



The Impact of the External Political Forces on Iraq's Food Production System from 1258 to the Early 1900s

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Abstract

The food security issue in Iraq has become the centre of attention to the Iraqi government and various stakeholders, such as international organisations. Many factors affect Iraq's food security, and whilst the issue of food insecurity in Iraq is gaining the momentum it needs now, it is not an unprecedented problem. Throughout the history of Iraq, the country went through many life-changing events that impacted its food security. In general, the issue of food security has been studied extensively by examining the internal political and non-political factors related to the problem. However, the impact of external political forces has been neglected. This article aims to show historical evidence of the external political forces' impact on Iraq's food security through the effects of these forces on Iraq's food production system. This paper will provide basic information on Iraq's location and geography, which shaped its economic conditions to understand why it came under the influence of external political forces. These forces also established a feudal system that impacted Iraq's food production system and will help economists and scholars understand the country's modern history when examining the 1900s since Iraq remained relatively the same, as abolishing feudalism and social change were unattainable until the late 1950s. Furthermore, the paper will help show the readers how the destruction by external political forces impacted the country's food production system, causing famines and food insecurity and test the impact of these forces in other post-colonial cases.

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تأثير القوى السياسية الخارجية على نظام الإنتاج الغذائي في العراق من عام 1258 إلى أوائل القرن العشرين

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المستخلص :

أصبحت قضية الأمن الغذائي في العراق مركز اهتمام الحكومة العراقية ومختلف الجهات المعنية، مثل المنظمات الدولية. هناك العديد من العوامل التي تؤثر على الأمن الغذائي في العراق، وبينما تكتسب قضية انعدام الأمن الغذائي في العراق الزخم الذي تحتاجه الآن، إلا أنها ليست مشكلة غير مسبوقه. على مدار تاريخ العراق، مرت البلاد بالعديد من الأحداث التي غيرت مجرى الحياة وأثرت على أمنه الغذائي. وبشكل عام، تمت دراسة موضوع الأمن الغذائي بشكل موسع من خلال دراسة العوامل الداخلية السياسية وغير السياسية المرتبطة بالمشكلة. ومع ذلك، فقد تم إهمال تأثير القوى السياسية الخارجية. يهدف هذا المقال إلى إظهار الأدلة التاريخية على تأثير القوى السياسية الخارجية على الأمن الغذائي للعراق من خلال تأثيرات هذه القوى على نظام الإنتاج الغذائي في العراق. ستقدم هذه الورقة معلومات أساسية عن موقع العراق وجغرافيته، التي شكلت ظروفه الاقتصادية لفهم أسباب وقوعه تحت تأثير القوى السياسية الخارجية. أنشأت هذه القوى أيضًا نظامًا إقطاعيًا أثر على نظام إنتاج الغذاء في العراق، وسيساعد الاقتصاديين والعلماء على فهم التاريخ الحديث للبلاد عند دراسة القرن العشرين فقد ظل العراق على حاله نسبيًا، إذ كان إلغاء الإقطاع والتغيير الاجتماعي بعيد المنال حتى أواخر الخمسينيات. فضلًا عن ذلك، ستساعد هذه الورقة في توضيح كيف أثر التدمير الذي أحدثته القوى السياسية الخارجية على نظام إنتاج الغذاء في البلاد، مما تسبب في المجاعات وانعدام الأمن الغذائي واختبار تأثير هذه القوى في حالات دول أخرى ما بعد الاستعمار.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الامن الغذائي، انتاج الغذاء، العراق، انظمة الغذاء، الامبراطورية العثمانية .

Introduction

Food security represents a pressing issue in today's globalised age after the food crisis of the 20th century. As a concept, it emerged in the mid-1970s. However, food insecurity is an age-old problem. It is caused by many factors, reflected in the conceptualisation process of food security and the policies to achieve it since the 1970s.

Over the past decades, the concept changed continuously to include non-political factors such as trade and food production issues that could influence food availability⁽²⁾, exchange entitlement concerning food accessibility⁽³⁾, poverty and national policies adopted to create employment opportunities and eradicate poverty⁽⁴⁾, underdevelopment and poverty in developing countries suffering from under nutrition, and global policies to eliminate poverty⁽⁵⁾. Additionally, the concept of food security has included internal political issues such as peace and political instability, corruption, terrorism, and their role in food insecurity⁽⁶⁾. However, it seems that the evolution of the concept of food security ceased during the 1990s-2000s.

When we examine the chronological evolution of the concept of food security, we will find that since the issue emerged in the mid-1970s, the concept failed to grasp the arising impact left by the external political forces during the 1990s. The external political forces represent international organisations and powerful states. The 1990s were not as stable as the improper conceptualisation process

¹ مدرس.دكتوراه في أبحاث التنمية المستدامة / دراسات السلم والحرب، الأمن الغذائي ودراسات التنمية العالمية / جامعة الدراسات العليا للدراسات العالمية / جامعة الدراسات العليا للهندسة وعلوم الزراعة / جامعة الدراسات العليا لتكنولوجيا المعلومات والهندسة / جامعة طوكيو للدراسات الأجنبية

⁽²⁾ United Nations (UN). *Report of the World Food Conference, Rome 5-16 November 1974*. New York, 1975.

⁽³⁾ Sen, Amartya. *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

⁽⁴⁾ World Bank (WB). *Poverty and Hunger: Issues and Options for Food Security in Developing Countries*. Washington DC, 1986.

⁽⁵⁾ UN Development Programme (UNDP). *Human Development Report 1994*. New York, 1994.

⁽⁶⁾ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). *Rome Declaration on World Food Security*. Rome, Italy, 1996.

made it seem to be. It witnessed the rise in the imposition of economic sanctions on developing countries. It is estimated that over 50 new sanctions cases were imposed post-Cold War, divided among the United Nations UN, European Union (organisations), and the United States (powerful state)⁽¹⁾. Sanctions were rarely employed before the Cold War, making them a noticeable characteristic of the 1990s⁽²⁾. As a result, the conceptualisation of food security missed an evolutionary opportunity. Therefore, the concept of food security did not evolve adequately past the challenging circumstances of the 1980s.

Although the conceptualisation process missed a golden opportunity to cover the impact of the external political forces, the re-establishment of the conceptualisation process proved that these forces, represented by international organisations, cause food insecurities in the targeted countries⁽³⁾. This was done through the direct⁽⁴⁾ impact of resolutions on food security. Similarly, the impact of the external political forces, represented by powerful states, on food security can be tested and proven. The theory should be applicable even in the historical context to withstand the test of time. Therefore, to show the influence of these powers on food security, we must examine the impact mechanism on the food production system⁽⁵⁾.

There is limited data that gives a clear definition of food production systems. Therefore, there is no specific structured definition of food production systems or their components. In its conventional definition, the food production system usually revolves around agricultural production⁽⁶⁾. Porter et al. came close to defining most of its components. They define it as “all processes and infrastructure involved in satisfying a population’s food security, that is, the gathering/catching, growing, harvesting (production aspects), storing, processing, packaging, transporting, marketing, and consuming of food, and disposing of food waste (non-production aspects)”⁽⁷⁾. Therefore, from the definition, it is easy to locate five main components: food products, food manufacturing, food marketing, food transporting, and waste disposal.

However, the Danish food production system, for example, comprises three components: plant and animal-based agricultural production, food manufacturing such as dairy and meat production, and

⁽¹⁾ Cortright, David and Lopez, George. Sanctions Decade: Assessing Strategies in the 1990s, 2000 (accessed July 23, 2021)

⁽²⁾ Cashen, Emily. The impact of economic sanctions, 2017 (accessed July 23, 2021)

⁽³⁾ Mohammed, Teeba M. Food Security: The Concept’s Evolution and its Coverage, *Journal of Human Security Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2022. pp. 13, 14, 15.

⁽⁴⁾ The external political forces can impact food security directly through their impact on the four dimensions of food security: Availability, Accessibility, Utilisation, and Stability of the previous three at all time. Check FAO. *Food insecurity: when people live with hunger and fear starvation*. Rome, Italy. 2001 and also see Mohammed, 2022. pp. 9, 10, 11.

⁽⁵⁾ One of the challenges that could face testing this theory in the historical context is the issue of limited data, such as in the case of Iraq. Therefore, testing the direct impact of these forces on the four pillars (check footnote 9) of food security might be difficult. Instead, the theory can be tested through the indirect impact of the external political forces on the food production system.

⁽⁶⁾ Sierra, Rodrigo. Food Production Systems in the Amazon. *Encyclopaedia of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures*, 2018.

⁽⁷⁾ Porter, John R. Xie, Liyong, Challinor, Andrew J. Cochrane, Kevern, Howden, Mark S. Iqbal, Muhammed Muhsin, Lobell, David B. and Travasso, Maria Isabel. Food Security and Food Production Systems. *Climate Change: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. p. 490.

transportation of food in and out of the country⁽¹⁾. These variations in the main components of the food production system might be attributed to different reasons, such as the type of economy, like market economy vs. planned economy and the historical stage in the system's evolution. The components of food production systems in the 1200s are undoubtedly different from that of the 2000s. In addition, according to FAO, the food system is comprised of:

Sub-systems (e.g. farming system, waste management system, input supply system, etc.) and interacts with other key systems (e.g. energy system, trade system, health system, etc.). Therefore, a structural change in the food system might originate from a change in another system; for example, a policy promoting more biofuel in the energy system will have a significant impact on the food system⁽²⁾.

It means that the food production system includes sub-systems that are part of the actual food production process, like agriculture, and key systems that are not directly related to the food production process but can impact the food system and food security, such as education, health care, energy etc. Therefore, the indirect impact of external political forces on food security can be examined in the historical context by looking at the effects of these forces on the traditional sub and key food production systems (meaning agriculture, infrastructure, and labour).

As a case study, Iraq represents an optimal choice to show the impact of external political forces on food security and production. The country witnessed the effects of external political forces under both powerful states and international organisations throughout its history, which will allow the examination of the impact of these forces countless times. This paper is a historical analysis of secondary data and literature sources of Iraq's political conditions, which impacted its food security from the Mongol invasion in 1258 till the early 1900s. The paper aims to produce more data regarding food, social and economic conditions in Iraq during that period due to the vast literature gap on this issue. In addition, the paper will help scholars in sustainability studies to understand Iraq's food production and economic system and its development during most of the 20th century. Iraq remained relatively the same, as abolishing the residual feudal system and social change came in the late 1950s, though unsuccessful. Moreover, this paper will let scholars examine the impact of external political forces on food security and food production in the historical context of other countries that suffered and are still struggling with the effects of colonialism's practices and colonial past. In section one, I will review the appealing factors that brought Iraq under these forces' impact, such as its geography and strategic location, and main crops. Section two will review the fall of Iraq under the control of external political forces, represented by powerful states from the mid-1200s till the early 1900s. Then, section three will elaborate on the impact mechanism of these forces on Iraq's food security during that period. Finally, section four will present the concluding remarks.

To understand why Iraq fell under the control of powerful states, we must provide basic information on Iraq's attractive features and characteristics. These alluring factors played an essential role in shaping the country's political, social, nutritional and economic conditions.

⁽¹⁾ Markussen, Mads V. and Ostergard, Hanne. Energy Analysis of the Danish Food Production System: Food-EROI and Fossil Fuel Dependency. *Energies*, 2013. p. 4173.

⁽²⁾ Also, check page 3 of the same FAO document for the food wheel system to see the interactions between the food systems and other key systems. FAO. *Sustainable food systems: concept and framework*, n.d. p. 1.

I. Iraq's Traits and Characteristics

1. Strategic Location and Geography

Iraq has a complicated political history and a unique social diversity because of its geographic location, which had an influence on its history that dates back to the earliest human civilizations. Iraq was previously known as Mesopotamia, which is the Greek name for the land between the two rivers the Tigris and the Euphrates; it was located between the Zagros Mountains and Arabian Plateau or modern-day Iraq and parts of Iran, Syria, Kuwait, and Turkey, an area known as the Fertile Crescent⁽¹⁾. Iraq (*al 'Iraq* العراق) is said to be the Arabic name for the land near the sea, or it originated from the word (عِرق or branch) from tree branches as it was the land where many trees grow⁽²⁾. However, others claim that the name is derived from *Ukuk*, which means the settler, from the ancient language of the Sumerians⁽³⁾.

Iraq had no actual marked borders before 1916⁽⁴⁾. However, it is located in the northeast of the Arabian Peninsula with no natural boundaries between them, bordered by Turkey in the north, Syria in the west, the Arabian Gulf in the south and Iran in the east⁽⁵⁾. Therefore, Iraq had a demographic and geographic extension in the region where it is difficult to distinguish between the people and the land of Iraq and those of the surrounding countries⁽⁶⁾. The land area of Iraq is reportedly 434128 square kilometres⁽⁷⁾. It consists of three regions: the mountainous region in the north, the alluvial plain, and the desert area⁽⁸⁾.

The country is known as the home of the first plant domestication and agriculture. The abundance of fresh water, cultivable lands, and diverse climate aided agriculture there⁽⁹⁾. Iraq's climate is a mix of continental, subtropical semi-arid, and Mediterranean climates⁽¹⁰⁾. The weather alters from cool to cold in the winter and from hot and dry to very hot in the summer⁽¹¹⁾. This variation in geography and climate gave Iraq the advantage of being suitable for food production and agriculture.

⁽¹⁾ Mark, Joshua J. Mesopotamia, 2018 (accessed on March 30, 2023)

⁽²⁾ It was named the land near the sea due to the geographical conditions at that time. The Arabian Gulf's water submerged a large portion south of Iraq, see Al Hasani, 'Abd el Razaq. *Al 'Iraq: Qadeem wa Hadeethn (Iraq: Ancient and Modern)*. Dar el Rafidain: Beirut, Lebanon, 2013. p. 12, and Taqoosh, Mohammad S. *Tareekh al 'Iraq al Hadeeth wa al Mu'asir (Modern and contemporary Iraq history)*. Dar el Nafa'is: Beirut, Lebanon, 2015. p. 17.

⁽³⁾ Baghora, Mariam. El Tawajud al biritani fi al 'Iraq 1914-1932 (British presence in Iraq 1914-1932), 2016. p. 13 (accessed on March 30, 2023)

⁽⁴⁾ Sykes-Picot Agreement divided the Fertile Crescent region between the UK and France in 1916 and was the blueprint to draw the arbitrary lines, see Al Jazeera. Thikra Taqseem el Duwal al 'Arabiyah...106 'Awam 'ala Itifaqiyat Saykis Pico (The anniversary of the Arab countries division...106 years after the Sykes-Picot Agreement), 2022 (accessed on March 31, 2023)

⁽⁵⁾ Al Hasani, 2013. p. 7.

⁽⁶⁾ Sulaiman, As'ad. Al Iraq: Jithoor el sira'at el dakhiliyah (Iraq: the roots of internal conflict. *Egyptian Institute for Political and Strategic Studies*, 2017. p. 4.

⁽⁷⁾ WB. *Land area (sq.km) – Iraq*. 2021.

⁽⁸⁾ Clark, Ramsey. *The impact of sanctions on Iraq: the children are dying*. New York: World View Forum, Inc, 1996. p. 21.

⁽⁹⁾ Muhaimeed, Ahmad S. Saloom, A.J. Saliem, K.A, Alani, K.A. and Muklef, W. M. Classification and distribution of Iraqi Soils. *International Journal of Agriculture Innovations and Research*, Vol. 2, issue 6, 2018. p. 997.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Semi-arid regions have low annual rainfall but can receive a bountiful amount of rain during some periods, allowing a great level and verity of vegetation, see Bastos, Ana, Naipal, Victoria, Ahlstrom, Anders, MacBean, Natasha, Smith, William Kolby and Poulter, Benjamin. Semiarid ecosystems. In Poulter, Benjamin, Canadell, Josep, Hayes, Daniel and Thompson, Rona (Eds.). *Balancing Greenhouse Gas Budgets*, 2022. pp. 311, 312, and Climate Change Knowledge Portal. Current Climate: Iraq, n. d (accessed July 22, 2022)

⁽¹¹⁾ Climate Change Knowledge Portal. Current Climate: Iraq, n. d (accessed July 22, 2022)

Furthermore, the soil's chemical and physical compositions gave Iraq additional economic importance. It is majorly made from silt soil⁽¹⁾ which makes it rich in organic nutrients suitable for growing large quantities of crops such as barley and sesame⁽²⁾. In addition, the Mesopotamian plain (alluvial plain) of the two rivers contains sediments left by the rivers and sand blown by the wind from the desert, located in the central and southern part of Iraq and called Ardh el Sawad أرض السواد or the blackness land for its high agricultural production⁽³⁾. However, the soil profile of the pedons⁽⁴⁾ in most of Iraq now show a low degree of development due to the warm climate⁽⁵⁾ and salinity⁽⁶⁾.

Agriculture in Iraq depended mainly on two sources of water: river water and rainwater⁽⁷⁾, in addition to groundwater⁽⁸⁾. Therefore, half of⁽⁹⁾ the cultivable lands are irrigated by irrigation methods (through means⁽¹⁰⁾), especially in the central and southern regions of the country, or rain-fed like in the northern region⁽¹¹⁾.

2. The Main Food Crops in Iraq

As for the production of food crops, wheat is one of the most important cereal crops in production and consumption, and rice comes in second place⁽¹²⁾. Wheat is a winter crop produced in every city in Iraq but mainly in the northern part, where you see fluctuation in the rate of production depending on the

⁽¹⁾ Growing plants rely on many components, such as soil. For growing good plants, the medium must have good drainage and aeration, determined by the soil's proportion of sand, silt, and clay, see Cassidy, James. Sand, silt or clay? Texture says a lot about soil, 2021 (accessed on April 1, 2023)

⁽²⁾ Al Hasani, 2013. p. 12.

⁽³⁾ Muhaimeed et al., 2018. p. 999.

⁽⁴⁾ According to The Manual of Scientific Style, a pedon is a "3-dimensional sample of a body of soil that is 1 m² at the surface and extends to the bottom of the soil". For further information, see Rabinowitz, Harold and Vogel, Suzanne. *The Manual of Scientific Style: A Guide for Authors, Editors, and Researchers*. US: Academic Press, 2009.

⁽⁵⁾ Muhaimeed et al., 2018. p. 1000.

⁽⁶⁾ The issue of soil salinity in Iraq is an old problem, and its causes are due to many factors, including high rates of evaporation due to high temperatures, bad drainage, capillary property, and less precipitation which previously helped wash the soil naturally from the salts deposited on its surface, read Altaweel, Mark. Water management across time: Dealing with too much or too little water in ancient Mesopotamia. Zhuang, Yijie and Altaweel, Mark (Eds.). *Water Societies and Technologies from the Past and Present*. UCL Press, 2018. p. 183.

⁽⁷⁾ Al 'Alwan, 'Abd el Sahib and 'Abbawi, 'Abd Allah. *Al mudkhal fi al iqtisad el zira'i m'a el ta'keed 'ala al iqtisad el zira'i al 'Iraqi (An Introduction to Agricultural Economics with Special Reference to Iraqi Agriculture)*. Baghdad, Iraq: Mutba'at al Ma'aref for Publications, 1966. p. 166.

⁽⁸⁾ Al Hashimi, Ridha Jawad. *Tareekh el ray fi al 'Iraq al qadeem (The history of irrigation in ancient Iraq)*, n. d. p. 75.

⁽⁹⁾ Currently, only one-third of the cultivable lands are rain-fed, while the rest is through irrigation, check Iraqi Thoughts. The Importance of Fixing Iraq's Irrigation, 2018 (accessed on April 2, 2023)

⁽¹⁰⁾ Means refer to the tool or equipment used for irrigation. One of the first irrigation equipment used in Iraq was the water wheel, read Al Hashimi, n.d. p. 76. It is worth mentioning that most irrigation methods in Iraq were ancient until 1977, and the need for mechanised methods grew bigger following the construction of dams in Syria, read Rost, Stephanie, Hamdani, Abdulmir and George, Steven. Traditional Dam Construction in Modern Iraq: A Possible Analogy for Ancient Mesopotamian Irrigation Practices. *British Institute for the Study of Iraq*, Vol. 73, 2011. p. 203.

⁽¹¹⁾ Al Hashimi, n. d. p. 76.

⁽¹²⁾ The Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning. *Al atlas al ihza'i el zira'i al intaj el nabati al juzu' el thani (Agricultural Statistical Atlas Plant-based Production Part 2)*. Baghdad, Iraq, n. d. p. 3.

rainfall of that year, while the production is ensured in the centre and south of the country because it uses irrigation⁽¹⁾. On the other hand, rice is a summer crop produced in the centre and south⁽²⁾.

As for other grains, such as barley and corn, they are usually produced for use as animal feed⁽³⁾. Barley is another winter crop, and Iraq comes second in production in the Arab region (19.3% of the total Arab production), cultivated mainly in the centre, then north, then south of the country, with noticeable production fluctuation depending on droughts or water levels in the Euphrates⁽⁴⁾.

II. The External Political Forces in Iraq (mid 1200s-early 1900s)

Because of the previously mentioned properties, Iraq was economically advanced in comparison with the surrounding area, and that is why it became a path for many invaders and conquerors and an arena for political bickering between regional powers and their subjects inside Iraq, influencing its social, economic, and political structure. In this section, I will review external political forces and the political conditions in Iraq from the mid-1200s till the early 1900s.

Iraq's geographical location in the far west of Asia made it a natural and historical route, connecting Asia to the Arabian Peninsula and then Africa⁽⁵⁾ and giving it a cultural weight as it represents a bridge between two regions. The first Semitic migration from the Arabian Peninsula settled in the north and centre of Mesopotamia and established the first civilizations known to humankind⁽⁶⁾. Later, many Caliphs took cities in Iraq as capitals of the successive Islamic Caliphates, such as Baghdad, Kufa, and Samarra⁽⁷⁾ since the year 656. Therefore, Iraq became a cultural hub and a destination for many many scientists, poets and thinkers from around the old world, yearning to benefit from its scientific centre, the Grand Library of Baghdad, or House of Wisdom (Bait al Hikma *بيت الحكمة*), built during the Abbasid Caliphate⁽⁸⁾.

The economic, political, and scientific prosperity made Iraq reach the pinnacle of its time till Al Musta'sim *المستعصم* came into power. It is said that he did not follow the path his predecessors took and that a combination of his weak leadership skills, bad policies, and lack of knowledge brought the end of his rule that lasted 15 years as the last Abbasid Caliph⁽⁹⁾. For economic and political reasons and after conquering most of Eurasia, the Mongols under Hulagu Khan led their armies to Baghdad, ending a long chapter of Iraq's great history and Islamic ruling. The Siege of Baghdad in 1258 was a dark time in

⁽¹⁾ The Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Agriculture. *Nadwa mushkilat al ghitha' fi al watan al arabi: Al intaj al ghitha' i fi al watan al arabi ma' el tarkeez 'ala al qutur al 'Iraqi (A seminar on food issues in the Arab world: Food production in the Arab world while focusing on Iraq)*. Kuwait, 1978. p. 42.

⁽²⁾ Rice production is sensitive to water levels in the Euphrates. There was a production drop based on that in 1975 after Syria and turkey finished building their dams. See the Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Agriculture, 1978. p. 44.

⁽³⁾ The Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning. n. d. p. 3.

⁽⁴⁾ The Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Agriculture. 1978. p. 43.

⁽⁵⁾ Sulaiman, 2017. p. 4.

⁽⁶⁾ Abo Ramees, Nadiya. *Hadharat al 'Iraq al Qadeema (Ancient Civilizations of Iraq)*, 2021 (accessed on March 30, 2023)

⁽⁷⁾ Ghadeer, Salah. *Al Awasim al Islamiya el Tareekhiya (Historic Islamic Capitals)*, n. d (accessed July 17, 2022)

⁽⁸⁾ Basheer, Shahada. *Ma el lathi faqadnahu b kharab maktabat Bait al Hikma? (What did we lose in the destruction of the House of Wisdom?)*, 2020 (accessed on April 1, 2023)

⁽⁹⁾ 'Abd el Rahman, Mohammad. *Jahal am Dhu'uf um Khud'a...Kaif Tasabab al Musta'sim fi Siqoot Baghdad? (Ignorance, Weakness, or Trickery: How did al Musta'sim cause the fall of Baghdad?)*, 2020c (accessed on March 31, 2023)

history; Hulagu bludgeoned people to death and destroyed all that was standing, including the mentioned earlier House of Wisdom, by fire, sword or drowning⁽¹⁾. The event was recorded in history like none other;

If someone were to say: the world since God created Adam until now has not been afflicted with the like of it, it would have been truthful, and perhaps the creation will not see such an event until the world is extinct, and the world perishes, except for Gog and Magog and the act of the antichrist when he appears is less than their actions, for they killed women, men, and children, and slit the wombs of the pregnant and killed their foetuses, and their evil and harm spread⁽²⁾.

The literature and scientific production of more than 600 years in medicine, physics, chemistry, and engineering were lost, leaving Iraq with lousy trade policies that served the Mongols (Il Khanate) Empire's interests and broken ties with the rest of the Arab world⁽³⁾. As a result, Baghdad was left in ruins, a wasteful land devastated by chaos, illiteracy, and poverty for a long time. The fall of Baghdad influenced the region negatively, but it also made Iraq open for more migration waves from the east to rule, cross or inhabit.

Different to the first historic migration waves, the following waves had an adverse impact, and more human waves were heading to Iraq from the far-east, which did not stop till the Ottoman Empire took over despite the stagnant conditions it was going through and the end of its glorious years⁽⁴⁾. The rule of the Il Khanate Empire ended after 80 years in 1336, and the Jalayirid⁽⁵⁾ Sultanate took power in 1338⁽⁶⁾. They used a similar administration style to that of the Mongols. After their rule ended, the foreign empires from the east continued to rule over Iraq.

The Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu⁽⁷⁾ that followed the Jalayirid Sultanate had similar policies and styles to their predecessors, relying on injustice and exploitation of the local farmers, which caused deterioration of every aspect of life and widespread epidemics⁽⁸⁾. Iraq suffered tremendously under their rule, characterised by political instability, killing of the people and their displacement, sieges, the greed of the ruling elites, theft, destruction, and starvation⁽⁹⁾. The Siege of Baghdad by the Mongols and the destruction and instability that followed created a suitable environment for small tribal opportunists, such as the Jalayirids and the Qara Qoyunlu and the Aq Qoyunlu, to control the cultural bridge that is Iraq. It also allowed their successors to seize the chance to do the same and establish their control over Iraq. However, this time it was not foreign conquerors from the far-east but two of the regional powers, the

⁽¹⁾ Basheer, 2020.

⁽²⁾ Azeez, Abd. Mubarirat Ghazo al Maghool lil 'Alam al Islami (The Mongol's invasion causes of the Islamic World), 2020 (accessed on March 31, 2023)

⁽³⁾ 'Abd el Rahman, Mohammad. Fi Laylat Siqoot Baghdad... Hatha ma Taratab 'ala Siqoot 'Asimat Dawlat Al Khilafa Al Abasiyah (On the night of the fall of Baghdad: this is what resulted in the fall of the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate), 2019 (accessed on April 2, 2023)

⁽⁴⁾ Sulaiman, 2017. p. 4.

⁽⁵⁾ The Jalayirid Sultanate was a Persian-speaking Mongolian tribe making the Jalayir dynasty, considered an extension of the Il Khanate rule in the region due to marriage and blood ties. Read Tartoor, Sha'ban. *El Dawla al Jala'riyah (The Jalayirid Sultanate)*. Egypt: Dar al Hidayah for publication, 1987. p. 5-7.

⁽⁶⁾ Al Hasani, 2013. p. 24.

⁽⁷⁾ The Qara Qoyunlu or the Black Sheep Aq Qoyunlu or White Sheep were of Turcoman ethnicity, see Khalifa, Mohammad. *Dawlat al Kharoof al Aswad wa Dawlat al Kharoof al Abyad (The Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu)*, 2007. They ruled over Iraq and other parts of the region from 1410 to 1508, check Al Hasani, 2013. pp. 26, 27.

⁽⁸⁾ Al Hasani, 2013. p. 7.

⁽⁹⁾ Qadawi, Ala' Mahmood. *Tareekh al Iraq fi Ahidai al Qara Qrainlu wa al Aaq Qwainlu (Iraq's History under the Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu)*. Amman, Jordan: Dar Ghaida' for Publication, 2012. pp. 97, 98, 99.

Safavids and Ottomans. The political conflict between these two was due to political, economic, and religious reasons⁽¹⁾.

Shah Ismail founded the Safavid dynasty in Iran, who ruled it as its king and proclaimed the Twelver denomination of Shi'a Islam as the new official religion of the Persian Empire, which he enforced by the sword⁽²⁾. He used that to enforce his control in Persia and Iraq. He could control some of the smaller cities beyond Khorasan, but naturally, Shah Ismail was determined to take over Iraq, mainly because of the Shi'a Holy Shrines in Karbala and Najaf⁽³⁾. Therefore, his armies marched toward Baghdad and managed to invade it in 1508 with the same savagery and brutality as his predecessors, threatening the Ottoman Empire since many of the elites who controlled areas in Iraq were Sunni Ottomans⁽⁴⁾. The arrival of Shah Ismail as the new conqueror of Iraq and the annexation of Baghdad and other cities right near another regional power created friction and insatiability in a game of political tug of war. In addition, the aggressive sectarian and expansionist policies of the Safavids in Iraq made the ottomans realise the importance of keeping Iraq stable to ensure the Safavids would not get a hold of the ground in more cities under Ottoman rule. Therefore, Sultan Selim I of the Ottoman Empire took responsibility for curbing the religious and political influence of Shah Ismail. Selim I headed to fight Ismail with his army in Tabriz in 1514 in the Battle of Chaldiran⁽⁵⁾, which was a devastating blow to Ismail and resulted in his withdrawal deep into the Persian territories⁽⁶⁾.

The brutal reign of Shah Ismail came to an end in 1523, and his oldest but very young and inexperienced son Tahmasp I, took power, which made Thu al Faqar bin Nakhood⁽⁷⁾ *ثو الفقار بن نخود* revolt against Tahmasp I and took over Baghdad after 40 days siege then most of the Iraqi cities⁽⁸⁾. After six years, Tahmasp I tried to take back Baghdad and did so in 1530 by killing Thu al Faqar⁽⁹⁾. Tahmasp's actions angered the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman, who sent an army to Iraq, which was able to take over Baghdad in 1534⁽¹⁰⁾. Two days later, Sultan Suleiman arrived in Baghdad. He decided to earn the respect of the locals by urging his vizier⁽¹¹⁾ not to harm them, visiting the holly Shi'a shrines, helped build a dam

⁽¹⁾ El Dahan, Sarmad 'Aqeedi and 'Alawi, Satar Mohammad. El Sira' al Othmani al Farisi wa Atharahu 'ala al 'Iraq: 'Iraq: Dirasa Tareekhiya 1508-1779 (The Ottoman-Persian Conflict and its impact on Iraq: Historical Study 1508-1779). *Journal of Educational and Scientific Studies*, Vol. 3, issue 14, 2019. p. 118.

⁽²⁾ Al Wardi, Ali. *El Dawla el Safawiyah wa el Tashaiyo' (The Safavid Empire and Shi'asim)*. Al Mesbar Studies and Research Centre: UAE, 2010. pp. 14-17.

⁽³⁾ El Sa'dani, Abo Warda 'Abd al Wahab. El Sira' al Othmani el Safawi wa Nata'jahu el Siyasiyah wa al Askariyah (The Ottoman-Safavid Conflict and its Political and Military Consequences). *Asyut Arabic Language College Journal*, issue 13, 1993. p. 258.

⁽⁴⁾ Ibid. p. 259.

⁽⁵⁾ Selim I assumption of the Ottoman throne resulted in a significant shift from the expansion to the west to the expansion in the east due to the Shi'a expansion in the direction of the Ottoman Empire territories. To read more about Chaldiran Battle, check Taqoosh, 2015. p. 25.

⁽⁶⁾ El Dahan and 'Alawi, 2019. p. 120.

⁽⁷⁾ Thu al Faqar bin Nakhood was a Kurdish chief of the [Mosulu موصلو] tribe and ruler of the Kurdish State for six years. See Al 'Adhami, 'Ali Dhareef. *Tareekh el Dwal al Farisiya fi al 'Iraq (The Persian States in Iraq's History)*. Hindawi Publication: UK, 2017. p. 73.

⁽⁸⁾ Ibid.

⁽⁹⁾ Al Hasani, 2013. p. 27.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Ibid. p. 28.

⁽¹¹⁾ According to Merriam Webster, a vizier is "a high executive officer of various Muslim countries and especially of the Ottoman Empire". See <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vizier> (accessed on April 2, 2023)

in Karbala to prevent its flooding, and funded projects for expanding the irrigation systems near the Euphrates River⁽¹⁾. Tahmasp I tried to retrieve Iraq from the Ottoman Empire, but he failed and realised that it was near impossible, so he signed the Peace of Amasya Treaty⁽²⁾ with Sultan Suleiman in 1555, which marked the territories in the northern part of Iraq between the two empires⁽³⁾. The treaty offered a time of truce for both empires that lasted around 23 years⁽⁴⁾.

However, this transitional period was not as peaceful as it may sound. Political bickering was still the dominant theme during these years. In 1619 a quarrel between the vizier of Baghdad and its chief of the police resulted in the death of the vizier and the chief assumption of power, which led to the Ottoman army marching toward Baghdad⁽⁵⁾. The chief then sent a letter to the Safavid Shah Abbas to ask him to take Baghdad back again in an attempt to get the Shah's help, and he obliged by heading there with an army; however, the chief ended up reconciling with the Ottoman army's leader who was heading to Baghdad and sending a letter back to the Shah, urging him to stop his advancement towards Baghdad⁽⁶⁾. As a result, the Shah got angry and decided to take over and put Baghdad under siege for three months, which made the locals suffer greatly⁽⁷⁾. However, the suffering did not end with the Shah entering Baghdad; he killed many of its people and robbed and destroyed everything, marking Baghdad's fall under the Safavids' control again⁽⁸⁾. The political bickering and pull along sectarian lines was a characteristic of that period. The minute one empire is weak due to weak policies or the death of the Sultan/ Shah, they move to attack and conquer Iraq to establish their rule, which framed the empires' relationship with each other.

After the death of Shah Abbas in 1629, his grandson, Safi of Persia, took over⁽⁹⁾. The fight over Iraq restarted again when Sultan Murad IV sent his army in 1630 to take over Baghdad after they had taken parts of western Iran; they sieged Baghdad for 40 days, which ended with no results, and Iraq remained under the Safavids' control⁽¹⁰⁾. Many Iraqi cities remained under the Safavids' rule until Murad IV tried again. Finally, in 1638, Sultan Murad IV put Baghdad under another excruciating siege and won back most of the Iraqi cities after 16 years under Safi of Persia⁽¹¹⁾. The Safavids and Ottomans signed yet another treaty to regulate their regional affairs. In 1639, the Zuhab Treaty⁽¹²⁾ was signed between Murad IV and Safi of Persia, giving both sides time to regulate their internal affairs after years of wars and conflict⁽¹³⁾.

⁽¹⁾ El Dahan and 'Alawi, 2019. p. 122.

⁽²⁾ Peace of Amasya was considered the first official treaty signed between the Ottoman and Safavid empires, which demarked the borders of the Kurdish cities, Baghdad, Tabriz, and Azerbaijan. See El Sarhan, Alaa. *Itifaqiyat Amasiya bain el Dawla al Othmaniyah and el Dawla el Safawiyah sanat 1555 Amasya Antlasmasi (Amasya Agreement between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires in 1555 Amasya Antlasmasi)*, 2018 (accessed on April 2, 2023)

⁽³⁾ El Dahan and 'Alawi, 2019. pp. 122, 123.

⁽⁴⁾ Taqoosh, 2015. p. 29.

⁽⁵⁾ Al Hasani, 2013. p. 28.

⁽⁶⁾ *Ibid.*

⁽⁷⁾ Al' Adhami, 2017. p. 78.

⁽⁸⁾ *Ibid.*

⁽⁹⁾ Taqoosh, 2015. p. 34.

⁽¹⁰⁾ *Ibid.* pp. 34, 35.

⁽¹¹⁾ Al 'Adhami, 2017. p. 79.

⁽¹²⁾ The Zuhab Treaty was an agreement signed between the Safavids and the Ottoman Empires to divide lands in the region by giving Yerevan in the South Caucasus to Iran and all of Mesopotamia (including Baghdad) to the Ottomans, see Sa'ad el Deen, Asma'. *Tafaseel Mu'ahadat Qasir Shereen (Details of Qasreshirin Treaty)*, 2022.

⁽¹³⁾ El Dahan and 'Alawi, 2019. pp. 131, 132.

After that, the unexpected happened. Iran and the Safavid Empire crumbled under the Afghan invasion in the 18th century, which was a contentious period of its own due to the political instability the internal fight over power caused⁽¹⁾. The situation in the Safavid Empire is not the point of focus here but rather what that period brought to the front of the struggle of the regional powers. The conditions in Iran produced Nader Shah⁽²⁾. Like his predecessors from Iran, he had his mind made to invade Baghdad and tried so in 1733 but failed after seven months of siege and tried again in the same year but failed and had to reconcile with the Ottomans and went back to the old treaties⁽³⁾. However, he could control Basra, Hilla, and Kirkuk and tried to take over Mosul but failed after heavy artillery bombardment and a siege of 40 days⁽⁴⁾. Nader Shah or Tahmasp III sent a letter to the Sultan asking him to give up Mosul and Baghdad, but the Sultan responded with more soldiers to fight Nader Shah, who ended up reconciling with the Ottomans yet again⁽⁵⁾.

After Nader Shah died in 1747, Iran witnessed a time of insatiability, and Karim Khan Zand founded the Zand dynasty in Iran in 1750; unlike his predecessors, he focused on Basra⁽⁶⁾ and invaded it after 13 months of siege in 1776⁽⁷⁾. The remaining Iraqi territories were still under the control of the Ottoman Empire. However, the Ottoman Empire started to lose its grip in the entire region because Iraq was far from the centre of the Ottoman Empire and had difficulty reaching parts of it; this encouraged other groups such as Mamluks⁽⁸⁾ to establish the Mamluk Sultanate in 1750⁽⁹⁾. The Mamluk Sultanate ended in 1831 after Ali Riza Pasha marched the Ottoman army to Baghdad and killed all the Mamluks, and again, Iraq was under the Ottoman Empire until it fell under the control of a western occupier after the end of WWI in 1918⁽¹⁰⁾.

The Ottoman and the Safavid empires had no interest in establishing a strong Iraq or helping its people govern themselves, even though the Ottomans claimed to be the protectors of the Sunni Iraqis and the Safavids the protectors of Shi'a. Therefore, most rulers and civil servants were ethnically Turks or Persians⁽¹¹⁾, depending on who was in control at the time. However, due to the expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the area during the 19th century, some of these issues were altered to suit the interests of the

⁽¹⁾ Taqoosh, 2015. pp. 38-41.

⁽²⁾ Nader Shah was a Turcoman from the Afsharid tribe, who founded the Afsharid dynasty in Iran after he removed Tahmasp II and took power as the sole ruler under the name Tahmasp III, read Al 'Adhami, 2017. p. 80.

⁽³⁾ El Dahan and 'Alawi, 2019. p. 135.

⁽⁴⁾ Al 'Adhami, 2017. p. 81.

⁽⁵⁾ Ibid.

⁽⁶⁾ The Ottoman Sultans neglected Basra, which made it an easy target for Karim Khan. Read Al 'Adhami, 2017. p. 83.

⁽⁷⁾ El Dahan and 'Alawi, 2019. pp. 139, 140.

⁽⁸⁾ The Mamluks were a member of non-Muslim tribes originating in the regions of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Turkey. They served many empires, sultans, and caliphs as soldiers under their command and slaves (hence, the name means the owned) and later became their authority. For more details, see El Shawabka, Murad. Man hum al Mamaleek wa min Ayn Ja'ou? (Who are the Mamluks and where did they come from?), 2021 (accessed on April 1, 2023)

⁽⁹⁾ Al Hasani, 2013. p. 29.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Ibid. pp. 29, 30.

⁽¹¹⁾ Al Hasani, 2013. pp. 27-30.

empire. The bulk of the "reforms"⁽¹⁾ focused on the army. It established the first military school in Iraq, El El Rushdiyah Military School المدرسة الرشدية العسكرية, which opened in Baghdad in 1870⁽²⁾.

Nevertheless, these "reforms" were tainted with the same blueprint of sectarian and religious schemes they used during their conflict with the Safavids for centuries. The Ottomans did not trust the Iraqi Shi'a and felt they could weaken the empire's grip in Iraq if they joined the army, so the military institution in Iraq was predominantly Sunni Iraqis⁽³⁾. The graduates of these military schools were the nuclei of Iraq's modern army which would impact the political and economic scene during the 20th century. However, the picture regarding human resources as fuel for the wars was different. Due to the many wars that the Ottoman Empire had during their expansion in Europe, thousands of Iraqis were sent to fight for the empire under mandatory drafting, which led them to their death, if not by fighting, then by exposure to the element⁽⁴⁾.

III. The Impact Mechanism of the External Political Forces on Iraq's Food Security

Food insecurity is a concern during times of conflict and political instability. As pointed out by FAO in 1996, peace is crucial to achieving food security. In addition, scholars such as Quinn, Zeleny, and Bencho pointed out that conflicts and food security are connected and that countries experiencing active conflict were at a higher risk of food insecurity⁽⁵⁾. Iraq was known for its fertile land and massive agricultural production⁽⁶⁾. Therefore, it was considered an economically advanced region compared to other areas due to the previously mentioned characteristics such as location, geography, and bountiful resources for agricultural productivity. However, the recurrent theme of foreign occupation of Iraq by powerful states had a significant impact that can be easily described as catastrophic. In this section, I will examine the indirect impact mechanism of the external political forces on Iraq's food security through the effects of these forces on its traditional sub and key food production systems (meaning agriculture, infrastructure, and labour).

⁽¹⁾ Some of the "reforms" done by the Ottoman Governor of Baghdad were in the Arabian Gulf region. For example, he established a customs centre in Kuwait, appointed Sheikh Sabah II as Kuwait's ruler, and exempted him from taxes. The Governor aimed to stop the British from expanding in the region, which could undermine the Ottoman Empire's interests. See Taqoosh, 2015. p. 104.

⁽²⁾ The study duration in the military school was four years. The students are accepted after they finish elementary school with a full scholarship to receive various lessons. Another Rushdiyah Military School was established in Sulaymaniyah, north of Iraq, in 1893. These two schools prepared students to enrol in the Military Preparatory School, which was established in Baghdad in 1878, and the duration of the study was three years to prepare students to enter the Military School in Istanbul, read 'Abd Allah, Nazar 'Alwan. 'Iraqioon fi al Jaiysh al Othmani..'Askariyoon Mashhaeer min Wilayat al Iraq al Mukhtalifa (Iraqis in the Ottoman Army..Famous Soldiers from the Various States of Iraq), 2016 (accessed on March 31, 2023)

⁽³⁾ Al Qishtini, Khalid. Dawr el Dhubat al Othmanieen fi Bina' al 'Iraq al Mu'asir (The role of the Ottoman officers in building contemporary Iraq), 2013 (accessed on April 2, 2023)

⁽⁴⁾ Al Yasiri, Mazin. Tareekh al Jaiysh al 'Iraqi bain al Mu'asasa wa el Nidham al Hakim fi Thikrah el Thamina wa el Thamanin (The history of the Iraqi army between the establishment and the ruling regime on its 88 anniversary), 2009 (accessed on April 1, 2023)

⁽⁵⁾ Quinn, John, Zeleny, Tomas and Bencko, Vladimir. Food Is Security: The Nexus of Health Security in Fragile and Failed States. *Food and Nutrition Sciences*, Vol. 5, 2014. pp. 1828-1842.

⁽⁶⁾ Al Hasani, 2013. p. 9.

The fall of Baghdad came after 12 days of siege by the Mongols⁽¹⁾ and had a high cost on Iraq, from the destruction of its science centres and the loss of its most valuable documents to the loss of lives, destruction of hospitals, schools, and cultural buildings (infrastructure)⁽²⁾. Piles of dead bodies in the streets of Baghdad resulted in the spread of epidemic diseases and plague and caused food prices to soar⁽³⁾. Furthermore, the economy was ruined as Iraq's trade ties with Egypt and Syria were severed after the Mongol policies shifted the trade to Iran⁽⁴⁾. The Mongols used a scorched earth tactic by destroying the irrigation canals, famine followed, and Baghdad was left a destroyed and depopulated city⁽⁵⁾. It is said that it took those who remained alive more than a decade to afford Hajj⁽⁶⁾. It paints a grim picture of the socio-economic conditions of people who remained in Baghdad after the catastrophe. The destruction of key systems such as healthcare and education through its infrastructure impacted the people, i.e., labour. Furthermore, the collapse of the sub-systems of food production infrastructure, such as irrigation canals, resulted in famines and food insecurity.

When the Jalayirid took over, they followed the same destructive policies. In 1393, they invaded Baghdad, destroyed and burnt its markets to the ground, and killed its people⁽⁷⁾. Their impact, along with the Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu occupations, was indistinguishable. It caused low agricultural productivity, high prices, and high taxes, along with chaos, instability, burning crops, and farmers struggling with the ruling elites taking two-thirds of their production⁽⁸⁾. It also resulted in a brain drain as it is estimated that the number of scientists in the Il Khanate period (the Mongol rule over Iraq) was 121, which fell to 46 during the Jalayirid occupation⁽⁹⁾. Furthermore, the economy was in shamble due to the destruction of irrigation systems and the deterioration of agriculture, which affected the industry due to the loss of cotton crops and the uprooting of skilled workers to Samarkand⁽¹⁰⁾. It meant that the impact of the external political forces during that period on food security was both directly on food production and agriculture by burning and destroying food crops and by the displacement of labour and brain drain.

In 1508, Shah Ismail took over Baghdad after establishing the Safavid Empire in Persia⁽¹¹⁾. The new occupier was not any different from his predecessors in savagery. However, he used Iraq's ethnic and religious diversity to enforce his control over Baghdad and used sectarian expansionist policies that threatened the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, going through all the political changes caused by the political friction between these two regional powers again is unnecessary, and the overall conditions, the economic impact of their sequential occupation of Iraq can be summarised in the following:

- Long and extensive wars in Iraq created a destabilising state and affected the living conditions, making it unsuitable for economic movement.

⁽¹⁾ Hemmings, Jay. *The Sack of Baghdad in 1258 – One of the Bloodiest Days in Human History*, 2019 (accessed on April 3, 2023)

⁽²⁾ ‘Abd el Rahman, 2020a (accessed on April 1, 2023)

⁽³⁾ ‘Abd el Rahman. *Aob’a Intasharat bisabab al Huroob..Abrazaha Ta’oon Siqoot Baghdad (Epidemics spread due to wars.. most notably the plague of the fall of Baghdad)*, 2020b (accessed on April 2, 2023)

⁽⁴⁾ ‘Abd el Rahman, 2019.

⁽⁵⁾ Gearon, Eamonn. *The Mongol Sack of Baghdad in 1258*, 2017 (accessed on April 3, 2023)

⁽⁶⁾ Ibid.

⁽⁷⁾ Al Hasani, 2013. p. 26.

⁽⁸⁾ Qadawi, Ala’ Mahmood, 2012. pp. 20, 21.

⁽⁹⁾ Ibid. p. 27.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Ibid. pp. 193-205.

⁽¹¹⁾ Al Hasani, 2013. p. 27.

- Shah Ismail attacked many Arab tribes in Iraq, robbed them of their belongings and burnt their farms⁽¹⁾;
- The Safavid period witnessed no agrarian reforms or any significant impact on irrigation systems⁽²⁾.
- In 1530, Tahmasp I held Baghdad under siege for days and invaded it with the same sectarian policies his predecessor followed⁽³⁾.
- In 1619, Iraq fell under three month siege by Shah Abbas⁽⁴⁾.
- In 1621, famine hit Baghdad⁽⁵⁾;
- In 1623, the Safavids killed hundreds of Sunnis and sold others as slaves⁽⁶⁾.
- In 1630, Sultan Murad IV sent his army to take over Baghdad; they sieged Baghdad for 40 days, which was deemed unfruitful⁽⁷⁾.
- In 1633, there were widespread epidemics⁽⁸⁾.
- In 1638, Murad IV put Baghdad under siege for 40 days and then attacked it violently⁽⁹⁾.
- In 1689, there was famine and widespread diseases⁽¹⁰⁾.
- In 1726, the war continued between the Ottoman and the Safavid Empires, and Tahmasp III attacked Baghdad in 1733 after a siege⁽¹¹⁾.
- In 1733, the siege caused 100 thousand deaths because of famine and the plague⁽¹²⁾.
- In 1733, Tahmasp III failed to invade Mosul after a heavy bombardment and a siege of 40 days⁽¹³⁾. More than 100 thousand died from hunger and the plague⁽¹⁴⁾.
- In 1773, another strike of the plague⁽¹⁵⁾.
- In 1776, Karim Khan Zand invaded Basra after 13 months of siege, displaced the locals and took their possessions as bounties⁽¹⁶⁾.
- In 1831, an epidemic, flood, famine, and siege caused the population to fall from 80 thousand to 27 thousand⁽¹⁷⁾.

As seen in the points mentioned above, the continuous fight over power between the Ottoman and the Safavid empires resulted in catastrophic outcomes in Iraq, from destruction to famines. These forces' impact mechanism came through their destabilisation of the political conditions, i.e. peace, which affected the traditional sub and key food production systems (agriculture, infrastructure, and labour). Since peace

⁽¹⁾ El Dahan and 'Alawi, 2019. p. 121.

⁽²⁾ Ibid.

⁽³⁾ Al 'Adhami, 2017. p. 73.

⁽⁴⁾ Al Hasani, 2013. p. 28.

⁽⁵⁾ Batatu, Hanna. *Al 'Iraq: el Tabaqat al Ijtima'iyah wa al Harakat el Thawriyah min al 'Ahd al Othmani hata Qiyam al Jimhuriyah (The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq from the Ottoman Era until the Establishment of the Republic)*. Arab Research Foundation: Beirut, Lebanon, 1990. p. 34.

⁽⁶⁾ Ibid.

⁽⁷⁾ Taqoosh, 2015. pp. 34, 35.

⁽⁸⁾ Batatu, 1990. p. 34.

⁽⁹⁾ El Dahan and 'Alawi, 2019. p. 131.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Batatu, 1990. p. 34.

⁽¹¹⁾ Al Hasani, 2013. p. 29.

⁽¹²⁾ Batatu, 1990. p. 34.

⁽¹³⁾ Al 'Adhami, 2017. p. 81.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Batatu, 1990. p. 34.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Taqoosh, 2015. p. 53.

⁽¹⁶⁾ El Dahan and 'Alawi, 2019. pp. 139, 140.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Batatu, 1990. p. 34.

is crucial to achieving food security, the destabilised political conditions meant the situation was unfavourable for economic activities and food production. In addition, the high death toll due to conflict and widespread epidemics such as cholera and the plague and destroyed infrastructure pushed many local inhabitants to leave Baghdad, fearing death by active conflict or diseases⁽¹⁾. Low numbers of inhabitants mean low purchase rates and no labour for food production or economic activities. These conditions were unsuitable for commercial movements and caused food shortages, high food prices, and famines⁽²⁾. Furthermore, the destruction of infrastructure since the siege of Baghdad by the Mongols and centuries of political friction by the external political forces left Iraq incapable of fending for itself against natural disasters such as floods or diseases such as the plague. In today's scope and definitions, Iraq was a failed state due to the continuous influence of external political forces. Whenever one empire controlled Iraq, the other destabilised their power through sieges and wars, making the state fragile and unable to provide for the people⁽³⁾.

With their wars' destruction, there was no genuine interest in reforming policies. On the one hand, the Safavid Empire had no rehabilitation interest. For example, there were no changes to the agricultural sector⁽⁴⁾, even when the locals were forced to pay taxes. The Ottomans' interest, on the other hand, focused on fortifying the city's walls for military reasons or rebuilding mosques⁽⁵⁾. Except for one instance when one governor helped dig the Dejal river نهر الدجيل in the 18th century⁽⁶⁾. It was probably to compete with the Safavids' religious tide or can be attributed to other reasons. Furthermore, in the 16th century, the Ottoman control in Iraq was shaky because a number of the rulers were either former prisoners, very young, inexperienced, or ruled for a short time, which was reflected in their policies that ranged from corruption to pure disinterest in their administrative roles⁽⁷⁾. Another reason is that between 1639 and 1704, 39 governors ruled Baghdad with no mentionable achievements⁽⁸⁾. Therefore, the political game of musical chairs in the 18th century caused instability and impacted the state's economic policies and sub and key food production systems, such as necessary infrastructure and services.

In addition to negligence and lack of services, the Ottomans' policies impacted the economy and agriculture and left farmers suffering from exploitation and heavy taxes. The Ottoman state introduced the Iltizam system نظام التزام, which was futile⁽⁹⁾. It was a system used by individuals and the state where the state gave one of its resources to someone who could manage it and benefit from it while pledging to give a specific amount of money, in advance, to the state treasury, a form of rental (land tenure)⁽¹⁰⁾. Taxes were

⁽¹⁾ Al Khiqani, Haider Subri. *Asbab Siqoot Hukm al Mamaleek fi al 'Iraq 'am 1831 (Reasons behind the fall of the Mamluk Sultanate in Iraq in 1831)*. College of Education, History Department, 2013. p. 9.

⁽²⁾ Nassar, 'Abd el 'Adheem A. *Baladiyat al 'Iraq fi al 'Ahd el Othmani 1534-1918 (Municipalities of Iraq in the Ottoman era 1534-1918)*. Al Maktaba al Haidariyah Publication, 2005. p. 27.

⁽³⁾ A 'fragile state' is a state "incapable of fulfilling its responsibility as a provider of basic services and public goods, which in turn undermines its legitimacy". See Mata, Javier and Ziaja, Sebastian. *User's Guide on Measuring Fragility*. German Development Institute, UNDP, 2009.

⁽⁴⁾ El Dahan and 'Alawi, 2019. p. 121.

⁽⁵⁾ Taqoosh, 2015. p. 35.

⁽⁶⁾ El Dahan and 'Alawi, 2019. p. 132.

⁽⁷⁾ Ibid. p. 30.

⁽⁸⁾ Ibid. p. 132.

⁽⁹⁾ Taqoosh, 2015. p. 30.

⁽¹⁰⁾ 'Abdeen, Mu'ath Mohammad and Al Hamori, Qassim Mohammad. *Iltizam el dhara'ib fi el dawla al othmaniyah (Iltizam taxes in the Ottoman Empire: a historical study according to Islamic rules)*. King Abdulaziz University Journal: Islamic Economics, Vol. 29, issue 3, 2006. pp. 257-278. In addition, the patriarchal relations that ruled the southern regions of Iraq were based on the collective exploitation of the land by members of the tribe, read El

imposed on the locals and collected to be sent to Sultans without any concerns regarding the general state of Iraq and its infrastructure, which was devastated⁽¹⁾. The Ottomans' sole concern was to collect taxes for the administrative apparatus and army⁽²⁾. Therefore, Baghdad suffered from cruel rulers who collected taxes and left the country without construction or services⁽³⁾. Only a small part of these taxes collected in Iraq was allocated for its agriculture or economy⁽⁴⁾. Furthermore, farmers were using primitive agricultural tools, and there was no development in the irrigation system, as it remained the same since the Middle Ages⁽⁵⁾. The accumulation of many factors, such as a feudal system established under ruthless rulers and their exploitative policies by enforcing high taxes, retarded agricultural tools, and lack of interest in rehabilitating the destroyed infrastructure disservice the conflict-torn country and impacted its food production system and food security.

Nevertheless, once they realised the need to fund their military conquest and expansion in Europe, the Ottomans, yet again, put their interests ahead of the masses they claimed they protected. They realised the need for reforms of agrarian laws and distribution of lands if they were to impose tax farming and had no resistance from the tribes and farmers in Iraq. When the Ottomans eliminated the Mamluks and strengthened their control over Iraq, there was a change in their policies from religious to tribal lines. They enforced a feudal system where tribal relations prevailed in the agricultural community in Iraq. In the 19th century, the Governor of Baghdad turned tribal sheikhs into tax farmers or tax collectors for the Ottoman Empire with a share of production equal to the government's share⁽⁶⁾. Therefore, land tenure and tax farming became the main source of state revenues⁽⁷⁾. The same governor also established the Ottoman Land Law, selling lands through "legal" channels at low prices⁽⁸⁾. The law allowed the "legal" sale of lands in relatively low instalments to tribal sheikhs and holders of questionable bonds, based on a special agreement called *Tapu* طابو, which included the ownership of the irrigation systems⁽⁹⁾. The agreement meant that the 'owner' or manager, for lack of a better term, could use the land however they wanted as long as they paid the state the agreed amount of returns, while the state kept the ownership legally⁽¹⁰⁾.

It paved the way for influential people and notables in the cities to buy lands, and because of this, many owners were far from their land or even the profession of agriculture⁽¹¹⁾. Therefore, a new class of land owners emerged, called the absentee landlords (al mulak al gha'ibeen الملاك الغائبين), most of whom are urban city residents⁽¹²⁾. Once Iraq joined the global economy, and with the Ottoman policies in place, it pushed the feudal lords to increase agricultural production for the global market instead of self-

Zahawi, Suhail. *Nishu' al iqta' wa nidhal al flaheen fi al 'Iraq* (The emergence of feudalism and peasant struggle in Iraq), 2020 (accessed on April 1, 2023)

⁽¹⁾ Nassar, 2005. pp. 20-23.

⁽²⁾ El Zahawi, 2020.

⁽³⁾ 'Abd el Razaq, Salah. *Al wali al othmani wa a'malhu al eslahiyah fi al 'Iraq* (The Ottoman governor and his reform work in Baghdad), 2019 (accessed on April 3, 2023)

⁽⁴⁾ El Zahawi, 2020.

⁽⁵⁾ Ibid.

⁽⁶⁾ El Rabi'i, Ismail N. *El zira'a wa al elaqat el zirai'yah fi al 'Iraq awakhir al a'hd al othmani* (Agriculture and agricultural relations in Iraq late in the Ottoman era), 2006 (accessed on April 3, 2023)

⁽⁷⁾ Kiyotaki, Keiko. *Ottoman Land Reform in the Province of Baghdad*. The Netherlands: Printforce, 2019. p. 7.

⁽⁸⁾ El Zahawi, 2020.

⁽⁹⁾ The purpose was to control the tribes by settling them and encouraging agriculture to weaken the influence of the tribal sheikhs and thus strengthen the central authority to make it easier for them to collect taxes, read El Zahawi.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Ibid.

⁽¹¹⁾ El Rabi'i, 2006.

⁽¹²⁾ Ibid.

sufficiency⁽¹⁾. It led to further exploitation of peasants and the deterioration of their life conditions⁽²⁾. The loss of cultivable lands to absentee landlords and the food production for exportation rather than self-sufficiency to fund the military expansion of the Ottoman Empire in Europe affected food production through its impact on agriculture and farmers' conditions (labour). This remained the situation till Iraq fell under British control in 1914.

IV. Conclusion

Food security is a pressing issue for many countries in the current globalised age and has been since ancient times. Although it was conceptualised to include the internal political and non-political factors that could impact it, it failed to include the impact of the external political forces represented by international organisations and powerful states. To show the impact of the external political forces, represented by powerful states in the historical context, I examined the political conditions in Iraq from the Mongol invasion of Baghdad in 1258 till the early 1900s and their indirect impact mechanism on the traditional sub and key food production system.

With its geographical features, location and environment suitable for agriculture, Iraq became a destination for human migrations from different parts of the ancient world and a passage from Asia to the Arab world and Africa. Fertile lands, water resources and a diverse climate that ranges from continental to subtropical and the influence of the Mediterranean on the region made it easy to cultivate and for agriculture to thrive in Iraq, which made it the most economically developed in the region. The cultivation of half of the agricultural lands in ancient Iraq depended on irrigation from the water of the two rivers or groundwater, while the other half were rain-fed. Among the important crops grown in Iraq are wheat and barley in areas that depend on rain in the north and rice is grown in the centre and south of Iraq.

Iraq has become a cultural centre and a beacon for science and art since the mid-600s, with the succession of many Islamic Caliphates, and many of its cities were their state's capitals. Then the glory and lustre of Iraq's golden history disappeared with the Mongol invasion of Baghdad in 1258, and its infrastructure, scientific achievements, and agricultural and human capital were destroyed. The invasions coming from the Far East did not stop, and the destruction and brutality that accompanied those invasions did not end, impacting the food production's sub and key systems, and food security.

Then, Iraq became an arena of conflict for the Ottoman and Safavid empires and a target for political and religious bickering. This period witnessed successive invasions and sieges on Iraq and its people. The continuous fight over power between the Ottoman and the Safavids empires resulted in catastrophic outcomes in Iraq, from destruction to famines. Destabilised political conditions meant that the situation was unfavourable for food production and economic activities. The high death toll due to conflict and widespread epidemics such as cholera and the plague pushed many local inhabitants to leave Baghdad and Iraq. Therefore, low numbers of inhabitants meant no labour for economic activities or food production. These conditions were unsuitable for commercial movements and caused food shortages, high prices, and famines. Furthermore, the destruction of infrastructure since the siege of Baghdad by the Mongols and centuries of political friction over power left Iraq a failed state due to the continuous influence of external political forces. In short, the sieges, continuous wars and conflicts, exploitive policies, and destruction of infrastructure were the highlight of that period, resulting in famines due to the displacement of labour and low food production.

In addition, the occupiers had no genuine interest in reforming policies even when the people were forced to pay taxes. As a result, only a tiny part of these taxes collected in Iraq was allocated for its

⁽¹⁾ El Zahawi, 2020.

⁽²⁾ Ibid.

agriculture or economy. However, the Ottomans' policy changed once they realised the need to fund their military conquest and expansion in Europe. It started by consolidating its power and switching from religious to tribal lines. It enforced a feudal system, where land tenure and tax farming became the primary source of state revenues. The increase in agricultural production for the global market instead of self-sufficiency exploited farmers and further deteriorated their conditions till Iraq fell under the control of another powerful state in the early 1900s.

Since this is a historical study, we can only recommend scholars and experts of that period make more efforts and further examine the political factors that affected the economic and social conditions to understand modern Iraq and fill the literature gaps. The research, for example, can help scholars study Iraq's demographical changes during that period by using the economic circumstances and lack of stability as indicators of the instability of living conditions and suitability for settlement. Furthermore, I recommend those examining Iraq during the twentieth century and scholars of sustainable development studies to use the research to trace the developmental issues' root causes. I also suggest that researchers examining the impact of colonialism apply the research idea to countries with a history of colonial occupation and struggling with the aftermath.

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- ‘Abd el Rahman. 2020a. Seen wa Jeem.. Kul ma Tureed Ma’rifatahu ‘an Siqoot Baghdad qabl 762 Sana (Q and A..All you need to know about the fall of Baghdad 762 years ago). File retrieved from <https://www.youm7.com/story/2020/2/10/%D8%B3-%D9%88%D8%AC-%D9%83%D9%84-%D9%85%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%B1%D9%81%D8%AA%D9%87-%D8%B9%D9%86-%D8%B3%D9%82%D9%88%D8%B7-%D8%A8%D8%BA%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D9%82%D8%A8%D9%84/4624130> (accessed on April 1, 2023)
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