to the development of closer Syrian-Iranian relations in what is now called the 'Resistance Axis' (Nerguizian 2011, 62; Boucek and Sadjadpour 2011).

Following the invasion, Iran's regional ambitions have increasingly become more far-reaching in nature. Iran has also actively resorted to the "use of proxy and asymmetrical warfare" in the region, to progressively intimidate "Saudi Arabia, Israel, and other pro-Western regional actors, and plays a major role in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Gaza" (Nerguizian 2011, 7). Thus, Iran's regional ambitions continue to grow. In 2004, for instance, Iran accused Qatar of exceeding its quota of natural gases, which threatened Iran's market shares. Iran has increasingly advocated that Qatar is part of Iran (Knapp 2010, 49-59), which is reminiscent of Saddam's increased claims of sovereignty over Kuwait. Iran's increased disregard for international norms included the capture of British sailors in Iraqi water. Likewise, Iran has actively increased its influence in Africa and Latin America and vigorously pursued a nuclear proliferation policy (see, for instance, Rubin 2008). Closer relations with America's neighbours in Latin America, particularly with Chavez's Venezuela, are, for some, indicative of aspirations beyond regional boundaries towards a more global role. The U.S. presence in the Middle East may have convinced Iranian leaders to take a more aggressive and confrontational attitude, building alliances and relations across the region as

well as globally. Considering U.S. susceptibility to terrorist attacks, closer relations with U.S. neighbours could act as an important strategic asset. Consumed by a Vietnam-like war in the Middle East, the U.S. is in no position to overextend its military capacity. Indeed, it is widely accepted that U.S. hard and soft power is experiencing a decided decline in the last decades or so. Even before the current spate of sanctions, a tradition of hostile relations between Iran and the U.S. has taught Iranian policy makers to enact decisive counter-measures to balance American aggression and imperialism. Domestically, the regime has experienced increased pressure from civil society organisations who have demanded increased reforms (Semati 2008), as was evident by the 2009 'Green' revolution, creating a precarious position for the regime, both in terms of its domestic and regional long term survival and aspirations. It is yet to be seen how successful the civil society movements, widely thought to have U.S. sponsorship (Alsis, Cordesman and Seitz 2011), will be in Iran. Overall though, they indicate a level of internal volatility that may challenge Iran's outward façade of regional leadership.

One area of concern for western powers is the close relations between Iran and certain important factions in the Iraqi political scene. Attempts at gaining closer relationships with Shi'ite communities in the region have always been of paramount interest to the Iranians. Following the 1979 revolution under Imam Khomeini's guidance, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard troops were sent to large Shi'ite communities, such as those in Lebanon, to form close political ties (Nerguizian 2011, 1). Likewise, in Iraq, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) is one such example. In the early 1980's, Iraqi Shia exiles created the council in Iran with the direct support of Iranian government. The councils' core goals included consolidating the disjointed Shia political parties, including Da'wah and Islamic Action (Cordesman and Davies 2008, 38). Receiving direct support from Iran, the council advocated an Iranian style theocracy for Iraq, resulting in low frequency cross border conflicts with the Ba'ath regime across the Iran-Iraq border (Hashim 2005, 247). While relations between Iran and Iraq post-2003 have improved significantly, Iran still maintains its military and logistics support for the Badr Brigade - the Supreme Council's private military - who actively clashed with the newly reconstructed Iraqi military (Jeffries 2003, 5) Iran has also provided technological and military support to the Shi'ites through its *Vevak* And Quds Force, although this appears to have occurred by default rather than directly through the al-Quds force and its links to Hezbollah. Though evidence appears sketchy, their training operations, weaponry and operational tactics appear closely related to those of the Iranian Special Forces within the al-Quds. More importantly, the al-Quds forces have actively

pursued capabilities of conducting “unconventional warfare overseas using various foreign movements as proxies” (Cordesman 2007, 8), including Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, both Shia and Sunni groups within Iraq as well as Shi’ites in Afghanistan, to further Iranian interests. By 2005, as the sectarian conflict and anti-U.S. insurgencies reached a peak, the U.S. accused Iran of supplying militants - particularly Shia groups - and of acquiring Iranian made bomb-making equipment and parts (Gordon and Shane 2007). Others have debunked the long accepted myth that Iran retains significant sway over the region’s Shia communities. Roy (1994, 190) notes the lack of influence Tehran wields over non-clerical based Shia sects, such as the Alevis of Turkey, leading some (Wehrey 2009) to a re-examination of conventional thinking about Iran and its foreign policy agendas. Nevertheless, the United States has responded to increased Iranian influence within the region by forging closer military relations with Jordan, Egypt and Israel, as a measure of reducing Iranian influence (Nerguizian 2011, 23). In 2010, Aljazeera reported Egypt’s increasing unease with Iranian regional activities. In a leaked report obtained by Aljazeera, the Egyptian government had reported to the U.S. the Iranian attempts to smuggle funding to Hamas through Egypt, as well as to establish a Hezbollah cell by recruiting Sinai Bedouins (Aljazeera 2010). Iranian efforts to use the recent Egyptian revolution for its own regional aspirations have only served to increase tensions between the two (Ezzat 2011). The arrest and deportation of an Iranian diplomat in Cairo on charges of espionage (Ezzat 2011) attests to this increasing tension and distrust.

Iran, following the end of the first Gulf War, has enjoyed the status quo within the Middle East. U.N. sanctions, as well as the U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf, ensured that Iraq remained weak and its regional ambitions significantly curbed (Gordon 2010). Iraq’s oil outputs also suffered, allowing Iran to fill the gap. The 2003 Iraq invasion has removed such benefits, but it has also significantly bolstered anti-U.S. sentiments in the region. At the same time, Iran has come to represent the regional power that can possibly successfully curb U.S. agendas for the region. As a result, the incentives for Iran to interfere with and curb developments in Iraq are far greater than its incentive to not interfere, or to allow U.S. plans to facilitate Iraq’s economic recovery and the liberalisation of its markets. Allowing Iraq’s oil economy to liberalise further could severely curb the lucrative Iranian smuggling business, both in terms of oil as well as other products. The possibility of U.S. troops being stationed in Iraq indefinitely or, as some have speculated, permanently (see Niblett 2010; Gillem 2007) would increase Iranian anxiety and fear of a regime change extending beyond Iraq’s borders.

Further, a democratic Iraq would empower existing civil society groups, as well as minority groups, to demand increasing rights and reforms that would threaten the very foundation of *Velayat-e fageh*.

Iran certainly has the capacity and incentive to ensure that events and trends within Iraq transpire in its favour. While Iran's level of influence on local groups, parties and prominent actors is debatable, its existence is evident. Iran's relations with The PUK as well as Islamic groups, such as SIIC and other secular organisations, are well established (Katzman 2005). Iran can certainly pressure such groups into adopting policies favourable to itself through economic, security and other incentives (Gatehouse 2011). Iran is also increasingly seeing itself as closed in by the U.S. presence in both Afghanistan and Iraq. A long term U.S. presence is highly undesirable and will serve to produce external as well as domestic pressures for change and reform. Further, on an ideological front, reconstruction failure in Iraq will boost Iran's domestic legitimacy and serve to delegitimize American efforts towards increasing liberal democratic values in the region. Further, the U.S. rejection of Iranian efforts to strike a 'grand bargain' represented the perfect window of opportunity that was squandered by the U.S., reaffirming America's unequivocal denunciation of the regime (Parsi 2006). This refusal, on the part of the U.S., to work with Iran, represents one of the largest policy failures of the whole reconstruction. Iran's direct involvement could have reduced fears of regime change, as well as allowed the coalition forces to maintain a closer eye on Iran's direct involvement. This policy could have established a new era of bilateral relations between the two states and allowed Iran to play a more moderating role in post-Saddam Iraq. This would have certainly curbed the increasingly belligerent Iranian foreign policy turn. While the U.S. does possess the most technologically advanced, well equipped and trained army in the world, it has consistently failed to learn from past lessons. The porous nature of Iraq's borders with its neighbours, as well as over a decade of illegal black market and smuggling that developed as a result of the U.N. sanctions, ensured that resistant neighbours could easily influence U.S. policies for Iraq. On the other hand, there were strong elements within the Bush administration that viewed closer U.S.-Iran relations as undesirable. The failure to strike a 'grand bargain' with Iran is widely attributed to the working of neoconservatives such as Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney (Parsi 2006). Though, it is doubtful whether a 'grand bargain' could have ever been realized between the two historical rivals. Likewise, the strong and powerful Israeli lobby groups viewed closer relations as unwelcome (Skelly 2010, 178-179). Also, the Middle East, with its dominant Sunni states,

will view closer relations as increasing unfavourable Persian and Shia influence over the region.(Ahdi 2008). In turn, U.S. policies towards Iran involved attempts to balance the influence of Iran through promoting closer alliances with regional powers such as Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The dilemma, however, arises from the general attitude towards Iran. It is unlikely that Arab states will adopt an aggressive stance towards Iran, despite tacit U.S. pressures. While Iran is generally disliked, regional neighbours have demonstrated attempts to accommodate Iran (Wehrey 2009). Powerful states such as Turkey have a newfound reason for coordinating policies and improving relations with Iran following increased Kurdish unrest (Wehrey 2010, 45).

In a bid to restrict Iranian influence on the Iraq situation, the U.S. dispatched a U.S. carrier to the Gulf; increased intelligence and cooperation with the Gulf States and deployed Patriot antimissile equipment to Qatar, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and Kuwait (Tyson 2005; McGreal 2010). The U.S. also attempted to crack down on Iranian operatives and Quds agents, while airing its discontent about Iranian influence on Iraq. There was also increased funding, to the tune of US\$20 billion in arms deals to Persian Gulf states, to counter their increasing susceptibility and deference to Iranian power (Gordon and Shane 2007; Knapp 2010, 49-59). However, it is doubtful as to what extent the Iranian government, as a collective, is responsible for Iranian incursions into Iraq, whether tacitly or directly through supplying military parts. This is particularly relevant since the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) is increasingly becoming more political and involved in the internal political affairs of the state (Rubin 2008). Certain elements and factions also display strong loyalty towards President Ahmadinejad, which further complicates the internal political terrain of Iran. Likewise, other factions demonstrate strong loyalty towards the supreme leader, while prominent members of the IRGC have close ties to leading clerics (Cordesman 2007b). Iran's involvement in Iraq led some in the Bush administration to advocate a similar regime change as Iraq. The extent of Iranian involvement in Iraq prompted Senator Hilary Clinton to warn against attacking Iran in Congress. She argued that "It would be a mistake of historical proportions if the administration thought that the 2002 resolution authorizing force against Iraq was a blank check for the use of force against Iran without further congressional authorization" (Lake 2007). For its part, Iran has also demonstrated a willingness to cooperate with non-Shia anti-American groups as a means of producing a faster U.S. exit (see Tahir 2007). The regime also has a long history of supporting Shi'ite Hazara groups in Afghanistan and breeding ethnic discontent (Massoud 2011). Despite such behaviour, little

physical evidence exists to support direct Iranian interference in Iraq (Gatehouse 2010; Kukis and Hauslohner 2008). This does not necessarily indicate Iranian non-interference. Instead, external groups such as Hezbollah have actively provided aid and training to various Shia groups, a policy that is hardly in contrast with Iranian foreign policy within the region. Reports support active Hezbollah training of militants numbering over two thousand from the al-Mahdi army (Giraldi, 2008).

In a comparative account, Iran also exerts significant bargaining power over the Afghanistan reconstruction process. This involvement is important to the reconstruction of Iraq, since success in Afghanistan will demonstrate a greater probability of success in Iraq. Afghanistan's reconstruction also demonstrates too well the danger of external regional interference. As an example, Afghanistan's reliance on Iran for its trade routes, positions Kabul in a vulnerable diplomatic and bargaining stance - a fact which Iran attempts to exploit to the fullest. Interactions with Iran entail understanding of this reliance, since Iranian refusal to allow goods to pass through to Afghanistan could very well lead to its economic collapse (Tahir 2007). Iran has also integrated into the physical reconstruction process in Afghanistan, ensuring its importance in vital decision making processes. In 2006, for instance, Afghanistan was the recipient of \$500 million in revenue, or close to 4% of Iran's total exports. This is not surprising, given Tehran's opposition to the Taliban regime (Magnus and Naby 1998, 91). Unsurprisingly, over the duration of Afghanistan's reconstruction, Iran has provided more than \$500 million to date in humanitarian aid, including building schools, roads and bridges (Motlagh 2009), and hence, its contribution is crucial. Iran's continued support and involvement in Afghanistan's reconstruction is, thus, essential for the future of that state, despite the fact that this support consists of dual policies.

On the other hand, U.S. objectives for Iran's interference in Afghanistan, however, differed significantly to those within Iraq. As in Iraq, the immediate stages of Afghanistan's invasion contained the strong possibility of Iranian involvement, as part of the international coalition to address international terrorism in Afghanistan (Samii 2002). However, this proved fruitless, as Iranian interests and ideological leanings prevented direct cooperation with the United States led coalition forces. The U.S. has, for the most part, allowed Iran to have relative leeway in forming relations and restructuring the country. Likewise, the level of military force in Afghanistan exacerbated Iran's fear of U.S. regional ambitions. Further, widespread international support for Afghanistan would have placed Iranian protests in a futile position. More importantly, Iran desired regime change in Afghanistan and did not

view the removal of the Taliban as a negative venture (Alterman 2003). In fact, the removal of the anti-Shia Taliban regime allowed Iran to gain a stronger foothold over the country and exert its dominance further (Farmer 2010). Iran, for example, actively supports and funds the anti-Taliban *Hezb-i-Wahdat* (the Unity Party), a Shia party dedicated to opposing and removing the remnants of Taliban influence within Afghanistan. An active policy of establishing Shia mosques, importing religious learning and indoctrinating students returning from Iran to Afghanistan is another measure of Iranian influence over the state (Mishali-Ram 2008, 479). An example of this is seen through a significant reduction of the drug exporting industry since Mullah Omar banned opium cultivation in early 2000 (Samii 2003, 284). The opium trade created a widespread drug pandemic, contributing to overflowing prison systems, straining Iran's police force and creating social and economic rifts within society (Beehner 2006). According to Vick (2005), America's invasion of Afghanistan re-launched (the Taliban's attempt to) cultivate opium, leading to increased supply, particularly to neighbouring states such as Iran, which suffers the most from the drug trade, with over three million addicts, or 2.8 percent of the population. However, the economic impacts of the U.S. invasion drove opium production to areas outside of the Taliban's control (UNDCP 2001). Iran has attempted to negotiate with Afghanistan, regarding crop substitutions and providing compensation to farmers, but the problem still largely remains (Samii 2003). Considering the complex and linked nature of socio-economic and political relations between the two nations, it is highly unlikely that Iran will leave Afghanistan any time soon.

In contrast, the war in Iraq established a completely new regional environment within which Iran and the U.S. contend. The U.S. has insisted on its commitment to maintain Gulf Security and reduce Iranian influence and to counter threats to its regional neighbours, as well as its influence over oil flows. However, more recent developments have indicated increased diplomatic, strategic and economic pressures, including E.U. oil sanctions, and increased Israeli belligerency, which has led to Iranian threats to close the Straits of Hormuz (Blair 2012). Conservative analysts have argued that this commitment to the Gulf is necessary in preventing the inevitable domination of the region by Iran (Knapp 2010). In turn, Iran has attempted to influence the political direction of the new Iraq by establishing closer relations to its religious clergy. Such measures have gained limited success for both parties involved - Iraq's religious ulama and Iran's leaders. Nevertheless, such policies have reinforced Iran's influence as the dominant Shia state in the region, with a benign interest in reintroducing Khomeini's revolutionary agendas. It is, thus, not unusual that Iran would have inevitably



reached out to its co-religionists in Iraq since both states share two of the most prominent Shia and Islamic sites and centres of learning in the Islamic world. While, to some degree, Iran would have desired a higher level of influence on the Shia ulama in Iraq, it has failed to do so to the scale predicted by some (such as Nasr 2006). Identity politics has taken centre stage for both states and their future relations, leading Iran to adopt dual policies of supporting Sunni or Shia groups as the situation dictates (Nordland 2010). While Shia-Islam remain an important part of Iranian as well as Iraqi identity (the Shia community that is), it is, nevertheless, not the most essential factor. Indeed, national interest has prompted attempts to weaken co-religionists in Iran if necessary, or if its own interests are threatened (Nordland 2010). Though Tehran would have desired a more subservient Iraqi Shia ulama to consolidate its leadership role, it seems feasible that it would avoid overt confrontation with Najaf, so as to prevent speculations of Iran's weakness or lack of influence over its co-religionists. Religion, as a result, proves itself to be a part of the identity discourse, though in some instances not necessarily the most important. Certainly, the leaders in Najaf refused to subordinate their religious independence to the leadership of Iran, as that would have required extensively closer relations, and, to some degree, acknowledgment of Iranian leadership. Instead, as Chapter Four demonstrated, the ulama rejected Iran's influence and repeatedly advocated nationalist rhetoric to the detriment of regional Shia homogeneity.

## **6.7. Saudi Arabia:**

Arguably, Saudi Arabia has the most to lose if the Iraq war produces trends deemed undesirable by the Saudis. Despite the fact that the regime has historically relied on U.S. support, due to a tendency towards 'encirclement syndrome' (Long 1985), it nevertheless vocalised its aversion to an Iraqi invasion. Then, Saudi Arabia instead demanded a United Nations led mission (Murphy 2003; Cordesman 2010). The U.S. administration, in turn, criticised the Saudi regime for not providing enough support for the war, straining relations between the two allies. On the other hand, large numbers of terrorists and jihadists crossed over from Saudi Arabia and permeated the porous borders of Iraq. It is estimated that, each month during the 2007 period, well over 30 Saudi Arabian foreign fighters entered Iraq (Parker 2007; Cooper 2007). Likewise, Saudi Arabia has been accused of providing financial support to various Sunni groups (Cooper 2007). Saudi Arabia, therefore, was integral to the reconstruction in Iraq. Yet Saudi Arabia's significance to regional order and its impact on

Iraq cannot be underestimated. Analysts have noted that the Saudi's are 'critical' to not only the region, but also to the global order because they control the world's largest oil reserves, which culminates to over a quarter of global supply (Campbell and Yetiv 2007, 137).

Thus, the Iraq war signified fundamental changes to the regional order, especially for Saudi Arabia and its long established position as the leader of the Sunni Muslims of the world. The modern Saudi state's foundational myths centred on the al-Saudi family line and a genetic line tracing back to the prophet Mohammad (Elhadj 2006, 72). This narrative has allowed Saudi Arabia to position itself as the leader of the global Islamic community. Saudi Arabia's relative lack of military capacity has prevented its ability to make a direct bid for regional leadership (Cordesman 2002, 26). However, the Saudi's often use economic weapons as a means of coercive diplomacy and to pressure other states (Campbell and Yetiv 2007, 137). Traditionally, Iraq, Iran and Egypt have also attempted to compete for such a prestigious role, though neither has succeeded in achieving this. The relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia is pivotal for regional stability, with each proposing a different regional vision, yet vying for a leadership role. Saudi possession of holy Islamic sites, as well as its dominant locus within the World Muslim League as well as the Organization of the Islamic Conference, positions the regime as a strong contender of Islamic leadership (see Davis 1997; Al-Rasheed 2002). However, the post-Saddam era challenges Saudi Arabia on several fronts. Firstly, the intervention increased Iranian regional presence and power. Secondly, U.S. awareness of Iran's necessity to the peaceful post-Saddam transition challenges Riyadh's position as a close U.S. ally in the region and the privileges the relationship entailed. Finally, Iran's nuclear ambitions challenges Saudi's ideological survival and leaves it in a far more vulnerable position with the U.S., who has traditionally acted as its security ally. These trends leave Riyadh surrounded by a nuclear armed Jewish state as well as the powerful Persian Shia state, leaving it far more vulnerable and reliant on U.S. support which merely serves to reduce its legitimacy in the Arab world further. At a symbolic level, Riyadh appears significantly weakened by allowing the traditional guardians of Islam, the prophet and the significant Islamic symbols, Medina, Macca and the Kabbah to be surrounded by non-believers (Israeli 2003, 127). On a foundational myths of the Saudi state, it appears to have failed as the guardian of Islamic history and tradition and its leadership position on that front has been relatively weakened. Heusser and Grabher establishes the significance of myths and symbols as a measure of authority and legitimacy. He reasons that "[m]yth primarily serves basic socio-political purposes-most notably the establishment and maintenance of authority

and the formation and reinforcement of collective identity” (2002, 9). More significantly for Hausser, such myths are often linked to notions of authority, which in turn, are associated with religion. For the most part though, the Saudi’s allowance of U.S. military bases has significantly reduced its regional influence. In contrast, Iran has continued to rise as a pillar of Islamic pride and resurgence, leading to an intensification of tensions between Shi’ite Tehran and Sunni Riyadh, prompting some to label the face off as the “real clash of civilizations” (Fattah 2006).

Relations with Iran have generally consisted of typical power-balances for the regional order. However, post-revolutionary Iran adopted an increasingly confrontationist attitude towards Saudi Arabia. The 2003 Iraq war positioned both “Saudi Arabia and Iran as the twin pillars of the regional power-configuration” (Heyderian 2010). Tehran, post-1979, adopted a revolutionary political ideology including one of importing revolutions to other parts of the region. In contrast, the governing structure in Saudi Arabia is based on a monarchical system with close relationship with its clerical institutions. However, sovereign authority ultimately rests with the al-Saud family. Revolutionary Iran, on the other hand, advocates a vigorous anti-monarchical system of rule that places heavy significance on clerical rule (Wehrey 2009). The most learned religious leaders are indeed the most ideal guardians of the state and society in Iran. The 1979 revolution, however, has limited Iran to a Shia constituency, and even that, has been limited in some cases. Roy and Volk (1994, 184) note that Iran’s foreign policy initially committed itself to the Shiite community. This rhetoric, however, has not ensured Iranian leadership of the Shiite community, as is evident by the loyalty of large numbers of Lebanese Shiites to Syria rather than Iran. Since the 1979 revolution, Riyadh has been increasingly worried about augmented Iranian attempts to reach out to the wider Islamic community, including the Sunni majority within the region. The 1987 Shia uprisings in Mecca still represent the possibility of Iranian revolutionary reach into Saudi Arabia (Wilson and Graham 1994, 251). The second decade of the revolution saw Iran increasing interactions with the Muslim Brotherhood and taking a more direct and provocative stance towards the Palestinian issue through direct support of Hezbollah and Hamas (Wehrey 2009, 3). Tensions over Iran’s economic and petroleum policies have also challenged Saudi Arabian economic development (Heyderian 2010). Riyadh’s petroleum policy is traditionally based on three pillars: including ensuring long-term supply of oil, stabilizing the oil markets and retaining the kingdom’s monopoly of oil and its significance to the West (see, for instance, Abdulghani 1984).

While the ascendancy of Shi'ites to power in Iraq has been heralded by some experts as a new era of Shia empowerment within the region, in most instances it has indeed positioned Shi'ites in the region in a more precarious situation (Ambah 2007). The Shi'ites of Saudi Arabia personify this new trend well. Saudi's official figures indicate that 15 percent of 28 million Saudis are Shi'ites, who also happen to reside in the oil-rich eastern provinces (Habeeb 2012, 166). The official creed of the Saudi regime has revolved around a particularly conservative and militant strand of Islam, Wahhabism, which sees Shi'ites as heretics. The Iraq war and the 2006-2007 sectarian war however, revived fears of a loss of Wahhabi and Saudi supremacy in the region, which the 1979 Iranian revolution had so spectacularly initiated. The Saudi regime has faced various internal and external threats in the past, including Islamic revivalism in the form of external players such as the Muslim Brotherhood and grass-root revivalism, as advocated in the 1990's by the likes of rebellious Sahwa Sheikhs (Beranek 2009, 2). Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden's vocal criticism of the regime further provided ideological challenges to Saudi supremacy (Litvak 2006, 130). Nevertheless, maintaining strong control over domestic forces and opinions is an essential element in maintaining Saudi legitimacy, as well as a defining factor in its relationship with outside powers. Yet, the regime has proven resilient and has consistently proved capable of dealing with challenges. On this account the minority Shia who have traditionally faced heavy handed state repression and exclusion from the political process are faced with a greater dilemma as a result of the Iraq war and the rise of Shia. While emboldened to demand a greater share in the political process, including within the Consultative Council, *the Majlis al-Shura*, they have nevertheless had to divide their attention between proving their loyalty to the regime - particularly under the more conciliatory King Abdullah - and supporting and coordinating with their co-religionists in Iraq and the greater Middle East (Jones 2005). Instead, the regime has, for the most part increased repression, and rising Shia dissent has been crushed. As a result, the Shi'ite community in Saudi Arabia has attempted to distance itself from the sectarian conflicts in Iraq and refrain from initiating closer relations with Iran. The most revered Shi'ite cleric in Saudi Arabia, Hassan al-Saffar explicitly argued that "we are [sic] Saudi citizens concerned first of all with local issues. Our religious sympathies do not affect the security and stability of the country" (Ambah 2007). For the regime, the internal Shia threat is for the time being minimal on the scale of security and geopolitical priorities. What is of paramount concern, however, is the rise of Iranian influence, particularly with its pursuit of nuclear capabilities, as well as its influence within Iraq and other hot spots in the region. As a result, the Saudis have refrained from promoting increased

relations with Iraq for fear of its Shi'ite agendas. In 2005, for instance, direct Iraq-Saudi trade amounted to only \$5.32 million (Costel 2008, 142), indicating a lack of direct investment and hence the reduced incentive to avoid conflict. For, the Saudi's evidence of Iranian regional aspirations have become evident in events in the region outside Iraq as well. The on-going conflict in Lebanon, linked to the Israeli-Hezbollah 2006 war and the resulting tensions between Hezbollah and the Lebanese government, as well as the consistent Iranian support for Hamas, is indicative of an Iranian regional initiative (Gause 2007). These regional aspirations have led to the widespread belief that Iran is "more dangerous than Israel" (Fattah 2006).

One particular reversal of reforms emerged through Iran's post-Saddam regional policies. Iran's perceived proxy war against the U.S. appears to have involved increased covert support for Shia groups and organizations within the region. Like most other states in the Middle East, Yemen is home to a large Shia population, close to 43% (Hestler and Spilling 2010, 84). Further, the Shia Saaba uprising has raged on for several years, creating extensive socio-economic and political challenges to the state (see Beglari and Behravan 2009). President Saleh's attempts to curb the Saaba Uprising and the Shi'ite radical groups, the *Zaydi's* have achieved limited success. Considered as one of the main three branches of Shia Islam, along with Twelver and Isma'ili branches, the Zaydi have been confined to the borders of Yemen and have, for the most part, coexisted peacefully with Yemen's Sunnis until 1962, when the Zaidi imamate, which ruled a portion of the country, was deposed (Goldschmidt and Davidson 2009, 83). The government of Yemen increasingly clashed with the Zaydi's, particularly from 2004 onwards, as the Shi'ites in general became increasingly vocal in their anti-American rhetoric following a series of protests (Salmoni, Loidolt and Wells 2010). The uprising and subsequent clashes with government forces were initially led by Hussain al-Houthi, whose death in 2004 prompted the movement's take over by Abdul Malik al Houthi (Zimmerman and Harnisch 2010). The movement has protested the Yemen's pro-U.S. stance and Iraq war (McGregor 2005). It is yet to be seen how the recent revolution in Yemen will impact the sectarian conflict in the country.

Iran's involvement in Yemen is complex and subject to changing political conditions, though not necessarily unique to the region. Oman, Egypt and Saudi Arabia have all played, and continue to play, an important role in the domestic policies and stability of the state. Egypt and Saudi Arabia were particularly involved in the 1962-1967 civil war (Cordesman 2008). The civil war of the 1960's saw Iranian support for the Zaydi movement. The movement's

prominence emerged following its 2004 uprising, leading to Saudi offensives. Iran has condemned leading experts who label this trend as a proxy war between these two regional powers (Al-Jazeera 2009). Iran is perceived to aspire to the restoration of the Zaydi imamate, which was in place for centuries until the 1962 civil war (Hiltermann 2009). The movement, however, could play a strategic role in Iranian interests and security, as they border the northern parts of Yemen and neighbouring Saudi Arabia. Through providing aid and support, Iran attempts to pose a significant threat to Saudi Security. Direct Iranian military and financial aid is reinforced by Hezbollah supporting and training the various Shia and anti-western movements. Iran, for its part has rejected involvement with the movement, with experts noting that "Since about 2003 there has been a trend in Middle East politics that any civil conflict in the region which has relation with Shia or Islamists is being related to Iran" (AlJazeera 2009).

For, the Saudi's the new regional order is strongly hinged on Iran's rise to a hegemonic role and its support of Shia Islam (Gause 2007). More importantly, the Saudi's position as the defenders of Islam has been seriously challenged both by internal actors as well as powerful external actors, such as Bin Laden who criticised the regime's accommodation and cooperation with western powers. This has positioned Saudi Arabia in a complex role of supporting the American military effort in Iraq while, at the same time, rejecting the new Iraqi government. In 2007, for instance, when an international conference was held in Egypt in relation to Iraq, the Saudi King Abdullah rejected talks with Prime Minister Maliki, labelling him as essentially "embodying sectarian divisions" (Moubayed 2009). In contrast, Iran has retained staunch anti-U.S. policies, intensified further following the Iraq invasion. In the process, Iran has not shied away from developing relations with both Sunni and Shi'ite factions in advancing its interests. In turn, the Saudi's have been restrained by their strategic relationship with the U.S. in adopting a more aggressive role towards Iraq, particularly in embracing closer relations with the Sunni factions (Gause 2007). These limitations have positioned Iran in a better strategic situation and have gained the regime capital within the region to advertise itself as a legitimate defender of Islam against western neo-imperialism. More crucially, Iran's pursuit of nuclear capabilities is not necessarily viewed with widespread alarm within the region, as it is by the west. Indeed, the invasion of Iraq has served as a catalyst for the rise of anti-U.S. sentiments within the region. This trend has provided the perfect basis for regional support for Iranian nuclear capabilities, particularly as a means of countering Israeli influence and threats within the region. A 2010 Arab Public

Opinion Poll demonstrated increased levels of Arab support within Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Morocco for Iran's nuclear armament (Telhami 2010). The poll also demonstrated the widespread Arab view that Israel and the U.S. are considered to be far bigger threats than Iran. For the moment, Saudi Arabia is locked between a rock and a hard place. While, on the one hand, Saudi views towards Iran are strongly aligned with U.S. policies, it can ill afford a closer tie and relations with the west considering the strong anti-U.S. sentiments of the Arab world. On the other hand, it is forced to adopt a policy of containment, appeasement and accommodation with Iran (Wehrey 2009, 100). Nevertheless, Iran as well as Iraq, have been traditional regional rivals of Saudi regime. The removal of the secular Iraqi regime has meant a loss of a secular state that the Saudi's relied on to balance Iran's regional aspirations. Overall, though, the relationship between Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia has been complex and multi-dimensional, containing a multifaceted combination of containment, engagement, cooperation, isolation and economic and military pressures.

#### **6.8. Syria and Jordan:**

Before the recent uprising and civil war, Syria under the rule of Bashar al-Asad, has failed to meet the expectations of many experts in adopting a more moderate and western position, both regionally and on an international scale. Adopting a pan-Arab (in rhetoric at least) and militant foreign policy regarding the Palestinian issue, the Arab-Israel conflict as well as the war in Iraq, the regime has remained defiant of U.S. ambitions within the region. Syria selected a dominant position within the Arab region in contesting the war in Iraq. This protest was tacitly and implicitly implemented through the adoption of a belligerent anti-western rhetoric. The official Syrian rhetoric consisted of a dual policy of providing limited support to the U.S. on the war on terror while, at the same time, supporting radical elements within the Middle East, including Hezbollah. Syria's harbouring of prominent members of Saddam's regime, including Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, as well as Vice Presidents Tariq Yasin and Izat Ibrahim al-Duri, further increased U.S. antagonism (Zisser 2003).

Like most other states in the region, it was in Syria's best interest to retain the status quo in the Middle East and to continue Saddam's reign. A pro-American democracy would establish challenges close to home to influence elements within Syria, demanding greater political openness and reforms (such groups have emerged strongly after Tahrir Square). Further, both

Iraq and Syria shared a common view towards the U.S., and, in this regard, Saddam was widely viewed as the only Arab leader still willing to actively defy the U.S. Further, Saddam's defiance of the U.S. challenged Iranian aspirations to position itself as the only state within the region still actively pursuing an active anti-western foreign policy. Syria's adoption of a dual and contradictory policy towards the U.S. and the War on Terror, according to some experts, stemmed from a U.S. 'soft approach' towards Syria (Zisser 2003). Syrian foreign policy, particularly towards non-state organisations such as Hezbollah, al-Qaeda, and the Palestinian cause, has traditionally followed an ambivalent dual policy of supporting, limiting and restraining them (Byman 2005). Syrian foreign policy has often, according to experts, followed a "power-maximizing" (Telhami and Barnett 2002, 171) tradition, balancing competing powers within the region, while simultaneously manipulating pan-Arab and Palestinian sentiments. On the other hand, the sectarian nature of Syrian society, with the ruling Shia Alawi community that constitutes just over thirteen per cent of Syrian society, could see a fundamental challenge from the Sunni majority, following a sectarian war in Iraq (see Cordesman 2008, 155). Syria, however, still retains a strong military and security service presence, although it has not prevented dissident Sunni groups, such as the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, from actively challenging the regime in the 1970's and early 1980's. Syria's long term support for The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), the Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ), Hamas and Hezbollah (Cordesman 2008) at one point or another was widely feared by the regime to lead to a similar Iraq style intervention by the U.S. On this account, there was little incentive for the regime to change its foreign policy behaviour. In other words, it continued to promote its dual policy of support and restraint on an official and tacit level. Its official rhetoric was to condemn terrorism but still support and promote terrorist groups infiltrating Iraq.

Although official state rhetoric from Syria and Iran indicated that both desired a speedy U.S. exit from Iraq, both states have adopted a competing policy that contradicts their official rhetoric. The Bush administration labelled Iran and Syria as part of the 'axis of evil', and both legitimately feared a U.S. invasion (Davies 2008). As a result, both adopted a mutually exclusive policy of interfering explicitly or covertly by supplying, arming, aiding and supporting various radical groups and contributing to a more volatile domestic situation in Iraq (see Prados and Sharp 2005). As the reconstruction process continued, it became clear



that the U.S. would continue its presence in Iraq for some time; allegations that the U.S. desired a permanent role in Iraq through development of military bases alarmed Syria and Iran further (Santora 2009). While Iran attempted to produce nuclear facilities, both states were in agreement over creating a political situation that would bog down the U.S. indefinitely in a Vietnam like situation that would, at least for the foreseeable future, reduce the probability of U.S. adopting similar policies towards Iran and Syria. As some have argued, the regime is in a much weaker position, which ensures a greater reliance on terrorist groups (Byman 2005, 103). This, certainly, has produced the opposite regional effect that the U.S. intended the war in Iraq would produce. This issue is now greatly complicated by the hostility towards Asaad generally, especially from Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and the possibility of NATO bombings (MacFarquhar 2011; Muir 2011; Osborn 2012).

Like Syria, Jordan has also viewed the Iraq war in a negative light. U.S. policies such as selecting Ahmad Chalabi as the leader of post-Saddam era appear short sighted and ill-informed, since Chalabi almost single handedly brought down the Jordanian economy by embezzling millions. Jordanian views towards Chalabi are hostile, to say the least, with great cause. It was foreseeable to Middle East experts that Jordan would voice significant objections to not only the war, but also the election of Chalabi to a prominent role in the post-Saddam government, as well as question the democratic credentials of the post-conflict Iraq in positioning a known criminal to power. Moreover, Amman feared that Chalabi, in a position of power, could damage Jordanian interests in the region. This hardly positioned the Jordanian state and the public in a position to support or increase good will towards the U.S.

On a domestic level, like many other states in the region, Jordan took advantage of the 'war on terror' to crack down on Islamists as well as reduce and tighten political rights, free speech and protests. Hundreds of political activists from various parts of the political spectrum have been prosecuted as 'terrorists', with the Hashemite regime producing a royal decree proposing more restrictive counter-terrorism measures. Such measures and the vague and subjective concept of 'terrorist' allowed regimes, such as Jordan, to crack down on elements that demanded increased human rights, political freedom and self-expression, thereby reducing political reforms. However, such groups became further emboldened after the events of Tahrir Square. Overall, Jordan and Syria had little to gain in a changing regional order. Both Jordan and Syria bordered Iraq and were in an ideal position to advocate anti-western and anti-regime change views.

## 6.9. Conclusion:

The reconstruction process in Iraq distinctly lacks a regional outlook, and merely focuses on the domestic changes to the recipient state. The region, as a whole, faces an uncertain future: “confronted with a contradictory package of military intervention within the framework of the ‘war on terror,’ forced democratization, new types of security cooperation, and at least rhetorically strengthened Arab-European relations” (Harders and Legrenzi 2008, 3). Further complicating the regional order, is the instability generated by the Arab Spring. Domestic reforms through forced interventions will only produce limited outcomes if neighbouring states lack a stake in such changes. Further, if they perceive such changes to their neighbour as negative, they may directly or indirectly act to destabilise the process and limit any reforms. In sum, this indicates the need to view reconstructions as a regional initiative as well as regional in scope, as Dobbins (2007) notes. While domestic factors do restrain and limit the level of reforms, exogenous actors and forces also play a major role in domestic changes. To date, the level of commitment by the U.S. to this agenda provides limited hope for future regional stability. Instead, most policies have been directed at internal reforms and the pressure of reconstruction on domestic actors and parties. Aside from sporadic accusations to outside forces, the U.S. has demonstrated limited commitment at providing positive incentives to insure compliance and coordination of regional powers and neighbours in the reconstruction of Iraq - consistently leaving it open to the often negative influence of outside actors.

U.S. inability to view the reconstruction processes, in both Afghanistan and Iraq, as part of a wider regional reconstruction consistently places such reconstructions at the mercy of neighbouring states. Afghanistan, for instance, has produced limited successes, if any, outside of Kabul city, with both Iran and Pakistan vying for a greater role in the weak state, producing contradictory trends and behaviours to the detriment of the reconstruction. Likewise, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey and other regional players have consistently influenced and interfered directly in Iraq, contributing to policy failures. While regional players and actors can provide necessary aid and support, their interferences has consistently prolonged security dilemmas and contributed to the destabilisation of reconstructions in both Afghanistan and Iraq. This points to a wider normative and theoretical problem in the reconstructionary field, and indeed, again points to the wide gap between literature and the

empirical practices of reconstructions. The literature consistently points to the necessity of involving neighbouring states and actors by actively providing incentives and a stake in the reconstruction; yet, the empirical practice demonstrates a limited commitment at best to this important feature of reconstructions. In other words, the reconstructionary field, as led by the most powerful and developed countries in the international system demonstrates a consistent failure to take into consideration the historical and political culture of recipient societies and formulate a specific policy tailored towards addressing the recipient society's needs by seeing internal civil strife as an accumulation of a mutually binding internal and external sources of conflict. Iraq's relations with Iran, for instance, produced easily predictable trends, most of which were not foreseen by U.S. policy makers. Instead of providing incentives and attempting to involve and take into account Iran's fears and views, the U.S. actively pursued a confrontationist and aggressive attitude towards Iran. By coordinating with Iran's neighbours, such as Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states, buoyed by an aggressive international effort to isolate Iran, U.S. policies produced significant Iranian counter-policies to balance such efforts through building its nuclear capabilities, extending its reach to a global scale particularly through building close relations with U.S. neighbours as well as actively destabilising U.S. reconstructionary efforts in the Middle East.

This chapter has attempted to show that a close analysis of regional legacies, in conjunction with cultural trends and norms of recipient societies, entails a close investigation of neighbouring states and their traditional relations and involvement with domestic policies, groups, events and actors. Viewed in this light, reconstructions are far more difficult and larger in scope than most liberal studies have demonstrated. Even the most willing recipient societies can produce limited positive reforms if neighbouring states are determined to produce changes satisfactory to their own domestic interests. Considering the intricate and multi-layered relations and policies, often contradictory and prone to changes, the Middle East is a difficult terrain, to say the least, in promoting democracy building and liberal political and economic reforms. However, this does not indicate an absence of will or interest in the region for changes. The Arab Spring democracy processes are a combination of anti-globalization, anti-neoliberal and Islamist forces, with the addition of regular forces demanding democracy promotion. Nevertheless, the handling of the Iraq case points to the inability of U.S. and outside forces leading such missions, to view and comprehend complex regional norms and trends and address and utilise them in a positive manner through a combination of economic and political incentives in conjunction with global institutions.

This naturally points to a more coordinated international effort that requires burden sharing across a variety of regional and global powers, but also international organisations and bodies in producing a coordinated and comprehensive and long term commitment to such a reconstruction. The absence of such a cohesive international commitment has consistently pointed to colossal failures. Therefore, the reconstruction of a state such as Iraq or Afghanistan and others, has often failed long before a single troop has landed on recipient state soil. The international community has consistently demonstrated a lack of commitment and patience in reconstructions, demanding immediate returns for their involvement and investments that lead to the development of hasty reconstructionary policies, such as elections, institution building and other democracy-building measures that fail to address or even scratch the surface of the causes of conflict and domestic instability in recipient societies.

Additionally, this chapter has attempted to demonstrate two important facts required to produce successful reconstructions, both of which have been missing in democracy-building attempts in Iraq. Firstly, pre-conflict planning requires a comprehensive and transparent campaign by those proposing a reconstruction, be they the U.N. or the U.S., to involve as many regional and international players and actors as possible at a state and institutional level. Likewise, such attempts should be presented at both a human rights level as well as involve security arguments. In the case of Iraq, the human rights issues and the regime's brutality played a limited and secondary role to the security argument. When that security argument fell spectacularly short, attempts by the U.S. and the coalition of the willing to fill the gap with the human rights issue failed to bolster international enthusiasm and, indeed, contributed to a sharp rise in critical views of the war. This resulted in a largely unresolved humanitarian and refugee crisis. Secondly, international commitment can produce partial results if important regional actors and players are not allowed a voice in the reconstruction. Indeed, this is a necessary measure, despite particular neighbours actively or covertly contributing to their neighbours failure or internal conflict. This obviously does not indicate that all neighbours should be given an equal role in the reconstruction. However, just as legitimacy building is important through fostering domestic acceptance and ownership of the reconstruction, so too is regional involvement. Such reconstructions fail to take the 'legitimacy-building' concept beyond the borders of the recipient society. Legitimacy needs to entail a region wide agenda of adjustment and legitimacy-building because long after the last international troops have pulled out it is the neighbouring states that must co-exist in the

new regional order. Indeed, as Iraq and Afghanistan have indicated, neighbouring states should be encouraged to contribute under the leadership of a leading state. This concept is naturally subject to the regional trends and political culture as the reconstruction in the Balkans demonstrated. In this example, neighbouring powers desired a speedy reconstruction of the territories involved that entailed a liberal-democratic governing system and relevant institution building. As Carl Von Clausewitz (cited in Brearton 81) noted, war is “chameleon like in character, because it changes its colour in some degree in each particular case”. Each case, therefore, should be analysed based on its own merits, including on a regional level.

In the short term, Iraq cannot be considered a success until the U.S. military has fully withdrawn. It then remains to be seen whether the nascent democratic institutions will survive. Further, and perhaps more importantly, the U.S. withdrawal will undoubtedly leave Iraq open to influence by neighbouring states. The most certain assumption is that there are no certainties in the Middle East and the U.S. led invasion has further increased that uncertainty. However, perhaps most interestingly, the rising tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran following the Arab Spring, is perhaps the most important issue that has emerged as a result of recent events in the region. Saudi Arabia and Iran still continue to vie for power in Iraq, but it is the emerging shift in Syria which has positioned both regimes at increasingly polar opposites as each attempts to retain influence over its co-religionists in other areas of the region. The rising tension between the two states could well determine the future of the region’s stability.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN- CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter summarises the findings of the research and draws on their implications for the field of reconstruction. The research so far has focused on identifying limitations in approaching the rehabilitation of states using Iraq's current reconstruction as a sample. These limitations can be classified into three distinct categories: the disproportionate emphasis over state-building vs. nation-building, a focus on sovereignty over the legitimacy of a post-conflict state and, finally, the accentuation of liberal democratic norms vs. addressing the identity dilemmas. The chapter will start by providing a summary of previous chapters' main findings. It will then use the transitional justice in Iraq to demonstrate and consolidate the major findings. Finally, the chapter will conclude with possible implications for future research.

To date, this thesis has identified a limitation in the reconstruction of weak and failing states- the failure to reconstruct recipient societies with an understanding of the identity and cultural elements that could contribute to or hinder such missions. The thesis has utilised Iraq's reconstruction as a case study and has narrowed the research to a specific focus on the impact of religion and religious actors to demonstrate this lacuna. A brief recap of the major arguments proposed so far will help to consolidate the final conclusions of this thesis.

The literature review served an essential purpose in this research, for it demonstrated the following significant points: It highlighted the significance of the field and its continuously evolving nature in response to changing global trends. As well as evidencing the considerable body of knowledge already in existence, the chapter spotlighted inconsistencies such as those between theory and practice in the field. The chapter also located conflicts within present research which the thesis has aimed to address. These existing contradictions included the

synonymy of 'state-building' and 'nation-building' at a normative and policy level; and the imposition of state-centric and institutionally focused liberal democratic values which, in turn, have prevented a greater focus on issues of identity and producers of social cleavages such as religion, ethnicity or culture. As a result of identifying these discrepancies, the chapter's main contribution lay in demonstrating the field's inability to promote 'legitimacy'. For instance, in ignoring the role of religion and religious actors and the interests and voices they represented in Iraq, the legitimacy of the reconstruction suffered. Finally, it demonstrated the need to further research the necessity of accommodating identity markers, such as religion and its relevant actors, in order to establish a post-conflict political system which is solidly entrenched with legitimacy in the eyes of the recipient society.

Chapter Two endeavoured to focus on the shifting trends in the international system, and the increased dominance of the United States in this field. The chapter focused on identifying key U.S. foreign policy trends that have contributed to the failures in the field. It also highlighted that the foundations of this field lay further back in American history than initially thought. Indeed, it is widely accepted that the field largely emerged as a result of Wilsonian principles in early twentieth century as a response to demands for de-colonisation. The chapter highlighted that the U.S. commitment to the field is entrenched in the historical and political legacies of the state and is ideologically inherent in its very existence. As a result of this, while Wilsonian doctrine launched the field into the international arena, further fuelled by global developments such as WWI, WWII and the Cold War, the historical legacies of the founding fathers ensure that this field will continue to attract U.S. interest. Thus, it is essential for international peace and stability that limitations in U.S. policies within the field are identified and addressed. Additionally, this chapter's strength lay in avoiding sole devotion to the neo-conservative elites within the Bush administration and their agendas for the invasion of Iraq. This exclusive focus on the neo-conservatives in the Bush administration has served to limit the discourse significantly, though it still prevails largely in the analysis of Iraq's reconstruction. While this unique and powerful movement in the American political sphere is of some importance to the Iraq case study, it is not solely responsible for the failures in Iraq. Therefore, the utility of studying this movement in identifying theories and policies to address failures in the field is questionable. It is essential that the field acknowledges that the (undoubtedly justified) blame on the neo-conservatives in U.S. political sphere only served as a catalyst for an existing and inherent commitment to democratisation and the continued liberalisation of the international system. The implications for further invasions and forced

reconstructions are, thus, palpable. Finally, the chapter demonstrated the dominant inconsistencies within American foreign policy towards the field of reconstruction. These include inherent tensions between Wilsonian calls for self-determination and the necessity of respecting state sovereignty. In the contemporary state of the international system, this tension has produced conflicts between the normative concepts of 'legitimacy' and 'sovereignty'. State builders are, thus, often left to promote state sovereignty because of the scope of the challenge faced in such missions, which leaves very little focus for nation-orientated policies. This perspective also reflects the strong divide between U.S. self-interest and a lack of wholehearted commitment to the field.

Chapter Three then moved on to the case study. It attempted to map Iraq's inherent fault lines such as identity and religious cleavages. The chapter devoted some degree of attention to the colonial experience of Iraq and the impact of its socio-political legacies post-independence. The chapter then pointed out the various attempts by the subsequent regimes to establish a nation from the hodgepodge of identities that Iraq inherited. However, a combination of illiberal and authoritarian policies inherited from the Ottoman and British colonial era, combined with rising nationalism positioned the regime towards the brutal suppression of certain identities and the promotion of a dominant Sunni-Arab Iraqi persona. Chapter Three found that the political and institutional legacies of the past, both colonial and post-independence, have entrenched social cleavages in Iraq's socio-political sphere. The nature of this cleavage consists primarily of religious and ethnic differences. This process also entrenched the symbiotic relationship between identity and security. In other words, identity groups, particularly those facing state oppression such as the Shi'ites and the Kurds, sought safety in their own identities. This legacy has been the greatest challenge that has faced the reconstruction and underwrote policy failures or successes. Thus, the significance of this chapter lies in identifying and attempting to address the identity issue in Iraq's past and its implication for its continuation and sovereignty. The chapter also noted the failure of U.S. policies in demonstrating care for and awareness of various social and identity cleavages leading to increased levels of violence that culminated in the devastating 2006-2007 sectarian civil war. This chapter also demonstrated the U.S. determination to impose democracy without building a solid foundation based on the legitimacy of the post-Saddam institutional structures and their representatives. Indeed, the focus on democracy, elections and party formation served to further consolidate identity politics and cleavages. Rather than focus on transitional justice to address past injustice and build bridges between communities and



between victims and oppressors, the immediate attention was on democratising and liberalising the political system. This policy did not attempt to liberalise society and societal values by promoting tolerance and respect across communities. Rather, party formation reduced levels of tolerance as the reconstruction increasingly became a zero-sum game for identity groups. These factors were demonstrated, to a large degree, through the Kirkuk issue, which remains unresolved to date and is a possible source of future identity conflicts. In identifying security linkages to identity politics, this argument also noted the importance of territory and geography and the identity and emotional linkages which render Iraq's reconstruction far more complex a process than U.S. policy makers had initially envisioned. The focus on the Kurdish issue also served to drive this point further, and indicates that Iraq's continued existence, as well as its legitimacy and sovereignty, is reliant on a compromise between the state's approaches towards 'sovereignty' and 'legitimacy'. In other words, to continue to survive as a sovereign state, it had to compromise its sovereignty by ensuring the continued existence of the Kurdish autonomous zone, denoting the importance of identity politics, its accommodation, and its continued persistence to the future existence of Iraq. The chapter concluded with an analysis of transitional justice mechanisms adopted by the U.S. to resolve past injustices. These policies included de-Ba'athification and the trial and punishment of Saddam and his cronies. However, such policies largely failed as nation-building measures principally because they were not viewed as nation-building mechanisms. Additionally, the ineffective manner in which the majority of these measures were conducted also delegitimized the process further, reducing the effectiveness of these policies. Their aim was to address past injustices, to vindicate the rights of the victims and to punish the perpetrators of injustices. However, beyond restorative justice, these policies did not aspire to a deeper level of nation-building. When these policies largely failed, or were viewed as being inadequate and illegitimate measures both domestically and internationally, the greatest opportunity for nation-building was squandered.

Chapter Four picked up the identity issues introduced in Chapter Three. The chapter narrowed the identity issue through a focus on the rise of religious leaders. Though identity issues emerged with a vengeance in the post-Saddam era along ethnic and religious lines, the nature of the identity discourse has been predominantly a religious one, particularly since the Kurds were assured of their continued self-governance in the north. For the rest of Iraq, a significantly violent and all-encompassing debate emerged following the religious orientation of the post-Saddam Iraq. This religious discourse, and its inherent identity politics, were

controlled and subject to the views of several top level religious actors. These actors were identified as the Grand Marja Ayatollah Sistani and the lesser religiously schooled, yet still significant, Shi'ite cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr. As Chapter Two demonstrated, the inherent U.S. focus on building a democratic post-Saddam Iraq led to far too much focus on democratising the states institutions. Increased liberalisation, in turn, led to segments within society demanding a greater acknowledgement of Iraq's Islamic identity, which would have naturally aligned with the Shi'ites due to their numerical supremacy. The inherent U.S. view towards the rise of such actors was largely one of suspicion and marginalisation, and later, a grudging acceptance. The discourse surrounding the different views to which Sistani and Sadr adhered provided great insights into the voices they represented, and their aspirations as religious leaders and representatives, as well as the post-Saddam visions they supported for Iraq. In some instances their aspiration did not necessarily conflict with the U.S. values, but still found points of tension due to the nature and lack of legitimacy of the reconstruction, U.S. presence and policies. The chapter also demonstrated that the rise of such religious actors, among others, emerged as a complete surprise to the U.S. policy makers. The response of decision makers was to ignore, marginalise and exclude such actors from the reconstruction process. However, this policy only served to further entrench the influence of such elites, who also happened to epitomize the dominant religious doctrines of their communities. This trend occurred because society largely viewed such religious actors as embodying religious and moral legitimacy and, unlike the U.S. and the coalition allies, genuinely represented the interest of the Shiite communities at heart. Additionally, the distinction between Sistani and al-Sadr represented shifting and emerging discourses in regards to the legitimacy of the post-Saddam government, the role of religion in society-state relations, the nature of expressing grievances along violent or peaceful means, as well as the appropriate role that religious actors should adopt in engaging with the state and policy makers. This tension is certainly not a new concept for Iraq, however, the removal of the repressive regime and the liberalisation of the political sphere brought this discourse to the forefront of stability and the peace-building dilemma. The significance of this chapter resides in linking historical legacies and demonstrating the utility of path dependency in reconstructions. In simplified terms, religious identity and conflicts reside at the centre of Iraq's legitimacy dilemmas. Despite this obvious trend, the historical tendency towards the marginalisation of Shi'ites, and, hence, the religious identity of over sixty percent of Iraqi society, was largely dismissed by U.S. policy makers. Policy makers insisted that the adoption of Islamic values within the constitution demonstrated the acceptance and accommodation of religious values. Yet, the representatives

of such values were not afforded the same measure of accommodation, leaving a further legitimacy gap in the reconstruction. Again, it was largely assumed that democratisation and access to power and resources would curb religious zealotry, as Chapter Three had indicated. Finally, and perhaps most crucial for the future of Iraq, the reconstruction and the marginalisation of religion has entrenched the expectation that religious leaders will have an extensive and, often times, essential say in political matters and decision making processes in Iraq. This influence would be exercised through their possession of significant soft power.

Chapter Five, on the other hand, attempted to demonstrate the prevailing significance of identity politics within the region, particularly along religious lines. This chapter was significant, for it demonstrated reoccurring trends within the region which have played a crucial part in Iraq's reconstruction. The chapter focused on several key powers within the region, including: Iran, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Each state adopted responses that contributed to a prevention of long term success in Iraq for a variety of reasons, including national interest, security, as well as to balance the rise of other powers in the Middle East. This chapter demonstrated that U.S. policies, past and present, have contributed to significant levels of resentment in foreign interference, particularly when interference involved threats of forced democratizations. Additionally, none of the states in the region were supportive of an invasion of Iraq, and this subsequently impacted the level of legitimacy of post-Saddam government and its policies. Further, identity politics permeates state borders and each state feels a necessity to exercise a degree of interference and control over one's neighbour's domestic politics. The lack of legitimacy in the reconstruction in Iraq provided a *carte blanche* to state and non-state actors to influence the outcome of the reconstruction. Essentially, the chapter spotlighted that the reconstruction in Iraq failed to take into consideration regional concerns, and did not attempt to accommodate such trepidations so as to produce a more suitable regional environment. Instead, the reconstruction included intense pressure on and threats towards key regional actors, producing an increasingly hostile environment. Further, there were few incentives towards producing positive regional involvement, as there was little grasp of the importance of regional cooperation in the successful reconstruction of a state. Like the nation-building policies noted in Chapter Three, the regional policies adopted were often negative and punishment-orientated incentives towards non-interference. Finally, just as within Iraq, identity borders have come to correlate intensely with group security, so too, a regional trend of identity politics and security is present and has impacted the reconstruction to a large degree. More importantly, this trend

has been exacerbated by the reconstruction, and fluctuations in the region that have followed attempts to reconcile the pre-Saddam regional order with these changes. As a result, the reconstruction has almost completely changed the regional status quo, producing a whole new set of regional issues, new security dilemmas as well as relations between state and non-state actors.

This recap of past chapters has indicated several important trends: firstly, that identity politics is a regional issue within the Middle East and still retains significance in policy production. Secondly, the reconstruction of Iraq lacked legitimacy. What is implied by legitimacy here is not necessarily the widespread international legitimacy dilemma that faced the coalition, prompting the U.S. to 'go it alone'. What is meant by legitimacy is a locally produced concept of grass root acceptance of the tangible reconstruction within the recipient society. This is not to indicate that a lack of international legitimacy of the reconstruction is not important and does not impact the transition process for a recipient society. However, it is not the defining factor that would determine the eventual and relative successes or failures. Further, the absence of international legitimacy does not necessarily indicate a greater susceptibility to reconstruction failure. A comparison between Afghanistan and Iraq indicates that, although the reconstruction in Iraq was widely perceived to lack international legitimacy, Iraq has, in fact, demonstrated a relatively greater prospect for stability and democratization. Finally, as a result of these factors, the reconstruction in Iraq demonstrates tensions between normative concepts such as legitimacy, sovereignty, nation and state building, as well as identity politics. In other words, the field does not accommodate naturally complimentary concepts. As such, it can be argued that the field deems:

### **Sovereignty vs. Legitimacy**

### **State-building vs. Nation-building**

### **Liberal Democratic norms vs. Identity politics**

Principally, what this implies is that there is far too much attention paid to re-establishing the lost sovereignty of the recipient state, with a disproportionate amount of attention paid to the reconstruction of the state's weak institutions, with large portions of policies solely

concerned with establishing state capacity through institution building. These policies are measured and established through the promotion of liberal democratic and secular, and market orientated mechanisms. In turn, what is missing is a relatively equal level of interest in the promotion of the domestic legitimacy of the reconstruction. Paradoxically, legitimacy is established through a greater level of attention to identity politics as a foundation for developing a more cohesive and tolerant nation-state, at least in cases where identity cleavages are problematic. Rather, the existing trends focus on building institutional capacity in states that have very little experience with functioning institutions. Additionally, there is little trust between society towards the state and its representative bodies, as elites have exploited this relationship to serve their own interests, thereby significantly curbing the reduction of violence and identity cleavages.

Therefore, this thesis has demonstrated that the ideas and values that the U.S. and the international community references in order to reconstruct weak and failing states, are not serving the function that they ought. It has demonstrated that, in order for contemporary reconstructions to acquire a degree of success, they must adopt new approaches and accommodate various, perhaps contradictory notions. What is apparent is that the field requires a fundamental shift in its current approach, particularly on the empirical side of reconstructions. While the literature points out consistent limitations, and is far ahead of the empirical practices within the theatre, it is clear that such theories are not being accurately represented within the field. It is also apparent that the current global hegemon is representing the field to reflect its own national and security interests. However, the two interests, reconstructing recipient societies and U.S. national interest, need not necessarily be contradictory or opposing interests. It is possible to adopt a more sophisticated and comprehensive approach to the field of reconstruction that balances the needs of the recipient society with the objectives of the international community. The case study utilised in this research has provided a rich body of new knowledge to the field, which can be useful in approaches to future reconstructions. As emphasised, the limitations are clear and require a more practical approach, assuming that the interest of the U.S. in launching such reconstructions is to produce democracy.

The first and most fundamental dilemma that arises within reconstructions is the strong emphasis on the notion of 'sovereignty'. What is really meant by 'sovereignty' within the field is re-establishing the strength and capacity of the state. Hence, this concept needs to be the first point of departure from existing practices. What is already known within the field is

that reconstructions are often targeted towards post-colonial, weak and failing nation-states. These states often experience protracted conflicts, severe and deep identity cleavages and uneven access to wealth and power within differing communities. Likewise, the characteristics within the governing structure are also apparent: frequently such states are riddled with corruption, nepotism, authoritarianism, and an absence of rule of law and functioning institutions. The elites often consist of a select few who deliberately repress the collective so as to retain the status quo. In some instances, elites exercise limited influence and control over the collective, thereby allowing lawlessness, increased corruption and war-lordism to dominate. Conversely, in other cases, human rights violations of such magnitude emerge that the international community feels obliged to interfere and enforce the reconstruction of the state in an attempt to shape a more functional state-society relationship. Therefore, the most obvious conclusion is to re-establish the sovereignty of the state and to guide the new government towards adopting more inclusive institutions. It is not essential that the recipient state becomes an established democracy (as is nearly impossible in the short term), but rather, that the state is strengthened enough to contain internal tensions and resolve them without resorting to mass human rights violations. Undoubtedly, this is an essential element of international relations, enshrined within the doctrines of mutual respect, sovereignty and non-interference. What Iraq has demonstrated is that the approach to strengthening state capacity has produced contradictory results. While there have been positive results towards the democratisation of the state, it has not translated to a reduction of societal tensions and, more crucially, the liberalisation of society. Rather, democratic mechanisms have entrenched societal fault lines. Most importantly, it demonstrates that legitimacy cannot be imposed from above. Nor can it foment through external pressures. In order to reshape state-society relations, it is not adequate to simply reshape and construct a new 'sovereign' and capable state. In order for lasting results to occur, it is also essential that intra-societal relations also shift, but not necessarily through greater transference towards more equitable access to power. Rather, inter-societal relations, while strongly influenced by notions of 'greed' and the desire for greater power and resources, are also powerfully influenced by past memories, collective myths of injustices and powerlessness, and feelings of humiliation and resentment that can often supersede theories on 'greed'. As Iraq demonstrates, the promotion of sovereignty and increased capacity of the state has not translated to a loss of ethnic tensions and mistrust. It has exacerbated divergences because Iraq has little experience in this form of governance and in non-repressive and non-violent co-existence. Therefore, sovereignty has not, and probably will not, produce legitimacy of the

new state-society relations. Legitimacy needs to be an organic conception, and will emerge only when competing communities come to willing agreement over their interests. This will require trade-offs and affirmative incentives to positively encourage communities towards cooperation. However, this will only emerge through local ownership of the reconstruction and may indeed entail reversion to violent dialogue as part of the necessary process of establishing self-determination.

Nevertheless, during the course of writing this thesis, the reconstruction in Iraq has formally come to an end. President Obama's statement that Iraq is now deemed sufficiently "sovereign, stable, and self-reliant" (cited in Katzman 2012, 15) is an indication of the continuation of the centrality of sovereignty as a benchmark for reconstructions, which bears little resemblance to the post-Saddam reality of Iraq. The lack of legitimacy of the governing structures still retains some degree of influence within oppositional forces. As Chapter Two indicated, the secular elite still views reversion to violence or authoritarian tactics as a legitimate expression of political differences. On the religious front, since Muqtada returned to Iraq in early 2011, he has continued to reject cooperation with the U.S., has demanded the withdrawal of American forces and called for wide scale protests to ensure the end of the occupation on the date specified. While it is still early days it is also clear that Muqtada will not reduce his influence over Iraqi and Shia society, not only because of his family's legacy as resisters of oppression, but also because of the voices he represents. Indeed, he has actively resorted to forming rival policies and administrative bodies in order to challenge the authority of the central government. Experts have speculated that he intends to replicate Hezbollah's political model within Lebanon (Healy 2010; Katzman 2012, 22), which bodes an ominous portent of possible future discord in Iraq. However, rather than the new democratic mechanisms in place, it has been the wide ranging ethnosectarian interests that have reduced Muqtada's capacity to play a greater and perhaps more destabilising role in post-Saddam Iraq. It may very well be that these interests that will continue to curb his domestic and regional ambitions post U.S. exit. Sistani's legacy, on the other hand, resides in ensuring that upcoming Grand Marja's will be a legitimising source for future governments and policies. Sistani's greatest achievement has been through promoting the 'quietist' branch of Shia jurisprudence while adopting a more selectively tactical and 'activist' relationship towards the state. The removal of the U.S. presence in Iraq can only indicate a more unrestricted relationship between the Marja and the state. In this instance, the current Marja represents a moderating force within the new Iraq; however, a new Marja may adopt a far more radical

and, as some suspect, Iranian style of relationship towards the state. What is clear, though, is that the Marja and its supporting institutions serve a powerful legitimising moral and religious voice within post-Saddam Iraq by virtue of their position within Iraqi society. Ironically, this is a reflection of the increased liberalisation of Iraqi politics and society. This consequence is also a reflection of the unintended side-effects of democratisation in reconstructions, and shrouded as it is within a liberal-democratic environment it is difficult to reverse such a trend unless a collective shift in societal attitude occurs within Iraq that promotes a greater privatisation of religion in the public sphere. The significance of Najaf and Iraq's possession of a rich Shi'ite history, as well as the influence of millions of dollars of revenues ensure that Iraq will always retain a strong religious presence despite increased modernisation and developments in the future.

The finding of this thesis posits the essentiality of separating both the empirical and normative understandings associated with these processes. The concepts of nation-building from state-building should entail distinct, though not entirely separate policies to reinforce the greater legitimacy of the reconstruction for the benefit of the recipient society. As such, state-building can be defined as any form of interference, violent or non-violent, by exogenous actors in developing the institutional capacity and performance of a recipient government. This process may occur through a direct request from the recipient society, but has increasingly relied on the use of international and collective force to produce changes in troubled states. State-building, thus, entails a two-fold approach: policies either focus on the physical reconstruction of the state or on the development of state and institutional capacities. State-building, therefore, may entail any form of democratisation, liberalisation and strengthening of the political system, and the political processes in place. It is hoped that restructuring the institutional processes will result in shifts in political attitudes from illiberal values towards more tolerant and non-violent responses, thereby promoting legitimacy through more inclusive practices. State-building policies have also traditionally entailed the promotion of elections and party formation in the field. But they likewise entail the development of judicial, rule of law, and penal structures. On the physical level, the construction of roads, bridges, schools, and health care facilities, as well as the building of prisons and courts constitute the infrastructural support for developing institutional and state capacity. There are multiple and widely accepted definitions of state-building that prominent theorists in the field have proposed. What is largely missing, though, is a more



comprehensive definition of 'nation-building' as a distinct yet mutually reinforcing reconstruction policy.

Nation-building practices are not as prevalent and comprehensive as state-centric policies. However, nation-building policies can be identified as any policy designed to focus on promoting greater inter-ethnic and religious cohesion within recipient societies for the purpose of promoting mutual tolerance and forgiveness. Their purpose centres on building bridges between conflicting societies to reduce the possibility of return of conflict post-reconstruction; and their main aim is to build a nation invested in maintaining its mutual cohesion, reduce civil strife, and enthusiastic in addressing state-society and inter-societal tensions in a peaceful manner. While state-building policies, such as the introduction of democratic instruments, provide the mechanisms to address and respond to tensions, the distinction is that nation-building policies provide the incentives and societal willingness to utilise such democratic mechanisms to peacefully resolve conflicts. Nation-building policies would, hence, appear most effective in societies that have experienced internal identity cleavages. Afghanistan and Iraq represent cases that would have required extensive nation-building policies designed to address multiple dilemmas ranging from the historical legacies of past regimes (colonial and non-colonial) and religious and ethnic tensions, to an unwillingness to accept and cooperate with competing identity groups. In most of these instances, groups have viewed one another with varying degrees of existentialist lenses and fear of oppression, violence and marginalisation, and a loss of access to resources and power, all of which have significantly curbed incentives for cooperation and, hence, national cohesion. Therefore, while state-building mechanisms can provide the avenues for greater cooperation, and distribute power and resources in a more equitable manner, they do not provide the *incentive* to utilise such instruments, nor reduce mutual fear and distrust. The term 'incentive', here, reflects a non-imposed willingness to cooperate with other identity groups, to sit at negotiation tables and engage in joint dialogue as to the best methods of addressing mutual interests. In most instances, however, the reconstruction process imposes incentives for engaging in dialogue with competing identity groups. In Iraq, the democratic process was designed to provide an equitable access to power and resources. It was therefore imperative that identity groups engaged with what was perceived by them as being foreign imposed mechanism in order to have access to power and resources. In Iraq, the 2005 elections were widely boycotted by the Sunni Arab factions as protest over their marginalisation by the coalition forces within the new regime. They were also largely deemed

by the wider Iraqi community to represent the past injustices of the brutal Saddam regime, and their participation in the new governing processes of Iraq aroused significant protest by the Shi'ites and the Kurds. This trend posed considerable challenges within the path of any nation-building policies that the coalition forces could have proposed. Nevertheless concern over certain Sunni Arab elites returning to power in light of some of the brutal injustices imposed on the wider Iraqi society was a legitimate fear. Yet, on another level, the marginalisation of the Sunni Arabs resulted in significant losses in the determination of policies or a voice in how the new government would impact the Sunni communities. As a result the Sunnis soon realised that, if they were to have any say in and an increase in access to power and resources, they had to engage in the newly established governing structures. They resorted to forming political parties, engaged in election activities and formed alliances, with the result being greater access to power in the next round of elections. This example demonstrates positive changes in the engagement and acceptance of democratic processes; however, it does not necessarily demonstrate a willing engagement with competing identity groups. Rather, the attempt to engage in the democratic processes represented an internal fear of marginalisation and loss of power. Had this trend been supplemented with greater efforts on the part of the U.S. led coalition to engage each identity group in dialogue and bridge-building, to reduce fears, promote greater tolerance, and encourage the development of organically grown inter-communal cooperation and dialogue there may have been a greater possibility of success. Thus, nation-building policies may include a variety of attempts to produce cooperation, promote dialogue and encourage forgiveness and tolerance. Such processes often need to be viewed as slow and long term commitments. In some instances, the best outcome may very well be one of a willing acceptance not to resort to violence in the future when addressing differences and allow issues of historical memory and fear to resolve itself over time. However, the crucial factor is the willingness of the parties involved to reach this conclusion mutually. In such instances, combined economic and political incentives increase the chances of cooperation.

The greatest contribution separating the normative understanding of 'nation-building', as distinct from 'state-building', lies in accepting that reconstructions entail an often fundamental shift in state-societal relations and that it is not solely the state and its weak institutions that are responsible for failures and civil conflicts. Rather, it is society that also requires significant attention and social engineering so as to produce an organically developed willingness to coexist or to accept differences and address them peacefully.

Therefore, through promoting changes at the state level that are supported by policies that aim at producing stronger national ties at the society level, the reconstruction will undoubtedly yield greater positive results, particularly long term. The present literature may argue that the existence of the field of 'transitional justice' may serve the same function of nation-building. However, this thesis argues that 'transitional justice' is only one element of nation-building policies. Rather, nation-building policies are far more comprehensive and look beyond restorative justice practices and serve as positive incentives to build greater cohesiveness and bonds between society that both address and go beyond injustices imposed by the state in the past. Nation-building measures for Iraq could have entailed the utilisation of the legitimacy of religious actors to promote inter-ethnoreligious dialogue, cooperation through local and community projects; the development of monuments that not only represent past struggles, but also monuments that represent future collective hope and collaboration; encouraging civil society groups to form outside the boundaries of religious or ethnic lines; endorsing changes to the educational system that both accurately capture past wrongs; and promote collective forgiveness supported by comprehensive and adequately executed restorative justice measures such as demilitarisation, truth commissions, economic reparation and other necessary incentives to victims and families, and the trial and punishment of past perpetrators of violence; While some of these measures were implemented in Iraq the ineffective nature of the policies reduced the effect that that such policies ought to. At a normative level, these measures can combine to form a body of more holistic, collective, and mutually reinforcing policies.

The essential difference within this new definition resides in combining carefully selected, case specific punishment orientated justice with positive reward orientated incentives. The combination of a punishment with a reward system serves to provide a greater foundation for not only immediate, but also long term peace. Ideally, the implementation of justice should involve punishment orientated policies that are effectively and sufficiently implemented, and are combined with sensitivity and the taking into consideration of long term stability versus the immediate gratification of the needs of victims. What is clear, though, is that punishment orientated mechanisms should be applied in the initial stages of addressing nation-building mechanisms so as to open up the terrain for more positive restorative practices. All other forms of nation-building, once past injustices have been relatively and effectively addressed, should involve positive incentives. For instance, in the case of Iraq once de-Ba'athification was reversed there was no further attempt to address on-going public resentment of the

existence of former Ba'ath members in service, while victims continued to face unemployment and poverty. Additionally, past party members were left with the distinct feeling that they may perhaps be able to escape justice again in the future if they resorted to supporting authoritarian regimes. This led angry victims to extract their own justice, which then significantly de-legitimised the reconstruction and transitional justice process. A more positive form of nation-building would have entailed the compulsory attendance of former Ba'ath members in re-education programs based on instilling civil sentiments, such as the acceptance and awareness of rule of law, and notions of tolerance and multiculturalism. Continued future employment, for instance, could be contingent on attendance at re-education programs.<sup>25</sup> Such measures focus less on the punishment of past choices and shift the focus to promoting the greater good through changing attitudes and creating greater awareness. Community developed initiatives to combine past victims from different ethnoreligious orientations would likewise facilitate greater mutual empathy and respect that focus on developing a shared past based on collective pain, rather than access to power and resources along ethnoreligious lines. In the case of Iraq, the monitored anonymous presence of former Ba'ath members in such community meetings may serve to provide a greater understanding as to the level of suffering victims continue to experience and may assist as a far more positive form of rehabilitation but also reduce the feeling of escaping justice.<sup>26</sup> In most cases, punishment orientated restorative justice only captures a limited number of past regime supporters and leaves a large body of society who collaborated or supported the previous government, untouched by justice measures. It is this 'escaped' collective, combined with the remaining higher echelons of former party members that need to be subject to such measures. Attempting to rehabilitate former regime supporters will naturally be reliant on an individual's level of involvement in the party. Likewise, attendances at re-education facilities or community initiatives that develop a greater awareness of past injustices are contingent on the security and anonymity of former party supporters; this requires apolitical institutions and, by extension, civil servants who will serve to monitor this process and adhere to confidentiality agreements. Where some societies have expressions of revenge commonly used to address past injustices, such as in Iraq or Afghanistan, these policies may, according to some, appear inadequate; it is nevertheless still possible, particularly with the passage of time, to position national interests ahead of seeking individual revenge and the fulfilment of

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<sup>25</sup> Studies in Transitional Justice have demonstrated that education in post-conflict societies plays an important role in peace and reconciliation. See, for instance, Bekerman and McGlynn 2007.

<sup>26</sup> In other instances bicomunal interactions and cooperation have led to greater levels of trust and civil society development in polyethnic communities. See Maria Hadjipavolu 2004.

justice. In most past instances, where the restorative justice mechanisms have been successful, the majority of victims choose to use official mechanisms of acquiring justice rather than resorting to other methods. This line of argument that focuses on producing positive policies and developing case specific process that produce *positive* as opposed to the traditionally negative forms of nation-building requires further study and may be a source of future scrutiny in the field. Overall, though, a balance between producing nation-building and state-building policies needs to emerge in line with the context and the needs of the recipient societies. As such, a case such as Timor Leste would have benefited from a greater focus on state-building rather than nation-building since the Timorese were largely supportive of independence and willing to work with the international community in establishing functioning governing mechanisms. However, nation-building policies could still be useful in addressing past collective pain or as a form of liberalising intra-societal relations so as to reduce the incentive for resorting to violence, if future disagreements occur.

One final note within this discussion is based on the normative understanding that nation-building attempts to *liberalise* (as opposed to democratize) intra-societal relations and is, therefore, crucial in recipient societies plagued by protracted identity cleavages. In contrast, state-building through democratization attempts to liberalise intra-communal relations at a political level. However, the formation of a cohesive political community is difficult to consolidate in societies where an internal fear of others continues to prevail. This argument moves away from the central and prevailing values that currently predominate and views reconstruction as a form of a contractual, constitutionally based rule of law orientated rehabilitation of weak and failing states. What is missing, though, is an understanding that a political community forms from a willing acceptance of a social contract with the understanding that the state represents the interests of society. The dilemma in weak and failing states, however, resides in the state refusing to honour its contractual social obligations; hence, the essential bond in the formation of a political community is weakened. A weak state's inability to adequately address societal demands, often encouraging it to resort to disproportionate and illegitimate forms of violence and the oppression of opposition, renders the social contract void. State-building, therefore, attempts to reassert the sovereignty and, most crucially, the legitimacy of the state in an attempt to promote societal trust. The utility of such a system is undoubtedly often seen in its long term prospects for re-shaping society-state relations. A strong tension arises within the field of reconstruction, however, because of time constraints and the necessity of producing measurable developments in these

state-society relations in the short term. Only by attempting to realign a level of focus and policy energy towards addressing identity cleavages and promoting stronger social bonds, can the contractual, state-centric element of reconstructions gain further and tangible results in the shorter term.

In these cases, it is clear that adopting nation orientated policies is perhaps far more significant than state-building. The challenge in the modern international system is how to develop political communities that amalgamate various ethnic groups within the borders of states. Typically, the response has been to utilise inclusive governing mechanisms and to provide greater opportunities for equality and access to power. This remains a predominant dilemma and resolutions have increasingly been attempted through state-building endeavours. Yet, it is clear that state-centric, sovereignty orientated, liberal institution building is not producing the level of success required by recipient societies. Instead, such societies are left, at best, with weak democratic structures and loosely held ethnic communities that continue to view each other with suspicion and mistrust. It is little wonder that such communities often resort to civil conflict and a return to protracted social tensions soon after the exit of the international community. The question this thesis has attempted to address has aligned with finding alternative perspectives or policy measures that would increase the probability of greater peace in recipient societies, particularly within polyethnic societies.

Iraq is perhaps one of the most interesting reconstruction case studies to date. A widely viewed illegitimate and forcible reconstruction of a weak state has produced valuable lessons and precedents for future reconstructions. The dilemma of the reconstruction arose from the U.S. understanding that the removal of the Saddam regime would leave behind a functioning state apparatus, and that the liberated citizens would welcome the opportunity to adopt more inclusive measures, and rebuild Iraq; thereby, naturally producing a far more democratic system than previously existed. As benevolent facilitators, the U.S. would serve as a mentor, providing security and expert personal as well as other supports in the process of transition. However, the removal of the regime produced excessive violence as each community attempted to gain a greater foothold within the post-Saddam era. The U.S. and the coalition forces were largely taken by surprise, and did not anticipate such a wide scale and extensive eruption of violence. The violence was interpreted as negative interference from outside forces, particularly co-religionists and fundamentalists who served their own agendas at the cost of peace for Iraqi people. Others blamed the violence on Saddamists who were largely Sunni Arabs that resented the loss of power, or from religious zealots such as Muqtada al-

Sadr who wished to forge a political niche in the post-Saddam era to honour his family's legacy. Yet, this eruption of violence can be explained from a different perspective that more accurately fits the political reality of Iraq: repressive and violent measures of past regimes have produced a historical, institutional and societal legacy of addressing dilemmas principally through violent measures. The U.S. had not anticipated the effect of the violent legacies of the past regimes and that a natural eruption of ethnosectarian conflicts would be inevitable due to the legacies of the past. More paradoxically, the rise of various religious leaders increasingly challenged the U.S. vision for post-Saddam Iraq. Religious leaders such as Sistani rose to great prominence and largely dictated the course of the reconstruction, his voice serving as the rule of law and determining the success or failure of a policy. The unanticipated nature of this phenomenon also reflected an inability to perceive each case study within its own merits so as to produce contingency policies to address the changing political terrain. At the same time, Iraq's neighbours increasingly resorted to direct or covert interference that often reflected regional fears and national interests. This process shifted the regional order and, indeed, produced a far less conciliatory environment for Iraq's reconstruction.

The U.S. was, therefore, faced with three dominant challenges: one, the rise of ethnosectarian violence, particularly within the religious communities; two, the rise of prominent and powerful religious actors who dictated the reconstruction according to their values; and, finally, the rise of a regional environment that prevented the implementation of peaceful and democratic measures within Iraq. As a result, the U.S. responded by adopting policies that reaffirmed Iraq's sovereignty both to readdress the illegal invasion, as well as the incursion of outside state and sub-state forces and interests. It attempted to yield such an outcome through endeavouring to produce strong liberal institutions that, hopefully, would address domestic ethnoreligious tensions, thereby reducing the influence of traditional religious bodies and strengthening the internal national bonds necessary to prevent outside forces from negatively influencing Iraq. Yet, the outcome was that ethnoreligious tensions continued, however, this time redirected through the newly constructed liberal democratic mechanisms, which allowed differing identities to use the legitimacy of the system to impose their own interests. This resulted in increased societal discontent, violence and, ironically, the necessity of religious actors becoming further involved. Regionally, the reconstruction's obvious failures were viewed with anger and resentment, but at the same time, with relief for those who had been in line for a similar form of regime change. The U.S. response continued to revolve around the

reassertion of Iraq's sovereignty, the increased democratisation of the political system, and amplified threats and calls to reduce outside interference. The U.S. response yielded limited yet measurable success. However, it has largely failed due to an inability to address identity cleavages. With the end of the occupation, Iraq is left with three distinct communities, each still viewing the other with suspicion, and each having its own powerfully armed paramilitary bodies that could be dispatched at a moment's notice. The relative peace that currently exists within Iraq is largely because the Kurds have control of their autonomy and have a strong militia group that will defend the north from incursions or threats from the rest of Iraq. Likewise, the Sunnis and the Shi'ites have also come to a sort of a peace, but largely because of the numerical difference between each community. Further, the Shi'ites are assured of their dominance in post-Saddam Iraq on an indefinite basis. Their dominance is extended by an equal access to resources, as well as control over the Shi'ite world's most powerful religious centre of historical, moral and religious authority, which also happens to bring in millions of dollars of revenue each year. The Shi'ites also have their own security apparatus through the Badr Brigade and the Mahdi Army. Fear of past injustices indicates that the reversion to violence will not be ruled out if the Shi'ites' interests are threatened by the other groups. The Sunnis likewise, have their own paramilitaries and retain resentment over the loss of their privileges, loss of power and the perceived unfairness of the de-Ba'athification policies that were implemented. The peace that currently exists is, hence, tentative and fragile, with each community having demonstrated a willingness to resort to protracted violence to maintain their own separate interests. What will determine the nature of long term peace in Iraq is, therefore, reliant on whether the nascent democratic institutions are strong enough to counter the violent historical legacies of the past; or whether national and patriotic sentiments will be strong enough to prevent a wide scale reversion to protracted violence. The difficulties of this dilemma are amplified by the illegitimacy of the invasion, which has tainted the subsequent new governing structures, while outside state, and sub-state interference continues to shape domestic policy and inter-ethnoreligious relations and long term peace.

Defining and acknowledging the distinction between 'nation-building' and 'state-building' is an essential addition to the knowledge within the field, and will serve to allow policy makers to produce more comprehensive and case specific policies that respect the essentiality of building better and closer state-society relations through not only a focus on institution development, but also an appropriate level of attention on strengthening societal bonds. This



distinction may serve as a crucial addition to the field that is particularly relevant to the current Arab Spring within the Middle East. International and domestic policy makers can use the lessons learned within Iraq and apply its best practices to the eventual reconstructions. While Iraq has demonstrated unique characteristics, its lessons are, nevertheless, transferable across to other case studies within the region. Likewise, while the finer details within Iraq may differ to other cases such as Libya, Egypt and Tunisia, they nevertheless share similar underlying state-society conflicts and tensions. Religion and the rise of religious actors may very well be a common element within such cases that require accommodation. While the protests have largely emanated from societal demands for greater government responsibility and increased capacity, such cases, nevertheless, may evolve to self-initiated reconstruction that perhaps will require a closer scrutiny towards nation-building measures. In other cases such as Libya, the international community has inevitably become entangled in the peace process, which may lead to a full-fledged reconstruction. This may well be the case since the removal of authoritarian regimes would have produced liberalised and democratised state-society relations that might have opened unresolved intra-societal tensions and repressed identity cleavages that may otherwise have faced difficulty of expression. What is clear, though, is that the field of reconstruction is certain to face many future challenges. The adoption of an increasingly society-centred approach will undoubtedly strengthen the capacity for the field to produce more tangibly positive outcomes for recipient societies. While failures in the field have been prominent and presented extensive long term challenges to the international system, it is also clear that the international community and the United States will continue to approach such missions and attempt reconstructions. Reconstructions are complex, problematic and challenging, but it is for this reason that theorists are charged with the onerous task of locating better practices and approaches so that the quest for peace in conflict ridden societies is no longer so elusive.

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