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*Article review (مراجعة مقال)*

**Iraqi parliamentary institution: Power sharing in Iraq parliament**

Critical Literature Review on the Article: “Power Sharing (Consociational Democracy), its Effect on ” the Legislative and Oversight Performance of Iraqi Parliament Post 2003 Written By Ammar Saadoon Salman Albadry and Prof. Dr Mohd Kamarulnizam Bin Abdullah, College of Law Government and International Studies Universiti Utara Malaysia This article was published in European Law and Politics (ELP) Journal, No. 1, Volume 1/July 2014.

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**1. Introduction: Positioning the Study within the Literature**

Existing literature on power sharing and consociationalism democracy has developed significantly during the post–Cold War era, especially around deeply divided societies transitioning from conflict. This literature has been heavily inflected by normative assumptions that power sharing constitutes a stabilizer, capable of containing renewed violence and managing ethnic or sectarian pluralism (1). However, while theoretically the attractiveness of the concept of consociationalism democracy is widely recognized, its empirical implications particularly in relation to democratic institutions like parliaments are still very much debated.

In the case of Iraq after 2003, much scholarly attention has centered on constitutional design, identity politics and elite bargaining arrangements; unfortunately, often at the cost of systematic scrutiny of institutional performance. As such, the Iraqi parliament has repeatedly been presented as just passive arena where elite arrangements play out rather than as an independent institution whose legislative and oversight powers are shaped by power-sharing arrangements. This literature review critically reviews these trends, pinpointing the conceptual, methodological and empirical limitations which warrant the current study.

**2. Theoretical Approaches to Power Sharing: Normative Optimism and Its Limits**

The basic idea behind classical consociationalism, which is associated with (Arend Levart), can be summarized as follows: democratic stability can be achieved in divided societies through cooperation among elites, (2) proportional representation, and mutual veto power for all ethnic and political groups, especially in societies that suffer from deeply entrenched social divisions, which may even be tainted by bloodshed.



However, a trend in the literature casts doubt on this model based on its direct application. Proponents argue that consociationalism can contribute to the entrenchment of social inequalities and institutionalize sectarian identities, resulting in elite consensus overriding democratic accountability (3). From this perspective, it can guarantee temporary stability at the expense of the long-term consolidation of democratic institutions through power-sharing.

Although many theoretical discussions overlook the ongoing focus on the institutional effects of power-sharing on parliaments, the executive aspect of consensus arrangements has received considerable attention, while the role of the legislative branch is often downplayed or assumed to function smoothly without interference. It is especially problematic when the theory has been applied to cases like Iraq, where one of the most constitutive elements of post-2003 political order was parliamentary weakness.

### **3. Power Sharing in Post-Conflict Contexts: Comparative Insights and Analytical Gaps**

Comparative studies of power sharing in Lebanon, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Northern Ireland—which represent contrasting models for post-conflict settlement—can teach us a tremendous amount but should also be approached with a critical perspective. Much of this literature has focused on conflict management and elite pacts and tends to assess success in the absence of extensive violence rather than enhanced democratic governance (4).

Although these studies recognize some institutional dysfunctions, they often conceptualize them as transitional costs rather than structural outcomes of power-sharing agreements. Many scholars are prescriptive in this regard, convening workshops on “how to make parliament” work; however, parliamentary paralysis, weak oversight and legislative gridlock become naturalized as features of post-conflict politics rather than symptoms of democracy’s backsliding.

In addition, much comparative work tends to either use broad institutional indicators or constitutional analysis (with very little attention to parliamentary daily functioning). Such a methodological preference compounds and reinforces an executive-centric shared power understanding that marginalizes the legislature as a serious object of inquiry. As a result, the use of parliamentary-performance as an evaluative criterion for power-sharing arrangements has been under-researched in the literature.

### **4. Iraqi Political Studies: Sectarian Reductionism and Institutional Neglect**

There is a rich but uneven literature on Iraq post-2003. A prominent strain of scholarship on Iraq explains its dominant political outcomes almost exclusively through the lens of sectarian and ethnic identities, depicting Iraqi politics as an inescapably contingent reflection of societal fragmentation (5). While identity-



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based analysis has clear explanatory purchase, its overuse has produced a form of analytical reductionism that obscures institutional dynamics.

Much of this literature treats dysfunctional parliaments as an inevitable outcome of Iraq's social divisions, rather than examining how particular political arrangements including power sharing actively structure the conduct of parliament. In so doing, the literature tends to conflate societal pluralism and institutional incapacity into one totalizing argument that admits little purchase for alternative explanations rooted in either institutional design or political practice.

Even the studies based in Iraq that are widely available have tended to focus on elections, government building and executive bargaining — less soon parliamentary oversight which is often approached as a more peripheral concern. Indeed, when the legislature is discussed, it tends to be descriptively rather than analytically and little animated by questions of accountability, opposition or legislative autonomy.

### **5. Parliamentary Oversight and Legislation: A Marginalized Dimension**

Parliamentary oversight is arguably a central aspect of democratic theory, but it remains largely under-theorized within power-sharing systems. The powers of the executive authority perform some tasks that directly affect state life, society and individuals. These actions must not be left unsupervised to avoid tyranny or abuse of power, Yet how power-sharing arrangements constrain or undermine this oversight role is under-examined (6).

Similarly, while many studies have noted that consensus-based governments tend to lack a strong parliamentary opposition, this problem has rarely been studied in terms of its impact on the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight mechanisms. While this system is designed to avoid exclusion and, consequently, conflict, the inclusive nature of local governance hinders the distinction between government and opposition, thereby weakening both incentives and capabilities.

Legislative bodies under similar constraints have continued to suffer from weak institutional performance. The need for broad consensus among political blocs often leads to protracted legislative processes, substandard laws, or even completes paralysis of the legislative process. Yet, these types of results are usually justified by weak political culture or deficiencies in political leadership and not understood as repercussions derived from the very structural dynamics of the power-sharing setups.

### **6. Methodological Limitations in Existing Studies**

Scholarship that focuses on Iraq and the issue of power-sharing tends to share a number of characteristics. Not least, it is quite descriptive or normative in orientation (although it often depends upon a relatively limited body of empirical evidence to make its claims). Quantitative studies are rare, while



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qualitative studies seldom meet standards of rigorous methodology or transparency (7).

Ultimately, few studies have sought to establish the relationship between political arrangements and institutional outcomes using an explicit institutional framework. As a result, the causal relationship between power-sharing arrangements and enhanced parliamentary performance is yet to be sufficiently established. The normative approach, also called the philosophical or ethical political theory, asks what politics should be instead of what it is. This approach is, in the most fundamental sense, about values, ideals and moral principles that should govern political institutions and practices.

### **7. Research Gaps and the Contribution of the Present Study**

The critical literature review identifies several interrelated gap. There is a conceptual gap around the role of parliaments in power-sharing systems, for starters. Second, there is an empirical gap regarding the legislative and oversight performance analysis in Iraq post-2003. Third, a methodological gap stems from the inadequate qualitative research focused on an institution.

This study fills these gaps by moving the analytical focus away from identity and elite bargaining to institutional performance. And by investigating how power sharing has shaped the legislative and oversight functions of the Iraqi parliament, it complicates existing assumptions about both the indispensability of parliamentary weakness in Iraq and ways out of this conundrum—providing a more contextualized analysis of democratic dysfunction that is not conditional upon statehood as such, but rather on its forms.

### **8. Conclusion: Reassessing Power Sharing through an Institutional Lens**

The literature on power sharing provides only rudimentary tools for judging the democratic quality of government, especially at the parliamentary level. Quasi-party systems are not easily captured in an ideological space and much scholarship to this effect has focused on elite consensus around a social basis of power at the expense of either institutional effectiveness or democratic responsiveness. The Iraqi experience revealed that there is an urgent need for a comprehensive evaluation based on more established institutional and experimental foundations in order to move beyond the normative positions that are completely supportive or opposed to consociational democracy.

This article, drawing on case studies of Iraq and offering a critical review of the formative literature in classical and comparative post-conflict studies, demonstrates that the primary criteria for a successful democracy are the legislative capacity and effective parliamentary oversight, and that the performance of the parliamentary institution cannot be considered a secondary or derivative issue. Furthermore, the article shows that the absence of a genuine parliamentary opposition (at least until mid-2023) is a major structural factor that can weaken accountability, one of the most important oversight tools, and



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simultaneously partially explains the peculiarities of consensus-based governance structures.

This study plays a significant role in reframing the concept and causes of weak parliamentary performance in Iraq after 2003. Extending our mixed-method study for identifying Web3 business model dimensions as well as corresponding business model archetypes through a qualitative analysis of total 171 interviews and a survey consisting of 126 ventures, we formulate a theoretical model of how restricting or loosening blockchain affordances affect business models particularly platform business models, platforms ecosystems and the interactions between core (of the platform) and periphery. More precisely, we observe that blockchain in platform ecosystems translates into greater transaction transparency and some measure of information symmetry, which affects — if not supplants altogether — the digital trust between a sponsor of the platform and users with the intrinsic digital truth encoded in the technology. We offer two different types of platform ecosystems and associated business model archetypes. These genres vary both in terms of the extent to which they are integrated with blockchain (including whether they embed tokens) and in terms of how much digital truth is relevant, with different implications for value creation, value capture, and platform control. In full scale, digital integrity zeros out centralization guarantee eras where above concepts are wrapped and incentivized by non-custodial tokens native to the blockchain/formula to create new epochs of token economics and platform dynamics.

### **Reconsidering Stability**

In summary, the study involves several research objectives. On the one hand, it is a matter of the theoretical level: it is first necessary to discuss the two concepts and explain how political legitimacy is conceptually related to economic legitimacy; at the same time, the relationship between the two concepts is explored at the level of empirical analysis. On the other hand, the study involves developing a certain practical application, as the review should draw conclusions about the possible problems of empirical research, how to avoid certain methodological uncertainty and empirical obstacles for scholars who will conduct studies in the future. Based on these objectives, the study must also complete certain tasks. First, it should be summarizing other existing conceptualizations of (political) legitimacy to identify the most important analytical qualities of the theoretical concept that leads to its possibility to pass on the meaning of this concept to another domain, and to put forward assumptions for the operationalization of one in the other. Secondly, it should put forward a plausible analytical framework that could actually help realize ideas about legitimacy in relation to the political system and the economic system. Third, the study should compare the analytical qualities identified for (political) legitimacy to the economics-related domain. Fourth, the task of the



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study will be to look at what kind of theoretical arguments and schools of thought can be potentially applied to explain the connection between political and economic legitimacy. Fifth, empirics should follow the mentioned theoretical generalizations.

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