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# Symbol and Social Solidarity in the Iraqi Culture (Anthropological Study) By the researcher

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الرمز والتضامن الاجتماعي في الثقافة العراقية(دراسة انثروبولوجيا) الباحث

# قتيبة قاسم مزعل التميمي رئاسة جامعة بغداد / قسم شؤون الاقسام الداخلية

#### **Abstract**

- 1. Social solidarity occupies a distinct symbolic semantic position in Iraqi culture since times passed in the history of Iraqi society, and despite the diversity and difference in the nature of the cultural system, social solidarity remained dominant in its moral and aesthetic value.
- 2. The symbolism of the social structure differs and varies from one region to another, due to the presence of social, cultural, economic, media, and moral psychological factors.
- 3. Symbolic forms vary from one civilization to another, while they used to refer to strength, war, courage, power, authority, and the consideration of gods, fertility, growth, rituals, rites, taboos, and prohibitions in pagan and ancient religions, they changed to take other symbolic forms in the Islamic eras and beyond, reaching modern and civilized societies.
- 4. There are social phenomena that affect the reality of life, which has become affected by the simplest details that are considered a cultural reference to which these individuals return to express themselves through what they acquire and wear.
- 5. There is a cultural compliance with the variables of Iraqi social circles of all sects and beliefs, which is represented by images, shapes, phrases and social environmental sayings engraved and carved on paintings and expressive drawings.

# الخااصة

- ١ يحتل التضامن الاجتماعي موقعاً دلالياً رمزياً متميزاً في الثقافة العراقية منذ أزمنة مرّت في تاريخ المجتمع العراقي، وعلى الرغم من
   التباين والاختلاف في طبيعة المنظومة الثقافية، الا أن التضامن الاجتماعي بقي متسيداً لقيمته المعنوبة والجمالية,
- ٢- أن رمزية البنية الاجتماعية تختلف وتتباين من منطقة الى أخرى، وذلك لوجود عوامل اجتماعية، وثقافية، واقتصادية وإعلامية، وعوامل معنوبة نفسية.
- ٣- تتباين الاشكال الرمزية من حضارة الى أخرى، ففيما كانت تشير الى القوة والحرب والشجاعة والسطوة والسلطة واعتبار الالهة والخصب والنماء والطقوس والشعائر والتابو والتحريم في الديانات الوثنية والقديمة، فقد تغيرت لكي تتخذ اشكالا رمزية أخرى في العصور الاسلامية وما بعدها وصولا الى المجتمعات الحديثة والمتحضرة.
- ٤- هناك ظواهر اجتماعية تؤثر على الواقع الحياتي، الذي أصبح يتأثر بأبسط التفاصيل التي يعدها مرجع ثقافي يعود اليه هؤلاء للتعبير
   عن ذاتهم عبر ما يقتنون ويرتدون افراد المجتمع.

هناك امتثال ثقافي لمتغيرات الأوساط الاجتماعية العراقية من كل الطوائف والمعتقدات، والتي تتمثل بالصور والاشكال والعبارات
 والمقولات البيئية الاجتماعية المنقوشة والمنحوتة على اللوحات والرسوم التعبيرية.

#### Introduction:

The essence of the symbol has occupied harmony in all human cultures and civilizations, especially the Sumerian civilization and the Pharaonic civilization, as well as all late ancient and modern civilized societies. Thus, most thinkers, scientists, researchers and writers have been preoccupied with all their scientific and practical ideas and perceptions that touch on the symbol and the nature of the symbol in the daily lives of peoples in the past and present, and they have put all aspects of comparison and approximation between them. Accordingly, the symbol leads us to a quick understanding and realization of the meanings that do not only include the world, but rather it extends to include times, ages and races that illuminate our perceptions and lead us to the world of silent thought. So, the symbol is deemed a medium in itself, and cannot be fabricated or invented according to some personal interpretations. Accordingly, it can be inferred via arbitrary perceptions that perform an indicative function. There may be approaches between social solidarity and the mechanisms of symbolic operation, through the actions and images embodying the achievement in Iraqi culture, because the symbol is an embodiment of the axis of culture through which the image produced by the semiotics of human civilizations is formed. From (Pierce's) point of view, the image here refers to the similarity or symmetry (icon) that embodies the image and graphic reference, and it is also an imitation of natural forms that depend on the icon of symmetry between the signifier and the signified. It also refers to the meanings that have multiple uses in different directions, and give symbols that represent the movement of the symbol in social solidarity since solidarity is the integration of people into a society, through which the type and degree of that integration appears, and refers to the ties of society that connect one person to another.

This may confirm that it represents the driving force that classifies the workforce in an ideal way. Solidarity also permeates the social structure as a network that enhances the cohesion of society with each other, resulting in material and social goods that express the semiotic representation of ambiguous, clear, or agreed-upon forms, even if they are not agreed upon. The important thing is that they form visions of the nature of this culture, and carry interests and variables that touch contemporary anthropological thought. Culture, as (Clyde Kluckhohn) sees it, is a guide to human behavior at all times and places because it carries real motives that express the relationship of man with the universe. The approaches and methods may differ in analyzing the process of commodity and service exchanges that some materialist scholars have emphasized, unlike anthropologists who have drawn their theory from the exchange of decorative tools that depend on the decision of the human mind and what it relies on the principle "give and take" that represents the basis for cohesive relationships between individuals and groups which represents the basis in the process of basic construction, which is called social exchange that strengthens social cohesion between individuals.

The significance of the research indicates to the life of the community that touches on human relations and people's communication with each other, according to basic standards that affirm social organizations (Social organization) and their performance to fulfill goals adopted by the community in the integration of its social structure and its shared and cohesive values whenever its scope expands. Accordingly, the research's goal seeks to identify the symbol and social solidarity in Iraqi culture.

Defining terms:

### 1. Symbol

Language: The symbol, in language, as in al Muheet Dictionary, is the symbol that includes and moves the sign, or gesture with the lips, eyes, eyebrows, mouth, hand, or tongue. It is symbolized and symbolizes something. (Al-Fayrouzabadi, 2008, 669).

Terminologically: The symbol tends toward the philosophical trend, and through it experiences and cases are expressed and disclosed indirectly. It is everything that replaces something to indicate it, not by way of complete conformity, but rather by gesture or by the existence of a known incidental relationship - and usually the symbol means the tangible thing.

#### 2. Social solidarity

It is a productive group or category based on shared interests, including: common goals, norms and sympathy. Solidarity refers to community relationships that bind people together as a team. In simple societies, it can be based on kinship and shared values, and in more complex societies, there are different theories about the factors that contribute to the feeling of social solidarity. (web.archive.org)

3. Culture

It is a social behavior and norm found in human societies. Culture is a central concept in anthropology, encompassing the range of phenomena transmitted through social learning in human societies. Culture embraces a wide spectrum that extends from historical monuments that represent museums and living heritage to contemporary art forms, and we use it to build inclusive, creative, cohesive, harmonious and adaptable societies. (Adolf Bastian, 2009, 22)

#### 4. Social Exchange

Social exchange is considered a social psychological theory and a social vision that explains social change and stability as a negotiated exchange process between different parties. This theory proposes the idea that human relations arise from non- objective calculations of cost and benefit, and from comparing alternatives. The roots of social exchange theory go back to economics, psychology and sociology. This theory is often used today in the business world. (Dr. Ibrahim, Othman, 2010, 22).

#### Symbolic connotations and their impact on social solidarity

Symbolic connotations uncover the relationship between the concept of the human self and circular shapes, and decorative complements and their manifestations in the arts from an interpretive perspective, embodying different time periods, and from multiple artistic schools and trends, interpreting the relationship of the human self in accordance with the totality of the connotations affecting the artistic forms mentioned by comparing some of them with each other, and the connotation in its semiotic sense is the moral content representing the level of content of a visual sign. Or it can be open to the diversity of its intellectual and cultural references, in accordance with the influential contexts and its dealings with different cultures. Priests and kings asked the artist to follow the ideal of representation characterized by the laws of dignity and majesty, and encouraged the artist to remain static and conservative in his stylistic laws. (Dr. Zuhair Sahib, 2005, 82).

The interpretations of symbolic connotations also uncover circular shapes and their various connotations, within the framework of their reliance on addressing social solidarity throughout the ages. Arts have varied in shaping the materials and shapes of sculptures, golden statues, jewelry and ornaments through engravings and decorations that have influenced Iraqi culture since the beginning of human civilizations, which occupied a large space in their cultural similarities embodied materially within symbolic connotations. Perhaps these connotations demonstrated the maturity of human thinking and creativity in drawing inspiration from ideas as the Sumerians discovered them from their natural environments through their focused senses, which were like lines and influential engines in their intellectual expansion that addressed their capabilities and these capabilities were reflected in possibilities in implementing their work in the fields of religious, social, cultural, economic and political life. Artistic activity is a spring from the essence of life itself, as it is a social activity, the purpose of which is limited to life or reality itself, and accordingly the system of formal relationships is the essence that is characterized by awareness and will (Dr. Zuhair Sahib, 2005, 178).

Life is renewed through the advancement of symbolic social transformations associated with social norms and the renewal of its rituals through an image that it carefully dresses for its abstract ideas, based on the variable in the formal formation and what it carries of symbols that have a natural presence in the creative process. Here, symbolic connotations may affect solidarity, considering that it is the social guide among the most important guides that determine the form of Iraqi culture and its symbolism in the nature of Iraqi society and all social classes, and since the symbol of traditions is a main axis and an economic and social value, and a tool for social exchange, and is also the subject of conditions for the symbol of exchange between lineages and families, according to the social contexts represented by the symbolism of life connotations and their multiple forms within the scope of agreements in light of the nature of the prevailing social norms in society. Sumerian products are considered represented in the literary texts discovered for the state of history, which confirm human attempts to express the problems of life and its values, in creative artistic ways based on imagination and contemplation. (Dr. Zuhair Sahib, Dr. Najm Abdul Haider, Dr. Balasim Muhammad, 2006, 27).

Accordingly, researchers in social sciences agreed that the method is the path leading to clarifying the reality or truth of organizing dealing with the scientific method and clarifying the objective study that is far from personal tendencies in order to reach scientific facts. The methods used in anthropological studies also give an accurate detailed picture of the phenomenon studied in society (Youssef Ghanima Al-Mahini, 1980, 8).

The methods aim to study the facts related to the nature of symbolic connotations and their impact on social solidarity in Iraqi culture, as follows:

First - The cognitive approach (the self-understanding approach)

The self-understanding approach in anthropological thought takes a new theoretical direction, based on discovering the way in which individuals organize their cultures and their way of using this culture, which is known as (the cognitive approach). This approach seeks to understand people's perceptions, their way of thinking, and their way of perceiving things, and the principles that this thinking, perception, and feeling entail, and the means by which they reach, because they are first and foremost connected to society, meaning that it focuses on the citizens' view that carries the meaning of experiences, values, and cognitive or perceptual statements (Muhammad Hassan Ghamri, 1983, 36). It does not study the material elements of the phenomenon, as much as it studies the way that works to organize these elements in people's minds.

The cognitive approach directs attention to the human being in his thinking and his clear exposure to traditional methods, more than his behavior or in the sense of understanding this behavior, so that the cognitive study of a culture means searching for the perceptions, statements and mental classifications that the individuals of this culture organize through the various phenomena surrounding them. Culture, according to the cognitive approach, means a set of popular classifications of a known society. It is known that each society has its own methods of classifying its material and social world. In this cognitive approach, the researcher's task is determined by revealing how members of a certain culture perceive their social reality, defining and classifying it, as well as how they accomplish their activities, and to know the meaning they give to the actions that occur in the context of their culture. The cognitive trend crystallized in the early sixties with two schools: French constructivism led by Claude Levi-Strauss, and the new anthropology led by a group of American anthropologists. Although both schools were interested in studying the relationship or connection between language and culture to support their cognitive or perceptual direction in understanding the societies studied, this cognitive trend gave the study of symbolic meanings a new and important impact and dimensions in the studies of anthropologists. (Hussein Fahim, 1986, 222-229).

Their starting point is that each culture has its own system of knowledge and its own distinctive style of perception. No culture can be similar to another culture in its experiences, and a sound understanding of any culture requires the cognitive content of the linguistic and non-linguistic expressions issued by the individuals of this culture. It is clear from the above that this approach focuses primarily on the human being in his thinking more than on his behavior, in other words, it is the necessary approach to understanding this behavior. Through this approach, the approach of self-understanding (cognitive) seeks to identify the way in which individuals organize their culture and their way of using that culture. Therefore, this approach attaches great importance to the rules governing behavior, which the individual must take into account in his calculations as a member of a certain culture that he seeks not to violate its controls.

The cognitive approach emerged and crystallized in the sixties of the last century, until it gained wide fame as a result of its focus on addressing the central problem that social solidarity has always worked to confront and explain the cultural elements that it relies on. Accordingly, we can define the cognitive approach as the method, style, or direction that the researcher takes in his dealings with the research community to reach the way in which members of society think about things and the extent of their interpretations of those things. Since this approach has special importance in most studies, and also for the scientific aspect, and the potential for its employment within the contexts of practical work according to current data that can be extracted from human societies possessing special systems of knowledge, and a distinct style of perception, it is not possible for all cultures to be similar in perception and interpretation, and accordingly this approach was employed in order to reach the desired results according to the view of society and the researcher's visions of the subject of the study.

#### Second - Ethnographic (realistic) method:

The ethnographic method is one of the methods on which anthropology is based, i.e. it is the field work in which the anthropological researcher participates in the daily life and culture of a society, observes, records, tries to express the points of view of the members of the society, and then writes. Franz Boas and Malinowski are considered the founders of this method, the first in his study of the Indians on the eastern coast of the United States of America in 1886 AD, and the other in his study of the Trobriand Islands on the coast of New Guinea in 1914 AD (Marc Auger, Paul Colin, 2008, 71)

The ethnographic method or the (descriptive) method provides the basic information and data that draw a general picture of the problems or phenomena studied, and it also helps to identify and select research that they deem worthy of study, considering that the descriptive method aims to study current facts related to the nature of a phenomenon, situation, group of people, events, and even situations. The ethnographic method studies the phenomenon as it is in reality, and describes it accurately by relying on collecting facts, analyzing them, and interpreting them, then extracting their meanings, and issuing generalizations about them. Thus, through this method, it is possible to obtain accurate detailed images of the phenomenon being studied. Perhaps one of the characteristics of new ethnographic research, as Clifford Geertz says, is the ethnographer's ability to go beyond the information he has collected and make himself transparent so that the reader can see for himself something of what the facts appear to be, and then judge the conclusions, recommendations, and generalizations presented by the researcher through his mental perception. (Adam Cooper, 2008, 120). The literal meaning of the word ethnography is writing about culture. Ethnographers go into the social worlds of the people in their research community, observing and recording the continuous daily life of the individuals of this community, by providing an intensive description of this social environment and the daily life of the individuals who live in these places. Ethnographers provide detailed pictures of a culture, subculture, or group of daily life practices and customs. Mesopotamian creative thought establishes systems that inspired the environment through the senses, which are psychological pressures, incentives, and stimuli, which lead to a structural semantic system in their visual contrasts. (Dr. Zuhair Sahib, Dr. Najm Abdul Haider, Dr. Balasim Muhammad, 2006, 47). In addition to specific sensory details of scenes, locations, objects, individuals, important actions and methods, ethnography as one of the writing strategies, deals with concrete details and not abstract generalizations, and also sensory images and not evaluative adjectives as it requires immediacy, in order to encompass the details that are presented. (Goffman) advises field researchers to write with flow and spontaneity, using linguistic forms of adjectives and circumstances (adverbs of time and adverbs of place)

to convey details, for example, details that provide color, shape, and size to create a visual image, while other details related to sound, tone of speech, loudness suggest auditory images, and there are other details that depict gestures and movements, body positions, and facial changes that convey the kinetic image. The ethnographic researcher depicts the appearances of the characters that form part of the scenes described, in order to present the framework in which the actions and conversations take place (Robert Emerson, 2012, 165-167). Thus, we make the means of description of what is tangible absent, as if it is present before us, and what is intertwined and interwoven is more clear and organized. Accordingly, the possibilities of the ethnographic method can be employed, because this method is characterized by the accuracy of description, it has become very important, and perhaps the description and intensive description give another function to the study by means of this method, which is to focus on describing the symbolic field of the specificity of this culture, and the acquisition, saving, selling and buying of symbolic forms as required by the situation and

#### Third - The historical method:

image in the subject matter of the research.

The historical method is considered one of the basic classifications of scientific research methods, and this method is important in achieving research studies, and coming up with important evidence, with its strong argument, and then achieving positive results at the end of implementing research plans. Methods are used in scientific research for the purpose of following specific agreed-upon methods, and in a way that makes scientific research regular, with the conclusions of reason and thinking, without that, scientific research will appear in a flabby and random form, and the benefit will not be there, and no goals will be fulfilled therefrom. The historical method relies on an organized method that aims to reach a specific thing, and is attributed to past events that are documented and recorded before the present, and then collecting past evidence and working on arranging, classifying and criticizing it, then presenting it in the form of documented facts, and coming up with implications and clues that help understand a specific scientific topic or social problem. This is based on the fact that a person cannot live in isolation from his past, and through previous events, mistakes can be identified and avoided, and different visions can be adopted that contribute to improving the image in the future. The importance of the historical approach lies in its contributions to addressing current problems in light of previous information, with the possibility of predicting what will happen in the future in light of the successive time variables on the problem of the study. The historical approach also allows for identifying

مجلة الجامعة العراقية المجلد (١) العدد (١) نيسان لسنة ٢٠٠٥ records and blogs in different time periods, which expands the researcher's horizons and provides him with extensive information.

The historical researcher has pivotal characteristics, including: being able to criticize objectively, being wellinformed, being serious, patient and careful in collecting information, and being passionate about historical material, far from bias towards personal whims or opinions.

There are advantages to the historical approach, including: it is suitable for different types of research and scientific theses, including economics, sociology, management, accounting, geography, philosophy, etc., and among the important advantages of the historical approach is its effective contribution to identifying how the phenomena under study arose, and then deducing the causes. It is easy to use with many other scientific research methods, most notably the descriptive method, the analytical method, and the comparative method. As for the disadvantages of the historical method, they include: what concerns historical data and information that are events and facts that have passed and gone, so they cannot be tested, which makes there are doubts surrounding the research results, and this is at the forefront of the disadvantages of the historical method. In addition to the difficulty of verifying some sources of historical information, and relying on them as evidence and indications, and this can affect the research with some negatives. As in some historical research topics, it is difficult for the researcher to make generalizations about the results he reaches, and this results in the inability to make future guesses.

Fourth - The comparative approach:

The comparative approach is concerned with studying the social phenomenon in more than one society and over a specific period of time. It works to compare the phenomenon in one society over a different period of time. Through the influence of the desire to conduct comparisons between different cultures with the aim of reaching general laws and provisions in the anthropological field, cross-cultural studies became active in America. George Murdoch played a major role since 1937 in preparing records containing the summary of the studies of researchers in various parts of the world, which he called HRAF. D. White also established other records in 1966, which were known by the symbol SRAS. These records helped conduct comparisons and reach generalizations that not only provide us with a system of organizing different experiences, but also provide an explanation for this regularity. (58,1970,Obbe).

This trend was active during the nineteenth century and included several branches of human knowledge and proved successful in some fields such as biology, language and legislation. The influence of the anthropological pioneers of this comparative trend began in their search for the first origins of social systems and successive stages of development. In 1896 AD, (Francis Boas) explained the shortcomings of the comparative method and pointed to the possibility of comparing between a number of societies within a specific geographical area. When (Radcliffe Brown) spoke about social anthropology as a distinct branch, he called it (comparative sociology). The comparative trend took several forms between social and cultural anthropology, and within each of them he showed the various schools and trends, its scope was reached by (George Murdoch), who expanded the scope of comparison to include societies in various parts of the world. He also expanded the use of statistical methods to achieve this purpose. (Taylor) had compared a large number of societies early. The difference between him and Murdoch was that he aimed to prove his theory about the stages that human societies have gone through. In this regard, he cites a text by (François Boas) in which he indicates that the first task of anthropology is to reconstruct the history of a specific city or a specific people, and that the second task is to compare the social life of different peoples. (Radcliffe Brown) confirms that anthropology needs these two tasks because the historical method provides us with a collection of partial issues, while the comparative method provides us with general issues. (Radcliffe, 68)

Another trend opposing the Boas school in American anthropology is the ecological trend of (Julian Steward), who was influenced by the study of natural sciences and considered it the model that should be followed by the research method in social sciences, and then dealt with social phenomena from the positivist perspective that was common at that time, and considered that systems, patterns and manifestations of cultural behavior are objective units that have their natural system based on the law of the process, in which each part is linked to certain relationships with the other parts. The anthropologist's task is to discover these relationships as they exist in nature and in their temporal and spatial context, and this is done through the comparative method that reveals the laws that govern these relationships. (Myrphy, 1977, 18)

We employed the comparative method in our current study on the basis that this method lies at the heart of anthropological research and studies that rely on comparison in most previous, subsequent and current studies.

This is because the comparative method is the method that relies on comparison in studying the phenomenon, highlighting the similarities and differences between two phenomena or more, and the researcher relies on a set of steps to reach the scientific truth related to the phenomenon being studied. Analysis is the discovery of the framework structure of things, and begins by discovering the simplest image (fragmentation), i.e. discovering the parts that make up the structures its awareness the mind achieves. (Dr. Zuhair Sahib, Dr. Najm Abdul Haider, Dr. Blasim Muhammad, 2006, 139).

The researcher uses the comparative method in his paper away from other scientific research methods because he wants to seek for the axes of the theory, and this is determined by the researcher identifying the main axes that require comparison and explaining the reason for the comparison, as the comparison is limited to stating the nature of the prevailing conditions, in addition to linking this comparison between all the research axes. Therefore, the researcher must follow the method of analysis in the comparison, with the use of the quantitative analysis method if necessary, as the comparative method sheds light on: What is being compared...?, Why is he comparing...?, and How is he comparing?...

Objectives of the comparative method:

The objectives of the comparative method are limited to the following points:

- 1. The comparative method works to provide a high degree of generality, and explore variables that were not known before.
- 2. The comparative method works to collect similar, harmonious and consistent terms with each other, and this is an important condition for any theory; because the more the structures of the theory are distinguished, the more depth increases between the divisions, and then new topics and specializations appear.
- 3. The comparative approach helps the researcher to obtain experiences that prevent him and keep him away from committing the mistakes made by his predecessors, and helps him to evaluate his own culture.
- 4. This approach contributes to the analysis and interpretation processes in complex topics.
  - The importance of the comparative approach:
  - The importance of the comparative approach is highlighted through its uses, including:
- 1. In sociology: The researcher uses the comparative approach in his social research; because it helps him to achieve hypotheses with comparative history, so he can study societies in many different places and times, and explain how the phenomenon changes as a result of the change of another specific phenomenon, so the basis of the sociology approach is a comparative approach; because it depends on statistics and graphs.
- 2. In political science: The comparative approach has greatly contributed to the development of political science, as Montesquieu used it in his classification of systems (republic, monarchy, constitutionalism, despotism), and his comparison was based on the actual practice applied within the system, and the same was true for Machiavelli in his classification of states (the state ruled by one king, the aristocratic state, and the democratic state).

Difficulties in using the comparative method:

The comparative method is related to other methods, and despite its importance, objectives and uses, it is subject to some difficulties, including:

- 1. Difficulty in stating some basic terms of a general nature in the research.
- 2. Difficulty in determining the natural unit of comparison.
- 3. Difficulty in stating the features and characteristics of the phenomenon being compared.
- 4. Difficulty in identifying the main variables and the lack of accurate information characterized by scientific precision.
- 5. Difficulty in determining the analytical units on which the comparison is based.
- 6. The social phenomenon being compared may be very different in the societies being studied.
- 7. The conditions of comparison can be difficult and complex.
- 8. The lack of some necessary statistics in the comparison makes the latter weak in its argument and statistical significance.

#### **Study Suggestions:**

1. The study suggests to have other researchers conduct similar studies on the symbolism of Sumerian forms, or conduct comparative cultural studies to study the variation in different civilizations.

2. The study suggests to have other researchers study the approaches of the plastic arts concerned with the statues of Mesopotamia, and focus on the social structure of this civilization, for its historical value and cultural and social specificity.

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