



## The Tribal Power in Contemporary Iraq: A Sociological Analysis

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*A tribe will be defined as the people you feel compelled to share the last of your food with (Sebastian Junger: Tribe: on homecoming & belonging: P.54)*

### Abstract

This is an empirical investigation of the tribal power in Iraq and its consequences on the socio-political system. A theoretical background concerning the state kinship, tribe and tribal involvement in politics has been displayed with example of tribal power over people within the social context. Socio-anthropological method of data collection has been used, including a semi-structured interview with a sample of 120 correspondents. The outcome revealed that the feeble and corrupted state (government) play a vital role in encouraging the tribe to be dominant. The people of Iraq are clinging to the tribe regardless of whether they believe in it or not. Although they are aware that the tribe is a pre-state organisation and marred shape of civil society, they have no alternative since the weak government is incapable of restoring law and order. The feeble government is the main factor for tribal strength, the socio-political structure that yields from direct intervention of the invaders and divided the community into fractions, subcultures, religious and ethnic groups creates paralysed socio-political system that incapable to activate law and order, the tribe, in turn, fill the government power vacancy and enforce its own law and order. Unfortunately, the tribe misuses the power because its rules out of date, but after all, the people reluctantly rely on the tribe entity for protection.

**Key Words:** Tribal Power, Iraq, tribe and state, kinship

### السلطة العشائرية في العراق المعاصر: دراسة اجتماعية تحليلية

فجر جودة علوان

جامعة بغداد

### المخلص

هذه الدراسة الميدانية محاولة لتسليط الضوء على دخول العشيرة ميدان السلطة والقوة، لتكون بديلا للدولة المدنية الحديثة في العراق. الدراسات النظرية ذات العلاقة بالعشيرة والقراية والدولة كانت خلفية مناسبة للدخول الى التطبيق الميداني. المنهج الوصفي في الدراسات الاجتماعية والانثروبولوجية تم استخدامه عبر تبني المقابلة شبه المقننة على عينة من 120 مبحوثا اختبروا بطريقة عشوائية منظمة واطهرت النتائج ان هشاشة بناء الدولة وضعفها وفسادها كان وما يزال يلعب دورا حاسما في تغول العشيرة، وان الناس في العراق لا يتمسكون بالعشيرة ايمانا بها، فالغالبية يعتبرونها تنظيم اجتماعي بدائي يصلح لمرحلة ما قبل نشوء الدولة، واذا كان ضعف الدولة عاملا رئيسيا حاسما في دخول العشيرة لمليء فراغ السلطة، فان العوامل الأخرى لا يمكن اهمالها خصوصا التدخل المباشر لدولة الاحتلال التي ساهمت في اضعاف البناء الاجتماعي-السياسي عبر تقسيم المجتمع الى كيانات سياسية طائفية

و دينية وعرقية متناحرة هدفها الأساس تحقيق التوازن في الاختلاف والصراع والاحتراب للإبقاء على العراق دولة هشة تحت السيطرة، من جهة اخرى اطلقت قوى الاحتلال يد أجهزة مخابرات الدول الإقليمية المحيطة بالعراق لتضييق الخناق على المجتمع والدولة واخرجت العشيرة من غرفة الإنعاش الى الحياة بصناعة محترفة. ورغم ان العشيرة بقوانينها التقليدية غير مؤهلة للسلطة الا انها البديل الوحيد في عصر الديمقراطية الزائفة التي جاء بها المحتل. وقد تأكد ان قوانين العشيرة لا تصلح لإدارة شؤون مجتمع في القرن الحادي والعشرين لان قوانينها خارج الزمن وإنها لذلك اساءت استخدام السلطة ولكن الناس يتمسكون بها فقط من اجل الحماية حيث لا تستطيع الدولة توفير هذه الخدمة.  
**الكلمات المفتاحية:** السلطة العشائرية. العراق، القرابة

## 1. Introduction

Since the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, followed by the UN sanctions, dramatic changes penetrated deeply into the Iraqi society. The changes encompass not only the morphological aspects of social life, but the socio-economic, demographical movement, value system and the whole social structure. Deprivation, soon after the UN sanctions, started biting hard; the middle class including, Doctors, Teachers, University Professors, local investors and alike fled the country, mainly to neighbouring countries. The lower class went underground. The “Big Brother” state lost its grip on ordinary people, who began to take over during the night. In an arbitrary step, the state intended to revive the tribal system to secure its power and consolidate the iron grip that began to loosen. Thus, this instantly created tribal heads and supported them morally, financially and armed them in order to control their tribe members. This also allowed the tribe to cooperate with government officials, to report any unusual movement in their own tribe, or others neighbouring against the central government. The regime that revived the tribe was the same regime that dismantled the tribal system. Over forty years of deconstruction, the tribes were left with no power, no function, and nothing but names. Even tribal names were forbidden to be added as innocent nicknames between friends.

Tribes that had been functionally dead had no real control over their members, as most of them scattered all over the county in association with the urbanization and industrialization processes. The revival of the tribe had no real effect on the security and stability of the country which shook with hunger, deprivation and oppression. The decay reached all government officials including security forces and the army. The resurrect of the tribe, at the time, did not save the state that was on the brink of collapse. The state in the 1990’s looked like the ‘blind leading the blind’ painting by Pieter Bruegel, or the handicap reclining on the handicap, as neither of them has the capability to save the other. With the successive regime, the tribes had filled the vacuumed law and order with vigorousness.

## 2. Aims

This paper is an attempt to investigate the relationship between the state and the tribe in contemporary Iraq. Although they are opponents which look at one another with suspicion rather than integration, they are still interdependent. The tribe, however, has the upper hand in most instances that harness any social control. The state has a big but passive police army; the police personnel cannot involve themselves in any public or private disputes between individuals or groups; because the tenuous government was unable to place law and order with the presence of the tribal power. The police personnel have no judicial or forensic jurisdiction to be involved in any crime or dispute, otherwise, they are aware they will be accused of taking sides of the one tribe over another, and that could be a life-threatening thing to do. The problem is sophisticated and delicate matter with two powers working as an alliance and opponents simultaneously.

## 3. Methods

Qualitative methods of data collection have been used. This consists of a semi-structured interview; a method employed within field studies in social sciences that measures the tribe versus the state

phenomenon. The interview items were derived from relevant literature and from the experience of the researcher. In order to reinforce the qualitative outcomes, the interview questions were modified to statements within the multiple responses scale (agree, no opinion, disagree). The set of statements were given to the respondents to answer at the end of each interview. Public verbal tales that prevailed in the society and used as a joke to ridicule tribal behaviour or as a mode of sarcasm to reflect the socio-cultural change have also been included for context.

#### 4. hypotheses

This study will test the following hypotheses:

- There is a statistically significant difference between the lecturers' and students' attitudes toward the tribe's vigorous behaviour".
- The tribe doesn't acquire its power from generic formal social control
- The tribe has the potential to take over the government power
- There is no way to restore civil society with the rise of the tribe's superpower

#### 5. Literature

The tribe and the state relationship phenomenon in the Middle East has been tackled by a sizable number of sociologists, anthropologists, historians and politicians. They all highlighted the phenomenon from different angles, some take it from general to specific, others from specific to general.

##### 5.1 Kinship

Categorically, the clan and tribe have been studied under the broader concept of "Family & Kinship". In most anthropological and sociological studies, the concept kinship refers to the relationship based on blood bond and marriage (Evans-Pritchard 1951, Eickelman 1981, Giddens 1989, Haviland 1996, Mair 1980). Kinship, however, is more flexible and encompasses multi-dimensional groups of relatives. A tribe is a descent group, which is in Haviland (1996:273) terms "*a kind of kinship group in which being a lineal descendent of a particular real or mythical ancestor*". Although this definition is not universal, and is not applicable to all human societies and cultures, as Haviland himself considers many other descent groups; unilinear, matrilineal and patrilineal; however, the patrilineal kinship system is commonly applied in most societies including Iraq and the Arab world in general (Beattie 1985).

The kinship system in Iraq and the Arab world is more complex than its counterpart in Europe, whereas Giddens (1989:384) confirmed that kinship in Western societies is "*confined to a limited number of close relatives*". While in many other societies, kinship expanded to cover more distance than first or second cousins. The concept of kinship cannot be easily translated and recognized by other cultures; for instance, in English, the term "uncle" is one word used to describe both a mother's brother and a father's brother. However, in Iraq and the Arab world there is a separate idiom for mother (*khal* خال) and for father (*aam* عم) which gives an utterly different kind of kin in terms of preference and function. A father's brother is considered to be more important and closer than the mother's brother (Al-omer 1985, Alneamy 1993).

The importance of the kinship system is derived from its role in tackling the socio-economic, legal and political problems that the family cannot handle alone (Goode 1963). Meanwhile, the large kinship groups in Iraq went beyond the immediate family members to cover a large aggregation of people related to each other by tribal name rather than immediate actual blood ties. For example, one person who lives in the North of the country called "M Alshamiry". (Alshamiry is a tribe), would often call a person "his cousin" if they share the same surname for example "Ali Alashamiry", who could be an individual who has lived in the south of the country, even if they are not related and have never met each other before. In this sense, Eickelman (1989:151) reported that "*people make kinship ties and through them get things done. With them they establish social relationships also mark distinctions among themselves*". This kind of kinship is commonplace in Iraq. The social construction of the tribe can underline the patterns of large kinship relations.

## 5.2 The Tribe

The tribe is a socio-cultural aggregation of people in which all members believe they are descended from one ancestor, either through men or women (Giddens 1989). Although this definition is the most common one in the opinion of the vast majority of the scholars in the field of sociology, anthropology and history, some researchers denied the definition based on biological characteristics (tapper 1990, Crone 1986). Their argument takes a rational perspective, as all human societies have biological descent but not all of them are tribal, Ibin Khaldun (1332-1406) in his famous book "the introduction" assumed that the tribal characteristics in term of genealogy can be traced to four ancestors and beyond that, it is nonsense. Within this context, Crone (1986:446) asserted that no genus of society attributes all their social roles to biological aspects. In her words:

*Few would disagree that a tribe is a species of that genus of societies which create all or most of their social roles by ascribing social importance to biological characteristics, or in other words societies ordered with reference to kinship, sex and age. No society which makes extensive use of non-biological principles of organization is a tribal one, for all that kinship, sex and age may still regulate numerous aspects of it. Conversely, no definition of the tribe which omits reference to the biological principle of organization can be said to do its job. It is the organizational principle itself, not the various factors which underlie, accompany or result from it, which demarcates a tribal from non-tribal society*

This is, indeed, a systematic, logical argument, where the tribe as a social organization may include biological, sex and age characteristics, and may not have formed a tribal society or vice versa. Lapidus (1990:25) asserted that tribe as a concept in terms of biological characteristics is meaningless, he said the discussion of the concept is better off described as "chieftaincies", accordingly he called it a "certain type of rural organization". Within this context Goods (1963) claimed that the tribe has declined especially in urban areas of the Middle East, thus he suggested to make a distinction between urban and rural- nomad settings. Goods touches on the truth as urbanization fundamentally reduces clinging to the tribal system up to the early 1990's then the tribe underwent a revival and strengthened after the American invasion. Eickelman (1989:128) went down a different avenue; first he criticized the western anthropologists who believed that the tribe is an "exotic" phenomenon, as they look at it from their own cultural context, second, he regarded tribe as a socio-political phenomenon. In his words, tribe is "generally based upon a concept of political identity formed through common patrilineal descent", third, he claimed that the tribe is some kind of social organization fostered under the colonial administrations, especially the Ottoman Empire. Despite the long experience of Eickelman in the Middle East, he still misunderstands the long history of the tribal system in the Arab world, which is was born long before the rise of Islam as a religion 1500 years ago. The early Islamic system tried hard to replace the concept of tribe with the concept of "Umma أمة" nation, which accrued only for a short period during the Prophet Mohammad's life, where soon after his death they returned back to their segmentation. (Altabary224-2310H, Ibin Husham 000- 280H, 1997),

However, we have to admit that despite the logical argument on both sides, logic does not always represent reality; Iraqi society hundreds of years ago was a tribal society based on biological characteristics, as Mrs bell (1920) describes it and is still a tribal society until this day. The structural aspects of the tribal organization may have changed, but the biological characteristics still, to some degree, remain intact in rural and urban areas alike, in some social occasions or at least nominally. However, this is not to say that the tribe is racially pure or it has blue blood, but the tribe over decades or even centuries maintained its socio-cultural characteristics in relation to genealogical bases. With reference to Iraqi society, which has a patrilineal tribal system, where the people can trace their origin to a common patriarchal ancestor for several generations, the tribe is a socio-cultural unit rather than a political aggregation. It is often divided into sub-tribes called "fikhith فخذ" and the fikhith are also divided into several households or extended families called 'Hamolah in

Arabic حمولة” but all are under the authority of the main tribe leader (Eickelman 1989, Salim 1956). Nevertheless, the tribal system which used to be well-known as segmented, illiterate, autonomous and primitive no longer exists. It dramatically changed forward and backward in terms of structure, function and power.

### 5.3 Tribe and the State:

If we accept the idea of some sociologists and anthropologists of regarding the tribe as a socio-cultural and political aggregate, based on genealogical formation, we can understand its relation with the state. The sentiment of marginalising among the overwhelming majority of the tribe’s role in political life, pushes them to be the thorn in the mouth of any government. The sentiment of exclusion created the gap between them. The interchangeable suspicions found through four centuries of Ottoman Occupation where tribes were ill-treated in both heavy taxation and role ignorance, they always felt as if they were a ‘money cow’ rather than a partner or even a respectable citizen (alazawy 1937, Yassin 1994, Owen 2004).

This heavy heritage of the Ottoman empire reflected on the tribes during the first world war, as most tribes supported the British army against the Turks. Although some tribes fought with the Turks against the British under the provocation of some fraction of religious men who aligned with the Turks as Muslim brothers; they are, in reality, a beneficiary of the Turks who privileged from them morally and materially with a salient role to control their followers (Longrigg 1925, Mrs bell 1920). However, the successive governments suffered, like the Turks, from the tribal rebellions, and despite all the government’s temptations and promises, they maintained their autonomy and exchanged suspicions with the central government.

The state authorities played games with tribes since the independence of Iraq; from one side the state authority used the carrot and stick principle, simultaneously encouraging them to fight each other in order to weaken them and to maintain the state’s upper hand. From the other hand, the state encouraged the tribesmen to join the army and the security forces in order to contain them. This is similar to the tribe relation with the state in Yemen and Arabian Peninsula as described by Manea (1996). This policy achieved relative stability, but it was far from harmonious. The side of the tribe tried to penetrate the government and succeeded to some degree to occupy prime positions in the army and the government offices, resulting in a series of successive coups led by tribesmen officers (Barakat 1993). In this sense, Barakat (1993:67) stated:

*the nomad and sedentary population was {were} in many places deeply influenced by the culture of tribes. From 1950’s on, however, these relationships and attitudes began to be transformed in several Arab countries (though they persist in others). Military officers of peasant origins have been involved in revolutions and coups d’état... in Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Sudan and other countries.*

This was creating fundamental problems in urban centres in the Arab world and in Iraq particularly as cities transformed from pure urban to mostly rural, through a massive influx of rural-tribal migration, who shaped the city’s population with tribal values, traditions and behaviours. The original urban population either fled the country or were isolated in enclaves (abu-lughod 1969, Alneamy 1993), that is, of course, it takes place as a reflex to the tribesmen in power who encourage others to follow tribesmen to improve their way of life. As a consequence, the cities lost their original socio-morphological structure.

From the 1970’s onwards, the government of the unilateral party were led by tribesmen waging war against tribes and transferring the tribal loyalty to the Baath party loyalty. They prohibited any tribal movement in order to consolidate the grip of government power on all social life aspects, even the tribal names who used to be annexed to some peoples’ names as a nickname was forbidden. The tribes vanished in term of structure and function, but during the 1990s the government started to shake under the international siege that widened the gap between the government and the people (Simons 1994). The government’s ill-thinking drove them to revive the tribal system that they dismantled over three decades ago. The government armed the tribal chiefs, provided them with a

sum of money and support in order to control their fellow tribesmen who already scattered all-over the country and the chiefs had no power over them. Nevertheless, the tribal chiefs manipulated the government, as most of them had no real followers and what is left of them were aligned with the government during the day time and joined the rebel groups during the night. The security situation deteriorated as the government and the tribes were both paralyzed and look like a dying patient in solitary confinement.

The dead tribes suddenly resurrected from the dust heap, soon after the American invasion in 2003 and the shapeless government that followed. The tribe started to get involved in everything in one's social life, from personal disputes to law and order. This disabled the government institutions who appeared as a midget compared to the super tribe (Abdilhassan and Smesim 2017).

#### **5.4 Examples of the tribal involvement**

The tribe involvement in the socio-political affairs and its negative role in daily life activities of the whole society including the ordinary people, officials, politicians, and all other middle class educated individuals, increased the magnitude of the Iraqi tragedy. The tribe went too far in its interference. The following stories are true stories and not fiction.

- A Little girl was frightened from a rat that popped out from the side path of their next-door neighbour. She collapsed on the pavement and fractured her leg; the girl's family stuck a short note on the main gate of their next-door neighbour's door stating: "Tribunal wanted". The neighbour asked what was wrong and the girl's family told them that a rat of yours frightened our girl and she damaged her leg. The neighbour was not responsible but they responded by recalling tribe's chief to deal with the neighbours. Negotiations could take half a day to solve the problem and ending with heavy compensation to the girl's family, which is between 2 to 5 million Iraqi Dinar (£1000-£2,500) plus the treatment costs.
- A taxi driver received a telephone call from his wife asking him where he is and what he was doing, he replied 'I am in the street driving the Sipa' (Sipa is a car brand name). When he dropped off the passenger who was a middle-aged lady, she told him to wait until she gets him the fare. After two or three minutes the women came back with her father and brother and start shouting at the driver to come down as he is "Tribally wanted", he asked why? They said you call our women "sipa" which in Iraq's local dialect means "generic" or 'prostitute'. He was unable to convince them he was talking about his car and not the woman, but had to stand for a tribal trial and was eventually made to pay several million Iraqi Dinars for this ridiculous accusation.
- A thief climbed the wall to burgle a house, while he was collecting things and rushing to leave he stumbled on an electric wire, and died. His family enveloped a letter and put it on the step of the householder, accusing them of killing the thief with their electric wire, and their graffiti paint written on the wall saying: "no one can buy this house". The householder ended up taking his family away the same night and ran away, as he would be forced to pay compensation of manslaughter or be killed.

Many other stories like these prevail all over the city of Baghdad and many other cities south of Baghdad in particular. The police cannot get involved in any of these problems, despite hundreds of checkpoints in the main roads and the police cars stationed in the streets but only watching. The current researcher witnesses a man being kidnapped, the kidnapers put him in a car boot near a heavy armed checkpoint, as they are being watched, with a blind eye. The tribal law echoes louder than the civil law of the state.

## 6. The interview

A sample of 100 students and fifty lecturers from the college of arts/ Baghdad university have been chosen randomly (opportunity sampling) to be interviewed for their opinion about the tribe involvement in social life. Only forty lecturers attended and eighty students. Thus, the total sample actually interviewed was 120 respondents, the age group mean of the students were 20.75 years, while lecturer's mean were 44.03 years. The interview took about 10 minutes for each individual and was conducted by person during the second semester of the scholastic year 2017-2018.

## 7. The Findings

Six questions were asked to investigate the sample opinion on the tribe's vigorous role in social life:

- Do you believe in the prevailed stories about the tribe's role in solving social problems?
- Do you think the tribe is capable of solving social problems and maintaining law and order (apart from the state institutions)?
- Do you resort to the tribe when you face serious problems or do you tend to go to the police and civil institutions (judiciary)?
- Why, in your opinion, did the tribe become vigorous?
- Should the state have any role in encouraging the tribe to keep the social situation unbridled?
- What is the solution in your opinion?

### 7.1 The lecturer's outcomes

The ideal and civilised tribe is that described by Junger (2017:110) which is utterly opposite Iraqi tribes in both function and structure. He reported that "*The definition of community -of tribe- would be the group of people that you would both help feed and help defend. A society that doesn't offer its member the chance to act selflessly in these ways is not a society in any tribal sense of the word*". Within this context, the respondent being asked if the tribal behaviour was ideal according to the prevailed stories, the overwhelming majority of the lecturers believed that these stories were true and far from ideal. Some of them said "we can provide you with more ridiculous stories about the interference of the tribe in public affairs" some said the tribes behaviour has gone too far to ruin our social system. One lecturer said "it happened with me once, someone threw himself at the back of my car, at the same time two of his friends waited at the front and forced me to stop, and they said you crashed into him". He went through a long procedure of "tribal wanted" and eventually paid two million Iraqi dinar compensation for the false accusation. He sold his car and is now using buses. Only about four respondents out of forty indicated that these stories may have happened but not on a large scale, that they exaggerated, the public often add some spice to a story such as that. However, the tribes misuse the power, exploiting the vacuum of law and order of the corrupt government. When they asked "*is the tribe capable of solving social problems apart from the state institutions*". About 80% of the informants ironically claimed "yes", which is in reality "no", one informant laughed and said "it already does". The problem of the tribe is that it restores its own law, such a law used to be fair, realistic and sensible, the new tribal chiefs don't know the original tribal law; they use the crooks' skills for manipulation and gain, their internal organisation based on maintaining power rather than producing a good example. The conclusion as Gellner (1990:111) said "*the more important the group's external relations, the more centralised and effective is its leadership likely to be*". Accordingly, the tribal chiefs only sought the benefit to consolidate their position in power. In that, they follow the politicians who are working for themselves and not for the nation and through manipulation stay in power for life.

The metamorphoses of social structure were overwhelmed by tribal customs and drove educated people like lecturers, doctors, teachers and other officials to resort to the tribe rather than the state. 99% of the respondents, agreed, they have no choice but to cling to the tribe. One respondent said "as long as your tribe is strong, you can protect yourself and your family, otherwise you will be vulnerable and an easy target". It is, then a state shaped with tribal features. In this context. Tahir (2015) claimed that the Iraqi's social behaviour is tribal in general, and that's why British authorities

during the occupation of Iraq issued the law of 'Tribal lawsuit' in 1916 before the establishment of the Iraqi state in 1921. This law was everlasting during the Monarchy rule and beyond, and despite the attempt of abolishing the tribal lawsuit in 1958 and then in 1970's, the attempts succeeded to eliminate the tribe especially under the Saddam Hussain regime. In 1991 Saddam himself revived the tribe once again. He concluded that the state of Iraq may be the only state who run the country with two laws. However, only one respondent claimed that he does not believe in tribal law and whatever happened he said he 'will never give them a chance to manipulate me, whatever the cost, the civil institutions are weak and corrupt, I admit it, but they are still doing their job'

The new forged democracy in Iraq dedicated the tribal behaviour among politicians before the ordinary people. The parliament candidate always had the support of his tribe, the voters gave their voice to the person of their own tribe even if he is illiterate, that's why the tribe is vigorous. One informant said "the tribe is vigorous because it has power inside Parliament and the government" another said "the tenuous government indirectly encourages the tribe to take over"; the third said "it is in their favour to keep the society lawless, anarchy and disordered to keep looting the Iraqi wealth". Tessler (2007) claimed that the dilemma of democracy in the Arab world is the Islamic fractions, who did not support the democratic transformation to any degree. Tessler was attached to one side of the truth, as the fundamental obstacle is the tribal system who adopt the wave of superficial religious doctrine to mislead. Finally, the question was "*what is the solution*", the respondents unanimously agreed "get rid of the tribal system". Indeed, the tribal system was based on segmentation, genealogical parental lineage system and autonomy (Canton 1990). This was responsible for the fragmentation of the society, especially with the fragile state who cannot impose a civil law.

## 7.2 The Student's Outcomes

The student responses may be slightly different, as they are young and less experienced, besides the influence of social media and the internet may affect their reactions. In the first instance, students appeared to be more radical in their responses toward tribal behaviour, as they unanimously claimed that the stories prevailed in Baghdad and other cities are true and each respondent has a ridiculous story about the tribal behaviour. Some of them being a witness, some said they had joined tribal sessions to monitor the way in which they argue and solve problems. The ridiculous stories of "tribal wanted" prevailed on the social media and the youth were often addicted to it, and most of them did not have the critical mind to distinguish true stories from forged ones. Nevertheless, they use these stories, sometimes, for jokes and other times to express their feeling towards the misery of a lawless social life. Although most of the young respondents claimed that they oppose the tribe (as an organization) role in social life, in reality they acted and behaved in a tribal way. An overwhelming majority of them appended a tribal name to their personal names like Ali Alzubaidy, Hassan Alamery, Taha Alaani. Regarding problems between each other, they use threats which in a way, is as if they are resorting to their tribes. These double standards are common in social life as Alwardy (1965) claimed, which is sharper and more radical than the 'dissonance theory' of Festinger (1957). However, the pattern of their behaviour is often inconsistent with their verbal approach, it is, as Hofstede (2001: 4) claimed "*risk in relying on words to predict deeds*". By all means, we have to rely on their attitude as the only alternative is the observation which is used occasionally in this context to refine the words in relation to the action of the youth. In their responses to the question "do you think the tribe is capable of solving social problems...." The overwhelming majority said "No", about 15% of them said "yes", about 5% of the 15% that said "yes" said this in a way that maybe interpreted as a "No". One respondent claimed "yes they can maintain law and order but in an arbitrary and corrupted way" another said "it can solve social problems in illogical way", few of them have a pro-tribe attitude, as one of them said "without our own tribe we would be lost", another said "the tribe is our protector, without it we can't survive in a society which practices the law of the jungle ". Unanimously, they agreed that the feeble government can't force civil law and order, and



gives the tribes the chance to implement its own law that would never be appropriate to a civilized society, thus all of them claimed that they resort to the tribe whenever they encounter a threat or a serious problem. One informant said “who is going to protect me if I don’t rely on a solid tribe.... the government can’t protect its members” another one claimed that “informal social control body is paralyzed, so either you rely on a strong tribe or join religious parties’ gangster ‘Militia’”. Either way the informants pinpoint the anarchical way of life under the ‘democratic’ government. However, the student sample unanimously indicated that the absence of formal social control was the main reason behind the tribe’s vigorousness. One informant said “the government is preoccupied with systematic looting of Iraq’s wealth, billions of dollars disappeared in false economic projects. This climate, as in the state of chaos pledged to drain the budget and they don’t care about social stability” another claimed that “the tribe is vigorous because the central authorities try to keep the state of anarchy in order to stay in power to fulfil the American policy that aimed to keep the country weak, segmented and paralyzed”. However, this part of the sample like the other part, both expressed their negative feelings toward the tribal power as an exotic phenomenon for pre-state organization, which has been created and supported directly or indirectly by the puppet governments. In this context, the respondents unanimously agreed that the government encourage the tribe to have powerful informal control; some claimed that the weak government indirectly paved the way for the tribe to fill the power vacuum, but the majority asserted that the government have their hand to keep the society vulnerable, segmented and in a state of chaos in order to stay in power and exploited their position financially and materially. As Salih (2017) claimed, about 170 billion US Dollars over the last fifteen years of the oil revenue were wasted, during these years there was no school, hospital or factories built. The infrastructure was still the same since the invasion and became worse every day. This triggered peoples’ discontent and bit their fingers for voting for them. The sample reflects the general attitude of ordinary people for blaming the government as responsible for the misery. ‘What’s the solution?’ Again about 95% of the respondents said “a strong government is capable of restoring law and order, and that is the only way to get rid of the tribe”. 5% of them said the tribe is their heritage and that the tribe is doing what the state cannot do. One informant said “the tribe maintains social equilibrium, where informal social control is unavailable”. Although there are slight differences between the two samples, these differences were not statistically significant (see appendix). As both have negative attitudes toward the role of the tribe in everyday social life.

## **8. Discussion**

The process of resurrecting tribes from the graveyard resulted in creating a state of metamorphosis within Iraqi society. It was created to save the state from rebellion, and collapse but the attempt manifested the opposite, it was expanded in an unexpected and unprecedented way. It was vigorous to take over the state power. The state itself had sent the tribe to the backyard, paralysed it and buried it, then suddenly took it back to the emergency room for revitalization. The new shape of the tribe is similar in structure but different in function to the old one. Nevertheless, the tribe under the dictatorship regime was under control, as soon as the iron grip was removed the tribe became out of control. This is associated with the feeble ‘democratic’ government, who handed the power keys indirectly to the tribe and other outlaw forces; political gangsters, criminal aggregates and religious ‘militias’, which segmented the society into fractions. Each fraction has its own territories and enclaves; they knew each other and admired each other to avoid spontaneous clashing. The interviews revealed that the ridiculous stories of the tribes’ intervention in social life was not fiction, it is true and took place daily. These stories paved the way for a deep crisis in the fabric of the Iraqi society. The intervention of the tribe went too far, to encompass the individual, group and institutes. If the pupil in school failed to get a passing grade, the child’s tribe may close the school and charge the teacher or the headteacher, if a patient died in a situation out of the doctor’s hands, the tribe could close the hospital and terrorise all the staff and force them to pay compensation. If children in school quarrelled, the tribes have a say in the matter. The samples with slight differences (statistically

significant at .000 level) agreed that the tribe can't solve social problems, and if they do, they do it in an arbitrary way and make it more complicated. The people as Barakat (1993:26) said "become powerless and subordinated to the whim of their rulers". Consequently, Arab states represent a force directed against society. The tribe is one of these forces directed to prevail fear and terror. This aligns with what Khouri (2000) claimed: that the main sources for instability in the Arab world is the lack of a watch dog over the government's use of power. However, there was a similar percentage of the two samples relying on the tribe due to there being no central power on the ground. Both admitted that this situation is erratic and every one yearns for civil rights, civil law and order, but as Karatnycky (2002:101) reported: "*in an environment of corruption, weak rule of law, ethnic and religious strife, and single party dominance*" the people have no choice but to rely on alternative power for protection, thereby, the tribe is the attached power that one can depend on to maintain his/her life and belongings.

The tribe's vigorousness is another question that the respondents on both sides attributed to the feeble central government who are unable to restore law and order and unable to protect it is members, (with no statistical significant differences). Yet the people who strive for civil society using the mechanism of democracy totally fail. This is because democracy as Yom (2005) argues, came from outside and did not develop within the fabric of society or as a result of civil pressure. The solution of the expanding power of the tribe, as the vast majority claimed, is that it needs more than a strong government; but improvement of education, the economy, social services and putting an end to official corruption. In such a scenario, tribal power fades away. Indeed, the tribe has no potential to replace the state whatever the power it possesses as Crone (1986:454) asserted "*the tribal organization does not have any dynamic potential. Band do not have to be destroyed in order for tribes to emerge, but tribe do have to be destroyed in order to make way for states*". This is probably a normal development, with the state already giving way to tribes to secure a large stake in the social fabric. This is associated with the highest level of corruption in human history as Salih (2017) claimed, it is hard to get the state back on track with situations like this. Civil society who are supposed to put pressure on the government retreated alongside the segmentation of the society into fractions; religious groups, political parties, powerful tribes and ethnic fanatics. All these aggregations have gangs, militia and outlaws with armed groups.

## 9. Conclusion

It is not easy to assume that the tribe will confront and replace the state in the long run, but for the time being and for the foreseeable future, the clash between them is not in the favour of the state, as the tribe has acquired the potential to destabilize the whole social organization. We can conclude that, the tribe as a socio-cultural and political entity (which is always regarded as a pre-state organization), must give way to the state and fade away. Unfortunately, the situation in Iraq turned over, as the tribes overtook, and looked even more advanced than the state, in terms of power, management and goals. And the relevant field information proved our third assumption. The explanation of the tribe's vigorousness in modern Iraq was attributed to the following reasons:

1. The feeble authorities who only look at their own interest which gave a profound gap with the rest of society.
2. The scale of corruption that is higher than ever in human history; billions of US Dollars wasted in a fallacious project.
3. The top official corruption reflected on the whole social fabric, as the lower always follow and imitates the higher.
4. The weak government indirectly encourages the division of society, religious groups, political parties' enclaves, outlaw organizations, ethnic autonomous groups, and tribal aggregations, which all have their own 'militias' and armed forces, creating states inside the state.

5. The invaders play a primitive role in the destruction of the state of Iraq, and formulated marred constitution to keep the people of Iraq divided, segmented, clashing and consuming.
6. The forge democracy increases the power of tribes and other fractions in order to keep the nation united under the umbrella of these entities rather than the state.
7. The tribe get involved in all social contexts; from individual to group problems.
8. The involvement of the tribe in everyday social life creates fear, instability, and corruption.
9. The weak government left the people vulnerable, and with no choice but to rely on the tribe for protection.
10. The tribe misused the power they acquired and played the role of the executioner and the victim at the same time.
11. The outcome revealed that there is no statistical difference between both samples except for item (2)  $F=17.7$   $df=1$  sig at .000 (Appendix table 9), thus we reject the first hypothesis.
12. According to context data, the second, third and fourth assumptions have been proven. Thus, these hypotheses are accepted.

In the end, the tribal system in Iraq not only survived and was active in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it ruined civil life and created a state of chaos. The government created a law of tribe under their supervision, in order to keep the tribe in line with the government who provide its members with voters.

Iraq, by all means, faces serious trouble in the future, not only because of the powerful tribal system, but because the weapons remain; health, education and judicial systems are all quasi-paralysed. Moreover, deprivation creates an atmosphere of systematic crime. In reality, these chronic problems overlap to strengthen the tribe's role in social control. Until these problems find a solution, the people will be suffering and waiting in the shadows, handicapped by the state.

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• **Statistical Methods**

**Frequency Table**

**Table (1) group**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	lecturer	40	33.3	33.3	33.3
	student	80	66.7	66.7	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

**Table (2) Age & gender "mean"**

	group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
age	lecturer	40	44.03	8.232	1.302
	student	80	20.75	1.307	.146
gender	lecturer	40	.18	.385	.061
	student	80	.56	.499	.056

**Table (3) a1. The tribal ridiculous stories true**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	agree	110	91.7	91.7	91.7
	no opinion	4	3.3	3.3	95.0
	disagree	6	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

**Table (4) a2. The tribe is capable to solve social problem apart from the state**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	agree	89	74.2	74.2	74.2
	no opinion	6	5.0	5.0	79.2
	disagree	25	20.8	20.8	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

**Table (5) a3. I resort to the tribe when I face serious trouble**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative P
Valid	agree	108	90.0	90.0	90.0
	no opinion	4	3.3	3.3	93.3
	disagree	8	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

**Table (6) a4. The tribe becomes vigorous**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	agree	109	90.8	90.8	90.8
	no opinion	3	2.5	2.5	93.3
	disagree	8	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

**Table (7) a5. The state encouraging the tribe to keep society unbridled**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	agree	112	93.3	93.3	93.3
	no opinion	2	1.7	1.7	95.0
	disagree	6	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

**Table (8) a6. There is a solution to the horrific role of the tribe**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	agree	110	91.7	91.7	91.7
	no opinion	5	4.2	4.2	95.8
	disagree	5	4.2	4.2	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

**Table (9) one-way ANOVA**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
age	Between Groups	14446.017	1	14446.017	613.623	.000
	Within Groups	2777.975	118	23.542		
	Total	17223.992	119			
gender	Between Groups	4.004	1	4.004	18.556	.000
	Within Groups	25.463	118	.216		
	Total	29.467	119			
a1	Between Groups	.704	1	.704	3.302	.072
	Within Groups	25.163	118	.213		
	Total	25.867	119			
a2	Between Groups	10.417	1	10.417	17.699	.000
	Within Groups	69.450	118	.589		
	Total	79.867	119			
a3	Between Groups	.067	1	.067	.241	.624
	Within Groups	32.600	118	.276		
	Total	32.667	119			
a4	Between Groups	.067	1	.067	.246	.621
	Within Groups	31.925	118	.271		
	Total	31.992	119			
a5	Between Groups	.067	1	.067	.324	.570
	Within Groups	24.300	118	.206		
	Total	24.367	119			
a6	Between Groups	.338	1	.338	1.748	.189
	Within Groups	22.788	118	.193		
	Total	23.125	119			