The Impact of Quotas on Women's Representation in Iraq

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A thesis presented to the Department of Politics, International Relations and Human Rights of Kingston University London in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

March 2019

Contents

List of Abbreviations

CC: Constitutional Committee formed by Iraqi Transitional Government in 2005 to draft the Iraqi Constitution.

CEDAW: The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CPA: Coalition Provisional Authority

CS: candidate selection

HIEC: Independent High Electoral Commission, Republic of Iraq

TAL: Transitional Administration Law

ISCI: Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq

PUK: Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

NRT: National Reform Trend

Abstract

This study examines the impact of legal gender quotas on the qualitative representation of women in the Iraqi Parliament. As a fast-track resolution to women's long-term underrepresentation, gender quotas face a series of obstacles. Even at a very functional level candidates' selection, qualifications, political résumés of female MPs in the national parliament were consistently subjected to criticism. The behaviour of those who have benefited from this legal arrangement is reviewed in the framework of networking and advancement of women's interests as a group. The role of political parties in candidate selection is investigated to identify who are the key players in the selection; women or the political parties. Furthermore, the study poses a number of key questions: How wide is the space between women's interests as a group and the parties' agenda in the light of the parliamentary gender quotas? Consequently, do the beneficiaries of the legal quotas owe allegiance to their represented group or to their selectors? Overall, would gender quotas make a difference in terms of increasing not just the numerical presence of women in parliament but their substantive representation, too? The thesis seeks answers to these questions while considering the historical framework, political system, experience of the feminist movement and the impact of culture on women's status in Iraq.

Introduction

Over the last two decades, legal gender quotas have been considered as a fast-track method to redress the political under-representation of women in developing countries. The inclusion of women's quotas in the law often takes place during constitutional drafting, political reform or fundamental political transformation. This is what happened in Iraq after the overthrow of Saddam Hussain: a 25 per cent constitutional and legislative gender quota was included in the Constitution of 2005. This thesis examined whether those legal gender quotas significantly advanced the interests of Iraqi women. It furthermore looked at the actions taken by female parliamentarians to improve women's political participation, how female parliamentarians acted as representatives of their group, and how those parliamentarians understood and applied the concept of political representation, especially of groups. It also studied the role played by merit and qualifications in bringing trustworthy female representatives into the political arena. This thesis provided an overview of Iraq's recent political history and examined women's political status prior to and following April 2003. In order to obtain the primary data for my research, the qualitative semi-structured interviewing method and focus groups were employed. These methods help to determine the credibility of the legislative gender quotas as a shortcut to include women in politics. The available data from the parliamentary sessions of 2006-2010, 2010-2014 and 2014-2018 were also consulted.

This thesis found that although descriptive representation increased as a result of the parliamentary elections of 2006, 2010 and 2014, substantive representation did not. It further found that effective representation of women at the level of national politics requires a high degree of awareness and understanding of gender quotas both among the representatives and those represented, an awareness that was largely lacking in Iraq. This research claims that gender quotas can serve women's figurative representation, but the substantive representation did not receive enough consideration by decision-makers and the local designers of quotas. Therefore, after a period of time, such as in the case of Iraqi quotas, multiple problems appear at the level of representing interests and the performance of female MPs beneficiaries of quotas. Through reviewing the literature about political representation, it can be said that lack of intellectual preparation regarding quotas can be

held responsible for the dissatisfaction among women in general and female MPs. This is, possibly, due to the fact that the regional and local circumstances have not received attention from the designers of these special measures. For example, a significant factor such as the age of women's mobilisation in Iraq has not been precisely calculated. This factor plays a crucial role at the level of awareness, aspiration among women and political experience. Working on women's social and political development in parallel methods most likely advances women's political character. This beside qualification and experience play a crucial role in building up a stable ground for women's political participation in general and representation in particular.

The Adoption of Gender Quotas

Since the end of the Second World War and the founding of major international organisations, the local has become international and vice versa. The United Nations (UN) became the key player in numerous decisions on political and financial matters as well as on human rights and women's rights. Treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), together with the recommendations of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) and feminist discourse in the West, have been utilised to measure the level of democratisation and development among states. The fieldwork interviewees have highlighted that the inclusion of quotas for women was considered an essential piece of the democratic package.

Resolving the long-term political exclusion by implementing the mechanism of gender quotas was initially driven by many factors. The theory of "critical mass" was a primary motive in applying this mechanism (Phillips, 1995; Tripp and Kang, 2008; Childs and Lovenduski, 2012). It was assumed that the influence of women in decision-making is likely to be guaranteed if a high number of them were present in the political institutions. Concerns on how to get women empowered and effectively included in politics were interpreted into the phenomenon of gender quotas in the contemporary debates (Phillips, 1995). The first widely known movement towards engaging women in politics started in 1985 with only four countries adopting quotas. But since the Beijing Conference in 1995 gender quotas became

the globally approved method to solve the matter of women's underrepresentation in politics (Krook, 2010; Pande and Ford, 2011; Wängnerud, 2009; Paxton, Hughes and Painter, 2009; Caul, 2001; Murray, 2014). In 2006 more than 84 countries adopted a certain type of quota to improve the political balance among women and men. By 2019, 130 states had joined the international trend and adopted the mechanism of gender quotas (IPU, 2019). As of the present day, more than fifty states have adopted party quotas, 24 have chosen reserved seats, and 34 have chosen legislated candidate quotas (IDEA, 2019).

During the last four decades, the mechanism of women's quotas has received considerable attention theoretically and practically after the Scandinavian experience (Dahlerup, 2006). The most adopted type of quota was the voluntary party quota that was usually voluntarily implemented by political parties. It reflects the ideology and the willingness of political parties to introduce gender balanced schemes and show how they are committed towards women. The other two types were usually applied with the force of law, and therefore accompanied by critics especially the candidate selection. The international campaign led by the UN resulted in increasing women's presence in parliaments to around 16 per cent by 2003 and to 19.3 per cent in 2010. In spite of this gradual improvement women's descriptive representation has increased only 6 percent and yet it is lower than the 30 per cent target of Beijing Conference 1995 (Dahlerup, 2006; Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2008).

In Iraq by April 2003 and the collapse of the Ba'th regime there was a significant chance for women alike other previously excluded groups to be included in politics. Taking advantage of the international discourse of quotas in 2005, the Constitution of Iraq dedicated 25 per cent parliamentary seats to women. It ruled that one-quarter of each electoral list must also be filled with female candidates. This was the first time in Iraqi history that legislative quotas for women were included in the law. Due to the absence of effective feminist organisations prior to and during the transitional period of 2003 and 2004, this case study determines that the decision of adoption this mechanism was initially taken upon the recommendation of the Transitional Administration Law (TAL). It seems there was limited debate on whether temporary or permanent quotas better assists the purpose of gender balance in Iraq. The fieldwork sources showed that discussion of voluntary party quotas or legal candidate quotas was not in the list of debates of the Constitutional Committee (CC) in 2004 and 2005. Furthermore, the CC faced mounting public pressure to pass the constitution as quickly as

possible from one hand to another, while at the same time dealing with security threats (Ghai and Cottrell, 2005). The positive discrimination scheme of quotas looked an internationally agreed on trend and applied whenever and wherever there is a political transformation taking place. Afghanistan introduced a similar constitutional quota in 2004 (IDEA, 2018). This study finds that the local variables must be considered during the discussion, the inclusion and enforcement of legislative parliamentary gender quotas. It is essential to understand the political circumstances of women before adopting gender quotas and the reasons behind their exclusion from politics.

Women's Political Involvement Prior to 2003

This part will briefly describe whether women in Iraq have had opportunities for political engagement. An examination of Iraq's political history during the three decades prior to 2003 will help to build an understanding of the reasons for the virtual exclusion of Iraqi women from politics. Iraq's turbulent political situation during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, which witnessed the expansion of the internal security services, the 1980-1988 war with Iran, the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, and the imposition of draconian sanctions imposed by the UN after August 1990, resulted in a significant decline in women's political participation. The second half of the twentieth century also saw the appearance of the Iraqi Communist Party, the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, and the Islamic Dawa Party. When the Ba'th Party took power in 1963 and brought the entire country under its control, the political map of Iraq was distorted in favour of the Ba'th and other parties were largely shut out from politics, further decreasing the political opportunities for women. Until 2003, the remainder of Iraq's political parties either operated underground or in neighbouring countries such as Syria, Iran and Jordan (Makiya, 1989; Al-Kayssi, 1998; Dawisha,2011). When these parties were first established, they included female members, though women rarely became senior members or leaders. Later only a small number of women who had demonstrated unswerving loyalty to the Ba'th regime enjoyed some privileges, such as membership of the ruling Ba'th Party.

Over the course of the 1970s, women from the opposition were gradually subjected to greater levels of imprisonment, torture and even execution because of their direct political

activities or their family relationship to a male member of the opposition (Tripp, 2007). This harsh treatment of political opponents was the primary reason for the limited political participation of women (and men) under Saddam's government. Saddam's era saw the dismantling of women's prior political achievements, such as selection for senior government positions during the 1950s and 1960s. Alongside this political struggle, the level of female literacy dropped significantly during the 1990s (Al-Jawaheri, 2008). Although the Ba'th Party had long had a secular ideology, the Saddam government underwent an ideological change in 1993, when it launched the "Faith Campaign" that forced women to cover and allowed them to travel only accompanied by male relatives (Benraad, 2018). The Ba'th Party did include women in some political positions as a way of demonstrating its commitment to women-friendly policies. Such token political inclusion of women under authoritarian regimes is generally very limited and is done only to appear democratic to the international community. By that time Iraqi women had already lost much of the economic independence they had achieved during the 1970s. They were under acute financial pressure and often left their office jobs for better opportunities in the private sector or outside Iraq. As a result, women in Iraq were deprived of, or stepped back from, any genuine political engagement, further decreasing the number of women with primary political skills. The changes brought about by the Ba'th regime led to the near-demise of political development among Iraqis (Tripp, 2007). Women as well as men lacked any sort of political or social activity outside the inner circles of the regime. Organisations that could have helped women develop skills for the most elementary forms of political participation were largely absent (Al-Kayssi, 1998) These circumstances were addressed in greater detail in Chapter Three. In April 2003, during the radical transformation of the political system in Iraq gender quotas were suggested by the international community to include women in the political system.

Research Questions

The international discourse of quotas was accompanied with wide agreement among researchers that the electoral gender quotas comes as a fast-track route to guarantee women's representation in parliament (Dahlerup, 2006; Tripp and Kang, 2008; Dahlerup and

Freidenvall, 2010). However, it was underlined that before any procedural inclusion takes place it is essential to study the experience of other nations in regard to quotas and how successful was this positive discrimination scheme (Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2005). The social and political preparations are exclusively important for the public and especially women to comprehend and acknowledge the dynamics of the legal gender quotas.

As for this case study, the newly formed Iraqi government in 2003 was keen to include women in order to amend their long-term political exclusion during the Ba'th ruling era. However, the intended inclusion was not accompanied with enough research by decision-makers regarding the outcome of the applied gender quotas elsewhere. This resulted in that this mechanism was included in the law before conducting precise study of the pros and cons of other experiences. In addition, not enough space was dedicated to exploring how convenient this type of quota for women in politically undeveloped Iraq. This is important because the legislative constitutional quotas in this specific case were made permanent and any further constitutional reform constitutes a major challenge due to the technical complexity of the constitution. This thesis, therefore, aims to answer primary questions related to women's quotas in the Iraqi Council of Representative of that can be summarised as follows:

1. How female parliamentarian beneficiaries from gender quotas have acted in the context of group political representation. This question was examined by reviewing the political behaviour of female representatives, their achievements related to women's interests and how convincing this behaviour was for women from elites and non-elites.

2. To identify the key factors behind the political performance of female MPs who benefited from the legal quotas we need to examine the procedure of candidate selection. What was the role of political parties in selecting female candidates and how this selection impacted the anticipated substantive representation of women in Iraq since 2005?

Considering the answers of the above questions, I debated that the deep-rooted apolitical character of women was unlikely to be transformed with a sudden legislative adjustment. It seemed that the role of law in this multifaceted political, social and cultural issue has been misunderstood or underestimated by decision-makers. The legislative gender quotas may assist in enhancing the descriptive representation of women in politics. However, the real

challenge remains at the level of achieving substantive representation of women's voice as a group heard in the political institutions. By reviewing the literature framework this research concludes that representation stands on three pillars: the represented, representative and authority (Hobbs, 1660). It is therefore an act of joint participation conducted by multiple parties. As a result of applying the above theoretical framework, some social or religious groups may suffer from inferior representation compared with others. In order to overcome this problem these groups including women have been offered quotas. Women as a group, rather than women as individuals, are the objective of this special measurement. If the aim of the legal quotas was simply to increase women's token representation in parliament, the law should have clearly stated that the targeted group of this mechanism were individual female citizens rather than women as a group. As for this case study neither in the Iraqi Constitution nor in the academic debates there is a gesture that the aim of the legal gender quotas was merely increasing women's descriptive representation in politics. As long as the debate revolves around women representation in general, the meant beneficiaries are women as a disadvantaged group rather than individual female citizens. Therefore, female representatives who benefited from the legal arrangement of quotas were expected to act as group's representatives rather than individual members of parliament who represent a specific geographical constituency. Taking into consideration the political behaviour of female MPs (who secured their seats through quotas) during the elections of 2006, 2010 and 2014 it can be concluded that the adoption of quotas in Iraq is unlikely to serve an extensive and substantial aim such as substantive political representation. Such aim, this study argues, unlikely to be achieved in the absence of a wider intellectual, political and systematic transformation. Efforts need to be offered in empowering women through engaging them in practical and genuine political activities such as party membership. The legislative gender quotas have, until now, had a considerable effect in increasing the number of women MPs in the Iraqi Parliament. However, through the discussion of the fieldwork it can be concluded that the substantive representation is still under-developed.

Motivations and Aims

The watershed of April 2003 was not merely a sort of alteration of one political system to another. It was a transformation of power and political balance, from the majority being excluded under the rule of a single party (Tripp, 2007; Dawisha, 2009; Alkayssi, 1998; Al-Hassan, 2002; Al-Ali, 2002) to multiple party ruling systems. This event opened up fundamental opportunities for new voices to be heard for the first time in Iraqi history. Women as an excluded group have entered the political arena from its wider doors as individual citizens and through their ethnic and religious groups. This turning point ought to have established a steady base for women's political engagement in general, and representation in particular. Deteriorating such opportunity, instead, will keep women rotating in the circle of tokenism rather than achieving substantive representation and coherent political engagement. The application of legislative gender quotas was of high importance for women in Iraq and other politically developing states. The scheme was progressing, and it was essential to be examined in order to evaluate its advantages and disadvantages. This is especially true because shortly after its application in Iraq, the statutory gender quotas started to be reviewed in some quarters as an act to narrow women's opportunities. In addition, misuse of this positive discrimination mechanism may end up in violating the primary aim of widening women's shares in decision-making institutions. The 25 per cent quotas looked like a figurative framework to keep female politicians constrained rather than opening the doors towards a more free and sober electoral competition. Due to a long-term lack of social and political development, there remains uncertainty about that the positive impact of quotas and how to avoid the intentional or unintentional misuse of this positive discrimination scheme. Despite these critics; more Iraqi women can be seen in political offices and governmental institutions where no quota scheme applied, such as the council of ministers. Since 2003 women's political participation has become an accepted and familiar part of the new political system in Iraq. This progressing women's political engagement has led the debate to grow beyond merely the inclusion to a more advanced one such as the quality of representation. Although these sorts of debate were infrequent, it indicates a sort of socio-political development during the last 10 years.

Hence, on-going informal debate with politicians, academics and ordinary Iraqi citizens were in place. The legislative parliamentary quotas, moreover, started to be framed as unjustified privilege offered to some unqualified women. The behaviour of female politicians during the last three parliamentary periods was subject to accumulative criticism. This was seen as a failure to fulfil the core value of gender quotas. It was important, therefore, to hear voices from locals about the outcome of gender quotas and the performance of female MPs rather taking it as a guaranteed successful scheme. This sort of consideration constituted the initial motive behind starting this research. The other cause behind approaching this topic in an academic fashion was that I had an opportunity to be part of the pre-election preparations team to review some female candidate résumés for an Iraqi political party.

The aim, therefore, was to find an answer to a fundamental question about who benefits most from the legal quotas: women as a group, women as individual MPs, or political parties. This study, moreover, seeks to offer an exemplary case related to the Middle Eastern, Arab and Muslim states by examining political and democratic development in one of the most controversial countries in the region from the scope of gender quotas. It is worth considering that women's political development in Iraq was often overlooked by researchers since 2003 onward. The focus was diverted towards the impact of war, the foreign policy of Iraq and the foreign policies of other countries towards Iraq. Political or social development has been seldom looked at from an academic perspective. Criticisms that targeted the US's policy towards Iraq caused many promising aspects such as women's political participation to be underrated. For instance, Iraq was the first country in the Middle East to overthrow a long-term dictatorship and start democratising all its political offices. Consequently, freedom of press, freedom of speech and political participation were gradually developing. Around 10 years after the overthrow of the Ba'th regime, the Arab revolutionary movements started in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria. In relation to women's rights, Kuwait, for example, granted the right to vote to women and they were allowed to run for election in 2005 for the first time in its history. Saudi Arabia, too, recently in 2011 has opened the space for women to stand for the local elections (Al-Heis, 2011).

The Case Study

Taking in account the current research trend of avoiding generalisation and encouraging more regional and local case studies (Tripp and Kang, 2008; Krook, 2009; Childs and Lovenduski, 2012) this study pays considerable attention to the socio-political circumstances prior to and during the course of political change in Iraq. Moreover, how these local variables impacted the legislative gender quotas. Taking into consideration the dramatic political transformation of 2003 in Baghdad, the political experience of Iraqi women was unique when compared with other Arab states. Although, recently, a number of Arab states — Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Palestine — have adopted a certain type of quotas, the Iraqi quotas seem dissimilar to other forms of quotas. The Moroccan experience of adopting quotas in 2002, for instance, can be considered as within the system practice (Darhour and Dahlerup, 2013). In addition, Egypt was the first Arab state that adopted gender quotas in 1979, but this was temporary quotas, applied into two elections only (IDEA, 2018). Reserved seat quotas for women in Egypt were temporary during the 1970s and re-adopted in 2014, but this alike to the Moroccan quota was within the system rather part of a fundamental political transformation. The Iraqi gender quotas were adopted within a wide and fundamental political shift unlike the examples of Morocco and Egypt. The new Iraqi Constitution that passed through the referendum of 2005 with a turnout of 78.59 per cent has made it clear that all religions, ethnicities and sects are respected. In addition, those minorities of religious or ethnic groups that their population is less than 100.00 were granted quotas in the pluralist state of Iraq (Iraqi Constitution, 2005; Ghai and Cottrell, 2005). The Iraqi type of gender quota was constitutional (included in the Constitution of 2005), legal (included with more legal and applied details), and permanent quotas. These specifications made a good ground to study the mechanism of gender quotas in this specific geographical area.

The parliamentary legislative quotas were a significant achievement in the context of women's presence in the political-legal institutions since the dramatic change of April 2003 in Iraq. Therefore, this research is focusing on the impact of these 25% legal parliamentary quotas on women's representation from 2005 until 2016. The gender quota was first included in the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 and it was applied later in the first election that took place in 2006. Therefore, a decade after the adoption of the legal gender quotas including three

elections seems a sound period for examining the impact of gender quotas on women's political representation in Iraq. Considering the criticisms and debates about gender quotas that mentioned earlier, this thesis studied the gap between women as an audience and women as politicians. Who was responsible for the gap among women as a group and their presumed representatives; is it the mechanism of quota, the candidate's selector bodies, or the candidate's lack of political skills? Or the commitment and loyalty of female MPs to the selectors rather than their group could be the core problem? This thesis attempts to bridge all of these actors in order to find whether the problem rests in the concept of the gender quotas or the method and technicality of its application in this particular case study. The requirements of women as a marginalised group and how that mirrored in the behaviour of their descriptive representatives and whether the mechanism of legal quotas was effective in these regards was examined in this study.

The interviewing method was employed in order to reach my final conclusion about if this particular type of gender quota has merely increased the proportion of women in the Iraqi representatives' assembly. Views of female and male elites were solicited in the form of individual academics and politician interviews. Focus groups, in addition, were another utilised method in order to shade light on the views of women at the mass level. How women from non-elite see the political performance of female legislators in the last three parliamentary elections in Iraq. Chapters Four and Five were allocated for qualitatively analysing the collected data from the semi-structured interviews with a number of individuals, politicians, academics as well as focus groups.

Limitations of Sources

There were many technical limitations that will be listed in this section. First is variation of ideologies (secularism and theocracy) as well as multiplicity of identities has sometimes adversely impacted women's political and social participation. This is significantly apparent in a controversial state such as Iraq (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 2003; Dawisha, 2009; Tripp, 2007) that has no unified feminist organisations due to the political circumstances of this country prior to 2003 that was illuminated in Chapter Three. Therefore, dealing with a

concept such as women's political representation in a multi-cultural (tribal and urban) and multi-ethnic (Arab and Kurd) country is a challenging task. Muslim Iraqis, moreover, follow different schools of jurisprudence: Shia's (majority) and Sunnis (minority). There are further divisions in Iraqi society such as minorities of Turkmens, Christians (Caledonians and Assyrians), Yazidis and Sabians. Diversity of views and split of identities constitute one of the challenges facing research such as this one. It looks problematic, therefore, to outline the final conclusion regarding one specific theme without looking at the socio-political map of this country. This research finds the division in identities is challenging in order to provide an overall combined approach for women's political participation within a single case study.

The second challenge confronted this thesis was that the topic of women's representation is a work in progress and active in an emerging democratic state such as Iraq. For example, since 2013, there have been four amendments conducted to the Iraqi Electoral Law, which may frame this study in a limited time. In addition, due to the newness of the gender quotas and the entire democratic system in Iraq, academic studies were extremely limited. Third is both academic and official sources were rarely digitised. This required extra time and sometimes physical presence endeavours. Hence an up-to-date testimony and open discussions were essential to fill in the gap of the above limitations for the benefit of this thesis. Fourth limitation was the paucity of reliable official statistics regarding issues such as the voting turnout for example

Yet, further studies are required in areas such as voting behaviour, which is out of the scope of this research. The motivations, obstacles and preferences of voting entail a systematic study of its own, as these aspects of the voting system are rooted in and linked to the social, political and cultural variables in each case separately. The electoral system needs attentive study, too, in areas such as proportional representation and increasing women's political presence. Additionally, there was not enough space in the thesis to look thoroughly at the voluntary party quotas and their significant impact on increasing both substantive and descriptive representation for women.

Structure of the thesis

The thesis contains five chapters:

▪ Chapter One discusses the theoretical background associated with the topic of gender quotas through the lens of political theory. Literature related to the concept of representation (Hobbes, 1660; Adams, 1841; Pitkin, 1967), how it is delivered (Burke, 1774; Pitkin, 1967; Phillips, 1995), the qualifications of representatives (Phillips, 1995; Williams, 1998; Krook, 2009) and the key players of this political activity (Pitkin, 1967; Phillips, 1995, Hazan and Rahat, 2006; Murray, 2014) were all elicited in order to build up the further discussions of this research.

▪ Chapter Two focuses on the strategy of this thesis. It provides the methodological approach and the purpose of employing mixed methods, both qualitative and quantitative and why the qualitative data was prioritised. Furthermore, the chapter elaborates on the drive of employing the semi-structured interviews and focus groups as the primary source of data due to the limitation of data related to the topic of this study.

▪ Chapter Three, although not directly associated with the argument of gender quotas, it offers a historical background related to women's political and social struggle during the Ba'th regime. In addition, this chapter provides a brief overview about the party system and a landscape of political parties in Iraq. This aids in understanding the current political position of women in Iraq. The chapter seeks to answer the question: Why Iraqi women are lacking political experience such as party membership, public speaking skills and decision-making abilities? Utilising the fieldwork data Chapter Three offers an outline about the circumstances of adoption of the constitutional 25 per cent quotas for women in 2004 and 2005.

▪ Chapters Four and Five examine the hypothesis of whether the legislative gender quotas have succeeded — up until now — in achieving not only numerical representation but also substantive representation for women in this specific case study. Both chapters mainly draw on data collected from political and academic elites and focus group interviews conducted between March and April 2016. These interviews help this research fill the quantitative gap and limitation of official sources. However, this part of my thesis benefitted

from data made available and provided by the Iraqi Parliament and the High Iraqi Election Commission (HIEC), as well as published paper by Iraqi academics. The thematically analysed data outlines the overall perception of Iraqi women's representation in the light of gender quotas that was applied in the Iraqi Parliament since 2005. These chapters explain the process of candidate selection and its significant impact on the following political behaviour of female MPs who benefited from the legal exemption attached with gender quotas.

1. Chapter One: Literature Review

1.1. Introduction

This chapter will look at the definitions and conceptual dimensions of political representation, which is fundamental to the subject of this dissertation. It will also examine how representation has been approached by theorists, and in particular the debate over the exclusion and inclusion of certain groups in politics. It will ask what the debate on equal representation has to say about the interests of marginalised groups such as women and examine whether the mechanism of gender quotas is in harmony with other democratic principles, such as delivering both qualitative and quantitative representation. The mechanism of gender quotas depends first and foremost on how representation is defined. This thesis will therefore clarify the core meaning of representation, how it has been defined historically, and how it has been applied in practice. The purpose of defining political representation is to highlight that descriptive representation schemes such as legal gender quotas must be observed as a political representation with all its philosophical and practical domains. In other words, there is no exemption for the benefit of descriptive representation because it solves the problem of under-representation.

This chapter is divided thematically. It begins with a survey of the broad literature on representation and political representation, then addresses more specific literature on substantive and descriptive representation. This is followed by a discussion of the characteristics of political representatives and the debate about which descriptive representatives are most suitable for politically excluded groups. The second part of the chapter looks at political representation through gender quotas, examining how gender quotas have become internationally established as a mechanism for advancing women's political representation. We examine the candidate selection process and the role that political parties play in it, as well as the consequences of the selection process for the subsequent behaviour of female MPs who benefitted from gender quotas. In later chapter, we consider whether these considerations were considered by the designers and beneficiaries of positive discrimination schemes. Although gender quotas were intended to increase women's political representation in Iraq, because fundamental principles of

representation such as voter thresholds and candidate qualifications were often overlooked, the result for women's representation was not as intended.

This thesis argues that there was a considerable gap between the ideals, methods and aims of political representation through gender quotas, and their reality. By examining the concept of representation, its implementation, and its contradictions, this chapter seeks to determine the standards for effective representation in the context of gender quotas. While substantive and descriptive representation have an identical goal, that is, political representation, both types call for skills, experience and authority, something that has often been overlooked in the application of gender quotas.

1.2.   Representation

The term 'representation' itself was the starting point for debates that are active to the present day. Although representation has been described as "one of the core concepts of politics'' (McLean and McMillan, 2009: 458), it is a loose, intangible and problematic concept. The Romans, according to Pitkin (1967) "had the word repraesentare, from which our own 'representation' derives by way of old French; but they used it to mean the literal bringing into presence of something previously absent or the embodiment of an abstraction in an object" (Pitkin,1967: 3). She furthermore notes that the word itself needs to be defined and clarified; it is no "mere" word, but one of the tools of the trade for philosophers and scientists, "and a vital part of his subject matter" (Pitkin, 1967: 1). Finding a convincing definition for this term in political science is not merely a linguistic matter but rather, a question of simplifying the concept in order to determine its function, methods and factual models. Therefore, determining its philosophical framework has been the core concern for social scientists and philosophers for centuries and remains so until now.

Since Ancient Greece, the concept of representation has been debated in the study of social and political systems. In 1660 Thomas Hobbes argued that theology and sacred books bolstered the concept of representation. The belief that God, who controls everything and is represented by others, is a prime example of representation. Both people as physical beings and God as a metaphysical concept share the desire and demand to be well represented. The

godly drive to have representatives is little different than the desire of the ordinary citizen seeking to be effectively represented, as we understand from Hobbes (1660): "The true God may be personated. As He was: first, Moses, who governed the Israelites, that were not his, but God's people; not in his own name, with hoc dicit Moses, but in God's name, with hoc dicit Dominus. Secondly, by the Son of Man, His own Son, our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, that came to reduce the Jews and induce all nations into the kingdom of his Father; not as of himself, but as sent from his Father. And thirdly, by the Holy Ghost, or Comforter, speaking and working in the Apostles; which Holy Ghost was a Comforter that came not of himself, but was sent and proceeded from them both." (Hobbes, 1660: Chapter 16)

Hobbes's statement shows the significance of the represented and the representative and how the act of representation plays a central role in human life. The religious approach to representation looks no different than the hypothesis of representation as an on-going socio-political activity. Some theological texts have talked about representatives in the context of meritocracy and its significance in the selection of prophets and messengers. For example, the Quran highlights on many occasions that the messenger or the 'representative of God on earth' is the person that is highly regarded by their people: "Indeed, you are of a great moral character" (Quran, 68:4). In Islamic literature, the person whom people consider the most moral is the best one to deliver the divine message.

1.3. Political Representation

Hobbes's (1660) definition of political representation rests on three pillars. The first is the person who gives authority to another to act on his behalf. The second is the authority itself, which may be described as the right to act. The third is the representative or the person who gains the authority to speak and act for others. In his review of political representation, Hobbes identifies two characters, the 'natural' and the 'artificial'. The 'natural' is the one who retains the right to act and speak. The 'artificial' is the person who has been given the authority by the natural character to act and speak on his behalf. These categories are somewhat problematic; the boundaries and limitations of each party must be acknowledged in order to evaluate their acts.

It is clear from the above-mentioned discussion that a simple question such as "what is representation?" opens the door to many possibilities. The complexity of the concept originates from the complexity of the relationship between political representation and democracy; as Pitkin (1967) explains: "In modern times almost everyone wants to be governed by representatives... every political group or cause wants representation; every government claims to represent" (Pitkin, 1967: 2). Despite the many efforts to provide a precise framework for political representation, it is still a matter of debate. Childs and Lovenduski (2012: 1) state that the notion of representation is "contingent and contested" and "paradoxical". To further define political representation, Hanna Pitkin (1967) describes it as "acting in the interests of the represented, in a manner responsive to them" (Pitkin, 1967:209). Pitkin's approach, namely, that representation must include the deliberation of interests, and if it does not, it is no longer considered representation offers an excellent outline for our argument of substantive representation. For Pitkin, therefore, representation means the combination of good representation and the role of the qualified representative.

The acknowledgment of interests, therefore, is the first step in conducting the duties of representation. The next step is to take decisions about what is most important to represent. Representation, according to Phillips (1995:1) "is considered more or less adequate depending on how well it reflects voters' opinions or preferences of belief". Pitkin (1967: 218) contends that the representative's "duty is to pursue both local and national interest, the first because he/she is a representative, the other because their job as representatives is governing the nation. That dual task is difficult, but it is neither practically nor theoretically impossible". Pitkin bases her argument upon Burke's 1774 speech in Bristol in which he called for unifying rather than dividing the interests of the whole nation. Burke assumed that parliament is a forum for decision-makers rather than 'ambassadors' (Williams, 1998: 34). Pitkin (1967) divides representation into two states: being present and being heard. The first, presence, can be achieved by merely being included in order to change the composition and the image of political institutions. Presence can be achieved through the actions of outsiders, legislation, governments and most importantly, political parties. The second state (being heard) relies mainly on the bottom-up activities and political skills of the representative. Before discussing political representation further, it is important to clarify what is meant by "authority" and by "the representative''. The following section will discuss these two

concepts, the relationship between them, and how they are linked to arguments for gender quotas.

1.3.1 Authority

If we assume that the "natural character" is the voter or the person granting authority, and the "artificial character" is the candidate or the elected representative, it is logical to demarcate the responsibilities of each side. This case study argues that representatives must understand the skills, duties, and limitations of political representation before they become representatives. John Adams (1841) drew attention to the practical side of representation: "[T]he first necessary step then, is to depute power from the many to a few of the most wise and good" (Adams, 1841:278). The representative assembly therefore "should be an exact portrait, in miniature, of the people at large, as it should think, feel, reason and act like them" (McLean and McMillan, 2009:458). Observing that "Hobbesian representatives cannot have duties qua representative; if he does something outside his authorization, he is not representing at all, but has exceeded the limits" Pitkin (1967: 31) provided an excellent framework for the arguments made later in this thesis. If it is the case that the represented and the representative have entered an implicit agreement on the ballot, how do we distinguish between the authority of the representative and that of the represented body? The question is not of definitions or categories, but of the level of authority - its size and its limitations.

Regarding the obligations of those participating in the process of political representation, Tussman (1947) contends that the contract between the represented and the representative is not always in favour of the represented. Although the voter transfers this right with full consent and approval to the representative, Tussman argues: "To say that we send our representatives to Congress is not to say we have sent our servants to the market. We have designated the person or persons to whose judgment or will we have subordinated ourselves" (cited in Pitkin, 1967:43). Subordination must be viewed in the context of the parliamentary period, since representatives often stay in their position for four years or more. This means that most decisions about interests and legislation will be in their hands, whether or not those

represented have agreed, as these representatives were authorised by law. Young (2000) sees representation "as a dynamic process that moves between the moment of authorization and the moment of accountability". When we look at how legal gender quotas have been applied, it is evident that some of their core elements are missing or have been overlooked. Authority, or the contract between the natural and the artificial character, often is undermined when the legal exemption to the electoral threshold is applied under the requirement of gender quotas. The following section will look at the ways in which misunderstanding or overlooking the principles of representation does not serve the purpose of representing the disadvantaged groups.

1.3.2 The representative

Having established that the relationship between the represented and the representative is a contract in which the former transfers authority to the latter, we must then define the representative. The characteristics of female candidates and MPs will be discussed frequently in this case study in order to pinpoint how overlooking these characteristics can affect the quality of representation. Over the years, the discussion of political representation has shifted from one focused on defining the representative to one focused on determining the relationship between the representative and the represented constituency. Hobbes (1660) believed that the representative has full authority to act in his or her own interest. In this context, Pitkin (1967) argued that most theorists agree to a certain extent with Hobbes' statement and believe "the representative must do what is best for those in his charge, but he must do what he thinks best, using his own judgment and wisdom, since he is chosen to decide for his constituents'' (Pitkin 1967:4). In her early writings, Drude Dahlerup (1988) argued that "critical acts" require a critical actor, which reduces the significance of numerical presence and "critical mass" (cited in Childs and Lovenduski, 2912).

As the concept of representation has been previously determined, we need to acknowledge the types of political representation: descriptive and substantive representation. However, we will see throughout this thesis that separating descriptive from substantive representation will not serve the advantages of disadvantaged groups. In the

following sections, we outline the two types of representation in order to determine the relationship between them and gender quotas.

1.4 Substantive Representation

After outlining representation as a core concept of political science, it is essential to discuss the theoretical framework of substantive representation, as the latter is the primary concern of this thesis. It should be emphasized that theorists have not yet agreed on a single definition for substantive representation (Celis, 2009; Dahlerup, 2014; Paxton and Hughes, 2017). Phillips (1995) defines substantive representation as "representation with purpose; it aims to subvert or add or transform" (Phillips 1995: 47). She further describes substantive representation "as implying a more adequate representation of the different social groups that make up the citizen body, and notions of 'typical' or 'mirror' or 'descriptive' representation have then returned with renewed force" (Phillips, 1995: 7). Mansbridge (1999) defines political representation as follows: "The primary function of representative democracy is to represent the substantive interests of the represented through both deliberation and aggregation". Representing in someone's name, therefore, requires two significant abilities. The first is the ability to speak and convince others about the credibility of one's aim. The second is the ability to act to achieve the interests of the represented group. Both skills are the expected outcome of experience, training and trust. These two abilities - acting and speaking - can be derived from Hobbes's (1660) definition of representation, in which he compares the representative with an actor or performer. This thesis concurs with this approach to representation, with the addition that substantive representation can be viewed as representing others with previously planned strategies. When the representatives of groups join a legislative assembly, they should therefore hold clear views about the represented group or constituency and its interests and demands. Furthermore, they must be equipped with the competence, skills, and planning abilities that will enable them to "stand for" (Pitkin, 1967: 199) the represented individuals or groups.

While a representative is an image in miniature of the people he or she represents, Adams (1841) emphasizes the importance of a representative's character, stating that he or she must

also be "good" and "wise". If being an "exact portrait" means the art of acting as a presenter rather than a representative, then where do we locate the 'skills of representation'? The solution is to take the term "exact portrait" or 'image in miniature' as another approach for representing interests. In her ground-breaking work The Politics of Presence (1995), Anne Phillips raises important questions by asking : "If [a representative] has been sent to the legislature to pass on pre-agreed programmes and ideas, then it might seem rather beside the point to worry about how many of them are female or Latino or black" (Phillips, 1995:159). This raises the question of what is most important in a representative: gender, ethnicity or qualifications. Therefore, showing a decent level of trust in representatives and relying on their accountability and political skills is likely to result in reaching the goal by proposing policies for the benefit of the represented. This is in order to guarantee a sort of "possibility of any later transformation" according to Phillips (1995:159). In such a case, moreover, representing voters' interest at the level of both the group and the individual is most likely to be expected. This argument gives representatives ample opportunity to show and master their skills and abilities to make change, and simply to represent. This interpretation makes descriptive attributes such as colour, ethnicity or gender less important than interests.

1.5   Descriptive Representation

The preceding review of theories on representation makes it clear that the relationship between descriptive and substantive representation for women is plagued with uncertainty. Disagreement remains about the source of authority, the representation of disadvantaged groups, and the question of who can best represent these groups. Nevertheless, the theory of the 'exact portrait' model of descriptive representation has had a significant influence on the argument that women should represent women, and subsequently on the arguments for gender quotas. Phillips (1995) argued that participation in political office brings parity, while the "absence of particular social groups is a self-evident failing of democracy" (1995: 31). She emphasizes that we must first focus on increasing women's presence in politics, which is "likely to change both the practice and priorities of politics" (Phillips, 1995: 71). We

understand from this that descriptive representation can be employed in order to achieve substantive representation. Interests, Phillips suggests, will be achieved when inclusion has been guaranteed (1995). Nevertheless, she has called the entire process of women's inclusion and gender balance "a shot in the dark" (1995:83). In redirecting attention from the concept of representation to the appearance of political institutions, Phillips's approach opens the way to change in the "gender composition of elected assemblies" (Phillips, 1995: 83).

For the last forty years, descriptive representation has received more attention in the literature than substantive representation. Gender quotas were one way of abandoning the "slow process of structural transformation" (Phillips, 1995: 13). It was assumed that quotas, as a "fast track" resolution (Dahlerup, 2006), or "special measures" (Krook, 2009), would solve the problem of women's numerical under-representation in politics. Theorists such as Hannah Pitkin (1967) have provided a different definition of the concept of representation by distinguishing between "being like'' and "standing for". It has been argued that "acting like" or "being like'' the represented body is unenforceable in practice and does not meet the core purpose of representation. Pitkin herself has explicitly expressed uncertainty about this approach: "If representatives are to reflect their constituents as a mirror does, we are left in doubt as to just how active or passive this 'reflecting' might be" (Pitkin 1967:82). If the representative should be 'like' the represented, in practice this can be interpreted as meaning that the representative must be either geographically connected to the represented people or biologically similar to them. For example, black men must be represented by black men and white women by white women, regardless of their skills or experience. Although this assumption may support the claim that women must represent women, it seems most impractical when applied to any group other than women, given the variety of divisions in most modern societies based on colour, ethnicity, gender and class. Moreover, as Young (1994) has asked, which group is entitled to be represented and which is not? Insisting that every group be represented by one of its members would lead to the deepening of societal divisions rather than unifying people, and it would furthermore downgrade political experience in favour of ethnicity, colour or gender. Pitkin (1967) has therefore focused on substantive representation as an effective mechanism to advance interests, while other researchers assume that descriptive representation will ultimately lead to qualitative action (Kittilson, 2016; Childs and Krook, 2008; Dahlerup, 2009).

At this point, it can be argued that descriptive and substantive representation intersect when it comes to the accountability and qualifications of the representative. Merit, political experience and debating skills are essential instruments for critical action in the context of political representation. In particular, the representative of a group should be equipped with these skills in order to "subvert, add or defend" (Phillips, 1995: 47). Based on the theoretical arguments for political representation, designers of positive discrimination arrangements should therefore consider that both descriptive and substantive representation require a particular set of skills, and that they work in tandem rather than in opposition to one another.

1.6   Who Is Representing Women?

The characteristic attributes of representatives have seldom been examined by researchers. As Anne Phillips (1995) notes: "The personal characteristics of the representatives barely figure in this except perhaps as an after-the-event grumble about the poor quality of our politicians" (1995:1). Criteria such as the competence and capabilities of the representative have not received as much attention as the concept of representation itself. Dovi (2002) argues that little has been said to assist citizens in their choice of descriptive representatives. This is particularly evident during debates about the representation of women and marginalised groups. This research argues that both aspiring female candidates and ordinary citizens (or potential voters) are not adequately informed about the criteria for the preferred descriptive representative. Debates about inclusion often receive more consideration than the qualifications of representatives. While some researchers have acknowledged the lack of criteria for the preferred descriptive representatives (Mansbridge, 1999; Dovi, 2002), that lack remains one of the challenges confronting the mechanism of gender quotas in general and this case study in particular. In this context, researchers have begun by addressing the issue of interests, indicating that understanding them is the first step in representing them. Phillips has stated that "the representatives may and will differ from those they act for...in their understanding of where the 'true' interests of their constituents lie" (2003:4). Hence, although it is a priority for any political representative to fulfil the

interests of the represented, it is also their responsibility to distinguish between genuine and unfitting interests.

It has been argued that women who have been granted the right or the advantage of quotas to represent their excluded group ought to be "attitudinally predisposed to act for women whether [or not] they are attitudinally feminist..." (Childs, 2006:11). Dovi (2002) calls this sort of representative the 'preferable descriptive representative'. As an excluded group, and despite their need to be present in political institutions, women therefore need descriptive representatives who acknowledge and pursue their interests in order to obtain substantive representation. Substantive representatives stand for the interests of the represented and represent them with purpose. Descriptive representatives, on the other hand, are "in their own persons and lives in some sense typical of the larger class of persons whom they represent. Black legislators, for instance, represent Black constituents, women legislators represent women constituents and so on" (Mansbridge, 1999: 629). If the representatives chosen through the mechanism of gender quotas are considered descriptive representatives, their primary role is to make sure that the group's voice is heard, and its interests are looked after.

Phillips (1995) has identified four groups of arguments for raising the proportion of women elected. The first group includes the argument for role models and how they affect women's presence in political institutions; for Phillips, this argument is the least reliable. It can be argued here that the impact of having female politicians as role models has a strong effect on women's political engagement in general. In newly formed political systems and during democratic transformations such as Iraq's, having politically qualified female politicians or parliamentarians responds to the aspirations of women in general. During the fieldwork, it was observed that, contrary to theoretical assumptions such as that of Phillips (1995), interviewees were willing to see female politicians as role models. Among Phillips' other three groups of arguments for increasing the numerical presence of women are that it "appeal[s] to principles of justice between sexes", it identifies "the particular interests of women", and women's presence helps to enhance "the quality of political life" (Phillips, 1995:62-63).

According to Mansbridge (1999), the primary duty of representative democracy is deliberation and aggregation, which may serve as the standards for assessing the behaviour of descriptive representatives. Descriptive representatives carry more responsibility than ordinary members of parliament. In addition to their familiar representative duties such as passing laws, they are expected to fulfil their group's interests by ending the oppression and long-term exclusion of that group. While a recognised set of standards for efficient representatives remains controversial, Dovi (2002) lists as one of her criteria for preferable descriptive representatives that they have a "mutual relationship" with their group. Such a relationship ensures that the representative will understand the interests of the group and the best methods for advancing those interests. Moreover, a strong mutual relationship between the representative and the represented group can increase the inclusion and influence of disadvantaged groups in decision-making offices (Mansbridge, 1999). Influence, therefore, rather than the mere presence of delegates from excluded groups such as women, is the objective of descriptive representation.

In the context of judgment and assessment, Dovi lists a set of criteria for recognising the successful descriptive representative, stating that "descriptive representatives should be judged by who does and does not interact with [the group]" (2002: 736). Interaction and influence, therefore, improve democratic representation, which in turn guarantees political space for all groups. During my fieldwork, it was observed that although women as an excluded group were seen to be in need of effective representatives (who could bring their interests before parliament, and speak on their behalf), female beneficiaries of legal gender quotas were instead often seen as inactive, privileged MPs. Hence the representatives of groups, or "descriptive representatives" as Mansbridge (1999) and Dovi (2002) call them, should fully grasp their group's interests and act effectively to advance them. Dovi's criteria were applied in this case study, which found that most of them were overlooked during the process of candidate selection for reasons such as the lack of female aspirants and the difficulty of applying global standards in a regional context. However, researchers such as Dovi (2002) have argued that merely having "descriptive representatives" does not guarantee meeting the aim of representing disadvantaged groups. I find her argument of a preferable descriptive representative must be taken into account whenever gender quotas are proposed or applied, because it is imperative that the new beneficiaries of this mechanism understand

that belonging to a disadvantaged group does not mean that someone will be qualified to represent their group. Advancing the interests of a politically excluded group requires a 'preferable descriptive representative' rather than any member of the group.

The other controversial aspect in regard to representing a disadvantaged group is how unified, declared and acknowledged the interests of the represented constituency or group are. Phillips has written that "well-organized interest groups have more power than those whose membership remains dispersed" (1995: 147). Having therefore a set of acknowledged demands and interests makes the act of qualitative representation manageable for the representatives and the represented group. Despite strong feminist calls for gender balance, women rarely embrace a unified set of interests (Dahlerup, 2014). This is particularly the case in Iraq, where the extreme diversity of ethnic and other identities makes it difficult to find a shared set of women's interests in the process of representation. Furthermore, due to the long-term exclusion from politics of some ethnicities and sects, the post-2003 era in Iraq saw the creation of sub-identities. Women were no exception to this situation; their interests were likewise subject to variation and complexity. Representatives must therefore acknowledge and advance those interests, whether or not they are shared among all women, in order to fulfil the principles of representation.

This case study finds that the relationship between legal gender quotas and substantive representation is unclear, nor has it been clarified by the lawmakers and political actors. The three key sets of actors involved in representation– lawmakers, politicians, and women - are unaware, or unsure, of how to achieve substantive representation in the context of legal gender quotas. Female citizens, female politicians and political parties have no prepared framework for the implementation of substantive representation. This lack of a framework puts all the parties concerned with political activities, especially political representation, in an awkward situation and leads to mutual recriminations. This thesis argues that both substantive and descriptive representatives have the same responsibilities in the legislature. Although they may have been chosen according to different criteria, substantive and descriptive representatives both perform substantive representation. In other words, we cannot expect descriptive representatives only to deliver descriptive representation. We can talk about descriptive representation during the periods of selection and candidacy, but once the legislature has been formed, the task of the descriptive representative will not differ from

that of the substantive representative. There would seem to be no grounds for distinguishing between the methodology and techniques of substantive and descriptive representation. Before parliament has been formed, it is possible to speak about classifying representation as descriptive or substantive. However, when MPs are present and parliament is in session, there is no basis for classifying their actions as descriptive or substantive.

1.7 Representing Marginalised Groups

Political representation, as theorists have concurred, is the most functional way for disadvantaged groups to have their voices heard. Moreover, it "increase[s] a sense of democratic legitimacy" (Lovenduski and Norris, 2003: 86). As Phillips (1995) has highlighted in her approach to deliberative democracy, systems cannot be recognised as democratic if some groups have been excluded. As discussed earlier, special measures have often been designed to solve the problem of disadvantaged groups, including women. Therefore, studies about the representation of marginalised groups have recently received considerable interest at both the academic and the legislative level, according to Phillips (1998) and Williams (1998). Accordingly, concerns have been raised about how these disadvantaged groups can be included (Young, 1990) and who is best placed to represent or speak on their behalf (Phillips, 1995).

In this context, there is wide agreement among the theorists of women representation that women may be considered a 'group' and 'marginalised' (Williams, 1998; Bacchi, 2006; Dahlerup, 2006; Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2010). It can be argued here if in principle, we agree on gendering society by considering women a group, then logically there should be another group called 'men'. However, Iris Young (1994), avoids this terminological difficulty by employing the term 'collective' instead of 'group' for women, while Williams (2000) considers women a "class" rather than individual citizens. Nevertheless, Young (1994) believes that categories for grouping individuals are still needed in order to address the structured oppression and exclusion of women.

The other problem of framing women as a group is that it may represent "men [as] the norm and women as the "other" (Murray, 2014). If the goal of categorising women as a group

is to grant them special status through gender quotas, this research argues that such an approach creates additional complications and deepens social divisions rather than the converse. This researcher would prefer to categorise women as individual citizens who share rights and obligations similar to those of men. However, to avoid theoretical or linguistic confusion when speaking about gender quotas, it is necessary to use the term 'group.' However, in subsequent chapters, we will see how problematic questions of terminology can be. This is especially evident in the context of descriptive representation and those groups that benefit from positive discrimination schemes. On many occasions' women, for example, have been regarded and treated in the same way as minorities by granting them a quota, when numerically-speaking they are not a minority.

Here we should define the meaning of groups in general, and under-represented groups in particular. The UN defines minorities as those groups that can be categorised according to religion, ethnicity, language, and so on, and that usually have little or no presence in decision-making positions. In the UN declaration of December 1992 (Article 4), states were encouraged to take special measures to provide opportunities to include these non- or under-represented groups in political, economic and social institutions (UN, 2010). This ongoing debate about minorities and disadvantaged groups also includes women as a group. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations, and steps to implement it were agreed upon in the Beijing Conference of 1995 (Childs and Lovenduski, 2012). In the context of their recommendations, women, like other marginalised groups or minorities, should be represented by those similar to them. The recommendations of these international fora helped to give additional value to descriptive representation, especially gender quotas.

It has been consistently suggested by political researchers that after achieving descriptive representation, marginalised groups are in need of substantive representation. However, researchers such as Celis (2004) and Tamerius (1995) argue that it is not mandatory for women to be represented by women, and their interests can be advanced regardless of who is representing (Celis, Childs and Krook, 2008). Rather like the theory of the 'politics of ideas', this argument emphasises that in order for women to achieve substantive representation, what matters is not the gender of the representative, but the representation of women's interests (Krook, 2009; Black, 2013). This thesis concurs that representing women's interests

and delivering substantive representation are of particular importance during the early stages of women's political inclusion, as in the case of Iraq. Phillips (1995:30) has noted that "equality is hardly achieved when some groups have so much more leverage than others" and "there must be room for all groups in the democratic system". In the context of gender parity, researchers argue that special mechanisms and positive discrimination policies may help bring about equality (Phillips, 1995; Dahlerup, 2006; Kittilson, 2016). This type of representation, when a specific number of seats are granted to previously excluded groups, has been classified as "selective representation" by researchers such as Mansbridge (1999:631).

1.8 Gender Quotas

Contemporary researchers have looked at gender quotas as a systematic remedy for recruiting and increasing the number of women in politics (Pande and Ford, 2011; Dahlerup, 2006; 2007; Kuku, 2007; Dovi, 2002). In the last three decades there has been increased interest in the practical steps that must accompany representation. This is due to the fact that many states, especially in the Middle East, were attempting to introduce democracy, as was the case in Iraq, Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt (Norris, 2004; Heideman and Youssef, 2012). In Iraq, the transformation to democracy was accompanied by the introduction and adoption of legal gender quotas. However, the goal of changing the current situation of Iraqi women and offering a remedy to their long-term struggle to reach parity in politics has not yet been achieved, because those who proposed the gender quotas were more concerned with descriptive than with substantive representation could be delivered. The scholar Kate Nash (1998) has highlighted the risks of such a focus: "[The] quota system may not have very much effect on the lives of women, other than those few elected to parliament, either at the beginning of the process of getting more women elected, or at the end, in policy-making" (Nash, 1998:52). Krook (2009) has expressed similar concern about the limitations of gender quotas in achieving substantive representation.

The move to introduce gender quotas into political institutions has been driven by many factors, of which the primary one has been the theory of "critical mass" (Phillips, 1995; Tripp

and Kang, 2008; Childs and Lovenduski, 2012). Some thinkers have argued that only the presence of a high number of women in political institutions would ensure their influence as a group in decision-making, allowing them to "grow from a few token individuals into a considerable minority of all legislators" (Childs and Krook, 2007: 725). This assertion rests on two assumptions. The first is that women's interests cannot be represented without an increase in the number of women representatives (Black, 2013). According to this view, the ratio and percentage of women in political institutions play a key role in improving the nature of women's involvement in politics. The second is that in order to advance women-friendly policies and female leadership, more women must be present in political office and their voice must be heard (Philips, 1995; Pande and Ford, 2011; Dahlerup, 2007). These concerns ultimately became the mechanism of gender quotas in contemporary debates (Phillips, 1995). By 2006, therefore, more than 84 countries had introduced some form of quota to improve the selection of female candidates running for office (Tripp and Kang, 2008), and by 2019, 130 states had done so (IPU, 2019). This progress came after the first movement to engage women in politics began in 1985, when only four countries had gender quotas.

Since the 1970s, gender quotas have been categorised as "the fast track to gender balance in politics" (Dahlerup, 2006:3). They have also often been applied as the fastest route to women's political empowerment and a way to achieve a historical leap toward the inclusion of women in politics (Phillips, 1995; Dahlerup, 2006; Dahlerup, 2009; Kuku, 2007; Pandeand Ford, 2011; Murray, 2014; Norris and Dahlerup, 2015). During the last four decades the mechanism of gender quotas has received considerable attention both in theory and in practice, following the Scandinavian experience (Dahlerup, 2006). Far from Europe, gender quotas had a major effect in Rwanda in 2003, with women taking 48.8 percent of the seats (Dahlerup, 2006; Norris and Dahlerup, 2015). The significant increase in women's representation since the Beijing Conference in 1995 has led to the use of gender quotas as the globally approved method for solving the problem of women's under-representation in politics (Krook, 2010; Pandeand Ford, 2011; Wängnerud, 2009; Paxton, Hughes and Painter, 2009; Caul, 2001; Murray, 2014). The international campaign led by the UN, however, has only resulted in increasing women's descriptive representation in parliaments to around 16 per cent by 2003 (Dahlerup, 2006), 18 per cent by 2008 (Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2008) and 19.3 percent by 2010 (Childs and Lovenduski, 2012). These figures are still well below the

expectations of the 1995 Beijing Conference and its 30 per cent target (Dahlerup, 2006; Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2008). Despite all these efforts, women's descriptive representation rose over the last three decades on average by only six per cent (Childs and Lovenduski 2012).

Women's legal quotas can increase women's presence in political institutions within just a few years. It has been assumed that gender quotas fulfil the aim of "increasing the selection and election of female candidates to political office" (Krook, 2009: 3). Tripp and Kang argue that "the interests of women will not necessarily be represented if women are not present in decision-making bodies" (Tripp and Kang, 2008: 340). Because women have less opportunity to be in political institutions, a special method is required to increase their participation. It seems that the main concern of those who designed the gender quota mechanism was the quantity of women representatives; "the adoption of quotas reflects a growing consensus that women should have greater representation or even equal representation with men" (Tripp and Kang, 2008: 340; Dahlerup, 2009; Krook, 2009). Most researchers have noted that there is a significant amount of attention paid to the quantity of representation (Childs and Krook, 2008; Dahlerup, 1988; Tripp and Kang, 2008; Childs and Lovenduski, 2012). A certain figure or percentage of seats, usually from 20 to 30 per cent, have been set aside for women in parliaments (Dahlerup, 2006; Tripp and Kang, 2008). It is worth noting here whenever gender quotas are discussed, discussion of the significance of qualifications and merit often disappears. The fierce debate over the respective merits of quality and quantity would seem to have been settled in favour of the latter. The international community therefore now encourages most transitional governments to adopt gender quotas by setting aside a certain percentage of seats for women (Dahlerup, 2006; Tripp and Kang, 2008; Paxton, Hughes and Painter, 2009; Caul, 2001). On the other hand, in more mature or established regimes, even when the number of women in political office is low, there is seldom a call for legislative quotas. The international policy-making community has explicitly favoured increasing the number of women in politics and implementing more quotas whenever possible. Moreover, a look at the tables and reports published by the UN reveals that women's political achievements have often been measured by the numbers of women present in political office.

Although close to 100 countries have now adopted gender quotas, voluntarily or through legislation, the rate of women's participation in political office is still low. In 2005 the world

average for women's descriptive representation was 16 percent (Dahlerup, 2006). In 2017 statistics showed a seven percent increase in the overall parliamentary presence of women to 23 percent (Inter-parliamentary Union, 2017). It should be underscored that the quota scheme can be an effective solution in the case of marginalised groups such as ethnic or religious groups. For example, article 125 of the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 allocated quotas for Christians and Yazidis, and since then, those two minorities have benefited from their allocated quotas. Because of their limited numbers, they could not technically have reached the electoral threshold, and without quotas, they would have remained excluded (Institute for International Law and Human Rights, 2011). Technically and statistically, however, the case of women differs. Women in Iraq, for example, make up 49.5 percent of the population (Iraqi Ministry of Planning, 2016). Women are therefore almost equal to men numerically, and presumably they are equally present as candidates and voters. Quotas for women therefore need to be examined apart from their numerical presence, for example, from the perspective of how the quota mechanism is able to bring about change on the social and political levels. In terms of the impact of gender quotas on women's political transformation, Tripp and Kang (2008) have observed that "some [researchers such as Baldez 2006, Dahlerup 2006...] argue that quotas make people aware of gender imbalances in social institutions" (2008:340). While this argument may be true in theory, in practice it is subject to widespread variation. In Iraq, as in other Middle Eastern countries, debate formerly revolved around equality in the workplace, civil rights and education rather than political participation. Seeking parity in political office is a fairly new trend in the Middle East, including in Iraq, that surfaced after the political reform of some regimes and the fall of others.

According to Tripp and Kang (2008), the type of quota most often adopted was the voluntary party quota, "which is adopted by parties of their own volition regardless of whether or not there is a compulsory party quota" (2008: 339). As of today, more than fifty states have adopted party quotas, 24 have chosen reserved seats, and 34 have chosen legislated candidate quotas (IDEA, 2019). This thesis asserts that the voluntary quotas have the greatest potential for success because they reflect the commitment of political parties to establish parity, while the other two types are usually applied under the force of law and they are therefore accompanied by criticism and non-compliance (Tripp and Kang, 2008; Murray, 2014). Nevertheless, in any movement towards or away from parity, political parties are the

key players and gatekeepers. This case study focuses on those gender quotas in which the law reserves a certain percentage of places for female candidates in the candidacy list. In the case of Iraq, the women's quota is constitutional, legal and applied both in the candidacy lists and in Parliament.

It should be noted that of the three types of quotas - reserved seats, party quotas and legislative quotas - reserved seats have been excluded from this research, because they have no place in Iraq's electoral system. Furthermore, where applied, they have not resulted in any significant practical progress. Although India, for example, adopted the system of reserved seats, the percentage of women's representation remained between 4.0 and 9.1 per cent for more than 50 years (between 1951 and 2004) (Inter-Parliamentary Union 1995, 1998 and 2008). Moreover, the reserved seat mechanism often results in the allocation of a very limited number of seats to women, as seen in the example of Jordan. In 2003, the King of Jordan assigned six out of 110 seats to women, representing only five per cent of total seats (Norris, 2004). From the perspective of women's empowerment, the second type of quota would appear to be more pragmatic and effective. The quota of 50 per cent for women and 50 per cent for men in nomination lists in France is a well-known example of party quotas (Krook, 2009). Interestingly, the French constitutional reforms of 1999 and 2000 obligated parties to apply the 50 per cent quota for women in "almost all political offices'' (Murray, 2004) rather than just in parliament. Between the 1960s and the 1990s, the adoption of quotas by some political parties in the UK and Sweden succeeded in significantly increasing women's representation (Krook, 2009: 107). Swedish women saw a dramatic increase in their political presence within 36 years. In 1970 Swedish women's level of parliamentary representation was only 14 per cent; by 2006 it had increased to 47.3 per cent, topping the world-wide list of women's representations (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1995 and 2008). Krook (2009) notes, however, that "both countries [Sweden and the UK] had relatively similar percentages of women in the parliament before the first quota policies were adopted: women occupied 14 percent of the seats in the Swedish Parliament in 1970 and 9 percent of the seats in the British House of Commons in 1992" (Krook, 2009:107). This statistic reveals the importance of pre-quota circumstances in increasing women's presence and representation in legislative bodies. However, special legal measures for women alone may not be sufficient. In the Swedish case, by the time political parties adopted voluntary quotas, the country already had a robust basis

for women's representation (Nash, 1998). It can therefore be argued that a top-down path does not necessarily offer the solution to a deep-rooted problem such as women's under-representation unless it is accompanied by preliminary practical steps. It can be assumed here that the outcome of gender quotas may vary; quotas may significantly strengthen women's presence if women have secured a tangible level of presence prior to the adoption of quotas.

The quota system has come in for criticism; researchers such as Goetz and Hassim (2003) have posed the question "to what extent increasing numbers of women in politics will help produce 'gender-sensitive politics' and better public accountability' for women" (Dahlerup, 2006: 12). In their analysis of women in Uganda, Goetz and Hassim (2003) argue that women have made progress "in terms of their numerical presence in political arenas, and their feminist influence on policy, only where the women's movement is strong and autonomous, political parties are sympathetic to feminist goals, and electoral systems and other political institutions can give voice to socially excluded groups" (Goetz and Hassim, 2003: 136). This argument focuses attention on elements other than gender quotas as a remedy for women's under-representation. When studying women's representation, social, cultural and historical variables must also be considered. Designers of gender quotas must take into consideration whether this mechanism is suitable for a given society and what type of quotas might improve women's political participation qualitatively and quantitatively. Before making the decision to include gender quotas, decision-makers must also study the particular circumstances of a country. This is particularly important if, as in the case of Iraq, the quota mechanism will be incorporated permanently into national law, which is difficult to amend or abrogate.

Temporary quotas are sometimes a convenient vehicle for addressing certain problems, after which a nation can return to a more gradual approach to change. Although incremental change is slower, it is more likely to lead to fundamental transformation in terms of equality and gender balance. Along these lines, Phillips has argued that the consideration of time is not sufficient justification for societies to undertake rapid social and political change; she states that "people do not normally change direction just because things take so long" (Phillips, 1995: 13).

The mechanism of gender quotas confronted by some challenges such the impact of culture, the power of law and generalisation of methods and outcomes that will be discussed in the upcoming titles:

1.8.1 Culture

There is a common assumption among researchers that cultural factors are a core factor in the increase or decrease in women's representation (Tripp and Kang, 2008; Viterna, Fallon and Backfield, 2008; Childs and Lovenduski, 2012). This thesis agrees with this assumption, taking into consideration the nature of culture and the weight of political tradition in the Middle East in general and in Iraq in particular. The examples of the adoption of gender quotas in Egypt (Dahlerup, 2006) and Pakistan (Krook, 2009) are illuminating in this regard. After legal gender quotas were adopted by Egypt between 1979 and 1984, thirty women secured parliamentary seats (Abou-Zeid, 2006). It was anticipated that this temporary quota (which was only for two elections) would create the social and political basis for women's political engagement. It was also presumed that although the quota was temporary, its positive impact would become permanent. However, after Egypt eliminated the temporary quotas, women's legislative representation dropped dramatically. In 2000, for example, women's presence in Egypt's legislature decreased to only 2.4 per cent (Abou-Zeid, 2006).

In the example of Pakistan, the reserved seats quotas go back to 1950 and 1960, though the country later abandoned the quota system (Reyes, 2002). Despite the passage of more than fifty years, gender parity has not yet become the norm in Pakistani politics. When the reserved seats mechanism was abolished in the 1990s, only thirteen female candidates stood for election, and only Benazir Bhutto and her mother Nusrat Bhutto successfully secured seats in parliament (Krook, 2009). These examples show that without social campaigns regarding women's political engagement and genuine, widespread debate on the issue, changes in gender political balance are unlikely. Researchers have emphasized that in order to develop a comparative understanding of women's representation, cultural factors must first be reviewed (Viterna, Fallon and Beckfield, 2007). Middle Eastern women's reluctance to

participate in politics also needs to be studied by drawing on research in fields such as psychology, sociology, and the history of women's political engagement.

From a social perspective, researchers have noted that women in the Middle East are reluctant to join politics because they do not want to be associated with the complexity of political affairs (Abou-Zeid, 2006). It was noted during the fieldwork interviews that the conduct of politicians' while in office had a significant effect on women's enthusiasm for political activities. The behaviour of both male and female politicians is one of the factors that can encourage or inhibit people from engaging in politics. Politicians' lack of transparency and their failure to stand up for public interests are other factors that play a role in the shortage of women in politics. In her discussion of Arab women and the adoption of quotas, Abou-Zeid (2006) outlined two significant ways in which seeing women "in the corridors of parliament" can improve the public perception of female politicians. The first is "getting society accustomed to seeing women in decision-making roles". The second is "building a woman's record of public participation" (Abou-Zeid, 2006: 188). These two elements can lead to the formation of a political elite among women and also shift the public's mind from regarding female politicians as a legally privileged group to considering them efficient decision-makers. If the above-mentioned elements are achieved, political parties will be more likely to find dependable and reliable female candidates who can attract votes.

1.8.2   The power of law

Before introducing a legal arrangement such as gender quotas, with all its socio-political complexities, it is essential that the proposed law be understood by decision-makers, candidates and voters. Researchers such as Williams (2000) are not convinced that the law can change the social mind-set. Williams notes that "the law is powerless to enforce social attitudes, and it neither can nor should guarantee that members of some groups be equals by members of other groups" (Williams, 2000: 238). Nash (1998) highlights that the quota mechanism may not advance the interests of women except for "those few elected to parliament, either at the beginning of the process of getting more women elected, or at the end, in policy-making" (1998: 52). This approach raises the question as to whom quotas are intended to benefit: is it women as an excluded group or merely individual female citizens?

This specific case study did not find a direct answer to this question because Iraqi law provided no answer in this regard.

Reliance on a single method such as legal gender quotas to solve the deep-rooted and multifaceted problem of women's political underrepresentation is fraught with risks. Moreover, it may close off other avenues to social and political development. In other words, the misuse of a legal arrangement such as gender quotas can be harmful over the long term. It should also be borne in mind that quotas as a legal measure are subject to manipulation through political or legal changes. For instance, although Pakistan's prime minister was a woman at the time, in 1989 "over five hundred [Sunni] Ulama... came together from all over Pakistan... which passed a resolution calling on citizens to reject Bhutto's premiership as anti-Islamic" (Krook, 2009: 69). This rejection of women's political participation very nearly succeeded, and Pakistani women almost lost their right to any political participation due to internal political and cultural struggles. Not only culture but also religion, sect and schools of thoughts may play a role in advancing or impeding women's political participation.

Gender quotas may also have other, less democratic consequences. In the 2014 election for the Iraqi parliament, a number of male candidates reached or even exceeded the electoral threshold (IHEC, 2014), but failed to secure a seat, while their female colleagues gained seats based upon the legal exemption of gender quotas. Male candidates were even forced to cede their seats to female candidates. As the Iraqi Electoral Law states, the fourth seat in an electoral list must go to a female candidate regardless of the number of votes she received. In other words, if the fourth female candidate did not reach the threshold but her fellow male candidate did, the seat would go to her rather than to him. This had the additional consequence of causing an enormous quantity of votes to be wasted, since voters cast their votes for candidates who were then excluded from office by the provisions of the gender quotas.

1.8.3   Generalisation

Gender quotas of all types may be effective in developing greater political parity in some societies but they do not necessarily do so in all. In well-established democracies with a long

history of debate on women's rights, quotas can be a step toward equality. However, their effectiveness needs to be examined on a case by case basis, especially when speaking about politically undeveloped or developing states. It has been pointed out that the implementation of gender quotas in Tunisia and Algeria was considered successful. Both states have adopted voluntary party quotas (Abou-Zeid, 2005; Dahlerupand Freidenvall, 2009). Researchers have suggested that the quota scheme must be examined by looking at local conditions. Mahoney (2000) highlights "the possibility that variables may not work the same way in all instances" (cited in Krook, 2009:13) and adds that "the data do not support a single universal explanation for either adoption or implementation" (Krook, 2009:207). International reports and relevant studies support the claim that regional studies on gender quotas do not always reveal similar outcomes (Tripp and Kang, 2008; IPU, 2019), and the "reasons for these variations are not well-understood" (Krook, 2010:37).

Politically disadvantaged groups such as women urgently need influential representatives to focus on and pursue their interests in order to promote equality among all citizens (Norris, 2004) but there are three challenges in evaluating substantive representation in a given case. The first challenge is that the cultural and geopolitical circumstances of countries vary greatly. What has been considered functional in Western countries may not necessarily work well in other parts of the world. The second challenge is that political mechanisms, methods and qualifications are often Western-defined. The third challenge, underlined by Paxton and Hughes (2017), is that the level of power allowed to women in inter-party politics varies from one party to another and from one country to another. It can therefore be assumed that generalisations about research criteria and examining the results of the application of gender quotas through only one lens can lead to erroneous conclusions. This case study seeks to contribute to limiting generalisations about standards for substantive representation, motivations for the adoption of special measures and the outcomes of these schemes. Furthermore, the criteria for effective representation need to be updated using more reliable and recognised studies and research. Otherwise, they will remain "outdated" (Murray, 2014). Therefore, globally accepted standards for dynamic representation for women may not be applicable at the regional level. Standards for each case study must take into consideration the local political system, the history of women's movements in a country, and cultural customs (Tripp and Kang, 2008; Childs and Lovenduski, 2012). Regional and cross-national

studies may answer the question of how the above-mentioned factors can play a key role in our understanding about the motivations for and outcomes of adopting gender quotas.

Political systems, cultural perceptions of gender, and the maturity of women's movements are among the many factors that may in the long run lead to an increase or decrease in women's representation (Krook, 2010; Viterna, Fallon and Backfield, 2007; Kenworthy and Malami, 1999; Tripp and Kang, 2008). Researchers have therefore called for more examination of these factors through conducting more regional and national studies (Wängnerud, 2009; Paxton and Hughes, 2017). Understanding the geopolitical, social and financial circumstances in developing countries through local and regional studies is a crucial step in avoiding generalisation of methods and outcomes. Parity is a cumulative social, cultural and political process that may be achieved through revolutionary methods, legal development or both. Moreover, generalising about the motivations and effects of the "mechanism of positive discrimination" (Krook, 2010) can be misleading, as each society or region has a different historical and political background.

1.9 Routes to Gender Balance

Theoretically, an important question was raised regarding who can best represent politically disadvantaged groups and what the criteria are for their selection. When we insist that women must represent women, do we mean well-qualified and well-experienced women? Or does the mere presence of women representatives guarantee that women's interests will be advanced? The literature remains undecided on whether same-gender candidates or those representing the group's interests (Sapiro, 1998; Young, 2000) should be prioritised. It has been emphasized that the "interests of women will not be represented if women are not present in decision-making bodies" (Tripp and Kang, 2008: 340). Nevertheless, Suzanne Dovi (2012) has summarised the criteria for preferred representatives of marginalised groups as follows: "[Preferable] descriptive representatives have strong mutual relationships with dispossessed subgroups". This description calls into question both the selection of candidates and the legal exemption of gender quotas. The fieldwork data have shown that merit and political experience were overlooked by both the selectors and the

candidates themselves, often when there was an urgent need to meet the legal requirement of the 25 per cent quota. This sort of fundamental challenge threatens the core concept of political representation, and these special measures should be evaluated and revised based on the experience gained to date.

The demands to balance descriptive and substantive representation has recently attracted interest among researchers. It has been argued that decision-makers "must investigate multiple possibilities in the relationship between women's descriptive and substantive representation" (Childs and Krook, 2008: 734). Regional and international studies show that the result of quotas appears to be far from the desired equivalence, with the global average of women in parliaments at 16 percent (Dahlerup, 2006:7). Supporters of equal opportunity for both genders have therefore criticised the discourse on quotas (Krook, 2009:46) as offering a privileged opportunity for women but not men. While the mechanism of gender quotas has increased the presence of women in politics, this research argues that the quota mechanism continues to face critical challenges at the level of candidate selection and substantive representation, and even the concept of equality itself has come under challenge. Gender quotas can be a pragmatic way to mollify the large number of women or feminists who are angered by women's long-term political exclusion. Furthermore, as Krook (2010) has highlighted, quotas have been considered as only one of several methods of women's representation, not the only one.

While it is apparent that the mechanism of legislative gender quotas is one method for reducing inequality in politics, it is not necessarily the only effective one. Given that gender quotas are only one of the methods for enhancing women's political engagement, one should first examine a variety of methods to ascertain their effectiveness or lack thereof. Gender imbalance in societies described as "rooted in inequality, based on patriarchy, or male domination, and often on racism..." (Gelb, 1989: 31) represents a continuing obstacle to political development. In considering political reforms intended to bring about parity, therefore, the first item to be considered must be the under-representation of women in political life and the measures for addressing this problem (Tripp and Kang, 2008: 340). This is especially evident when a country is undertaking extensive reforms or drafting a new constitution (Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2009). Iraq is an excellent case in point. When decision-makers began to draft Iraq's first democratic constitution for the post-dictatorship

era, among their principal concerns was how to achieve gender equality. While their discussions led ultimately to the inclusion of gender quotas, it will be demonstrated later in this thesis that there was insufficient prior discussion of the experience of other nations regarding gender quotas.

For more than fifty years, political researchers examining the most effective ways for including previously excluded groups have suggested diverse solutions for establishing parity in political institutions. The argument that radical ideological transformation can transform women's oppression into a balanced social and political partnership is still accepted by many (Gelb, 1989). Furthermore, to increase women's numerical representation, the 'incremental track' (Dahlerup, 2006) can be tested as a long-term substantive way to represent women, although it is a slow one. Despite this variety of means for addressing gender inequality, over the last thirty years feminists and international organisations such as the UN have shown a clear preference for the introduction of rapid legal or voluntary actions (Dahlerup, 2006; Dahlerupand Freidenvall, 2010; Krook, 2010). Researchers have argued that effective representation is the outcome of multiple key players rather than just a single player. Weldon (2002) argues that individual representatives may constitute one form of representation; however, other actors such as women's movements can offer alternative and perhaps more effective forms of representation (cited in Celis, Childs, Kantola and Krook, 2008). Inclusion cannot therefore be confined only to legal gender quotas. This thesis agrees with Young's (2000:36) suggestion that "debates, finance campaigns, lobbying regulations, rules for hearing and all attempts to regulate decision-making processes" have a significant impact on the inclusion of women in political decision-making. Political representation is a combined action based upon authority granted by voters and accountability vested in the representative.

If quotas are seen as the only route to achieve gender balance, decision-makers must still take into account the circumstances before and after legal gender quotas have been applied. Although quotas have become an international trend (Caul, 2001; Paxton, Hughes and Painter, 2009, Dahlerup, 2009) their application may have different outcomes in societies that have different cultures and political systems. Hence, it can be argued that factors of both the pre- and post- application of gender quotas play a crucial role in how this mechanism is reviewed and evaluated. Krook (2009: 43) has highlighted two areas that must be analysed

when evaluating the effects of adopting gender quotas. The first comprises "the factors that influence women's representation before quotas are adopted". For example, prior to the adoption of any type of quota in the parliaments of Denmark, Finland and Norway, the number of women was around 20 to 30 per cent (Dahlerup, 2006:7), and in Uruguay approximately 15 percent of representatives were female (Hinojosa, Fridkin and Kittilson, 2017). Therefore, when the number of women in politics is low, the adoption of gender quotas can increase their numbers. If there are no women in elective office, quotas are less likely to solve the problem of women's non-presentation. In the Nordic cases, the quotas came about after nearly 60 years of effort by women's movements and debates about gender balance. Quotas for women may help to redress long-term under-representation, but they are not the only solution for such complex matters. The second area discussed by Krook is "the ways and degrees to which quotas alter these dynamics" (2009: 43). The dynamics are political inclusion, motivation and how these two elements protect the long-term achievement of gender balance in political office. Factors such as the political system (whether it is democratic or authoritarian), culture and ideology can play a fundamental role in any change in women's circumstances. Alongside governmental schemes, women's NGOs can also assist in developing women's social, financial and political status.

This thesis finds that despite losing ground to special measures, gender-neutral representation remains a rational path to achieve parity between men and women. Assuming that a same-gender representative does not necessarily stand for their group's interests; other factors are worth considering. The influence of having female role models is one such factor. For example, Margaret Thatcher's first cabinet was criticised as non-feminist (Freeman, 2013) but her political views were seen as "significant" (Gelb, 1989: 59) on the national level. Her position as the first female prime minister and her success in gaining a majority in three elections was an inspiration for women in the UK. This may reflect her effectiveness as a politician and her belief in merit (Holehouse, 2013) rather than a privileged female politician. The example of Thatcher raises two questions. First, who is best placed to represent – a person of the same gender or a qualified representative? Second: what kind of candidate will best advance women's interests, the one selected on the basis of merit, or the one selected based on gender? The answer can be found by examining the political behaviour of female leaders such as Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi (Steinberg, 2008) and Benazir

Bhutto (Shafqat,1996). The political record of these leaders demonstrates that women can become role models and respected politicians through experience and merit rather than through positive discrimination schemes. These three women were members and leaders of their parties, and prior to becoming prime ministers, they had all served as active politicians or as ministers. All three were elected more than once, and they remain an inspiration to other women (Steinberg, 2008; Shafqat, 1996).

1.10 The Interests of the Group

There is an inseparable relationship between interests and representation; as Sapiro has stated: "...having special interests require[s] representation" (Sapiro, 1998: 167). Representation has furthermore been identified as "mak[ing] a difference in legislative life and political leadership" (Lovenduski and Norris, 2003: 87). Change cannot come about without a recognised set of interests and the presence of representatives with the qualifications and skills to bring this change about. Those who are representing women should be equipped with skills, experience and an awareness of what interests are achievable (Philips, 1995; Wängnerud, 2009; Caul, 2001; Dahlerup, 1988; Dahlerup, 2006; Dahlerup, 2009 Childs and Krook, 2008; Tripp and Kang, 2008). In order to advance the interests of a group, its representatives should be 'wise', 'good', 'adequate,' have 'charisma', build a 'network' and run a 'successful election campaign' (Pitkin, 1967; Phillips, 1995; Williams, 1998; Krook, 2010). In light of these recommendations, exemption from such criteria will be discussed from two perspectives: first, in relation to the interests of the group, and secondly, in relation to the image of the representative. It has been assumed that groups usually share similar interests and that women as a group have a specific set of interests and demands that need to be represented. Nevertheless, this set of interests can vary due to cultural and political differences, and it may not always be unachieved. In this context Dovi (2002) points out that under-representation does not necessarily unify the interests of the members of a disadvantaged group.

Researchers such as Phillips (1998) assumed that there is a good recognition of 'women's interests' at both the national and the international level. However, a recognised set of

interests may be found when a society has already witnessed long-term organised debates about representing marginalised groups, a phenomenon that is not always found in underdeveloped or developing political systems. As it will be seen in the forthcoming chapters, women's representation was not discussed in Iraq until the post-2003 era, when the entire political system was overhauled. Having a widely recognised set of interests at the national level and among women themselves was therefore unlikely. This raises the question of what value to assign to the gender of representatives when there is no categorised set of interests (Phillips, 1998; Mansbridge, 1999). Advocates of women's inclusion in politics such as Phillips (1995) put the debate about common interests second in the list, after "changing the composition of the decision-making bodies" (Phillips, 1995:167) leaving unanswered the question of who can best represent women's interests.

Interests and identities, moreover, have a controversial relationship. Iris Young (1997) has highlighted that descriptive representation sometimes overlooks the subgroup's interests in favour of those of the main group. She has criticised the idea of sacrificing the interests of the subgroup in favour of those of the entire group. An example from this case study can be mentioned here. The records of the last three Iraqi parliamentary sessions show that issues such as female genital mutilation among Iraqi Kurdish women or the punishment of honour killings of Iraqi Arab women were not addressed. This leads us to concur with Young (1997, 2000) and Dovi (2002) that women's interests may vary depending on ethnicity, geographical diversity, or even diversity within a disadvantaged group. The level of women's under-representation in different societies varies (Dahlerup, 2014), and as theorists have pointed out, the inevitability of diversity means that it is highly unrealistic to assume there is a universal or globally-agreed upon set of women's interests (Escobar-Lemmon and Taylor-Robinson, 2014; Tripp and Kang, 2008). In the same vein, Virginia Sapiro states that "although women share many common problems, they are also divided, for example, by class, race, age and marital status" (Sapiro, 1998:168). For example, in their protests during the 20th century, Arab women demanded equal rights in education and work, but not in property ownership, because in those Arab and Muslim states based on Sharia law, women have full control of their property before marriage, after marriage and in the event of divorce (Yamani, 1996).

At the local level, therefore, women have an exclusive set of interests that must be represented in legislative institutions and decision-making offices by representatives who are

fully aware of those interests. However, classifying interests according to gender may deepen the divisions between women and men and may entrench gender-based identity. The map of national interests can instead be imagined as divided between men and women, main groups and subgroups, and numerous other disparate identities, which work against making purposeful decisions in the common interest. It can be added here that common and less-divisive interests make the assignment of representation more feasible. Examination of the relatively brief history of women's descriptive representation in the Iraqi Parliament, however, suggests that its benefits were not commensurate with those suggested in the literature. The 25 per cent gender quotas that have been mandated by law since 2005 brought about the inclusion of a significant number of women in Parliament but this was not reflected in any noteworthy women-friendly legislation. Female MPs who had entered parliament thanks to the gender quotas frequently prioritised the interests of their political parties over those of women. In 2009, for example, there was an effort to organise a parliamentary bloc of female MPs belonging to different political parties and ideological trends and to unify women's efforts in the Parliament. This step failed because of a variety of conflicts in political orientation and leadership. Some researchers have suggested that the relationship between numerical presence or 'critical mass' and substantive representation is subject to "multiple possibilities" (Childs and Krook, 2008: 733) - that is, it may not lead to the expected outcome. Parallels can be found in other countries; Rwanda, for example, has 48.8 per cent women representation in parliament. However, researchers have highlighted that "increased women's representation [in Rwanda] has had little effect" (Devlin and Elgie, 2008:237) on providing substantive representation.

If the whole of society is aware of women's interests, and those interests are familiar to all decision-makers and candidates for office, are calls such as 'women must represent women' (Phillips 1998) still necessary? Uncertainty remains about how to define a recognised set of interests for women (Dahlerup, 2014), and how these interests can be addressed in the context of gender. This thesis contends that the debate about interests calls into serious question the belief that women must represent women. Likewise, the argument that women's quotas are necessary to increase women's representation is also questionable, particularly in the absence of women's mobilisation, purposeful debate about interests, and a lack of an organised set of interests. Mansbridge (1999) asserts that 'shared experience'

rather than 'visible characteristics such as colour or gender' will contribute to advancing the interests of the under-represented group. The fieldwork interviewees made similar arguments, asserting that having representatives of the same gender did not help promote their interests. Iris Young makes this point as follows: "Having such a relation of identity or similarity with constituents says nothing about what the representative does" (Young, 1997:354). Therefore, there is not a clear link between gender, colour or ethnicity and advancing the interests of disadvantaged groups.

1.11 Women's Quotas and Candidate Selection

Candidate selection plays a significant role in placing an appropriate candidate in a post. The process by which candidates are chosen will have a long-term impact on women's representation. This thesis finds that identifying and applying the standards of candidacy has a significant impact both on elections and on the development of women's political character. While the focus of this thesis is the impact of gender quotas on substantive representation, I will discuss how overlooking the standards of candidate selection also has a negative impact on the quality of deliberation. My fieldwork data reveals the extent to which political parties omitted or downgraded standards of candidate selection for female candidates. This thesis finds that the absence of established women's organisations in Iraq played a substantial role in this problem too. In order to guarantee a certain level of substantive representation, a reasonable effort should be made when candidates are chosen for candidacy lists. An important question emerges here: were gender quotas implemented to benefit women as a politically-excluded group or to benefit individual female citizens who were willing to participate in politics?

When we speak of the nomination of parliamentary candidates, there is significant agreement that political parties are the 'gatekeepers' for the nomination of candidates and organisation of the electoral lists (Dahlerup, 2007; Kuku, 2007; Matland, 2007; Tripp and Kang, 2008). This can be examined from a variety of angles, such as whether the party has a positive agenda regarding women's empowerment. Any sort of party support undoubtedly strengthens the electoral position of women. Furthermore, some "political leaders may

pursue quotas because they want to appear 'modern'..." (Tripp and Kang, 2008:340) but in practice, when they select female candidates, they appear to be less concerned about meritocracy. This does not necessarily mean that political parties do not have positive intentions regarding women's interests. Party campaigns in support of women's political participation have frequently had a significant effect on achieving a high proportion of women in decision-making offices (Phillips, 1998). There were clear examples of this during the application of inter-party gender quotas in France and Sweden, and when the UK Labour Party adopted all-women shortlists (Krook, 2009). However, during political transformation, because of women's lack of political experience and the urgent need to get more votes, some political parties are prepared to abandon their principles, with the result that "[S]ince women's issues are not seen as central to party platforms, they often disappear from the political terrain altogether" (Randall and Waylen, 1998:110). The latter assertion has been confirmed by the findings of this case study. It was observed that during the campaigns for the last three parliamentary elections in Iraq, there were no visible activities related to recruitment of female aspirants, nor was there a serious approach to women's interests. Female candidates stepped forward as individuals ready to carry out the political agendas of the party that selected them, not to support women's interests. Whether drawn from elites or focus groups, fieldwork interviewees indicated that selectors were primarily concerned with their own interests as well as with fulfilling the requirement to include 25 per cent female candidates in their lists as required by Iraqi law.

Whatever the objectives and agendas of political parties may be, the new and smaller parties that had not previously won seats generally support quotas more than other parties in order to gain women's votes and compete with other parties (Krook, 2009). Small and less electorally fortunate parties find the exemption to the electoral threshold offered by legal quotas an excellent opportunity to gain access to representative assemblies. For instance, the Iraqi Communist Party used the 'women card' to win in the 2014 parliamentary election after it had lost heavily in the previous three elections. It should be noted that the Communist Party is a well-established party that has existed for nearly 70 years in Iraq (Al-Khalil, 1989), and like most left-wing parties, it has shown a constant interest in women's rights. However, after repeated losses in the elections, it gave more attention to supporting its female candidates, possibly hoping to benefit from legislative gender quotas in order to overcome another

electoral failure. It can therefore be presumed that certain political parties sometimes exploit the motto of empowering women to counter their electoral weakness. As discussed earlier, political parties may also "make sex an additional criterion in choosing their candidates" when they are "already worried about their electoral appeal" (Phillips, 1995: 59). This can be seen as both a positive and a negative act. It is positive in the sense that women can take advantage of the party's need for success, and by so doing, advance their interests as well as improve their political participation. It can be negative in that playing the 'women's card' to conceal a party's weakness may bring unqualified candidates to the fore, which does not help to advance women's interests. Moreover, having female politicians who are perceived as weak can have long-term consequences for the political reputation of women.

With respect to Middle Eastern women, Abou-Zeid (2006) has highlighted an important argument - that "many effective and active women politicians stay out of parliament because they refuse to be, as some regard it, the "puppets of a 'joker' party" (Abou-Zeid, 2006: 186). This brings us to the question of role models and how the presence of qualified women in political office affects women's political engagement in general. Childs and Lovenduski (2012) have noted that the presence of "high profile and viable women" in political assemblies not only provides a pragmatic role model for young girls, but also opens doors to advanced political debate among women (Childs and Lovenduski, 2012: 3). This is especially true when women have recently emerged from a long period of political struggle, such as was the case with women in Iraq, who had no noteworthy political participation under the Baath Party dictatorship. Women in such a situation urgently need adequate female role models in order to build the confidence they need to participate in political activity. A thoughtful process for candidate selection may build that confidence by opening previously-closed doors to more qualified candidates. Although there is no universally-agreed set of criteria for adequate candidates, theorists have tried to establish a list of requirements (Pitkin, 1967; Phillips, 1995, Hazan and Rahat, 2006). These requirements include the "availability of resources, such as the time and money necessary to run a successful campaign; charisma; eloquence and the ability to defend an argument in public; media appeal; the ability to work a crowd; intelligence; and networks" (Murray, 2014: 526).

Some argue that increasing women's participation in party activities, in particular party membership, can advance women's interests. In this context, Kunovich and Paxton have

stated that "female party elites can help female candidates get elected and increase in female party bureau members..." (Tripp and Kang, 2008:344). In addition, nominating more women in the electoral list would encourage other political parties to follow the same policy. This research finds that the relationship between political parties and women as aspirant individuals or organisations is unclear. In this case study, for the period of 2003 onward, there were no apparent systematic efforts to recruit or encourage more women to join political parties as a primary step to politically empower women. Prior to each election, there was a certain movement to bridge the electoral gap and fulfil the legal requirement of 25 percent quotas for women. Women's interests and the development of their political character were often postponed or sacrificed for the sake of immediate electoral agendas. It is widely known that parties' first priority is their own agenda rather than the interests of each group (Tripp and Kang, 2008; Norris and Lovenduski, 1995). Hence, it can be assumed that the selection of female candidates will be managed according to each party's priorities, while women's interests come second.

In supportive parties, on the other hand, especially when the party leaders believe in empowering women (Tripp and Kang, 2008) female members and candidates play their expected roles with confidence. In this regard, Childs and Lovenduski (2012) highlighted that "the number of women selected as legislative candidates will be determined by the interaction between the supply of applicants wishing to pursue a political career and the demands of selectors..." (Childs and Lovenduski, 2012: 8). In other words, women's candidacy depends mainly on the balance between 'supply', which is the number of women who step forward, and 'demand', which is the willingness of political parties to include more women. Norris and Lovenduski (1995) have suggested some attributes that must be considered by selectors in order to establish a sound candidate selection process. These attributes are: first, the 'preferences of the political party', second, the 'perception of abilities', third, 'qualifications' and fourth, 'perceived electability' (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995:14). Practically speaking, while candidates in established states are usually selected from "highly educated, middle class, elite women" (Childs and Lovenduski, 2012:10), in the Middle East this is not always the case. According to a report published by International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2007), this is due to the absence of legal regulations for candidate selection. It is moreover due to the newness of women's political experience in

most Arab countries, including Iraq, which results from political instability in those countries. In addition, women face additional obstacles to entering politics because of social, financial and historical circumstances.

It is worth considering that female candidates or female party members can play a significant role in advancing women's agendas (Phillips, 1995; Childs and Lovenduski, 2012). Especially if candidate selection was left entirely to the discretion of political parties such as under the gender quota mechanism in the Iraqi law. In this context, if we assume that all female candidates are fully aware of women's interests and consider these interests their first priority, this "can lead to a problem in which women legislators and activists have to choose between party and gender loyalties and developing cross-party support for issues can be difficult" (Craske, 1998:110). The problem is twofold: first, during the selection process, it must be determined whether female candidates are aware of the group's interests and able to defend them. This can be achieved through mutual recognition and the relationship between the group and its representatives, as Dovi (2002) has suggested. The second is after these female candidates have been elected, when they must balance between party loyalty and women's interests. This is probably the most challenging issue related to candidate selection in the context of gender quotas.

Empirical and regional studies show that the mechanism of gender quotas profits the interests of political parties rather than those of women as a group. Research also indicates that parties play a central role in the adoption of gender quotas. This can be for reasons of ideology, legal regulation, or "to appear modern", as Tripp and Kang (2008:340) anticipate. The other reason for party support of quotas is the advantage of getting a low-voted parliamentary seat. For example, researchers have indicated that parties that ideologically identified as leftist will usually support women's political engagement (Caul, 1999; Caul, 2001; Tripp and Kang, 2008). This thesis has observed that the impact of ideology may differ between politically developed and developing states. In the case of Iraq, political parties such as the Iraqi Communist Party were represented by a female MP who received only 1,417 votes (IHEC, 2014). The low number of votes received by this candidate would indicate that she had a poorly-developed social and political network. This example suggests that ideology, particularly on the left, is not necessarily motivated to advance women's interests, as is often claimed in the literature. It is rather the presence of mature and established systems that can

give a party's ideology a positive, purposeful role or the contrary. Bearing in mind the above example, this thesis argues that the weakness of some parties and their desperate need for high voter turnout can be the motive to recruit and support women during the candidacy procedure. Secondly, the example shows that great diversity exists between women's circumstances, expectations and achievements in different societies. Solution-providers and decision-makers therefore should take this diversity into consideration in order to avoid stereotypes or generalisations about candidacy strategies.

The other issue is that female MPs have often been viewed by voters and political parties as "second-rate politicians" or "not real parliamentarians" (Abou-Zeid, 2006) because they have not won office in their own right. Such issues have a deleterious effect on evaluating the overall progress of female candidates or MPs who have benefited from gender quotas and on women's representation in general. Women's representation has only become the subject of widespread debate in Iraq since 2003. Since then, women have been the subject of continual discussions as a disadvantaged group, one that needs urgent support in light of poverty, domestic violence and lack of education. However, women's political presence was the first to be achieved through the legislative 25 percent quotas before any academic or political debate took place. The decision to include electoral quotas for women in the Iraqi Constitution occurred in the very early stages of political transformation in the country and its early introduction contributed to the undermining of trust in women politicians.

It is worth noting that in the context of legislative gender quotas, the criteria for sound candidate selection have repeatedly been overlooked. However, Gideon Rahat (2008) has stated that "candidate selection methods are important for democracy in the same sense that electoral systems are" (Rahat, 2008:1). Moreover, the methods of candidate selection and the motivation to stand for election should both be subject to explicit specification. As the electoral selection has been left fully in the hands of selection committees, "the elected representatives will respond to the demands and grievances of their respective (s)electorates" (Rahat, 2008:2) which results in neglect of the group's interests in favour of the selectors. In this context the mechanism of quotas may work negatively due to the expression left that women's quotas have developed an alternative model candidate inferior to male candidates. This is because "uneducated women will be elected to meet the quota" according to Abou-Zeid (2006:187). These candidates in addition provide limitless effort to

convince selectors which is ultimately lowering the standards of women candidates. Consequently, the public may see the majority of 'quota MPs' as inactive and inadequate. Some women representatives had played a part in setting an example that does not serve women's interests and was sometimes deemed corrupt. This example of their inadequacy not only harms the reputation of current representatives, but also causes long-term fragility in terms of women's representation and trust.

This research underscores that qualification is the most important tool for delivering substantive representation. By qualifications, we mean political experience, party membership, public networking, a reasonable level of formal education and public speaking skills. Excepting candidates from these qualifications merely to increase the number of women in political institutions cannot be justified either theoretically or practically. Pitkin (1967) also states: "it is clear that the real question is not whether my representative looks like me – it is whether my representative is acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner responsive to me" (Phillips, 1998: 164). The main focus therefore is on how representation is delivered rather than on who is delivering it. The quality of representation is undoubtedly linked to the skills and competence of the candidates and representatives. These qualifications are the foundation for selecting candidates or representatives, especially when they are representing groups that have a history of exclusion. The process of placing women in political office, especially as legislators, therefore requires transparency and competence. Selecting female candidates should not be considered an urgent activity that takes place just before each election with the sole goal of fulfilling the legal requirements of legislative gender quotas. Only a thoughtful process accompanied by careful planning and consultation among women's groups and political parties will result in the greater inclusion of women in politics.

1.12 Conclusion

By reviewing the literature of political representation, this chapter has examined the theoretical arguments for substantive representation and the qualifications of descriptive representatives in light of gender quotas. As discussed above, representation relying on

legislative gender quotas has had a chequered relationship with the concept of representation as defined by philosophers and researchers. As we have established in this study of women's political participation in Iraq, procedures for candidate selection and the political behaviour of female MPs who benefitted from gender quotas did not deliver substantive representation as expected. It was also demonstrated that when it came to representation for women as a marginalised group in Iraq, descriptive representatives were sometimes not sufficiently competent to advance the interests of their group.

This chapter examined theories regarding representation, ideal group representatives, and the standards of good representation. The concepts, definitions and categories surrounding representation prior to the adoption of gender quotas were also discussed. This review helps us to understand how fundamental the assignment of representation is and how firmly it is linked to democratic principles. Pitkin's definition of representation as "acting in the interests of the represented", upon which this thesis primarily relies, proved a useful tool for evaluating the effectiveness of the application of gender quotas in Iraq. It has been argued as well that political representation requires in-depth discussion of how it can be delivered and who is the best to stand for the represented body. Moreover, in order to achieve substantive representation, interests must be identified and recognised by female candidates, women, and political parties. The existence of an acknowledged set of interests that are known to all can help to produce representatives who "think, feel and reason and act" (Adams, 1841) like their electorates. The representatives of groups should understand, defend and advance their groups' interests. And tendencies to depart from or overlook the standards of representation or representatives only to increase the number of descriptive representatives may result in increasing the number of delegates with no substantive representation. Therefore, the model of preferable descriptive representation was discussed as a solution for overcoming the political exclusion of certain groups such as women and delivering substantive representation.

2 Chapter Two: Research Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the methodical and technical aspects of the entire thesis. For the academic and systematic purpose, this research is aiming to employ both qualitative and quantitative methods. The mixed methods approach helps to draw a clearer picture of the impact of gender quotas on women's representation in Iraq. However, due to a scarcity of academic statistics regarding the circumstances of women in Iraq in general and their political participation in particular, qualitative methods are prioritised. Some of the challenges facing this research, however, can be summarised in two aspects; first researching a conceptual topic such as quality and qualification, mainly drawing from analysing the current circumstances which requires non-traditional data collection. The second aspect is the studied area is immature based on the current conditions of Iraq and shortness of time since the adoption of legislative gender quotas. Therefore, this thesis is aiming to make use of the most possible techniques such as elite's interviews, focus group interviews and quantitative data. This thesis has been designed as an "Outcome Evaluation Research" (Donleyand Grauerholz ,2012) in order to acknowledge and observe the Impact of the 25% gender quotas on substantive representation in Iraq.

The main source of qualitative data is the semi-structured elites' interviews. This type of interviewing assists the research with inner circle perception. More importantly politicians and decision-makers' conversation makes the main source to understand the circumstances of suggestion and adoption the mechanism of gender quotas in 2004 and 2005. The politician interviewees have been selected based on their involvement in the post-2003 early days' political activities such as being a member of the constitutional drafting committee in 2004-2005. MPs interviewees have been selected based on their availability and willingness to talk about the political character of female MPs and the political behaviour of political parties towards women's presence in the parliament. Moreover, the procedure of candidate selection as one of the engines of substantive representation is one of the main topics to be observed through the debate with politician interviewees. Academic interviewees were presenting the other side of elites' views regarding the impact of political experience and

qualification in delivering substantive representation. Most interviewees have been approached in person or through mutual friends in order to arrange the appointments. However, some of them have not attended due to personal issues which required finding alternatives.

Beside that four focus groups; teachers, journalists and housewives have been chosen to feed the research with the grassroots' perception regarding the experience of gender quotas in this country. The two teachers' groups have been approached through a charity organisation that works with women and children in the middle and southern Iraq. The female journalists' group have been suggested and asked to attend the debate by a friend male journalist who leads a TV and radio channel. The housewives' group have been selected randomly regardless of age and their levels of education in order to include views from a group that often have not been heard. The mechanism of gender quotas has been designed to change the current situation of women; therefore, listening to their views at variety of levels is needed for this research. The strategy of researching the legislative gender quotas in the Iraqi parliament as a social-political concept will be discussed in the upcoming titles; Iraqi women as a case study, mixed methods, qualitative approach, quantitative approach and more topics in relation to technical aspects of this thesis.

2.2 Gender Quotas in Iraq

The choice of women's representation in Iraq as the central theme of this research is to provide an example of women status in a Middle Eastern, Muslim and mixed-ethnicity states. In terms of limitation of opportunities, Iraqi women have experienced being ruled by a long-term dictatorship that to some extent has similarities with other regimes in the region. This similarity may shade lights on the women's circumstances in the surrounding area. The other reason behind selecting Iraq, compared with other Arab states, this country has witnessed the most prominent movement towards democratisation. After multiple unsuccessful public attempts to overthrow the Ba'th regime, in 2003 by a direct interference of the International Coalition the political system has been changed (Tripp '2007; Dawisha, 2009; Makiya, 2013). Ten years later the so-called Arab Spring started in Tunisia, Egypt and Syria.

To narrow the focus of the research area, case studies provide a pragmatic view to support the theoretical framework or otherwise. Denzin and Lincoln (1998: 87) demonstrate that "A case study is both the process of learning about the case and the product of our learning". This explanation of the purpose of a case study confirms the significance of this method in terms of presenting academically established data. In addition, it will contribute in developing a new way of understanding of the researched topic. This case study, despite it leaning on a short history and practically immature experience, would assist in developing a general understanding with regard to women representation and how it has been reviewed till now. This study along with other regional and local studies may provide a closer and clearer picture of the current circumstances. Generalisation would be avoided and, consequently, vanished as much as possible when multiple regional case studies have been offered. Methodological researchers have warned that the generalised outcomes may shift the focus from the case in hand leading to neglect of some important details for the price of generalisation (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Although the strategies of studying each case seem similar to each other by utilising theoretically established methods, "the end result regularly presents something unique" as Stake (1998: 90) emphasises. The uniqueness, he adds, comes from some features including "the nature of the case" and "its historical background" (Stake, 1998: 90). Hence, the final touches of the researcher that make each work is exclusive within the circle of the widely-recognised set of methods.

It is worth mentioning that, from a statistical perspective, women consist of 49 percent of the population of Iraq according to the World Bank statistics in 2017 (accessed December 2017). As such, almost half of the society has been often excluded from most engagements in the political system during the last 30 years before 2003. After the fall of the Ba'th regime, there were attempts to transform women's political engagement into practical steps rather than merely intellectual. With those democratic principles being made more applicable, women's participation in politics became more central. In chapter four, this thesis is aiming to answer the question of who the key player in was advancing the issue of women's under-representation and how the legislative gender quotas have been included in the Iraqi Constitution of 2005.

Researchers have highlighted that "often the case [its history and complexity] is an important context for understanding what is studied" (Kvale, 2007: xi). Thus, the experience

of this country and its women in particular will be analysed with regard to the similarities with other surrounding aspects such as religion, language and the political system. This case study, moreover, may offer a purposeful paper in relation with dissimilarities such as jurisprudence schools, ethnic diversity and a history of women's political participation in this country. For example, the first woman minister in the Arab world was Iraqi; Al-Dulaimi in 1959 (Al-Ali, 2009) whereas in the neighbouring state of Kuwait, women have received the right to vote only in 2005 (BBC, 17 May 2005). Indeed, this research is implicitly willing to improve the general knowledge of the similarities as well as dissimilarities regarding women in this particular country and the region.

2.3 The Research Methods

This research, based on the established methodological arguments, initially employs qualitative techniques such as semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. This is in order to offer a "deeper understanding of social phenomena" (Silverman 2005:112) such as women's political representation. Traditionally, the interviewing method has been long used, back to ancient Greek. Though, in the last three centuries it has obtained a significant role in social science (Kvale, 2007). Hence, semi-structured, face-to-face, interviews will be utilised in this thesis. Interviewing elites; politicians and academics plays the backbone source of collected data in terms of first-hand information and the chronology of political activities. The aftermath of Saddam's regime's political events and actions are still not systematically recorded or published especially the early years after 2003. Therefore, most of the data have not been made available for reviewing and researching yet. Hence, debates and interviewing play the core foundations for the information as well as views.

As for this research, semi-structured, 'elite interviews' (Lamont, 2015:84) will be the main applied methods for a multiple reason:

(1) Data collection comes in the first stand. Therefore, the open questions have been utilised in order to avoid limiting the flow of thoughts of interviewees. In addition, semi-structured questions give the opportunity to increase the chance of collecting more

information and insights offered by this type of open debates (Donley and Grauerholz, 2012) in order to fill in the gap. In the same vein, this study can be described as cross-sectional in terms of interviewing as these people would be only interviewed once. On the other hand, the other type of data such as the female MPs parliamentary behaviour is constantly collected which can be classified as longitudinal according to the study of Donley and Grauerholz (2012).

(2) The aim of implementation of the semi-structured face to face interviews is "to learn from the data" (Richards, 2015:104) by exploring the interviewee's experience and their approach to the problem (Mathews and Ross, 2010). It is, moreover, to gradually build up the argument of this research and construct our "site of knowledge" (Kvale, 2007: 21) related to the circumstances of adoption of gender quotas. Contrary to the closed questions, the open-ended questions are "useful for exploring new areas or ones in which the researcher has limited knowledge" (Bryman, 2012:247) such as the circumstances of suggestion and adoption of gender quotas in this research. In the same context, theoretically it has been highlighted that semi-structured interviews offer the interviewee the prospect "to probe beyond the answers and thus enter into a dialogue with the interviewee" (May 2011:134).

(3) The democratic transformations in Iraq including the enforcement of gender quotas are still not received enough academic review. Therefore, it was essential to employ the technique of semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions to explore this researching area and gather supplementary data. These facts or observations collected from the interviewees can be hired to challenge or develop precise focused conversation with other interviewees as Morgan (2014) has suggested. The qualitative interviews, therefore, work in the area between a "collection of facts" and "construction of knowledge" (Kvale, 2007: 22). While the other types of data such as official records or published researches about this case study are still seldom so Open-ended questions may bring up more needed information and open up more inquiries.

(4) For the similar purpose, the semi-structured interviews are employed in order to avoid widening the area of conversation, which therefore can cause some topics to be missed or left out as can be the case with unstructured questions. Moreover, the control of the conversation as well as the freedom of analysing the data remains in the hand of the

researcher (Kvale, 2007; May, 2011) when the semi-structured qualitative approach applied. During the experience of fieldwork, in many occasions especially when the focus group interviews were conducted the action was required to limit the debate within the topic otherwise the talk would be time-consuming and out of control.

However, answers from the qualitative interviews are subject to social status, psychological and political agendas of the interviewees. Therefore, the interviewees have been selected according to their career, positions and interests. They have been asked if they are voluntarily disclosing their political and religious affiliation. This is in order to acknowledge the viewpoint of religious, secular or nationalist political parties in Iraq. This certainly requires the researcher to sharpen their researching skills in order "to develop critical yet productive and creative ways of thinking and doing" (Mason 2002:4) while showing a good level of awareness (May, 2011). Based on this theoretical approach the question of sectarian belonging has been avoided due to the sensitivity related to this aspect in the Iraqi society. The other reason is the sectarian affiliation among focus group interviewees would not be of benefit of the research.

In terms of the number of interviewees researchers highlighted that there is no strict figure that needs to follow, "interview as many subjects as necessary to find out what you need to know " Kvale (2007:43) stated. However, it has been indicated that between 15 and 25 interviews usually is common (Kvale, 2007). Therefore, for this research, the estimated number of interviewees was twenty; ten politicians, current or former decision-makers including members of the Iraqi Constitutional Drafting Committee founded in 2004. The insight of the politicians highlights the surrounding circumstances during the writing up of the Iraqi Constitution and the inclusion of gender quotas. For instance, the outcome may reflect who had the greatest influence to pass this law and who was with or against it. What was happening in the backstage during this event is still unknown and publicly unavailable. Therefore, the intertwining was a crucial necessity for this research. In relation to the geographic aspect of whereabouts to conduct these interviews, three places have been selected. Baghdad as capital city and the main sources of politicians and political activities as the Iraqi political system is single federal based on the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 (constituproject.org, 2019). The cities of Najaf and Nasiriya are both accessible, safe and interviewees were approachable due to my social and political network.

To understand the surrounding sphere of including women's quotas in the Iraqi Constitution, the elite interviewees will be asked whether enough exploration has been carried out before applying this mechanism. They will also be asked whether women members of the Constitution Committee had a significant impact in this event. Moreover, between 2005 and 2016 do they see that special arrangement of legal gender quota was effective in increasing women's presence in parliament, if so, is the turnout has significance in terms of enactment of women's interests? The interviews will include a query of whether the mechanism of positive discrimination is able to produce a significant balance between females and males in political representation. More importantly, whether such legislation has made or will make a future change in relation to parity in the social and psychological structure of the current Iraqi society.

Some academics, NGOs and civil servants who work or are interested in women's rights have been included in the interviewees list. The choice of academics here came to solicit the views of non-decision-makers who are aware of the political development to guarantee neutrality to some extent. The selected list of interviewees includes both; women and men in order to offer opinions on the gender-neutral basis. Although it is a matter of feminist agenda, it can be argued whether we agree or not that the decision-making process is still a masculine profession (Squires, 1999). Thus, the views of male interviewees are essential to illustrate this area of this research.

In order to achieve the "triangulation within methods" as Denzin (1970) called it, which distinguishes it from "triangulation between methods" (cited in Marsh and Stoker 2002:237), the second qualitative method is the focus group interviews. Both; within methods and between methods will be utilised in this research. In terms of the focus group, it has been indicated that the employment of this "useful [techniques] is to guard against misinforming your readers on the basis of an interview in which the participant knowingly provides misleading answers" (Lamont 2015:79) which possibly occurs during the individual's interview. It can be assumed, questioning a focus group consisting of individuals who do not hold a certain political agenda or shared political interests would be more transparent. It, possibly, varies with individuals' insights (May, 2011). It gives us the opportunity to compare the collected data from groups and elites and how both sides review the legislative gender quotas in the Iraqi Parliament up to now. Politician interviewees may consider giving

"misleading answers" (Lamont, 2015) with perhaps additional propaganda purposes, especially if the topic is related to women rights. However, some researchers argued that "the data derived from interviews are not simply 'accurate' or 'distorted' pieces of information" (May, 2011: 159). Utilising different types of interviewing methods, nevertheless, widens the area of analysis. It, also, offers room to various evaluations with regard to controversial topics such as the experience of women's representation in a transitional system like Iraq.

The outcome from the focus group is, moreover, "may facilitate expression of viewpoints usually not accessible" (Kvale, 2007:72). Hence, the plan of this research is that four groups of women formed of different age ranges will be interviewed. They would be selected based on their career; hence each group shares the similarity in the position due to the technical possibility to have them together in the same place. However, they presumably hold different political and social points of views which would serve triangulation. Donley and Grauerholz (2012) suggested that focus group participants "have at least one thing in common" (2012: 46). Therefore, the female teachers' group, for instance, may share same interests and concerns regarding their workplace, salary, child care and discrimination, but have diversity in social and political backgrounds. In this context, groups will be asked whether women quotas have any impact, during the last ten years, positively or negatively on women's interests as a group or individuals. For example, they will be asked whether they are aware of any legal changes due to women's presence in the political institutions such as parliament. This helps this research to analyse the relationship between the positive discrimination arrangement and the substantive representation. The interviews will, also, discuss if women would be able to get access to political institutions without need for the legal quotas. This approach benefits this thesis for any amendment suggestions can be made for the conclusion.

It is worth noting, as mentioned earlier, the interviewed groups were usually from grassroots and working class and have no direct impact on decision-making however, as they are the group who is targeted by the legal gender quotas they can be counted as 'stakeholders' (Donley and Grauerholz, 2012) in any policy concerns women's issues. Conducting focus group interviews has two advantages. Firstly; their views may "bring forth different viewpoints" (Kvale, 2007:72) for the topic of this research. Secondly these non-decision-makers reflect the view of some voters or audience women who may play a role in polling turnout. The focus groups are to be formed from six to ten people, as the interviewing

literature suggests (May, 2011; Donley and Grauerholz, 2012). They are teachers, journalists and housewives. Teachers are reflecting the middle class with a medium level of education at the same time they are in direct connection with families and their concerns. They could provide a realistic picture of problems and achievements related to women and families. The choice of journalists came as they are in regular engagement with female politicians, legal development of women's political engagements in political activities. Their views help in developing our perception related to the political behaviour of female politicians and MPs especially public speaking skills, communication and independence or dependence in terms of political and legal opinions. The third group, housewives, have been added to the list of interviewees because they are, rarely, involved in any systematic or academic debates. Therefore, they have the right to express their views regarding a legal arrangement that initially has been put in place to maintain the long-term exclusion of women and improve their situation.

It is the observations of the interviewees both decision-makers and non-decision-makers would shape the final framework approach of this thesis as Morgan (2014) suggests. However, as this piece of research focuses on how the legislative parliamentary gender quotas have been working so far, the type of the study can be categorised as an "Outcome Evaluation Research" based on the researching categories provided by Donley and Grauerholz (2012). Evaluation research has been defined by these researchers as it "focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of programs and policies" and it "determines if there was a positive change as a result of implemented program or policy" (Donley and Grauerholz, 2012:55and 61). This type of researching dynamic seems harmonising with the theme of this thesis. It aims to deconstruct the experience of legislative gender quotas in the last fifteen years, looking at the outcome through evaluating the act of beneficiaries of this policy both women and political parties.

It is worth noting here, that the question of this thesis relies on initial observations that require developing in either way; against or with, through consulting reviews of decision makers and women as a targeted group of the study. Donley and Grauerholz (2012) have called this way of building up the argument "inductive research" which mainly relies on observation rather than theoretical framework as in "deductive research" (Donleyand Grauerholz, 2012: 8-9).Hence, the employment of methodological triangulation in this

research, as mentioned above, relies on eliciting the views of interviewees regarding the experience of women representation during the period between 2006 (first election with effect of gender quotas) and 2016 (the date interviews conducted) in Iraq. The qualitative semi-structured interviews for both; groups and individuals would be functioned as a core method. The questions will be in open-ended qualitative structure according to the strategy of the thesis. While the quantitative data such as number of legislations achieved or the amount of political activities would be employed as supplementary methods based on Morgan's (2014) suggestion in this context.

2.4 Mixed Methods

This thesis discusses aspects related to women's representation in the context of gender quotas. To study such epistemological and practical aspects for academic purposes it is essential to make use of the most available techniques and mechanisms. Researchers have highlighted that "every successful research project requires two things: a meaningful research question and an appropriate way to answer that question" (Morgan, 2014: 59). Accordingly, the Mixed Methods strategy has been employed to answer the question of this thesis which compares the descriptive and substantive representation in light of gender quotas. Mixed methods according to Bryman (2012) support the 'triangulation', 'offset' and 'competence' of the research. This strategy has been identified "as simple shorthand to stand for research that integrates quantitative and qualitative research within a single project" (Bryman, 2012:628). Therefore, this research has the capacity to employ Qual-Quan strategy. This is to serve the hypothesis of this thesis which is the possibility that legislative parliamentary gender quota does not work equally wherever and whenever employed. Working on such a challenging approach, which swims against the current trend, requires and has the capacity of integrating both methods.

For example, answering the question of how female MPs beneficiaries of gender quotas acted so far requires two lines of answers. First is consulting opinions which can be collected through qualitative discussions. The other answer, likely, found in reviewing the available quantitative data from parliamentary records and statistics related to women's political and

legislative activities. This, what has been called by researchers as "to study different things and to answer different questions" (Marsh and Stoker, 2002: 231) through employing "numerical and narrative" (Plowright, 2011: 17) data for an academic research. Both types of sources complete each other especially when both of them are not academically established prior to this research. It is worth considering that some methodology theorists have indicated that sometimes, finding a sharp distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods is challenging (Dey, 1993). Nevertheless, the quantitative data will be employed in this research to strengthen the qualitative data rather than two types of data working in parallel. "Sequential contribution" as Morgan (2014) called it clarifies the relation between both methods as one of them is the master and the other is the assistant. While the other two types of connections between traditional methods are either "convergent" which both are equally used or "additional" which one adds to another one (Morgan, 2014: 10).

The quantitative approach was a dominant method in the social sciences for a long period and has been described as a 'legitimate' and 'scientific' technique (Marsh and Stoker, 2002: 236; Mason 2002:2; Plowright, 2011). Nevertheless, the problem that faces this research was the scarcity of academic statistics and official data in this particular academic context. The last census in Iraq, for example, was conducted in 1997 and the Ministry of Planning has since struggled to update it (Ministry of Planning, 2014) due to divisions in the political agendas. In this context this piece of research will analyse the existing data in order to pinpoint whether the legal quotas have a significant impact on women's circumstances or not. Unluckily, the numerical data belonging to the legislative and political behaviour of female MPs is infrequent especially at the local level. It does, however, provide some scientific sense as numbers still have significance in social sciences (Donely and Grauerholz, 2012).

Although the trend of researching in social science nowadays turned to be more qualitative, the researchers demonstrate "Quantities are not the end of understanding, but they can be the beginning" (Donely and Grauerholz, 2012: 17). This is especially the case when the intention to make a comparison between two concepts such as quality or quantity of representation. At this stage, this thesis examines women's political participation by visiting these accessible databases such as: World Bank Statistics, Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU), UN Women, Legal Archive of Iraqi Parliament, Department of Human Development Statistic 2014 / Iraqi Ministry of Planning. However, these sources offer 'intervening variables' which

usually serve a second data, focusing on surrounding circumstances rather than the independent or dependent variables according to Donley and Grauerholz (2012: 102). The disadvantage of using data from the above-mentioned sources is that it has been conducted for different purposes other than the topic of this research. Therefore, a little can be found which is connected to the theme of this study.

By employing mixed methods, this research is aiming to reach an impartial and pragmatic conclusion. Lamont explains how the "mixed methods research should provide a powerful methods tool that allows for researchers to make their finding more robust" (Lamont 2015:113). As each method serves the other one (Marsh and Stoker 2002) in order to come up with as scientific a conclusion as possible. Combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies however causes some complexities and makes researching more challenging. However, "a definitive version of reality" (Silverman 2005:121) that every researcher is willing to conclude with, remains associated with numerous in-depth researching tools, and not only one. By the same token, mixed methods should be employed as well, in order to theorise social perspectives especially when dealing with various cultures. The "methodological triangulation" (Silverman 2005:121, Rosnow and Rosenthal, 2005: 85, Bryman 2012), moreover, entails questioning the existing data and official records such as the archive of the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq to achieve the required accuracy and impartiality. Utilising different methods would "broaden, thicken, and deepen the interpretive base" (Denzin, 1989: 247) in order to serve developing a coherent and non-biased (Donley and Grauerholz, 2012) conclusion. For example, the general perception related to gender quotas worldwide that it often comes as a result of women mobilisation effort. This research finds that the decision of inclusion of the legal gender quotas is political and has been put in place by the international community's suggestion. The differences in the views of among elites and non-elite interviewees related to the impact of gender quotas on advancing women's interests is another example of significance of triangulation here.

Although, it has been stated that mixed methods strategy has been in use for more than 80 years, Fetters (2016) Bryman (2012) have indicated that since 1980s a significant attention has been paid to the importance of mix method describing "Qual-Quan" strategy "as the third and most beneficial category of mixed method"(Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010:221). Therefore, employing both methods widens our perception of this topic as "there is no sharp

division between what you may hear referred to as 'qual' and 'quant' research" (Richards, 2015:41). Combining both methods strengthen the collected data (Bryman, 2012; Donley and Grauerholz, 2012) and subsequently our conclusions regarding a complex topic such as women's representation. There were three methods for combining quantitative and qualitative data that were highlighted by researchers; "convergent, additional and sequential" (Morgan, 2014:67) contributions. The purpose of employment of sequential contribution has been concluded as "the goal is to use the result of one method to enhance the performance of another" (Morgan, 2014:78). The aim of using this strategy in this research is to support the qualitative analysis through employing quantitative data. It is worth considering that the amount of collected data for the benefit of this study does not look equal and balanced as the quantitative sources are significantly low.

2.5 Limitations

This research as mentioned previously faces dearth of academic sources in relation to women representation in Iraq. Therefore, functioning mixed methods helps avoid the miscalculation (Donley and Grauerholz, 2012) due to the limitation in the sources. Moreover, to offset the weakness of each method as combining qualitative and quantitative methods reduces "the biases associated with each method" (Bryman, 2012:637). It has been assumed that mix methodology would help decrease the technical difficulties that confront this thesis as "Mixed Methods Research makes it possible to do things that would be more difficult or even impossible to accomplish by operating solely…" (Morgan, 2014:57). Based on this view the Qual-Quan method has been employed to surpass the expected and unexpected difficulties.

These complications can be listed as following: (1) the deficiency of trustworthy sources. The academic researchers are still limited in relation to women's representation in general and the Iraqi legislative gender quotas in particular. Moreover, during the 1980s and 1990s while Iraq was under pressure of wars and economic sanctions the scientific development including follow up of communication technology was significantly slow. Therefore, most research and books are still available in a printed physical form rather than digital. This makes

the searching and researching is challenging and needs personal visits to each library or university.

(2) In relation to the insufficiency of the political data available for researching is that in the Middle East and Arab countries in particular, the traditions of political biographies or political literature are still uncommon and often unavailable. In other words, it became tradition in the West that almost all politicians write their biographies which provides libraries and political literature with information and insights from the inner circle. This tradition is rarely seen in the political field of the most Arab and Middle Eastern states. What is usually available in the book market are translated biographies for Western politicians or articles usually written by authors other than the politician themselves. However, in the course of the research, it has been revealed that the record of meetings of the Constitutional Drafting Committee would be made public soon and can be accessed for researching purposes. Two reasons can be speculated regarding not making these papers available for public till now; first politicians who participated in those early day's activities after April 2003, are still in the decision-making circle. They, probably, are not willing to talk explicitly about those circumstances because of the potential conflicts of political interests. Therefore, we try through these interviews to determine some missing information because we cannot predict in advance what we may acquire from the collected data (Richards, 2015). In this case, the interviews would acquire the status of "factual" as Kvale (2007) has labelled it.

(3) In the context of fieldwork there are some issues that can be addressed here too. Despite all previously mentioned advantages of interviewing it can be of some challenges. For example, talking to elite politicians is more challenging than the academics and focus groups. Interviewing politicians who are still involved in political activities and hold decision-making positions requires avoiding confrontations along with a high level of knowledge in the researching area. It is worth noting that most interviewed politicians are still holding positions in the Iraqi politics. This makes them cautious and careful of any problematic comments. Focus group interviews, on the other hand, were conducted in a more comfortable and straightforward atmosphere as all groups' interviewees are non-decision-makers and have no concerns regarding the political agendas.

(4) Another technical issue is the collected data especially the interviews will be in Arabic. Managing data therefore, will not be a straightforward job as transcription of the recorded interviews and translating it is time consuming. According to the plan of this study the voice-recorded interviews will be transferred into Arabic written text. The only important part will be translated into English in order to be used directly in chapters four and five.

2.6 Qualitative Approach

The academic engagement with different questions and different approaches (Marsh and Stoker, 2002) are one of the main reasons behind utilising qualitative methods in this research. The qualitative data has been defined as "records of observation or intention that are complex and contexed, and they are not easily reduced immediately to numbers" (Richards 2015:38). It is, initially, a method of collecting facts or information in a way other than numerical figures (Rosnow and Rosenthal, 2005; Donley and Grauerholz, 2012). However, theorists are more concerned about the intention of using the qualitative method. The qualitative strategy has been framed as the intention "to approach the world 'out there' and to understand, describe and sometimes explain social phenomena 'from the inside' in a number of different ways…" (Kvale, 2007: x).

The second reason behind the employment of qualitative methods is to illuminate the intellectual framework of the research. It is worth noting that researching a social-political concept -such as women's representation- often accompanied with complexity that may not be served by systematic or empirical method (May, 2011). The "narrative" (Plowright, 2011) method may better serve qualitative analysis rather than through statistical evidence. In the same vein Lamont (2015) stats that "qualitative methods is meant here to describe the diverse set of tools and resources that we can draw upon to collect and analyse data that comes in the form of the spoken or written language and is not formalized into numbers" (Lamont 2015:78). Although numbers play a significant role in serving some aspects of this research, the "contextual data" (Donley and Grauerholz, 2012:8) needs to be qualitatively analysed.

The other ground for employing qualitative methods is this research, primarily, depending upon the notion of women's representation, which at the same time plays a key role in the theory of feminism. Feminism, in the realm of social sciences, has utilised qualitative methodologies (Rosnow and Rosenthal, 2005) and it has also contributed to this field to become one of its central pillars. Mason (2002) argued that "[feminism] has indeed had an enormous impact in its challenge to conventional scientific discourse, and in establishing the agenda for a whole range of issues which are now seen as central to qualitative research" (Mason 2002:3). While this research can be categorised as political in its wide context rather than feminist, it employs research tools that are applied in both; politics and feminism. It is not, however, purely a feminist study due to the employment of two comprehensive concepts: representation and qualification, that both are political concepts rather than feminists. On the other hand, this research has a relation with feminist studies through investigating women's representation as a marginalised group and the impact of societal perspectives on women's political participation. However, some feminist researchers have accused the traditional methodology of being masculine (Harding, 1987). Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) have found that traditional methodology which employs either quantitative or qualitative unreliable to feminist researching trend. They have presumed that mixed methods as modern strategy is more dynamic for the purpose of feminist studies (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010).

Through analysing four case studies Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) observed the weight of dialogue by applying mixed methods to serve feminist researching aims. They have highlighted three dimensions: "(a) confront our assumption (especially traditional assumptions concerning the role of women in society), (b) suspend judgment, and (c) internally listen as a means toward building a new set of shared assumptions and culture" (2010:188). In this statement, the three recommended rules would serve the aim of this research by redirecting the focus of women studies from quantitative to qualitative representation. Building on the social act and consequently the endorsement of law, such as legal gender quotas, on traditional assumptions, is one of the main concerns of this research. Therefore, constant dialogue between three pillars: public, researchers and decision-makers, benefits feminism theories and subsequently the development of women's presence in political and social spheres. Accordingly, mixed methods offer instruments to explore the

credibility of prejudgments and presumed assumptions regarding any social event especially women's on-going matters.

2.7 Coding

In terms of coding, theorists have suggested that categorising raw data is a core step in order to prepare it for analysis (Bryman, 2012; Bhattacherjee, 2012; Donley and Grauerholz, 2012. Collected data from the semi-structured individuals and focus groups interviews as well as other qualitative and quantitative materials will be thematically coded. "Open coding", one of the three types of coding -open, axial and selective- mentioned by Anol Bhattacherjee (2012) will be employed in this thesis. Most interviewees have agreed for their names to be disclosed, but few of them asked for anonymity. Therefore, all interviewees will be identified in chapter four and five with their first name. Focus groups will be labelled by their profession.

Analysing the collected data is the main challenge for researchers while it is the best way to reveal the credibility of the collected data. This occurs according to Donley and Grauerholz (2012) when the data thoroughly analysed, with researchers keeping the distance between personal views and the discourse of the collected data. Moreover, the "evaluation research" (Bryman, 2012:57) is challenging and subject to cautious and precise conclusions. As David Morgan (2014) has argued that employing methodological theories cover both; data collection and the evaluation of collected data. Based on this argument the collected data from all methodological activities through the process of researching would be qualitatively evaluated in the argument chapters. The weighting of concepts such as qualitative political representation of women is a non-numerical concept to be merely investigated and evaluated through statistical approaches. Therefore, in the process of data analysing the content of interviews would be the key source. However, for the purpose of this research the content will be studied considering the surrounding social, political and historical circumstances. Hence based on methodical categories elaborated by Bhattacherjee (2012) the Sentiment Analysis would be employed. This type of content analysis has been defined as "a technique used to capture people's opinion or attitude toward an object, person or phenomenon" (Bhattacherjee, 2012: 116). As the ground of utilising interviewing methods is data collection

and observing the views of interviewees, sentiment content analysis seems more reliable for the purpose of collecting facts and views from the textual and vocal materials.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the plan and the design of this piece of research, trying to offer a systematic picture in relation to its strategy in order to reach a purposeful conclusion. Mixed methodology has been employed to achieve triangulation of the outcome. However, prioritising qualitative methods is consistent with the epistemological nature of the focus of this research. Studying the impact of legislative gender quotas on the quality of women's representation in Iraq provides a concrete assessment with drawing the focus toward one specific geopolitical case. To avoid generalisation and pre-planned judgments in relation to employment of gender quotas, theoretically approved techniques have been employed. This research claims by highlighting the pros and cons of the case of women's quotas in the Iraqi Parliament -along with other case studies- will offer more reliable evaluation with regard to women representation in general. A mixed method plan provides the procedural strategy to reach this aim and fill in the gap of lack of sources. The challenge of sources entails utilising every available data from qualitative or quantitative sources. The problems and challenges in relation to the transcription of the interviews and the transparency of the debates have been addressed in this chapter too. However, data analysis relies more on qualitative analysis due to the nature of the topic. Based on the theoretical framework discussed in this chapter, mixed methods provide a wide platform to answer the questions of this thesis. For instance, some research questions regarding the political behaviour of female MPs beneficiaries from the legislative gender quotas ought to be qualitatively answered and will be inevitably qualitatively analysed. While other questions in relation to the quantity of legislations or laws have been set forward in order to advance women's interests could mainly rely on quantifiable data.

This chapter has highlighted the purpose, the aim and the expected outcome of the strategy of this research. The drive of employing the mechanism of interviewing elites and focus groups has been elaborated too. The chapter has highlighted the significance of this

method in enriching the outcome of this piece of research. Pragmatically, the experience of individuals as interviewee let it be a politician, academic or interested observer would, generously, contribute to the supplementary sources of this research. Women groups' interviews, though, overall numerically low; they offer the minimised picture of the audience's observation with regard to legislative gender quotas. The enquiry of this research would be enriched with the integrating of methods as gap filler of insufficiency of solo method.

3 Chapter Three: Iraqi Women and Political Experience; Ba'th and Beyond

3.1 Introduction

Compared with other regional and Middle Eastern countries, Iraq had witnessed unusual circumstances from the 1960s to 1990s. The constant political changes during these forty years dragged the country under a cumulative social, political and financial collapse. This certainly has its own direct and indirect impact on women's status in general and their political engagement in particular. The chapter, therefore, will answer the question of why women in this country have had low levels of participation in most of the political activities especially at decision-making level. The focus here will be on the historical events and the chronology of the last thirty years leading to 2003. The period of 2003 onward, mainly the circumstances of adopting gender quotas, will be the focus of the main body of the study in chapters four and five. Notably, women in Iraq have had a promising level of political experience during the 1950s, 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s such as nominating females for top positions. Nevertheless, the latter decades witnessed a dramatic drop in the whole political system in this country. Women, whether being part of feminist or political movements or as individuals, were affected directly and indirectly by these comprehensive changes. As a result, there was a decline in women's presence at the political institutions with the exception of small groups loyal to the Ba'th regime.

This part of the research will study factors such as dictatorship, ideology, development, the UN's economic sanctions and their impact on women's political participation in general and political representation in particular. This chapter will contribute to the general understanding of the political features of this country. How the political system in Iraq was built and how the lack of stability led this country to lose some significant achievements rather than mastering them under the Ba'th's government (1963-2003). Due to the lengthy, complex and numerous historical events during the Ba'th ruling period, this chapter has been allocated to detail them and draw attention towards their impact on the social and political traditions related to women status. Most of the historical events mentioned in this chapter are not for merely chronological purpose. The main objective is to introduce them as highly

influential variables on the political character of the country -women in particular- and avoid repetition in the upcoming chapters.

3.2 From Monarchy to a Shapeless Republic

It looks common during the 1940s and 1950s for many countries in the Arab world to witness political changes such as transit from monarchy to a republic or from colonialism to independence (Al-Jawaheri, 2008; Milestone, accessed January 2018). Considering these usual changes during those days, Iraq was an arena for a bloodshed transfer from monarchy to the republican system with the Iraqi royal family massacre on 14 July 1958. When British colonial administration handed the ruling of Iraq over to the Iraqis, King Feisal (r. 1921-1933) was the chosen ruler for the new formed state. The history remembers this king with respect due to his intellectual openness (Dawisha, 2009). He was inspired by modernity and the experience of other nations (Rush, 2014, The Guardian, 2017). During the period of 1920s, women's statue was significantly developed by gaining some achievements with regard to education, health and freedom (Dougherty and Ghareeb, 2013; Hussein, 2017). In the Iraqi constitution of 1924, in Articles 5 to 18, women and men were mentioned equally with regard to their civil and political rights (Hussein, 2017).

Bearing in mind that the first school for girls was opened in Baghdad in 1899 (Dougherty and Ghareeb, 2013) women gained access into the secondary level in 1929 for the first time. At the higher education level, a college for girls under the name of 'Institution of Teaching' opened in 1923 by the Iraqi government. Female students, furthermore, have been sent abroad to get higher degrees (Hussein, 2017). Another step was issuing a journal (*Laila*) in 1923 which was engaged with women issues for the first time in the Iraqi history (Neshat, 2003; Hussein, 2017). The first driving license for a female driver issued in 1936 (Itp.gov.iq, 2018). Therefore, steps had already been taken towards advancing women's rights during the constitutional monarchy, although they were limited to the major cities; Baghdad, Mosul and Basra and women from the upper and middle class (Dougherty and Ghareeb, 2013). Century-long achievements of women in Iraq looks advanced when compared with women's status in the surrounding countries such as Gulf States. However, with the spread of communism and

secularism during the 1930s and 1940s, the monarchy system was under attack, charged with being conservative and backward. Despite all efforts offered by the kings to urbanise the life in Iraq including education and health, there was a widespread supply to overthrow the monarchy system. Military officers were the leaders of this movement beside the Iraqi Communist Party and the Arab nationalists (Al-Jawaheri, 2008).

The transition from the forty-year monarchy into the republican system was accompanied with violence such as murder of King Faisal II, his uncle Prince Abdul al- Ilah, his mother and other female and male family members (Wheeler, 1959; Dougherty and Ghareeb, 2013). The military officer Abdul Kareem Qasim and his officer colleagues took over the governing institutions declaring the establishment of the Republic of Iraq. Since the coup of 1958 and the wide wave of killing of the supporters of the monarchy including the Iraqi Prime Minister at the time Nuri Al-Said (1888-1958) in 1958 (Dawisha, 2009), life in Iraq started to be militarised. Nonetheless, the Qasim's governing period from 1958 to 1963 (Al-Zubaidi, 2013; Tripp, 2007) has been publicly considered as a period of socialism and change of financial balance in favour of grassroots upon wealthy class. This was achieved by distributing some lands to poor people (Al-Jawaheri, 2008) accompanied by asceticism and humbleness of Qasim himself which found wide satisfaction among the public. However, this regime did not take steps toward democratisation such as conducting elections at the national or local levels. The slogans of the Qasim's revolution, such as radical change of the administrative and political changes, soon vanished (Tripp, 2007). Furthermore, after a short period Qasim started to severely attack his opponents who were passionate supporters of his coup, the Iraqi Communist Party, for example (Dawisha, 2009). The promising five-year period of fundamental change turned to be a single-ruler (Tripp, 2007) and the "sole leader" system (Dawisha, 2009).

With regard to women's political engagement and as a gesture of political development, Naziha Al-Dulaimi (1923-2007) was appointed as a Minister of Municipalities and State between 1959 and 1960 (Al-Zubaidi, 2013). She graduated as a medical doctor during the monarchy era. This activist was the first female to be a minister not only in Iraq but amongst the Arab and regional states, too (Hussain, 2017). During this period, the Personal Status Law number 188 was issued including a significant level of parity in areas such as divorce, marriage and right of custody. Al-Dulaimi herself was a member of the writing committee of the

Personal Status Law issued in December 1959 (Dougherty and Ghareeb, 2013). It is not clear how effective her presence was on the committee. However, as a public and political figure her involvement in passing this Law most likely expected and counted on. Nevertheless, she was the only female who served in such a top position during the Qasim's governing period from 1958 to 1963 (Hussain, 2017; Tripp, 2007). By her appointment Qasim was willing to widen his legitimacy among the Iraqi Communist Party (Tripp, 2007) and women at the same time. Despite this, after about fifty years Al-Dulaimi is often remembered as a political activist who was committed to political and social activities (Hussein, 2017). Moreover, Al-Dulaimi along with other few known female figures was the first to step forward and became an inspiration and role model for other women in such a top position. This evolution in regard to women's political engagement, nevertheless, was not a sustainable one in this government nor was in the coming governments.

3.3 The Path towards Instability

Looking at the political diary of Iraq, within the years of 1958-1959 there were three upheavals accompanied with bloodshed (Wheeler, 1959). The decade of the 1960s alone, moreover, had witnessed seven coups (Dawisha, 2009; Hafid, 2017). This made the country suffer from continued instability. In 1963 the Ba'th Party took over, overthrowing the five-year old Qasim's government by the brutal killing of Qasim and his officer colleagues. Nevertheless, the ruling period of the two Ba'thists brothers; Abd al-Salam 'Aref and Abd al-Rahman 'Aref, had not been well received by other Ba'thists. The 17 July 1968 coup d'état was the next step to seize power and establish the long-term ruling system by another wing of Ba'thists (Alkayssi, 1998) which ended only in 2003. In such circumstances as we will see in this chapter, discussion or demanding any of the political rights was apparently a luxurious subject. Kanan Makiya (1989) in his book *Republic of Fear* describes the republic of Ba'thism as an era for secret policing and intelligence whose mission was to spread fear among Iraqi citizens. Women in such circumstances had no noteworthy decision-making role. They in some occasions participated in demonstrations and events to show their loyalty to the regime. The only channel for public or political activities related to women was through the

General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW) (Neshat, 2003; Lasky, 2006) which was one of the Ba'thist organisations.

At the party-membership stage, the majority of women were encouraged often with force to join the Ba'th Party especially students, teachers and civil servants. The rest of women preferred to stay away from politics dealing with their personal issues. Any other party-membership such as the Communist or Al-Dawa party is considered as a crime against the Iraqi state (Neshat, 2003).

3.4 Party Politics and Women's Political Presence

There is a wide agreement among political researchers that ideology of political parties often plays a significant role in the improvement of women's political status (Dahlerup, 2006; Tripp and Kang, 2008). This perception can be true when the partisan politics received as part of a stable, democratic and coherent political system. For instance, in the mature democracies political parties follow the same route and they are subject to the same legal standards. Moreover, the rule of procedure for each party is usually officially registered to protect the rights of its members and the rights of the entire party in front of the law. The constitutions and election laws, on the other side, are committed to guiding and respecting the political parties and their individual members. This clearly can be seen in the guidelines of political parties adopted by the Vince Commission Consequently in 2010. It has been stated: *"The law must be clear and precise, indicating to political parties both what activities are considered unlawful and what sanctions are available in cases of violations. Political party legislation should be adopted openly, following debate, and made widely available for public review to ensure individuals and political parties are aware of their rights and the limitations on such rights" (The Guidelines of Political Parties, Vince Commission, 2010: 9&10)*.

Due to the firm legal regulations and political competition between political parties in the democratic states, exceptions are uncommon, and violations are subject to the legal punishment. On the other hand, the true challenge surfaces when the same standards applied on the undemocratic regimes. In this particular case study, the policy of the Iraqi 'Arab Ba'th

Socialist Party' can be considered as a singular party ruling system rather than a multi-partisan system. Moreover, the Ba'th Party itself has lost its existence as a party including ideological principles in front of its leader and his close loyal and family members (see; Alkayssi, 1998; Dawisha, 2009; Tripp, 2007; Al-Jawaheri, 2008). Many top members of the Ba'th Party have been degraded from their membership, sent away or killed by the security forces belong to Saddam Hussain, his two sons Oday and Qusay and his brothers (Alkayssi, 1998; Al-Hassan, 2002; Al-Ali, 2002; Madlum, 2005; Tripp, 2007; Dawisha, 2009). This harsh treatment included sometimes even the top members of the party such as Fu'ad Al-Rikabi the founding member of the Ba'th Party who was dismissed in 1962 and later murdered in the prison in 1969 (Al-kayssi, 1998). Furthermore, another sign of the nature of this regime is in a TV recorded conference in 1979, where fifty-five members of Ba'th had been accused of planning a plot against Saddam were asked to leave the hall in terrifying scenery. Twenty-five were executed immediately after the conference without trial, and the rest prisoned or dismissed (Al-kayssi, 1998; Dawisha, 2009; YouTube record, 2013). This was a very clear message, publicly announced, for the party members, all Iraqis in general and opposition in particular, that a new era of tyrannical rule with no mercy to anyone had started. In such circumstances women's political presence in Iraq, as the previous chronology shows, initially was very limited. Secondly, female politicians, at that time, were supporters of the dictator in his wars with other countries; this will be discussed in the next part of this chapter. Thirdly and most importantly, the political involvement of these female politicians had not been considered as a step toward advancing women's interests including political freedom and just trials for female prisoners.

3.5 The Ba'th Government and Women's Political Experience

The system of singular party during the Ba'th ruling era which took place from the coup of 17 July 1963 until 2003 had produced a controversial experience due to the nature of this regime (Tripp, 2007; Al Kifaya, 2016). From then on, the full version of one-man rule with 'the leader syndrome' (Makiya, 1989) will be controlling the whole life in Iraq. Kanan Makiya (1989) pointed out a long list of roles that Saddam Hussain has allocated them for himself:

"Saddam is president of the republic, chairman of the Council of Ministers, commander in chief of the armed forces, chairman of the RCC (Revolutionary Command Council), general secretary of the Regional Command of the ABSP (Arab Ba'th Socialist Party), chairman of the Supreme Planning Council, chairman of the Committee on Agreements…" and more impressive titles such as "father of the nation" (Makiya, 1989:110). These leadership features were accompanied with a spread of fear, arrests and severe attacks to any opponent political activity inside Iraq. Saddam, according to a study published in 1998 by Rakia Al-Kayssi, decided to "establish a new class in Iraq, i.e. the class of authority which is primarily security" (Al-kayssi, 1998: 472) relying mainly on nepotism (Al-Jawaheri, 2008).

Despite the slogans of Ba'thism, women's political engagement at the decision-making level was significantly limited. During the first Ba'th governing period between 1960s and 1970s, Dr. Suad Khalil Ismail served as a Minister of Higher Education from 1969 to 1972 (Dougherty and Ghareeb, 2013; Assabah Aljadeed, 2014). She also was the only nominated woman for such position during the Ba'th ruling period. However, there were two females whose names were often mentioned in the 1980s and 1990s, Huda Ammash (1953-2016) and Manal Al-Alosi (killed in Amman 2015). Ammash was one of the top Ba'thists working on Iraqi biological weapons program and the only female in the Iraqi Command of Ba'th Party. She was often mentioned as an enthusiastic supporter of the regime, appearing usually with a military costume as a gesture for her readiness to defend the party and its sole leader (Madlum, 2005). She was captured after 2003 among other fifty-five top Ba'thists and released in 2005. Al-Alosi is another female member of Ba'th Party who became famous during the eight-year war with Iran. She was president of the General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW), offering Saddam's regime wide support in relation to recruiting women to support the regime's agenda. The GFIW was playing the role of the Ba'th tool as in reporting opponents to the security forces (Madlum, 2005; Haraj, 2005; Lasky, 2006). Both women; Ammash and Al-Alosi, were members of the Ba'th party and worked with full loyalty to Saddam Hussain (1937-2006). This presence was limited to a very small number of women who must be loyal members of the Ba'th Party and most importantly to the leader himself (Lasky, 2006). They, moreover, had a negative rather than positive role by supporting the fierce regime in the region that used its power to physically and intellectually attack its nation (Dawisha, 2009).

In addition, the attack and torture of oppositions in the prisons of the Ba'th regime (Lasky, 2006) made even the bravest women in a traditional society of Iraq hesitate to participate in any political activity outside the regime's circle. Women from the non-loyal or opposition side in this situation either pulled back to the housewifery duties or fled the country altogether. Ironically, the neighbouring state of Syria has been ruled by the left wing of the Ba'th party but there is a significant difference in the situation experienced by women between Iraq under Saddam's and Syria under Hafiz Al-Assad's government during the 1980s. Syria for example, has been categorised as the second highest Arab states in terms of females' representation (Abou-Zeid, 2006). This is probably due to the mindset of the party leaders and their social and geographical backgrounds. Saddam Hussein and his surrounding staff mostly came from tribal society faithful to its clannish principals (Al-Hsan, 2002). Raghad daughter of Saddam Hussein, in a television interview for Al-Arabiya Channel in 2003, talking about the family and the tribe of her father has explicitly said that it is rare to find educated people in such communities. Further evidence for the nature of the regime is from Dawisha in his book *Iraq: A Political History* stating that "in the 1990s, however, there was almost a tribal revival, a bandwagon effect, as people took their cue from their President" (Dawisha, 2009: 239). Hence, not only the ruling class was under the effect of the tribal customs, the whole society had to follow the similar path willingly or against their will. For example, in the 1990s after the uprising of people in the north and south of Iraq, the regime imposed on each person to add his/her tribal surname on their official identity card and if any not belong to any tribe, must find one to join. Therefore, this mentality of the Ba'th leadership in Iraq has had a significant impact on its political policy. This undoubtedly has negatively affected women's status quo in this country. The tribal as well as radical Salafi principles that started to spread in Iraq during the 1990s do not harmonise with basic women's rights such as political freedom and education. Moreover, the Ba'th Party in Iraq, despite its announced secular and socialist ideology, is firmly linked with the tribal tradition that rarely gives a leading role to women (Tripp, 2007; Dawisha, 2011).

It is worth considering that although Iraq under Saddam's leadership has seen the worst political disaster compared to other states, the above ideological and political disorder is common in the Middle Eastern states. Those republics that formed in the 1930s onward which came with promising political, social and financial agendas for their nations turned to be

featureless republics with lifelong rulers. The democracy in Egypt, for example, was struggling under the last three long-term leaders; Nassir, Sadat and Mubarak who each ruled their country undemocratically (Sabio, 2015). Nassir has ruled from 1956 until his death in 1970, Sadat ruled from 1970 until his assassination in 1981 and Mubarak was the president of Egypt from 1981 to 2011. The Gaddafi regime in Libya is another example of this ideological and political chaos (Sabio, 2015). Muammar Al-Gaddafi has ruled his country from 1969 until 2011. Hafez Al-Assad ruled the Arab Republic of Syria from 1971 until his death in 2000. These republics all in one way or another acted undemocratically towards their opponents. Nevertheless, Saddam's regime committed individual and mass crimes against his nation which are rarely seen in other states (Makiya, 1989; Alkayssi, 1998; Tripp, 2007; Dawisha, 2009). In the forthcoming parts, this chapter will discuss some of individual and mass crimes conducted by the Ba'th government in general and by Saddam Hussain in particular. The mentioned crimes gain importance in this chapter because women and children were direct or indirect targets alongside men.

3.6 Death Sentences for Female Activists

Despite the political propaganda regarding human rights, the majority of Iraqis were aware of how the regime dealt with its opponents from religious parties such as Al-Dawa Party and secular such as the Iraqi Communist Party. It is worth noting that due to the tribal and traditional values, in the Iraqi social and moral mindset, women, often, were exempted in the violent events and the conflict zone. This was not the case under Saddam's governing mechanism. Women from political opponent parties were subject to arrest, long-term prisons with no trial, as well as physical, psychological and sexual torture. Execution of female prisoners was rare until the 1980s. Nevertheless, the execution of Aamina Al-Sadder known as Bint Al-Huda (1937-1980) was a turning point in the way of treating opponent politicians, men and women alike. In the year of 1979 the Shi'a leader Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadir was placed under house arrest. This was followed by "arresting nearly 5,000 people including a large number of Shi'i and even some Sunni clerics" (Tripp, 2007:213). In 1980 (the second year of Saddam's presidency) Al-Sadir along with his social and intellectual activist

sister Aamina were executed. The corps of Aamina Al-Sadir has not been delivered since and there is no grave found for her even after the fall of Saddam's regime in 2003 (Dawisha, 2009; Dougherty and Ghareeb, 2013). The execution of Al-Sadir and his sister Aamina (1937-1980) was a turning point as it was "the first time in the history of Iraq that a senior cleric had been killed" (Tripp, 2007:221). It also never happened before in the recent Iraqi history that a female from such a senior *Ulama* (clergies) family, who are usually treated with high respect, to be arrested, tortured and executed. This female activist was known for her effort in opening schools for girls in the holy cities of Najaf and Kadhimiya (Baghdad). She utilised her family reputation and her respected character to encourage the conservative families to send their girls to get a good level of education. Coming from a highly religious and spiritual background Al-Sadir was able to gain the trust of the conservative city such as Najaf and reduce the amount of illiteracy among girls. She also published twelve books ranging between novels, short stories and biography (Establishment of Martyrs, 2010). Aamina Al-Sadir was known as a social and intellectual activist with modern feminist's views in regard to women's rights especially education and equality. She was not known for her political activity. However, she was seen by the regime as a dangerous figure due to her intellectual influence on women in the conservative cities as well on the girls in the schools and universities. Her execution along with her brother and hundreds of protesters against this crime was a clear message to the whole nation that the execution is the fastest way to keep the opponents and activists silent.

Although long before this point, individual female politicians were subject to arrests and torture but by the end of 1970s dozens have spent years in the prisons and some assassinated. Female political activists loyal to Al-Dawa Party faced the same fate as Aamina Al-Sadder. Moreover, female non-political activists could be included in the threat circle if they were family members of male political opposition to the regime. They have been, sometimes, sexually abused in front of their male family members (sometimes video recording the abuse was sent to them) to extend psychological pressure on their male relatives in order to get revelation from them (Lasky, 2006).According to the official record of the Iraqi government (after 2003) there are around 50,000 people were executed by Saddam's regime including hundreds of women and around 80 children (Establishment of Martyrs, 2018) in separated cases. The majority of these casualties were from the Shi'a, Al-Dawa Party, Iraqi Communist

Party and whoever reported as an opponent of the regime. Nevertheless, Saddam's regime was engaged with higher level of crimes against the nation which is mass murder of groups rather than individuals.

3.7 Genocides

In preparation for the upcoming war with a new Islamic Republic of Iran, thousands of Iraqi families were deported to the borders of Iran under the pretext of Iranian and Kurd Faily origins in the 1980s (Lasky, 2006; Refworld, 1990). Noteworthy, about ten years earlier in 1971 dozens of Shi'a families from Iranian origins were deported to Iran (BBC, accessed February 2018). Nevertheless, these families have been allowed to carry all their valuables, given time to prepare or sell their belongings accompanied by their men and young men. Although both deportation waves were illegal and unjust, compared with 1981, the deportation of 1971 was merciful. It is worth considering that by the time of their deportation these families had been living in Iraq for at least three generations. They always considered themselves as Iraqi citizens and often have Iraqi citizenship. The Ba'th regime used the allegation of Iranian origin plea only to attack the Shi'a structure in Iraq, pressurise Iran and seize the money and the properties of deportees.

The year of 1981, which was the third year of Saddam's presidency, witnessed the start of the eight-year war with Iran, and was to be the longest in modern history. In the same year the front line with Iran alongside with war has witnessed the oppressive expelling of thousands of "alleged 'Iranian' Shi'a" (Tripp, 2007:225). Women, children and old men were taken from their homes with no prior notice and expelled. Young men from the age of 13 to 40 have been separated and kept in prisons. The border under attack was witnessing the movement of thousands of families; women, children and the elderly walking for hundreds of kilometres towards the Iranian borders. They were the target of rape and theft gangs as well as attacks by wild animals. The deportees have been taken from their homes in middle and southern Iraqi cities, prisoned for a period of time, packed into trucks and left in the conflict areas of the borders with no food and enough clothing. Tripp (2007) in his book *A History of Iraq* provides more details about this social, financial and political disaster

conducted by Ba'th government stating that "in 1981 the Iraqi government began to provide financial incentives for Iraqi men to divorce their 'Iranian' wives (generally those connected to families already expelled, or marked down for expulsion), intending to create rifts among the Shi'a and forming part of a government campaign to underline the Arab nature of Iraq's Shi'i population" (Tripp, 2007:225). This movement had been accompanied by severe pressure in regard to finance as these families were stripped from all their possessions and left without any basic help. Initially, they have been accommodated in refugee camps in Iran until they started to rearrange the minimum level of living again facing language barriers, lack of job opportunities in the under-war Iran and the stress of distance from homes, schools, universities, husbands, brothers and fathers.

These mass crimes against humanity have been overlooked by most of the sources. Systematic studies needed to shade light on the social, psychological and financial impact of this oppressive, sadden and illegal decisions on the casualties especially women. Looking at the military attacks directly targeting women and children during the 1980s, the northern part of Iraq was an arena for genocide targeting the Kurdish ethnicity. Al-Anfal violent campaign and Halabja attacks in 1988 using chemical weapons in addition to the conventional weapons killed about 5.000 people (Tripp, 2007). It has been reported that between 70,000 and 100,000 have been injured, mostly civilians; women and children make up 75% of them (BBC, accessed February 2018).

This situation has topped by genocide against oppositions from Kurdish ethnicity in the northern area and Shi'a in the southern part of the country in 1991. After the withdrawal from Kuwait and enforcement of the economic sanctions under Chapter V of the Security Council, the daily life of Iraqis has been drastically changed. In March 1991, an uprising wave took over the southern and northern parts of Iraq (Tripp, 2007; Dawisha, 2009). Starting in the southern city of Basra the exhausted people got most of the official institution under control heading towards Baghdad. The celebration of the victory upon the long-term fear and war did not last long. Within two to three weeks the rebel cities have been fiercely attacked by the special government forces and the army had them under control again. It has been estimated that around 50,000 had to flee the country toward the border of Saudi Arabia and Iran. Thousands of Iraqis who participated in this movement were killed or imprisoned for years (Tripp, 2007). After the fall of the Ba'th regime in 2003, tens of mass graves of rebels have

been found in the Shi'a southern cities as another evidence of mass murder conducted by Saddam regime. A DNA campaign has been put in place for families to identify the remnants of their siblings or parents. As recently as 2003, about 270 mass graves were found in south and north of Iraq, some of them go back to 1980s and majority of them belong to the killed opponents during the 1991 uprising of Shi'a in the south. Between 300,000 to 400,000 remains have been found only in 2003 (U.S Agency for International Development, 2004). It is worth noting that some of the discovered mass graves contained remains of women and children from Kurdish ethnicity and Shi'a (Independent, 2009). Families of the victims buried in these graves have been left uninformed about their fate and whether they were alive or not for ten or twenty years. Mothers, daughters and wives were desperate to find out any sign of those dispersed for years under the rule of Saddam Hussain. Accordingly, amid this political, ideological and later economic chaos women were subject to ideological, political and social instability. Along with this ideological, political and financial decline, women's political participation significantly retreated. Among the military leadership of Saddam Hussein, harsh ongoing wars and always threatened state, Iraq wasn't a healthy sphere for intellectual and philosophical debates such as women's representation. Moreover, political participation for women has been considered as a luxurious demand while the Iraqi atmosphere was unstable for around 40 years.

3.8 The Endless War

At the stage of foreign relations, the start of the eight-year war (September 1980-August 1988) with Iran was the next step to establish the power of Saddam. He was willing to replace the overthrown king of Iran in the region. The hopes of Saddam Hussain to become the great leader of the Arabs and the region turned into a political, social and economic disaster for both countries. The war finished not only with failing to reach these goals but Iraq was in debt of $80 billion, an estimated $200 to $500 billion of war damage and one million casualties from both countries (Alkayssi, 1998; Tripp, 2007; Dawisha, 2009). Women under these circumstances took the responsibility to be the breadwinners and carers for the rest of the family (Al-Jawaheri, 2008). In this situation of fear, lack of resources and war women rarely

find a room for genuine political engagement. In such cases, the political activities decline to its lowest level. It has been stated that when the government offices kept the whole nation under control leaving no space for political freedom, women become inoperative and negative. Based on this approach and through an intense wave of exclusion of opposition parties and the outbreak of the Iraq-Iran war in the 1980, Iraqi women started to drown in their worst situation financially, socially and politically. While men were called to be in the front lines for eight years during the Iraq-Iran war, "for the majority of Iraqi women it meant heavy responsibilities both as mothers and workers" (Al-Jawaheri, 2008:21). The sudden disappearance of men in a society in which men often carry full financial responsibility, women were under unfamiliar yet a significant pressure (Lasky, 2006). By the end of the war in 1988 and with hundreds of thousands of killed and disabled soldiers, the whole society went under an emotional and psychological crisis.

It is worth considering that the ideology of the Ba'th Party towards women was dramatically changing depending on the political agendas. For instance, during the Iraq-Iran war the regime propaganda was to encourage women to contribute to the war through joining the workforce and encourage their men to join the front lines. In contrast, after the war women were asked to go back to their supposedly traditional role. Women were encouraged to follow the regime's orders through the only legal women organisation the General Federation of Iraqi Women (Lasky, 2006). Al-Jawaheri in her book *Women in Iraq* states that the fully controlled state by the inconstant Ba'th ideology started to spread the idea of women must "leave their formal jobs as workers and civil servants in order to give birth to more children [to a minimum of five children]" (Al-Jawaheri, 2008:21). She also listed a set of passed legislations indicating the mutable and shifting policy regarding women's role as citizens, workers and social figures. However, the restoration period following the war with Iran lasted only from 1988 to 1990. The circle of war regained after exactly two years by announcing the invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 (Dawisha, 2009). In 1991, Kuwait was liberated by the International Coalition and Iraq started a decade of severe collapse of any remaining state stability.

3.9 Political Parties in Iraq

In the states that have a short or non-democratic partisan culture the case would not be as easy as in the democratically established systems. In Iraq, the situation is even more complex. This country witnessed its first movements towards forming political parties about a hundred years ago, by the end of the Ottoman ruling and British Mandatory period back in 1920s (Al-Badri, 2011). It is worth noting that the religious leaders 'Ulama' were usually the founder or motivator of founding most political parties or political movements (Al-Hasani, 1971). For example, the main two opposition parties; the National Iraqi Party and The Renaissance Party had been formed under the supervision of Mohammed Al-Sadir (1883-1956) the then prime minister in 1948 (Al-Badri, 2011; Eliwi, 2012). The other examples are the Dawa Party (1958) and the Islamic Supreme Council (1982) who both have been founded and supported by Ulama (Allawi, 2007). The Communist Party is the only party which has been founded based on communist and socialist ideology.

The Turkish Committee of Union and Progress Party opened its first office in Baghdad in 1908 (Elewi, 2012: 10). However, the period between 1958 and 2003 saw a watershed in the partisan tradition in Iraq. After the coup of 1958 led by Brigadier Abd al- Karim Qasim (1914-1963) the first signs of authoritarianism and the 'sole leader' regime have started to emerge through marginalising others such as the short-term ally Communist Party (Dawisha, 2009). However, by the execution of Qasim and his colleagues and the start of the Ba'th ruling era in 1963 the face of the political system in Iraq remarkably changed (Alkayssi, 1998; Dawisha, 2009; Tripp, 2007; Allawi, 2007). With vast and organised arrests against oppositions "in the autumn of 1968, rounding up communists, Nasserists, dissident Ba'thists, former politicians, Western-oriented businessmen and others" (Tripp, 2007: 188) a new era has started. The wide power of the security agencies compelled all oppositions to turn to underground activities.

Therefore, the political activities or party membership was highly limited. Consequently, the division started to emerge between the public and all parties other than the ruling Ba'th Party. Most Iraqi political parties have grown in exile before 2003 (Eliwi, 2012; Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 2003). Political parties in general had been framed as an enemy for the regime.

Members of Islamic Dawa Party, and later Iraqi Communist Party and Kurdish parties were imprisoned, executed by the regime or managed to flee the country (Al-Khalil, 1989; Allawi, 2007; Elewi, 2012). The fierce security services activities against oppositions started during the Qasim's -for some extent- and for extreme extent during Saddam's regime (Tripp, 2007; Dawisha, 2009). Apparently, only two among the current political parties; the Iraqi Communist Party which was founded in 1934 (Al Amery, 2015) and the Islamic Dawa Party, founded in 1957 (Al-Khersan, 1999; Eliwi, 2012) have been formed inside Iraq before the Ba'th Party seizes the power. Offices for both parties have been opened in Syria, Iran and London for their activities to be restored (Eliwi, 2012; Marr, 2007; Allawi, 2007). Some other parties have been formed initially outside the country such as the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, founded in Iran 1982 (Tripp, 2007; Allawi, 2007), Patriotic Union of Kurdistan founded in Damascus 1975 (Farouk-Sluglett and Sluglett, 2003), Iraqi National Congress in London 1992 and Al-Wifaq in Amman 1991 (Allawi, 2007).

Political parties in post-2003 Iraq are either new or have less contact with the public. Those political parties who spent around thirty years in the exile missed the civil governing experience. They "remain working illegally underground, threatened by a death sentence (Penal Code) and the absolute power of the security services" (Jamil and Abdul Jabbar 2013; Alexandra, 2017; Brennan, 2011). Abdul Jabbar (interviewed in 2016) added that the Ba'th policy toward opposition parties did not offer them the opportunity to work and grow through the legal, peaceful and parliamentary route. They therefore took the revolutionary pathway (Abdul Jabbar, interviewed 2016). The exiled political parties, therefore, despite their long history and continued activities to overthrow the regime, they have been held away from authorisation and mutual communication with the public. On the other hand, stands some newly emerged parties or groups who stepped forwards in politics immediately after the fall of Saddam's regime such as the Sadrist Movement (Dobbins, Jones, Runkle and Mohandas, 2009). These parties, due to the above-mentioned circumstances, have lower or non-political or ideological experience. However, these newly formed groups rely on their broad grassroots base and wide social network (Marr, 2007) contrary to the returned parties.

However, there are many political parties that have been formed immediately after the fall of the regime. The records show that 326 political associations have been registered in The Independent High Electoral Commission in 2005 (IHEC, 2005). Most of these parties have

faded shortly after the first election, finding themselves weak to compete with the conventional and ideological parties. Although there are 36 political coalitions, that includes 238 small political parties (IHEC, 2014) there are around ten main players only available in the political scene in Iraq. Women, consequently, have been directly or indirectly prevented from taking part in political activities. Even in a free atmosphere in exile, outside the reach of the security service, women were almost absent from political activities. It is noteworthy there were some women's unions and associations in the exile, such as Iraqi Women League and Muslim Woman Association. Nevertheless, their role was limited, organising seminars related to issues such as ideological debates. These local organisations were playing a role in arranging regular gatherings to overcome the diaspora related struggles among women.

However, at the level of direct political activities, from 1990 until 2003 around twenty conferences for the opposition parties took place in Damascus, Tehran, London, Vienna and Erbil (Allawi, 2007; Eliwi, 2012). Hundreds of Iraqi politicians have attended these meetings. However, only three women have been mentioned in the list of attendees (Fayad, 2002; Eliwi, 2012). Women's absence from most of the political activities can be explained in ways; first the number of women members of political parties is initially low, especially at the level of leadership and senior cadres. Secondly, most exiled women during the Ba'th ruling era were usually concerned about the fate of remaining family members or relatives inside Iraq. Relatives of oppositions may face severe penalties if the exiled politicians publicly participate in activities against Saddam's regime (Marr, 2007). The third reason could be that most of the exiled women were family members of opposition men rather than being opposition themselves. They, therefore, had less chance than men to receive political experience. This introduction may help to realise how women can fit in such conditions including the process of CS in the above introduced map of political parties.

3.10   Wars and Women's Political Engagement

Iraqi women had some political achievements included in the constitution of 1968 such as the right to vote and the right to stand for election. This, however, was merely theoretical rather than practical. Practically, women entered the Iraqi Parliament for the first time in the

1980s (Al-Naddawi, 2010; Aylan, 2015). On the other hand, women during this period had lost certain basic rights such as travelling abroad without being accompanied by a male family member. The elections of 1984, during the Iran-Iraq war, witnessed the highest level of women winning parliamentary seats. Thirty-three female candidates which make 13 percent of the overall number of the members of the Iraqi Parliament have found their way to the representatives' assembly for the first time. This figure later dropped to 11% in the 1990s and to only 7% in 1996 (Al-Naddawi, 2010). It is worth considering that this entry was publicly unnoticed and barley mentioned as a victorious feminist achievement because it was limited (Lasky, 2006) due to a set of variables: First, the result of the elections under the single-party governing system was almost arranged prior to the election. Secondly, the whole country was under the pressure of war with neighbouring Iran. Thousands of young men were heading towards the front lines, returning injured or killed, leaving women between grieving their lost ones and becoming breadwinners. Winning parliamentary seats by some women was not taken as a victory in such pressurising circumstances.

Thirdly, this political entry for women was limited to those loyal to the regime and the talk about effective representation does not look factual (Al-Naddawi, 2010). There was a little chance for independents but none for oppositions to stand for the elections or win the parliamentary seat (Azhar, interviewed in 2016).Even during wartime only Ba'athists had access to the political positions (Makiya, 1989; Alkayssi, 1998).Therefore, women were given lower grade positions such as women union's leadership instead of first line party leadership. The long-term war policy of the Ba'th in Iraq, moreover, has forced women to keep most of their rights and demands aside for the benefit of the imposed wars.

3.11   The UN Sanctions and Women's Representation

The invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was the next episode in the violent and destructive series conducted by the Saddam's regime. A one-year campaign to take over the small, neighbouring country resulted in sending Iraq decades backward (Al-Jawaheri, 2008). The economic sanctions after severe loss in wealth and souls made the country one of the poorest states with lack of food and medication. After losing about 110,000 to 140,000 of Iraqi young

men in the second Gulf War (Al-Kayssi, 1998), the thirteen years of economic sanctions were another part of the devastating and destructive story of Iraq (Boone, Gazdar and Hussain, 1997; A-Jawaheri, 2008; Neshat, 2003). These penalties have been framed as economic control of the export and import of the goods from and to Iraq. The impact of these long-term sanctions, nevertheless, was spreading almost everywhere in the life of most Iraqis. The nutrition and health sector was the most damaged by these sanctions until the announcement of the oil-for-food program under the resolution of 986 adopted by the Security Council in April 1995, implemented in December 1996. However, the resolution 661 stated that the penalties were comprehensive (un.org, accessed 2018) therefore, the entire life of this country was seriously affected. The level and the quality of education, for instance, notably had dropped (Ranjan and Jain, 2009). Around 40,000 teachers have left the teaching sector for better income business during the sanctions period to be replaced by less qualified teachers (Gordon, 2010). Moreover, the education sector remained far from any type of upgrading in books, equipment and labs (Gordon, 2010).

For women, the 1990s was a drastic collapse contrary to the 1970s when the level of enrolment among girls was high resulting in that women make "46 per cent of all teachers, 29 per cent of all physicians, 46 per cent of all dentists, 70 percent of all pharmacists, 15 percent of all accountants, 14 percent of all factory workers and 16 per cent of all civil servants'' (Ranjan and Jain, 2009:7). These circumstances undoubtedly left the education in all levels at poor quality and lost its previous international respect and recognition. In addition, the Ba'th government annulled the compulsory education scheme which affected children and girls the most (Ranjan and Jain, 2009). As a result, by the end of 1990s the illiteracy rate was estimated as 77% among women aged over 15 (Al-Jawaheri, 2008). It is worth considering the impact of education decline remaining even after the abolishment of the economic sanctions causing long-term damage. Education, unlike economics, is not subject to immediate reform. Hence, the Iraqi education system during the period of the UN economic sanctions had lost its international recognition. Yasmin Al-Jawaheri (2008) stated that the economic sanction has caused significant damage to the entire women's lives in this period of Iraqi history. Explaining statistically the damaging impact of sanctions, she has highlighted that "while sanctions limited the potential economic opportunities of all Iraqi women, they also exerted further pressure on highly educated women'' (Al-Jawaheri, 2008).

In contrast, she added that "prior to sanctions such women perceived education and a professional career as the main path to independence, freedom and equality" (Al-Jawaheri, 2008). Hence, there was a drastic collapse in the quality of education (Ranjan and Jain, 2009) whose impact will be seen later in other fields such as politics. The relationship between women and education has been focused on in this part rather than other aspects due to the importance of this factor on the political engagement of women. The influence of the quality of education during the 1990s will be discussed in chapters four and five in the framework of the performance of female politicians - who often graduated during this period-in this case study. The financial sanctions beside other political circumstances had a direct impact on women's finance, health and education. Consequently, women had been "pushed back home" (Al-Jawaheri, 2008) psychologically, socially as well as politically.

3.12   Economic Development and Women's Representation

Developmental factors will be discussed here considering the historical events due to its presumed impact on women's political representation (Viterna, Fallon and Beckfield, 2007). Iraq did not have noteworthy systematic agriculture plans and yields or factories. Apart from Qasim's and his two successors, the brothers Arif's attempt to nationalise the oil industry, which had no significant outcome, the Iraqi economy remained at the primary level (Sanford, 2003). Its economy relies mainly on the oil industry (Al-Jawaheri, 2008). The 1970s have witnessed a sort of economic stability due to the rise of oil prices resulting in increased salaries and life quality. Consequently, the number of women in education has increased, reaching 95% from 1970 to 1980 (Sanford, 2003). Educated women during that period had been promised job opportunities. With the availability of public sector jobs and high salaries, the level of education and quality of life rose too. This situation did not last long with the trend of Ba'thification of the Iraqi life and the spread of security intelligence (Alkayssi, 1998; Dawisha, 2009).

Theoretically, development is regarded as one of the most effective factors that influence women's legislative representation (Viterna, Fallon and Beckfield, 2007). This perception seems to have some true elements in the case of Iraq. Women's participation in politics was

at its lowest level during the period of UN economic sanctions on this country. As we discussed in the last subsection, this period, also, witnessed a high level of decline in women participation socially and intellectually not only politically (AL-Jawaheri, 2008). It can be argued that the 1970s was the best economic period in modern Iraqi history with the arrival of vast swathes of oil investments. Women during this period of financial stability were enjoying a very good level of wealth from either high salaries at work or male family members' contributions. More women were headed towards education and gaining a college degree in order to get good job opportunities and high salaries (Al-Khalil, 1989; Dawisha, 2009). Although women were organised in some public organisations such as General Federation for Iraqi Women (Al-Khalil, 1989), their participation in politics was low. There are no prominent or known females' names at the decision-making stage or effective politicians during the economic stability in the 1970s. The government supportive organisation (GFIW) later during the 1980s and 1990s played a role in backing up the regime's propaganda such as the Faith Campaign leaving women's rights behind (Lasky, 2006). However, the financial stability of the 1970s lasted for less than a decade which can be considered a short period for any fundamental political development.

The impact of economic development on women's political engagement needs to be considered alongside with other factors such as the political system. It is worth noting that both women and men may not find the convenient opportunity to be involved in genuine political activities where political freedom is absent such as the case of Iraq under the Ba'ath government (Dawisha, 2009; Al-Kayssi, 1998; Lasky, 2006). Hence, factors such as development must be tested by taking into account the significant differences between the developing and the developed countries (Viterna, Fallon and Beckfield, 2007; Kenworthy and Malami, 1999). However, it does not seem easy to apply the development variable in the case of Iraq in order to measure its impact on the political representation of women. This country has witnessed sharp political ups and downs as well as substantially unstable economic circumstances. Since the withdrawal of British colonialism and later the fall of the monarchy, Iraq has experienced dramatic changes in its political system almost every decade (see: Dawisha, 2009; Tripp, 2007; Batatu, 2004). This carries a direct impact on the stability of the political tradition and financial system in general and women's status in particular. This is

especially, if we agree that most of these changes were due to either the military's governing system such as Qasim's or a single-party such as Ba'thist.

It is somewhat noteworthy that Iraq besides all its complexity is not easily categorised according to the economic scale. The struggle in fitting Iraq in the right financial category can be discussed from three angles; First, it cannot be categorised as a poor or undeveloped country because of its oil exports with the average per capita income indicating that it is a wealthy state (Sanford, 2003). For example, during the 1970s Iraq was the second in the OPEC list of oil exporters after Saudi Arabia (Al-Jawaheri, 2008). Second, on the other hand, Iraq cannot be counted as a developed state because of its lack of infrastructure and the drop of its economic rank after the Iran war, invasion of Kuwait and the economic sanctions during the 1990s (Sanford, 2003; Alkayssi, 1998; Lasky, 2006). Thirdly, considering the dramatic ideological changes occurred in the country it also cannot be ranked as socialists or capitalist. For example, as we discussed earlier, the Ba'th Party came to the government with a fervent socialist agenda, calling for equality and labour rights, attacking imperialism (Makiya, 1989; Alkayssi, 1998; Sanford, 2003). Nevertheless, the Ba'th government itself has later abandoned this ideology by abolishment of the Labour Law in 1987, leading the economy towards privatisation (Sanford, 2003). More discussion will be provided in the next part.

Due to these factors and the long-term one-man rule, therefore, it is not an easy task to initially classify Iraq correctly on the development scale in order to study the impact of economy on women's political engagement. Therefore, the positive impact of development variable on women's representation or effective political engagement seems standing on hesitant base in Iraq during the Ba'th ruling era. This is due to the complexity in the economic growth for more than three decades that has been discussed earlier in this chapter. This can be valid on some other Middle Eastern states too such as Saudi Arabia as despite the high level of wealth in this country, women were deprived from their basic rights until recently.

3.13   Socialism and Women's Political Participation

When the effective factors on women's representation are studied, researchers often mention the influence of left ideology on the rise of women-friendly policies (e.g. Caul, 1999; Caul, 2001; Tripp and Kang, 2008). Paxton (1997) stated that "countries with Marxist-Leninist governments have been shown to include more women in parliament, given their ideological commitment to gender equality and the tight control of a single party on government processes" (Viterna, Fallon and Beckfield, 2007: 3). The affirmative effect of leftist ideology can be seen when the concept of women's representation is analysed in the politically committed left states or parties. In the case of Iraq, the Ba'th party did not frame itself as a communist initially. Furthermore, the regime often engaged in a fierce conflict with the Iraqi Communist Party (Dawisha, 2009; Tripp, 2007). On the other hand, in the literature of Ba'thism and public speeches there was a clear attack against capitalism and apparent incline to socialism. The official full name of the party is the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party with the term 'socialist' always included. Furthermore, the Article 26 of the Ba'th Party Constitution clearly reads: "[T]he Party of the Arab Ba'th is a socialist party. It believes that the economic wealth of the fatherland belongs to the nation" (AlKayssi, 1998:61). Nonetheless, AlKayssi (1998) in her detailed study about the Ba'th ideology articulated that the practical and theoretical record of this party is full of contradictions. The chronological record shows a significant level of agreement with this perception.

Furthermore, the ideological flounce of Ba'thism resulted in initially; split of the party to become Syrian Ba'th Party and Iraqi Ba'th Party (AlKayssi, 1998; Al-Khalil, 1998) and latter for the party's ideology to dissolve in the leader's ideology. The Syrian Ba'th has been since introduced as a left wing while the Iraqi wing has been known since as a right Ba'th. Despite this the Ba'th party in Iraq was keen to keep socialism as the main ideology of the party, introducing itself as a supporter to human rights and women's rights in particular. However, at the practical level, these slogans including leftist's principles remained subject to a high degree of uncertainty when applied to countries such Iraq during the Ba'th party ruling period. For example, the socialist slogans were highly present in their literature. Socialism along with two other principles, unity and freedom, can be seen everywhere in the Ba'th literature including the Iraqi flag (Devlin, 1991). Also in the article 4 from the constitution of

the Ba'th Party it has been stated that "Ba'th Arab Socialist Party, ... believes that socialism should be emitted from the heart of Arab nationalism because it is the best system that allows the Arab people to achieve their potential and opens genius to the fullest guaranteed the nation's steady growth in the production of moral and material and closely brotherhood between its members" (baath-party.org, 2011). However, this remained at the level of slogans rather than having any real-world influence. Al-Fahad (2011) in his study about the political parties in Iraq from 1934 to 1958 explains the relationship between the Ba'th and socialism stating that "... the party (Ba'th) has called for socialism that its leaders could not provide a clear interpretation for it" (Al-Fahad, 2011: 298). Furthermore, none of the other declared slogans or ideologies of the Ba'thism (Unity, Freedom and Socialism) has been achieved. Arab unity has been abolished after the first attempt to unify the two neighbouring countries; Syria and Iraq, who both led by Ba'th Party, turning to a long-term conflict. Another example related to the abolishment of Arab unification was the invasion of the nearest Arab state Kuwait in 1990 by Saddam's regime. The overrun of the Kuwaiti borders by the Iraqi army on the morning of 2nd of August 1990 only took hours for the whole Kuwait to be fully under control of the Iraqi forces (BBC, 1991; Dougherty and Ghareeb, 2013). However, those hours have changed the relations between the two countries, put Iraq under heavy financial and political devastation and caused a severe division among the entire Arab World. The attempt of Arab's unification, hence, has been pushed away like there is no return forever.

Freedom, the second Ba'thist slogan, has completely disappeared from the daily life since Saddam seized the power in 1979 by starting a new circle of arrests and executions (Alkayssi, 1998; Tripp, 2007; Dawisha, 2009). This chapter has provided a set of evidence in regard to the lack of freedom at most of stages of the Iraqi's life. Socialism, moreover, as researchers indicated was a tool to serve the establishment of the personal agendas of the leader rather than truly adopted ideology (Alkayssi, 1998; Sabio, 2015). Notably, the Iraqi regime pre-April 2003 tried to deploy labour culture and talk in length about the rights of the working class, which explicitly suggests the adoption of socialist strategies (Rules of Procedure of Ba'th Party 1947). However, in 1987 the regime abolished the labour law, dismissing thousands of workers and heading towards privatisation of government-owned investments (Sanford, 2003). Consequently, a layer of rich aristocracy from military officers and the loyal clan of Saddam's were controlling most of public investments such as oil trade (Alkayssi, 1998),

leaving socialism behind even in the most critical circumstances of the 1990s. The whole nation was paying the bill of this ideological, political and economic chaos.

Accordingly, women have not benefited from the leftist slogans, specifically socialism to gain access to the world of politics and decision-making, as often happens in countries or parties that adopt socialist principles. Instead they found themselves in the middle of a circle of cruel challenges. This is because the other dominant factors such as, political system was firmly controlling any other aspects in this country. This does not mean that everything such as economy, culture and education were inoperative. These factors, nevertheless, were faded, ineffective or varying in influence. Hence, the hypotheses of Paxton (1997) and Kenworthy and Malami (1999) can be criticised that standards and measures had different outcomes according to the complexity of the political and economic circumstances of each case. Moreover, the level of ideological transparency and how it was reflected into practical steps gains a high level of influence in relation to women's political participation. The presence of slogans such as socialism cannot stand and sometimes turns to the opposite if the practical interpretation of these principles is absent. The same can be said about the impact of secularism on the ruling policy of Saddam's regime. While the Ba'th Party has been introduced as a secular party that sees religion as part of Arab's culture no more, the next part discusses a turning point in the ruling history of this party.

3.14   The Faith Campaign

Two years after the invasion of Kuwait and the uprising of 1991 the regime started its Faith Campaign in 1993 (Dawisha, 2009; Alkifaey, 2016) to encourage and sometimes impose the religious observance on people. Contradictory to its secular tradition and long-term neglect of religions the Ba'th Party turned towards Islamic principles (Kuoti, 2016). This was another tactic from the Ba'ath government to show that the regime is not against religion. To gain authority the regime was keen to appear in a position that has no conflict with religions, trying to wipe up the previous reputation surfaced with the execution of religious leaders. The support and spread of Islamic principles was to cut the way in front of his opposition and

establish its legitimacy (Benraad, 2018). Yasir Kuoti in an article published in 2016 argued that Saddam's Faith Campaign has helped in formation of radical trends such as ISIS.

With regard to women's status, the spread of conservative and tribal traditions supported by the legal actions cost women a lot. For example, the level of education among female Iraqis dropped from 75% in 1987 to 25% in 2000 (Human Rights Watch, 2003). The drop of education level during the 1990s has been discussed in more details earlier in this chapter. As a result of Saddam's Faith Campaign and the U.N economic sanctions, moreover, women have lost some legal achievement at the levels of employment and labour rights that have been set in place from 1958 to 1978 (Neshat, 2003). In 1998, for instance, the government has dismissed all women working as secretaries in the government agencies, enforcing more restrictions on women's employment (Human Rights Watch, 2003). The other harm accrued to women as a consequence of the regime radical turn was restrictions on women's travel freedom. Female adults were not allowed to travel alone unless accompanied by a male relative according to the travel regulations (Lasky, 2006; Human Rights Watch, 2003).

The other consequence of the religious propaganda of the Ba'th regime in the 1990s was the increase of 'honour killing'. The killings of suspected women of premarital sex or victims of rape has risen drastically after the prison sentences of male perpetrators has been reduced from 8 years to 6 months and often the crime goes without any a punishment (Lasky, 2006). Furthermore, Uday, the older son of Saddam, was leading another campaign which was responsible for tracking women under the allegation of prostitution and beheading them without trial (Lasky, 2006). Despite his widely known moral and financial corruption, Uday Saddam was keen to produce a new picture of his father's authority in order to impress the radical religious movement and the tribal leaders. A part of the political agenda, the most affected citizens were those women who were financially and socially vulnerable. The targeted women under the charge of prostitution could be political opponents of the regime or relatives of the opponents. The religious principal plan accompanied by return of religion lessons into the education and distribution of millions of Qurans (Kuoti, 2016). This led to most women appearing wearing the hijab, and sometimes veiled, whether they believe in it or not. It is, often, only to show their loyalty or obedience to the regime and to avoid any suspicion. The loyal female Ba'thists appeared with their hair covered after the declaration of

the Faith campaign while previously they had been unveiled and proud of the secular affiliation.

3.15   *Conclusion*

This chapter studied the impact of political system, ideology and financial circumstances on women's political engagement. The attempt was to answer the question of how the political experience and related historical events affect women's engagement in politics. Thirty years of singular party (Ba'th) and one-man (Saddam) leadership has its significant mark on the whole life in this country, let alone women's status. Although the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a significant drop in illiteracy among girls and women due to the literacy campaign announced by the government at the time. Wars, lack of personal and political freedom and the control of the security intelligence have caused a substantial drop in women's social and political engagement. Bearing the full financial responsibility for their families while men often absence in wars or prisons, Iraqi women were under more life-changing challenges. This situation certainly resulted in women often being absent from the political scene. Women's rights, moreover, was the last in the debate in the event of lack of security and political stability. However, the collapse of the Ba'th regime in Iraq and the establishment of democratic system was a promising event for women. The new system was a fundamental moment for women to have their voice heard. It was the accurate time to open an objective debate regarding women's intellectual, legal and political rights. Looking back into the near history of Iraq, this chapter offered a background answer of why women were unable to develop their political statues. In the coming chapters, we will see how the lack of experience (explained in the historical evidence offered in this chapter) affects the quality of women's political performance. In the data analysis chapters, the matter of lack of political experience is indicated, and this chapter offers a reference and explanation for why women lacked political experience pre-2003. Moreover, as a collective outcome of this thesis an explanation can be offered about the triple conflict between lack of experience, electoral legal requirement of gender quotas and the quality of political representation.

4   Chapter Four: Gender Quotas in the Iraqi Parliament 'Elite Interviews'

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to examine whether the legislative gender quotas have succeeded -until now- to achieve substantive representation for women as it did in numerical representation. The chapter mainly draws from data collected from political and academic elite interviews conducted between March and April 2016. For the purpose of triangulation, moreover, this part of the thesis will make use of any available data provided by the Iraqi Parliament and the High Iraqi Election Commission which is the Iraqi official institution that holds the role of taking decisions, supervision and publishing the election's turnout. The analysed data outlines the overall perception of Iraqi women's representation in lights of constitutional women quotas in the parliament since 2005. The discussion in this chapter revolves around the circumstances of adoption of women's quotas and the process of candidate selection (CS) in the light of this mechanism. The focus would be on how the 25% share for women in the Iraqi Parliament has been viewed by political actors such as political parties. How this mechanism has been included by decision-makers in terms of adopting, applying and candidate selection. The voting behaviour and the impact of ideology on women's voting preference will be discussed in this chapter despite the limitation of sources in this regard. It was essential for this thesis to understand how voting was received by women and their representatives. How women parliamentarians and candidates have acted as representatives for their politically disadvantaged group will be given enough space in this chapter. This is in order to understand the impact of legal quotas on women political behaviour as voters and politicians. This chapter, therefore, should offer data analysis in relation to these topics, while the next chapter looks at the gender quotas in the context of voting preference, women interests and political behaviour from a women standpoint.

4.2 The Circumstances of Adoption of Gender Quotas

Political researchers have highlighted that the adoption of special measures for under-represented groups usually accompanies the political transformation or deep reforming (Young, 1994; Krook, 2009; Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2010). Adoption and application of

gender quotas in Iraq, nevertheless, has been accompanied by the installation of a new political system, (Majumdar and Jones, 2011) under the pressure of war and terrorist attacks. Undoubtedly, applying such legislation in a country surrounded with previously mentioned circumstances faces real challenges at the level of candidate selection, the role of key players in adopting this policy and how it was received by the society. Most studies about gender quotas either mention Iraqi quotas briefly (see Dahlerup, 2006) or not at all. The reality is that Iraq was the first and only Arab country that adopted legislative gender quotas which are permanent and included in the primary articles of the Constitution of 2005 (Al Maaitah et al, 2011). This has been often overlooked by Arabic and English sources. This research, hence, offers an evaluation of this experience after ten years since its adoption. The legislative gender quotas in the Iraqi Parliament would be reviewed by examining the views of elites and public interviewees, the behaviour of political parties in regard with candidate selection and most importantly the behaviour of female parliamentarians.

As discussed in chapter one, researchers have assumed that gender quotas significantly increases descriptive representation (Phillips, 1995; Dahlerup, 2006; Dahlerup, 2009; Pande and Ford, 2011; Norris and Dahlerup, 2015).This finds a great agreement at the local level as statistics from the UN's reports and the Independent High Electoral Commission showed that the numerical presence for women in this particular case study has significantly increased. However, the question remains of whether this descriptive representation will assist in advancing women's interests or not. Will this rise in numerical representation remain at the level of tokenism and designed only to impress the international community and for decision-makers to look progressive or it can be seen as a step towards genuine women inclusion in politics.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, researchers believe that international decision-makers play a significant role in adopting special measures in order to include women in politics (Caul, 2001; Viterna et al, 2007; Tripp and Kang, 2008; Dahlerup, 2009; Paxton et al, 2009). At the local level, the international community including the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union and other international organisations have passed a clear message to politically developing states including Iraq and Afghanistan that women must be included in politics (Brown, 2005; OCHA, 2007; Krook, 2009:10; Bush, 2011; Norris and Dahlerup, 2015; Paxton and Hughes, 2017). It is worth consideration that women in Iraq until April 2003 were

subject to political neglect. Due to the totalitarian nature of the Iraqi regime pre-2003 their political role was limited to only serve the regime's interests (Al-Amery, 2015; Brown and Romano, 2006). Otherwise, details were offered in Chapter Three, as any opposition individual or party-member of other than Ba'th Party, women would be subject to imprisonment or execution (Al-Khalil, 1989; Tripp, 2007; Dawisha, 2009). Women, therefore, either stepped back or were deprived from any political participation (Al-Ali and Pratt, 2009). Hence, the political change in April 2003 was a valuable opportunity for women to act freely and have their voice heard again. In the event of the turning point of 2003, a special recommendation has been passed on to decision-makers to adopt quotas for women in parliament in particular, as the head of the Constitutional Drafting Committee of the Iraqi states (interviewed in 2016).

In the course of fulfilment of the international commitments toward women, in December 2003 a conference was held in Amman to introduce the principles of women's empowerment in Iraq led by "... the World Bank, the United Nations International Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Arab Regional Office, and Women for Women International" (Brennan, 2011:2 Wilson Centre, accessed January 2018). This conference and more events took place in 2003 and 2004 immediately after the fall of the Ba'th regime to recruit and train women for political and public activities as part of the commitment of the U.S. government towards women in Iraq (US Department of State Archive, September 2004). Consequently, many organisations that deal with women issues and training centres have appeared with the generous financial aid from the Coalition Provisional Authority (Al-Ali and Pratt, 2013). However, the political system was entirely fresh and there were few or no political organisations or NGOs for women that held clear and powerful views in that very early stage, stated Mr. Mohammed; a former MP (interviewed in 2016). The Iraqi women attendants in the conferences and workshops in the first years after the political change in Baghdad were individuals who, likely, had no social or political links with the public. The fieldwork data support this as a politician and candidate for the election of 2014 Mr. Abdul Jabbar (interviewed in 2016) said "they, often, do not hold a political experience or being members of a political party pre-2003, said. These women were publicly unknown". Therefore, few of them have remained active or became known politicians.

Women's empowerment in Iraq was one of the main projects for the government of the United States as "the Bush administration allocated considerable sums of money for reconstruction in Iraq, including projects aimed at improving women's participation in political, civil, and economic life" (Al-Ali and Pratt, 2009:57). There was a considerable amount of money spent between 2003 and 2007 on projects that targeted women and girls (around $1.5 billion), which led to the formation of some women's organisations for the first time after three decades of authoritarianism. The funding scheme also helped in opening small businesses for women breadwinners (U.S. Department of State Archive, 2004; UN Fact Sheet, 2013). Mr. Ayad, parliamentarian and the former Secretary General of the Iraqi parliament, stated that the decision of gender quotas has been taken in line with the trend of globalising and unifying of constitutions worldwide. He said: "there is a global demand to spread the human rights policies everywhere, especially in the events of political transitions'' (Ayad, interviewed 2016). Noteworthy, stating that the major driving force was the global trend finds a wide agreement in the literature (Caul, 2001; Viterna el at, 2007; Tripp and Kang, 2008; Paxton et al, 2009) which is reviewed in detail in chapter one. However, the interviewee added that the drafting committee had included experts in terms of women's rights who pushed towards adopting the legislative quotas along with the UN pressure (Ayad, interviewed 2016). Although it seems his view differs with other interviewees who stated that adopting quotas was a pre-planned international recommendation, he agrees on that the international role was significant anyway.

It needs to be highlighted that "the committee members and consultants have provided a significant effort in drafting the first approved constitution in that very unusual circumstances" (Humam, interviewed 2016) . In addition, Mr. Ayad (interviewed in 2016) added that this special measure was an essential part of the transit from dictatorship toward democracy. It is worth mentioning that, "by the second election (2010), I had no hope that women would reach the threshold to secure their seats. Fortunately, in the election of 2014 we had about 20 women who did not need the quotas by their own right". Indicating that gender quotas have helped women to find their place in the legislation institution, this MP has added that "women must benefit from this advantage to increase their presence in the Iraqi Parliament" (Ayad, interviewed 2016). Women, therefore, must employ this opportunity to build up a stable base for their political engagement in general and political representation

in particular, it can be assumed. This statement finds a great deal of agreement among the elite's interviewees.

On the other hand, there was uncertainty about the effectiveness of this mechanism considering the social and political features of Iraqi society. In this regard, Dr. Reyad, the principal of one of the Iraqi leading universities, argued that "the gender quotas is a total foreigner suggestion; we have received it as a ready-made policy that does not necessarily harmonise with our social tradition" (Reyad, interviewed 2016). Another elite interviewee agrees with this adding, "we can say women have had no role in adopting the legislative gender quotas, men decision-makers have included this policy with full support from the International Coalition" (Mohammed, interviewed 2016). With a critic of urgency in including this positive-discrimination scheme an academic interviewee has suggested, "we should have waited until women get well prepared to effectively participate in politics, especially, bearing in mind the Iraqi society is productive and we have very successful examples of women working in the governmental offices such as ministries" (Reyad, interviewed 2016). Another interviewee who is a former MP suggested that despite the requirement of urgent solutions in regard to women presence in the political institution, the incremental route would be prioritised as a natural and potentially stable process (Mohammed, interviewed 2016). In this context, researchers have highlighted that generalisation of mechanisms and outcomes may not be functional. The political, social and the age of feminist's movement must be taken in consideration in order to come up with more accurate evolution of each case individually (Viterna et al, 2007; Kenworthy and Malami, 1999; Thames and Williams, 2010; Murray, 2010).

There was a widespread belief among interviewees that women were credited with the advantage of legislative gender quotas. Some elite interviewees have highlighted this has been seen as a type of affirmative action for those women who are willing to stand for the elections (Mohammed; Osama; Ashwaq, interviewed 2016). Based on the Iraqi constitutional quotas, women candidates have been offered the exception from the electoral threshold. Candidates, men and women in a non-quota system, do not enjoy this privilege in any case. Undoubtedly, the legal balance would offer women a steady base for political activities. In terms of political participation, women and men have been equally mentioned in the paragraph 12 of the Transitional Administrative Law of 2003 as well as the constitution of

2005 (Muthana, 2012). Although the legal text in the politically developing states sometimes remains unapplied, in the Iraqi Constitution of 2005, this has turned out to become a practical step to offer balanced opportunities for men and women alike. Gender quotas have been initially received as the first and strongest step towards parity, said Mss Abdul Wahid who was MP and senior member in her party (interviewed 2016). However, such special measures need to be processed through thoughtful and accurate methods, highlighted Reyad (interviewed in 2016). This is in order to protect it from any misuse that causes future harm to the core intention which is parity, equal opportunities and increasing women's representation. Social awareness especially women's self-realisation with regard to the importance of legal mechanism of positive discrimination (Krook, 2009) plays a central role in the achievement of its goal. It can be assumed that women's representation or women's political participation will be received as a natural and essential procedure if women politicians are able to present themselves as functional and committed politicians. Otherwise, after a period of time, this special mechanism will be seen as a privilege for unproductive individual females (Osama, interviewed 2016). In the Iraqi case, the last fifteen years is a stage of building up a new political system as well as re-establishing the damaged administrative institutions. This certainly is a challenging period for the whole nation and women in particular. The legal, political and social advantages ought to be utilised to build a trustworthy framework for women's political presence. However, after around a decade since the enforcement of the legislative gender quotas, some people especially women started to lose faith in the performance of women politicians (Muthana, 2012; Aylan, 2015)

4.3 Ideology and Positive Discrimination Scheme

This kind of activity including the suggestion of gender quotas found no objection among Iraqi political leaders. An elite interviewee stated that "we are as a representative of the Shia' sect, which makes up the majority of Iraqis, had no objection against women's participation in politics. There are many female role models in the Islamic history that had a significant impact on political events, Fatima the daughter of Prophet Mohammed and his granddaughter Zainab for example" (Humam, interviewed 2016). This view comply with a

study conducted by a group of Egyptian academics about the approach of Islamic intellectual and jurisprudence schools (Salih, 2007). The Shi'a sect in their far and recent history did not show a clear tendency of objection towards women's political participation. The continued remembering of the battle of *Karbala* and martyrdom of *Imam Husain* (680 AD) in the Shi'a literature, always shades lights on the role of his sister *Zainab* and her impact on that political-social movement. Moreover, women's political and social participation has been seen as an obligation in the Shi'a jurisprudence (Salih, 2007).

Shi'a Political parties in Iraq, secular and religious, have a long list of female role models and martyrs who participated in political activities beside men. It is worth considering; the Iraqi Communist Party which clearly follows communism ideology has been founded and flourished in the Shi'a majority cities such Basra, Nasiriya and the holy city of Najaf. Despite the ideology of this party, the top holy Shi'a figures such as *Ali Bin Abi Talib, Husain* and *Zainab Bint Ali* have been, often, regarded as role models for uprisers against oppression and injustice. Therefore, despite the difference in their ideology, political parties in the case of Iraq, often agree on the same principles related to women's political engagements. In the same line, Ayatollah Sistani (1930-) who represents the highest Shi'a authority in the world when he was asked about women's political participation after 2003 answered "We hope that women have a great role in the development and advancement of Iraq'' (Al-Khafaf, 2009: 232). Ayatollah Fayad (1930-) another senior Shi'a scholar *Marji'* finds women's participation in political and judiciary jobs, as long the Islamic rules of modesty respected, is totally legitimate (Shafaqna, 2017). Another senior Shi'a scholar Mohamed Hussain Fadlulah (1935-2010) sees women and men have equal rights in political and social participation (Bayynat, 2017).

Although the inclusion of the 25% parliamentary quotas for women in the constitution of 2005 was made upon the suggestion of the international community, it has been learned that Iraqi political parties and religious authorities especially the supreme leader of Shia have shown no objection for this inclusion. Sunni political parties present in the drafting committee in 2004-2005 seemed to have no objection to gender quotas too. This is because most radicals have boycotted the new political system (Otterman, 2005; Morrow, 2005), therefore, they were not present during the drafting process. Nevertheless, the present parties from the Islamic Sunni sect (15 members out of 55 in drafting committee) (ar.parliament.iq, 2008;

Morrow, 2005) were from non-Salafi background. There was no sign of objection from their side according to the minutes of the drafting committee. The inclusion of legislative gender quotas was suggested by international decision-makers which faced either no objection or was welcomed by Iraqis.

Despite the above positive religious and social views in regard to women's political participation, most collected data revealed that women mobilisations had no role in the inclusion of the gender quotas in the Constitution of 2005. This probably was due to three factors; First, the absence of effective female leaders in the constitutional drafting committee of which is expected in the political scene till that time. There were seven women present in the drafting committee which was formed from 55 members (Morro, 2005; Dobbins et al, 2009; Iraqi parliament archive, AL Sabah archive). Despite the presence of these women and few of NGOs activists (Morrow, 2005), according to the meeting's records, it seems there was not much worth mentioning activities towards adopting gender quotas. There was a sort of agreement amongst most elite interviewees that women's presence in the event of drafting the constitution in 2005 was unnoticeable or ineffective (Humam; Mohammed; Iyad, interviewed 2016). Interviewee Mr. Humam said: "Including the paragraph of women's quotas was an utterly political decision taking by strong recommendation from Coalition Authority and the UN with the agreement of present political parties rather than feminist effort" (Humam, interviewed 2016). This view confirms the literature's perception about the impact of top down pressure toward adopting women-friendly policies as an international trend (Dahlerup, 2005, 2007, 2009; Krook, O'Brien and Swipe, 2010). Krook (2009), for example, stated that the international players, sometimes, interfere directly to include women quotas in the election law. It can be observed, therefore, that in the case of Iraq, the adoption of legislative quotas was not a bottom-up effort.

Second, the whole country was under the shock of dramatic change of the system (Morrow, 2005; Dobbins et al, 2009). Women were not an exception in this situation, they "were already in a terrible situation by the time the invasion happened" (Al-Ali and Pratt 2009: 65) after a long-term dictatorship and ten years economic sanctions. Therefore, they were not ideologically or practically ready to announce their demands or uphold the gender quotas (Mohammed; Jabbar; Osama, interviewed 2016). This can be argued at two levels; first is the division of identity at that early time of political change. Second is the division of

interests as a consequence of the split of identity. In regard to identity, it has been stated in chapter one that researchers have widely agreed on considering women as a group based on gender identity (Phillips, 1995; Williams, 1998; Bacchi, 2006; Dahlerup, 2006; Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2010). Nevertheless, this identity can be segmented in the event of political, sectarian and ethnical divisions. This can be clearly seen in the case of Iraq due to a long-term oppression towards Shi'a majority and Kurdish ethnicity (see Tripp, 2007; Dawisha, 2009; Al Khalil, 1990).

The group's theorist such as Iris Young (1990) has recognised five elements to identify the oppression of certain groups including class division, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence. Women as a gender-based group may share some of these categories in some occasions that lead to shared identity and interests. In the case of Iraq, the fall of the Ba'th government was an opportunity for excluded groups to declare their identity and raise their voice. This resulted in occurrence of more identities than it was before. Undoubtedly this has affected women's identity as a gender existence, to obtain other forms of identification such as sectarian, religious or ethnical. It can be argued here that in the event of uncertainty of identification, the talk about a unified set of interests becomes more complex too. Based on this, with a cleavage of identity, non-political practice during the dictatorship era and the absence of recognised set of interests women have missed the opportunity to act as a pressure group. Consequently, the claim of bottom-up impact on decisions such as adoption of legislative gender quotas fades in the favour of top-down policy.

It is worth considering here, the Iraqi Constitution was written within six months (Morrow, 2005; Dobbins, Jones, Runkle and Mohandas, 2009) which has been seen as a short period (Brown, 2005). It can be argued that considering the importance of this document in the Iraqis' current and future life, drafting it under urgency may cause long term problems. However, the foreign pressure, security threats and the national enthusiasm to send the constitution draft to the referendum as soon as possible left the drafting committee under great pressure to finish the job as scheduled. Underestimating its long-term effect maybe because of goodwill, the drafting committee was keen to satisfy all parties especially awaiting Iraqis who were willing to see their approved constitution sooner (Morrow, 2005). However, looking back at the critical circumstance of immediately after the fall of Ba'th regime, writing a civilised constitution was a challenging task. As Nathan Brown (2005) interestingly described

such circumstances, writing: "Countries undergoing dramatic political change often write constitutions like generals who fought the last war" (Brown, 2005: 10).

The third factor of why women had no noteworthy part in the adoption of quotas is that women in this country had no significant experience of organised movements that enabled them to institute a pressure group for women's right (Muhsen, 2011). It is worth noting that even in diaspora, women were almost absent from crucial political activities. For instance, in the London Conference for Iraqi opposition parties which took place in 2002 to prepare for takeover in Iraq after the fall of Ba'th regime, from 300 delegates only 5 were women (Al-Ali and Pratt, 2013; Aawsat, 2002). Despite their wide participation in most protests and opposition activities, women were rarely available in the decisive political gatherings. It is difficult to find out the exact reasons behind this low presence in the decisive political activities in the exile pre-2003 despite the available freedom of speech and activities. In the same vein, researchers have noted that women in the Arab states usually have a clear presence in the non-political or political but non-governmental activities (Al Maaitah, Al Maaitah, Olaimat and Gharaeibeh, 2011). At the decision-making and governmental level women in the Arab World are still struggling to secure a balanced presence (IPU, 2010). In addition, women in Iraq –as has been mentioned earlier- were barred from political and non-political activities during Ba'th governing time unless approved by the government. Considering the agreement of most elite's interviewees, it can be assumed that with the absence of women decision-makers, women at the grassroots had no immediate interference in the process of inclusion of the legislative gender quotas. Nevertheless, the international promises were effective enough to advance this inclusion. The gender quotas, moreover, had been received as an achievement for women at the political level in the very early days after the end of the thirty years regime.

This finding may contrast with what has been observed by researchers. Discussing the impact of women's activism on passing women-friendly regulation it has been stated: "the legislative quota in Iraq emerged mainly through the bottom–up mobilization of women's groups" (Krook, O'Brian and Swip, 2010: 2). The UN reports and Inter Parliamentary records besides the statements received from interviewed politicians, who participated in the transitional activities after 2003, reveal that the activities of women's groups had a minor or no role in the decision of legislative quotas. Most activities and projects for empowering

women in Iraq including the legislative women quotas was an effort of the international community (Mohammed; Jabbar; Reyad, interviewed 2016). None of the political parties disagreed with this suggestion. Possibly, they did not want to appear anti-feminist. There is a sort of agreement between the literature and finding of this research that political parties (Dahlerup, 2007; Kuku, 2007; Matland, 2007; Tripp and Kang, 2008) despite whether believe or not in women's rights, usually do not object to such measures. This is in order to appear modern (Tripp and Kang, 2008) or to increase their voting balance when they are uncertain about the success in the ballot (Phillips, 1995; Krook, 2009).

4.4 Temporary or Permanent Quotas?

It seemed there was a limited debate about the type of women's quotas, temporary or permanent, during the constitutional drafting time. Nevertheless, the second type was included based on the recommendation of Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) (Brown, 2005). In this vein, some interviewees showed uncertainty about the functional role of women quotas in advancing women's interest or placing women in politics. A tribal leader interviewee raised concerns about the actual intention behind including the quotas by American officials in Iraq while they do not have such an arrangement in the U.S. (Abdul Jabbar, interviewed 2016). Enforcing policies and laws for certain countries while not for others despite the lowness of women presences, seemed puzzling and ambiguous. To elaborate this point, Dahlerup and Freidenvall (2009) have highlighted that introducing positive-discrimination policies usually comes up during writing constitutions or deep reforms. Moreover, the answer probably can be found in some views of interviewees who have pointed out that without these legislative quotas women may face difficulty in finding their place in the political institutions (Abdul Jabbar; Reyad; Osama, interviewed 2016). "The solution for this matter possibly found in functional temporary quotas to provide suitable sources and opportunities during the transitional circumstances" stated Mohammed (interviewed, 2016).

Noteworthy, despite the high number of conferences and workshops that have been held under the title of women's empowerment, there were not enough studies or time spent to

review the experiences of other nations in regard to women quotas at the decision-making level (Humam; Reyad, interviewed 2016). The Deputy Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament (interviewed in 2016) indicated that "some committee members suggested including Article 49/ Paragraph 4 in the secondary legislations of the Constitution (easier to be changed later)". Article 49/4 states that "[T]he elections law shall aim to achieve a percentage of representation for women of not less than one-quarter of the members of the Council of Representatives" (Iraqi Constitution, 2005). However, the head of the Constitutional Drafting Committee at the time stated that while some members of the drafting committee have proposed adopting a temporary quota, "Americans insisted to include it in the primary articles and it must be permanent" (Humam, interviewed 2016).

Some elite interviewees have shown a wide agreement that special measures for women in politics were strongly required at the early stage of the political transition. During establishing the new democratic system, it seemed difficult for women to be present in the Iraqi Council of Representatives without the constitutional gender quotas (Iyad; Ashwaq; Jabbar; Mohammed, interviewed 2016). Therefore, much of the existing research, it has been highlighted that movements towards placing women in politics would utterly appear in the event of system change, writing a new constitution or deep political reforms (Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2009). Nevertheless, this sort of debate would be effective when relied on an established social movement, intellectual debate, established ideology and strategy of political parties and the level of democracy (Tripp and Kang, 2008). Gender quotas, as Mr. Mohammed (interviewed in 2016) stated, is an emergency solution. The society, he added, "will revert to the natural and normal route", which from his point of view, must be the incremental route. Mohammed who is a former MP and religion scholar, has added that, "the scheme of women's quotas has been seen as the fastest way to include women in decision-making, assuming that women best understand women's demands, therefore, there was a persistent need for women's voice to be heard" (Mohammed, interviewed 2016). This policy can be employed for a certain period of time to help women introduce themselves as adequate politicians and able to engage in decision-making. When society gets familiar with women's role in politics, the quotas must be abolished, suggests Mohammed (interviewed in 2016). In the same line, female members of a local provincial council agree that temporary quotas offer women a great opportunity to overtake the social obstacles and be present in

the political institutions. However, she highlights that "the first entry can be through women quotas, but the second entry ought to be gained through adequacy and qualification" (Ashwaq, interviewed 2016).

Nevertheless, the secretary general of the Iraqi Council of Representatives (interviewed in 2016) disagrees with the observation of other politicians and academic interviewees in regard to the benefit of temporary quotas. He stated that "the legislative women quotas in the Iraqi Parliament must be permanent and must remain even though the percentage of women reaches 50%" (Ayad, interviewed 2016). He also suggested that quotas must be extended into other political institutions such as the council of ministries. Ayad (interviewed in 2016) highlighted that temporary quotes does not serve the purpose of equality in the political institutions as the society is still masculine. Without legal quotas, women are unlikely to find their way to the parliament. This approach does not seem to have enough support among other interviewees. As both; academics and politicians have agreed that the legislative gender quotas ought to be beneficial temporarily during the transitional period. Positive-discrimination scheme can be essential step to introduce women into the political offices and provide them the opportunity to participate in politics. However, as interviewees suggested, this special measure must be abandoned in order to give the qualified and adequate female politicians the opportunity to compete freely with their fellow male politicians (Reyad; Mohammed; Ashwaq; Jabbar; Osama, interviewed 2016). Succession in such electoral competition, presumably, guarantees advancing interests of representatives (Pitkin, 1967) and "to subvert or add or transform" (Phillips, 1995:47) the long-term political exclusion.

4.5 Candidate Selection; 'secret garden of politics'

CS plays a crucial role in the democratic electoral process (Rahat, 2008). Selecting candidates has been defined as the "process by which a political party decides which of the persons legally eligible to hold an elective office will be designated on the ballot and in election communication as its recommended and supported candidates or list of candidates" (Ranney 1981: 75). This framework of candidate selection emphasises on that political parties are the gatekeepers of this process which finds a great deal of agreement in the literature

(Tripp and Kang, 2008; Caul, 2001; Dahlerup, 2007; Matland, 2007; Kuku, 2007; Rahat, 2008). The role of political parties can be significantly noticed in the parliamentary systems when women win top positions such premiership (Murray, 2010). As the system in Iraq is parliamentary, this approach finds notable interpreting at the empirical level in this case study. There is a considerable level of agreement among interviewees about the central role of the political parties in selecting candidates. Al-Nadawi, in her study about the behaviour of women parliamentarians, said: 73% of female parliamentarian participants in the study have declared that they secured the seat through the will of their block or political party (Al-Nadawi, 2010) and not based on their merit, qualification or political experience.

It is worth noting that the association between candidate selection and the performance of elected women MPs in this case study is more important for this research than the method itself. This is because framing the standards of CS is challenging. The complexity of this process is coming from that there are no globally agreed on criteria and "[T]here are very few countries where the legal system specifies criteria of candidate selection" (Rahat, 2008:1). Moreover, even at the local stage there are different approaches for how candidates ought to be selected. Each party could have standards that might differ with the other party. In addition, at the local level parties may choose to not declare their standards. In politically developing states such as Iraq, partisan politics is a new theme, due to the long-term ruling of a single party. Although there was a political parties' law written in 1991 (Higher Judicial Council, 2018), the first detailed legislation was issued only in 2015 (Parliament.iq, 2015).

While the candidate selection undoubtedly has a long-term impact on the quality of representation (Smiths and Tsutsumi, 2014), the overall procedure varies and cannot be world-widely generalised (Murray, 2010). Considering the level of democracy and party politics in each case (Rahat, 2008) the outcome at the local level, expectedly, varies too. In the same vein, Caul (2001) suggests that when candidate selection procedure examined four influential factors must be taken in consideration; 'Women activities', 'Electoral System', 'Diffusion and Competition' and 'Party Characteristics'. As women activities and the electoral system has been previously approached, the party behaviour and competition would be looked at in this and the next chapter. Most worthy to be examined from the collected data is how the procedure and the character of the selected candidates would be mirrored in their behaviour as MPs and how they are "expected to remain responsive to the demands and

grievances of their voters" (Rahat, 2008: 2). Hence, knowing how the candidates have been selected and what are the standards of this selection could lead to understanding the aftermath political behaviour of these candidates.

In the established democracies, the selection process does not constitute a problem for voters, because candidates usually come from established political parties. This means voters are aware in advance of who will stand for election as most candidates are usually members of the party prior to the election. Candidates, moreover, transit through either one of three stages; directly elected by party members, selected by party agency or selected by a nomination committee appointed by the party, as Rahat (2008) demonstrates. Therefore, most candidates are known and their biographies are available for public review. The method of candidate selection, therefore, does not make a problem for the public (voters). What is usually discussed in the event of election are the programs and the agendas rather than how the candidates have been selected. Candidate selection is, initially, a matter concerning political parties and candidates themselves rather voters as it "takes place almost entirely within particular parties" (Rahat, 2008: 1). It is the party responsibility to select the best for the position as a delegate for the party and representative for voters. Selection methods are usually subject to monitoring of the party's rules of procedures (Muller and Sieberer, 2006). There are only a few countries in which the legal system determines the standards and regulations for candidate selection, U.S, Germany and Finland for example (Hazan and Rahat, 2006). To persuade voters and party members, parties usually follow a democratic route when selecting their candidates. However, there are some exceptions in some countries that selectors must follow certain legal rules during selecting candidates. Although "parties are not legally bound to adopt any specific kind of candidate selection methods" (Rahat and Hazan, 2001:310) they are keen to keep their intra-party democratic values in front of members and potential voters (Hazan and Rahat, 2006). Despite this, researchers are calling for reform in the mechanism of candidate selection, finding that "selection criteria are seldom codified...Thus; an essential first step is to reappraise the qualities required of a representative" (Murray, 2014: 4).

Moreover, candidates are usually ready for the task and most likely have sufficient knowledge of public interests either through their inter-party activities or engagement in the public debates. As party membership offers members practical activities such as "elections

party officials, nominating candidates for public office, debating policies and participating in decision-making and in social events" Knut Haider (2006: 301) highlighted. These activities offer members who are willing or are nominated for candidacy a dynamic basis for understanding and participating in public offices. Rahat (2008) in his research regarding the more democratic method of CS has pointed out four important steps in order to produce an 'optimally' balanced selection system. The four aspects are: "[A] high rate of meaningful political participation, representation of relevant societal forces and various opinion; real competition on safe seats of safe positions on the parties' candidate list; a viable electoral connection that would pressure the elected to be responsive to the need and grievances of the public" (Rahat, 2008:3).

Contrary to the legal requirements such age, level of education and citizenship (Krook, 2010), the above range of requirements emphasises on qualitative aspects of the character of potential representatives regardless gender. In the context of data analysis, this chapter looks at the first two aspects; 'participation' and 'competition' as they both relate to the selection process. While the other two; representation and responsiveness will be discussed in the next chapter in the context of political performance and networking. Combining the collected data with Rahat's categories, this thesis seeks to identify how democratic the procedure of candidate selection is in the context of legislative gender quotas. Moreover, considering the historical, political and social circumstances, how tractable these qualitative requirements are.

Back to the new-born democracy in Iraq, there was not enough time and opportunities for women to be effectively engaged in the party membership and engagement in constructive political activities (Osama; Reyad, interviewed 2016). This, undoubtedly, adds more complexity on the nomination procedure in this country. While the majority of men candidates have been through sort of political or social activities such as party membership, women were unfamiliar with such activities due to the pre-2003 circumstances mentioned in chapter three. The next part of this chapter offers a chronological map for political parties in Iraq. The previously mentioned unusual circumstances have made the gap between the majority of citizens and political activities become wider. There are at least two or three generations of 1970s, 1980s and 1990s to grow up seeing no political party other than the single ruling party. These generations were estranged from any activities related to party

policies including elections and candidate selection. The political scene after the fall of Ba'th regime seemed chaotic and uncertain related to loyalty, affiliation and intra-party activities including candidates selection and candidate-to-be. In addition, the relationship between parties' leadership which is usually formed from long time exiled members with the newly joined members who are usually from inside the country was not clear for all parties. Mature party members were engaged in political activities such as attending opposition conferences, intra-party election and participating in ideological and social debates (Eliwi, 2012). While the insiders who constitute a considerable number of members, usually had no political experience compared with their exiled associates. Nevertheless, the newly joined members may have their tribal connections which offer them a wide and guaranteed voting source. Noteworthy, most political parties work on recruitment of pro-party loyal rather traditional membership-based audiences. In other words, all candidates included in the electoral list are not necessarily to be party members. There are candidates who step forward for candidacy or asked for shortly before the election (Ashwaq, interviewed 2016). This can be seen despite that these male or female candidates never been a member of the electorate party. It can be assumed, therefore, the process of party membership and its relation with candidacy in the newly installed political system in Iraq is not clear yet.

This complexity may explain the weakness of the candidate selection procedure in a transitional system such as Iraqi case. Members of political parties; who either were exiled and have fewer public connections but hold reasonable experience would be prioritised or those who hold almost no political experience but have a wide public network. During and after the change of political system, people in Iraq and maybe other similar societies were unfamiliar with the political system itself, let alone the party politics or democratic candidate selection methods. Therefore, the constant development of legislations related to election and reforms of existing party politics may offer an upcoming advanced selection procedure. Moreover, it is unlikely to find out the number of female party members in each party and whether the candidates were party members prior to their selection. This is due to confidentiality of some parties who keep their records fully private. The other political parties work on a grassroot basis rather than structured membership. Noteworthy, the previously exiled parties such as Al-Dawa Party are still carrying on their policy of keeping their membership data strictly private similar to their procedure during the opposition period. On

the other hand, those political parties, who work as a movement rather than a conventional form of political party, work on a wide public base. They, usually, ask their candidates to sign a list of commitments in case of winning rather than traditional membership.

it was observed that women candidates looked less concerned about the selection procedure and networking than men. Contrarily, men candidates are showing more interest in the election campaign through visiting tribes, gatherings and regular presence in their constituencies. The interviewees have indicated that women candidates look less active in their election campaign due to;

1- Dearth of female candidate pool due to security issues (Reyad; Abdul Jabbar, interviewed 2016), no interest in politics and lack of experience (Ashwaq; Abrar, interviewed 2016).

2- The mechanism of legislative gender quotas provides female candidates with a great chance of winning (Abdul Jabbar, Osama, Mohammed, interviewed 2016) through the exemption of electoral threshold. This exclusion has been justified when a "representation correction mechanism" (Rahat, 2008: 10) applied, only to recruit more women for electoral competition.

In the light of gender quotas, "the competition usually takes place among women candidates inside the electoral list rather than between women and men" stated Mrs Ashwaq a member of local council (interviewed in 2016). Therefore, due to the numerical limitation of female candidates, the competition amongst female candidates does not look very challenging, stated Mr. Abdul Jabbar; a candidate of 2014 election (interviewed in 2016). He provided an example from his party's list when a female candidate who has been included in the list at the last minute, personally had no interest in politics and no hope of winning, eventually won with 700 votes only which is almost two third lower than the electoral threshold (Abdul Jabbar, interviewed 2016). It can be argued, therefore, that there is no electoral competition in its widely known form. The competition takes place among a limited number of female candidates rather at the level of the entire list.

Theoretically, understanding the relationship between candidates and voters usually is the first incentive for the candidate (Rahat, 2008; Caul, 2001). Practically the picture of

candidate selection in the light of gender quotas remains unclear. There is no noticeable sign of applying a particular set of standards can be seen in the process of selecting candidates during the elections of 2006, 2010 and 2014 according to the interviewees Mohammed, Reyad, Abdul Jabbar and Ashwaq (interviewed in 2016). It is noteworthy that the standards and principles of candidate selection did not receive enough attention in literature as much as the electoral system (Krook, 2009:44; Rahat, 2008; Rahat and Hazan, 2001:298). In this case study, the Iraqi electoral law has allocated some requirements for the candidacy such as: the candidate must be a "qualified voter, holds an Iraqi citizenship, at least 30 years old, possession of a high-school certificate" (Inter-parliamentary Union, 2016). While ineligibilities include "persons covered by the de-Baathification law, persons convicted of a crime violating honour, persons who have enriched themselves in an illegitimate at the expense of the homeland and public finance and persons who are members of the armed forces at the time of their nomination." according to the Inter-parliamentary Union (2016). The above list of the requirements in the Iraqi Election Law can be framed as formal qualifications and discussed in details in chapter one. However, there are no "informal" qualifications specified in this law. Specification such as political experience or "party services, legislative experience, speaking abilities, financial resources, political connections, kinship, name recognition, membership, group network and organizational skills" (Krook, 2009: 45, Rahat and Hazan, 2001). This set of qualifications is usually not controlled by elections laws world-widely (Rahat, 2008) including the Iraqi Law. The political experience and party membership, for example, offer the candidate a better understanding of the surrounding circumstances in order to defend the group's interests and make decisions.

The above-mentioned criteria can be part of the system in the established political organisations. As the case looks different in the new-born democracies, it seems inequitable comparing the selection methods in an established political system with one that is developing yet. When the circumstances of candidate selection in Iraq has been reviewed, the fieldwork data showed that there is no clear and declared outline of the number of members, the gender balance, and leadership for most political parties in Iraq. An academic interviewee highlighted that "for example, some senior members or leaders of political parties have been in the position for around 50 years or for life. The problem lies in the political parties themselves as they do not follow the democratic principles inside the party"

(Reyad, interviewed 2016). This interviewee added that most political parties do not conduct inter-elections. This was negatively reflected on the entire political system including candidate selection during the last three elections. The democratisation of party activities or intra-party democratic practice at the level of membership and candidate selection plays a significant role (Rahat and Hazan, 2001; Rahat, 2008) in spreading trust and competition during procedure of candidate selection.

To understand the elites' approach of a candidate's selection, interviewees were asked: 'Are there any standards such as experience, age or social activities or any other for women candidate's selection in your party?' The purpose of this question initially was to explore if there were any set of standards for the selection process inside the parties. It is also to examine whether selectors are concerned about the qualitative standards such as party membership, social or political activities and more standards that were discussed in chapter one. Some interviewed politicians answered "yes, we do have standards" (Ayad; Humam; interviewed 2016), however, they did not confirm any. It might be confidential and members are not allowed to discuss it outside the party. However, some interviewees explained that their party often chooses "qualified and sufficient candidates" (Humam, interviewed 2016). Another politician stated that in his party, some female candidates were party members and others were non-members, but they were technocrats (Ayad, interviewed 2016). He explained, technocrat means they are capable of this position due to their professions such as being a teacher for example. When the answer of this politician was discussed with an academic interviewee, he stated that "a successful teacher is not necessary to be a successful representative or politician" (Reyad, interviewed 2016). The democratic system permits every citizen to compete for election, "but this does not imply that each party must allow any citizen who wishes to do so to compete for this role" (Rahat, 2008: 8).

Some individual interviewees have demonstrated another view related to the dearth in the pool of aspirant qualified female candidates. A female member of a local council stated that "sometimes, it is more difficult to convince a well-qualified woman to become involved in political activities" (Ashwaq, interviewed 2016). This view emphasises what Gihan Abou-Zeid stated in her research about Middle Eastern women explaining that "many effective and active women politicians stay out of parliament because they refuse to be puppets of 'joker' party" (Abou-Zeid, 2006). Some women, maybe, do not want to see themselves in a

vulnerable situation where men are the leaders and decision-makers. This can be one of the reasons that women distance themselves from political participation. Nevertheless, there are other factors behind women's estrangement from politics, for example, family duties, no interest in political activities (Abrar, interviewed 2016) because of the social belief that politics is masculine (Abdul Jabbar, interviewed 2016). Family duties in Iraq as well as in other Arab and Middle Eastern societies are mainly women's responsibility. This, possibly, causes more pressure on those women who are willing to be politicians although this kind of restrictions were eased nowadays.

Most elite interviews have pointed out that more attention must be paid to standards of candidate selection. a former MP pointed out that candidates have to be selected based on their "qualification, merit and political experience, this is the natural way of selecting candidates" (Mohammed, interviewed 2016). This view can be seen among independent politicians and academics interviewees rather than politicians. Non-political elite interviews such as academics showed uncertainty regarding whether political parties have criteria or standards for candidate's selection. A female professor has replied to this query by saying: "do they [political parties] have a committee that follows a certain criterion for selecting women candidates? We do not know if there are any, we are unaware of the whole process" (Maha, interviewed 2016). The fieldwork data showed that there was a considerable gap between political parties and the public. The relation between public, candidates or MPs and selectors, moreover, lacked transparency and clarity. This perception differs with the theoretical framework regarding the methods of candidate selection and party politics. Researchers emphasised on that "candidate selection methods should be treated as institutional mechanisms that both reflect the nature of the parties and affect party politics." (Rahat and Hazan, 2001:298). Hence, the procedure of nominating candidates would be evident for party members, candidates and voters. This may result in building up trust between voters and candidates and reducing the level of criticism that targets women politicians.

4.5. The Standards of Candidacy

Within the literature, contemporary researchers, such as Rahat (2008), have highlighted that there are a set of factors that play a substantial role in the democratic candidate selection. He highlighted four factors: "a high rate of meaningful political participation; representation of relevant societal forces and various opinions; real competition on safe seats or safe position on the party's candidates list; and a viable electoral connection that would pressure the elected to respond to the needs and grievances of the public" (Rahat, 2008:3). Providing a set of principles for selection procedure, besides securing transparency and trust among all parties, makes the judgment about the process of CS more traceable. In the case of absence of criteria, evaluation of the method of candidate selection and the political behaviour of these candidates turns to be more challenging and unsystematic. Based on this theoretical framework, the academic and politician interviewees have been asked about their views in relation to the qualifications and the candidacy standards for female candidates. The fieldwork interviewees have shown a sort of uncertainty in relation to such standards in the process of CS during the last three elections in Iraq. However, elite politicians; Humam from ISC, Ayad from PUK and Mrs Ashwaq from NRM have highlighted that their political parties prioritise well-qualified female candidates to be included in their electoral list. However, examples of these standards have not provided for the elections of 2006, 2010 and 2014.

A university professor has raised an important point regarding the qualification of local MPs. He stated that the "legal requirements for candidate eligibility is low and weak" (Reyad, interviewed 2016). By the Iraqi Electoral Law candidate must hold no less than a secondary school qualification, which from his point of view is low. When I argued that experience is more important than the college qualification, he said, "how, if the experience is not available? At least the education level; a minimum of undergraduate, can offer these candidates a reasonable awareness to observe the surrounding conditions and administrative skills" (Reyad, interviewed 2016). He added "ten years of administrative experience must be included in the list of the legal requirements for candidacy too in order to hold this important position" (Reyad, interviewed 2016). In regard with the education level of candidates, the amendment of the Electoral Law in 2018 has stated that candidates must hold undergraduate university qualification as a minimum requirement for candidacy (in.parliament.iq, 2018).

Moreover, it has been claimed that a "lack of clear criteria" would lead to dissatisfaction, or "disagreement in the evaluation" (Dahlerup, 2014:61). The fieldwork interviewees showed some concerns that lack of criteria or lack of transparency both lead to misjudgement and displeasure about the behaviour of political parties and female MPs in particular. Therefore, it appears that there is no agreed-upon vision in the newly installed electoral system in Iraq regarding the standards of candidacy.

Finding the problem not in the lack of classified standards only rather intended exclusion, a female academic and journalist said, "there is a high number of academics and qualified women who have been excluded from candidacy only because they have no link with political parties," (Azhar, interviewed 2016). She added that political parties prefer unqualified or weak figures to be easily controlled. Researchers, such as Gihan Abou-Zeid (2006), has highlighted this point too but from a different perspective, stating that based on the current reputation of female MPs, qualified women do not step forward rejecting being included in the circle of accusation and corruption (see chapter one). This view shows how important is the role of CS in women's representation. Positively or negatively, "the candidate selection procedure would have its impact remain for a long-term" (Abrar, interviewed 2016). It can be argued here that parties are not concerned about the number of votes received by female candidates as the legislated quotas offer the last-minute help in this regard (Abdul Jabbar, interviewed 2016). Females' stock of votes can be collected from family, friends and most importantly the tribe who usually offer utter support to their related candidate regardless any standards. Parties, therefore, are more concerned about their male candidates whether they could reach the threshold or lose. While the interviewees have agreed on that political parties are the gatekeepers, they have, also, emphasised that the party's agendas, often, prioritised rather than meritocracy during selecting female candidates. A female journalist - who had stood for elections of 2014 but did not win- added that parties do not support women activists; they only backup those who show loyalty (Mona, interviewed 2016). It can be argued that being a loyal or party member can be counted as an advantage of any candidate. As it has been indicated earlier in this chapter, parties suffer from the deficiency of female members (Reyad; Mohammed; Ashwaq, interviewed 2016) rather than the contrary.

In order to advance the interests of an excluded group, candidacy must be looked at as a core basis for substantive representation. The UN report of 2013 about women circumstances in Iraq stated that "since 2005, a quota of 25% for women in parliament has been in place; however, it has not resulted in greater inclusion or support for women's issues in the overall political agenda" (UN; Women in Iraq Factsheet, 2013). This shows that achievement has been in place since then but not equally growing. This conclusion was discussed in literature too that the high figurative presence does not necessarily advance substantive representation for women as a group (Caul, 2001; Tripp and Kang, 2008; Murray, 2014). The raised concerns among interviewees related to the lack of trust and transparency in the selection procedure enhances the view that candidate selection and the ongoing political behaviour of female MPs affects not only the current situation. It, most likely, dismantles trust in women's overall political participation. This has been perceived from the amount of trust-lacking among group's interviewees too.

The process of CS has been subject to an on-going criticism as the decision of selection of female candidates, often, takes place in urgency and in a very short time before the elections (Schmidt and Ghazi, 2011; Ashwaq; Jabbar; Mohammed, interviewed 2016). It was perceived from fieldwork data that misusing or degrading the method of candidate's selection produces a layer of unqualified or socially unaccepted female politicians. Hence, providing a set of standards to select candidates for an electoral list would support the nomination process and consequently women's political presence in ways: First, it reduces the amount of criticism targeting political parties due to lack of transparency. Second, it gradually builds up mutual trust between voters and political parties. When voters were informed about the allocated methods for selecting candidates, political parties would be seen as trusted and mature organisations. Thirdly, providing a set of methods for selecting candidates including women is strengthening women's presence in politics and legislative institutions. Female candidates, therefore, would be able to step forwards in political offices especially legislators confidently.

Although this research cannot statistically confirm that most women candidates beneficiaries of gender quotas were not party members prior to the election, there is a widespread impression among interviewees that they were not party members (Ashwaq; Mohammed; Jabbar; Abrar; Reyad, interviewed 2016). This means that most political parties choose female candidates from outside the party. It is often due to the infrequency of female

members. Political parties are, on the other hand, obligatory to include the ratio of 25% in their nomination list, otherwise their lists will be legally rejected (Mohammed, interviewed 2016), "therefore, they try to fill in this gap at any expense" (Abdul Jabbar, interviewed 2016). It can be noticed, therefore, that some candidates sign up for membership immediately before elections, a member of The Independent High Electoral Commission stated (Rafid, interviewed in 2016). Any urgent arrangement in relation to party membership causes hesitation in the relationship between the three elections' pillars; the voter, the candidate and the political party. It happened during the last three elections that after the candidate won the election, he/she started to work individually or maybe joined another party or bloc (Mohammed, interviewed 2016). This happens because candidates, especially women have been included in the candidacy list in the last minute. In the same vein, a tribal leader interviewee shows concerns about the dynamic of candidate selection. He added "the selection occurs in urgency only to meet the legal requirement for the gender quotas and not enough time has been spent to evaluate the CVs of candidates'' (Abdul Jabbar, interviewed 2016). For example, it happened, sometimes, that candidates have been included in electoral list of some electoral bloc to appear later that they have a criminal record or were included in De-Ba'thification Law. However, this has been referred to hesitancy in the ideology of candidates and the relationship between female MPs and the selectors. Moreover, joining a certain party comes, sometimes, "for winning purpose rather than belief in their political agenda or ideological principles which is uncommon for established party members" (Mohammed, interviewed 2016). As mentioned earlier in this part of the chapter that the qualitative standards of candidacy and nomination of female aspirants has been given less thought than the legal requirements of gender quotas.

4.6.   Voting Behaviour

Voting preference is another challenge that faces women voters and candidates. The Iraqi Constitution of 2005 and the Electoral Law of 2005 that was amended in 2016 (Parliament.iq, 2017) stated that individuals hold full freedom in their political activities including voting. However, empirically, some women step forward for political activities including voting with

interference and control of their male family members (Muthana, 2012). The opinion of male family members, especially husbands or fathers about the candidates may lead the whole household, including women, to vote for a certain candidate. This view has received a great agreement among the interviewees. It has been explained that "women often do not vote for women as still in our society women follow what men suggest. We do not expect from most wives to vote for someone other than what the whole family agreed on" (Iyad, interviewed 2016). This view indicates some social problems with regard to women's awareness about their intellectual freedom. It is worth considering that the patriarchal control of voting decisions does not necessarily mean that women were directly forced to follow. It is often because, as socially agreed on, some women think that men know better about political issues.

Examples for the above argument can be found in a research about the gender gap between men and women in political knowledge (Mendes and Osborn, 2010; Kittilson, 2016). A tribal leader and candidate for the election of 2014 stated that "it is rare to find a woman who holds an independent opinion; most of them are following their husbands' or fathers' will to vote for certain candidates" (Abdel Jabbar, interviewed 2016). An academic interviewee agreed with this view adding that this perception probably can explain the political behaviour of female parliamentarians. Therefore, he added, elected women work for their constituency or parties' agenda rather than women's (Iyad, interviewed 2016). This view was observed in most answers of political and academic elite's interviewees. The paucity of votes received by women may also support this perception. Although there were no official statistics that determine the percentage of women's votes received by women candidates, some general figures indicate that the overall percentage of votes received by male candidates was much higher than women. As a result, the overall voting outcome points out men were higher than women with regard to voting and votes received by each male candidate. The majority of male MPs have gained between 10,000 to 20,000 votes in the elections of 2014 while the average votes for women candidates is ranging between 1000 and 3000 (Iraqi Parliament Monitor, 2017). The difference between men's and women's votes average was considerably high.

When the last two elections of 2010 and 2014 were compared, there was a significant increase in the rate of votes received by women. The highest number of votes received by

female MPs in 2010 was 31,949 while in 2014 it was 90,781 (IHEC, 2014). Although this figure was limited to only one or two female candidates and the majority got a significantly low number of votes, it indicates a shift in the voting behaviour towards female candidates. However, we are still uncertain about women's voting behaviour and the question remains unanswered whether women vote for women or not. As it has been indicated previously, women form only 11% of total voters (IHEC, 2014), it can be assumed that the rise of votes received by women in the election of 2014 may be made by men voters rather than women. This assumption suggests that men vote for women more than women for women. This, however, cannot be confirmed without further statistics and quantitative systematic studies.

This uncertainty about women voting behaviour towards women candidates answers the question of why women candidates depend more on political parties rather than women audience. It explains firstly, why female politicians and "political parties are insisting to retain the legislated quota" (Abdel Jabbar; Osama, interviewed 2016) as it might be the only route for them to win. An interviewee added "for this specific reason [low voting rate] we need the quota, without it women will not make it" (Abdel Jabbar, interviewed 2016), despite the legislated quotas and the Election Law have brought "unqualified women" into the parliament. A female MP had insisted that, without the legal women quotas, women are not able to find their way to the parliament (Abdel Wahid, interviewed 2018). She blames men for not offering the required support to women in order to receive enough votes in the elections.

Knowing that women do not vote for women elaborates the tendency of candidates to fulfil the party's programs rather than women's. Parties, as explained previously, are the gatekeepers in terms of selecting candidates (Dahlerup, 2007; Kuku, 2007; Rahat, 2008). This finds a wide agreement among most interviewees too. Therefore, fulfilment to parties and selectors carries more value than women voters' for female candidates or MPs. On the other hand, any issue with the reputation of political parties would negatively affect women voting rate. This, anyhow, strengthens the belief that women voters do not form a crucial player in the voting process for women candidates in this case study. Political parties, on the other hand, could offer more winning opportunities for female candidates such as effective electoral campaigns. It should be noted that the Electoral Law allows candidates to run the elections with a single candidate list. This means citizens are able to stand for candidacy as

individuals and it is not compulsory to be part of a multi-candidate list. From the electoral experience in 2006, 2010 and 2014 individual candidates were unable to survive elections. Hence, despite the legal eligibility, parties' lists offer wider and potential opportunities for winning rather than individual lists. Moreover, when the party's list receives a high number of votes, this potentially leads to more women finding their way to the parliament by utilising the advantage of legislative gender quotas. This point can be explained that the Iraqi Electoral Law states whenever the list receives high votes the number of winner candidates would increase, parallel to this, the number of women winners increases too. The Article 11 of the Electoral Law has allocated that every fourth place in each electoral list must go to female candidates. Therefore, between every four winners there ought to be a woman winner regardless of her voting rate.

How women take control of their decisions regarding voting preference, standing for elections and even party membership remains a question whose answer requires a compound social, political and historical research. Voting behaviour in particular cannot be examined without trustworthy statistics which were unavailable and requires further studies. The fieldwork data revealed that Ideology plays a role in voting preferences and political participation in general. This is especially true when the society or a country has seen a fundamental political instability. In a post-conflict society such as Iraq where ethnicity, sect and ideology play a fundamental role, voting behaviour cannot be considered as merely a political activity. Despite an endless effort by some religious and political parties to unify the divided identities under a single national identity, people still vote based on the tendency of their sect, Sunni or Shi'a for example, regardless of the political background of the candidates. Women, hence, were not an exception from this process. Arab or Kurd, Islamist or secular are other levels of voting identities that can be seen in the electoral map each elections. Hence, for example, the paucity of votes received by a secular female MP in 2014 in some extent is more to do with the overall votes received by the secular electoral list rather than the gender. For example, the left-wing party who entered the 2014 elections under the name of Democratic Movement won only 2 seats out of 275 (Parliament.iq, 2017) with the female MP receiving 1,417 and the male MP 30,074 votes (Iraqi Parliament Monitor, 2017). Although the difference in the voter turnout between the two candidates is significant, the overall number of votes received by the party itself shows two factors. First is that securing only two

seats indicates that the party itself has no popularity among voters in general. If the list has received more votes there would be more seats and forcibly more women. The second point is that without the advantage of legislative quotas, it seems impossible for this female MP to get the seat as the number of votes received by her is lower than the required threshold. Moreover, despite the leftist slogans and constant calls for empowering women, parity and justice, it was not clear why the majority of secular voters did not vote for the female candidate. This example indicates that stereotypical mottos do not necessarily play a role related to decreasing gender gap contrary to what was highlighted in political literature (Krook, 2009; Caul, 2001; Tripp and Kang, 2008). While religious ideology, as Gine and Mansuri (2012) have highlighted, has a significant effect in overall winning of electoral lists which consequently results in more women getting parliamentary seats based on mandatory women quotas.

Beside the ideology, the popularity of the electoral list can directly affect women's presence in the parliament regardless of the number of votes received by each one. On the other hand, male candidates are affected individually by the ballot outcome. This is because each male candidate will be able to secure the seat respectively based on the number of votes received by their own rights. However, male candidate, despite reaching the threshold, might lose the seat, in favour of a female candidate regardless of her vote percentage, if he was in the fourth or eighth sequence in the list. For example, in the conservative, religious electoral list, more women have found their way to the parliament in the elections of 2010 and 2014 due to the high number of votes received by the list itself.

It is noteworthy that studies that focus on developing states find that sect and ethnicity may receive more attention from women voters than the gender of the candidate (Gine and Mansuri, 2012). An analysis of a considerable amount of media reports revealed that some female candidates who received a significant figure of votes in the elections of 2014 were focusing on the sectarian propaganda in their election campaigns and the media. Nevertheless, the results for the last three elections do not show the gender of voters for each winner MP. Therefore, it was difficult to decide on whether women support the sectarian agenda of the candidates more than men do or vice versa. However, some of the focus groups' interviews clearly declared that backing up those candidates who defend the agenda of their own sect is an obligation (Teachers Focus group, interviewed 2016). Sect or

ideology, therefore, has its own imprint on the voting map for women as voters and candidates. Nevertheless, the above perception may flourish or fade depending on the political, social and transitional circumstances. For example, after the political change in Iraq as a response to the long-term oppression of the Shi'a majority and the Kurds under the Ba'th regime, these two groups insisted to be included in the new system at the legal and administrative level. Hence, the sectarian and ethnic slogans started to gain strength after around thirty years of single-party and single-sect ruling regime.

It is worth considering that the Ba'th ideology initially was secular but by the time this party started to adopt a discriminated sectarian agenda against Shi'a, for example. This, nevertheless, does not mean that this party is an ideological believer in Sunnism. It happened that Saddam Hussein and his senior party fellows were Sunni and mostly from the same tribe. Moreover, after April 2003, Al-Qaida with the support of Ba'thist security and military officers from the dissolved forces started their fierce attacks against Shi'a which caused a type of sectarian civil war in Baghdad (Laub, 2016; Gold, 2017) to go under the government's control and eliminated later in 2006 and 2007. As a result of all these circumstances, the sectarian and nationalist propaganda has been clearly employed in most election campaigns from; Shi'a, Sunni and Kurds.

In terms of ideology and its role in women's political behaviour, there was an expression that the conflict between secularism and religion affects advancing women's issues. In a study published in 2009 it has been stated that the protectors of women's rights are the secular parties but they are a minority in the Iraqi Parliament (Al-Ali, 2009). To discuss this argument, we need to look at some quantitative electoral outcomes. An example from early days of political transformation in Baghdad showed that religious affiliation had a positive impact on women's political participation. The majority of Shi'a citizens had followed the announcement of the supreme Shi'a authority in Najaf to vote for the constitution of 2005 and participate in the following election as voters and candidates (Jeffery, 2005). It can be said here that religion in general a sort of control on shifting the mode of its followers. On the other hand, we see that left ideology in this case study had no significant impact on boosting women's participation in elections. Female candidates from the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) and the National Iraqi Alliance (Al-Watanya), for example, have received a significantly low number of votes; 1417 in the elections of 2010 and 1300 in 2014 in Baghdad (Iraqi Parliament Monitor,

2017). Both lists introduced themselves as secular electoral blocks. While in some of the religious electoral lists women received a significantly high number of votes in 2014. Moreover, in some constituencies female candidates have received a higher number of votes than male candidates (IHEC, 2014). In addition, it can be observed from the recorded parliamentary sessions, in the last three elections the religious parties such as Al Dawa, ISCI and even the most radical Sadrist movement; each has at least one or two active female MPs.

In the context of ideological variation, a secular female MP has expressed her concern about the slogans of secular parties and the stereotyped approaches in regard to the relationship between women rights and ideology. She highlighted that "religious parties have clearer views about women, hence, their female MPs act freely based upon their established principals, while seculars are not clear about that" (Abdul Wahid, interviewed 2018). This view can be clarified as the secular parties, due to failure in the last three elections, are willing to convince the voters at any price including secular principles. Therefore, candidates are not certain about the agenda of these parties and eventually lose the courage to defend their secular ideology. For example, in the course of preparation for the elections of April 2018 the Civil Democratic Alliance, which is a combination of communists and secular candidates, has declared its coalition with the one of most radical Islamic parties (Al hurra, 2018) to overcome the previous voting drop. Hence, the absence of firm ideological principles undoubtedly, increases the level of uncertainty with regard to methods and trajectories that are followed by MPs. The hesitation of ideologies and values causes the problem rather than the ideology itself.

By examining the limited sources about the voting behaviour of women in Iraq it seemed that it is more complex than the candidate selection. Pippa Norris (1995) in her study of the gender gap in voting behaviour in Britain, the USA and Europe finds considerable difference based on ideology and party competition. Therefore, it can be assumed that even in politically developed countries women's political presence and political behaviour did not rise up to the feminist and international expectations (Gine' and Mansuri, 2012). Confident studies and evaluations regarding women's voting behaviour can be provided based on statistics and surveys obtained in most established and mature political systems. However, a lack of researching institutions and shortage of studies in relation to political behaviour in most Middle-Eastern states including Iraq leaves the judgments in this regard more limited and

uncertain. Although there was a genuine need for a quantitative method for women voting outcome, taking in consideration its limitation, this research tried to work it out with the available qualitative views collected from the interviews.

4.7. Why Female Candidates Do Not Attract Voters?

One of the factors that have been frequently cited throughout this research is that women in Iraq have not gained enough political experience due to the instability in the political and social circumstances. These obstacles can be framed in three main issues; the harsh nature of the Ba'th regime before 2003, three wars and a decade of economic sanctions (Al-Ali and Pratt, 2013; Al Khalil, 1989; Alamery, 2012). This situation had become a serious obstacle for women's political participation. Abdul Jabbar (interviewed, 2016) and Reyad (interviewed, 2016) during their talk about women's political participation before April 2003 highlighted that Iraqi families may condone for their male members to be involved in secret political activities. However, girls or women were discouraged from any political activities. The security agents of the Saddam's regime did not hesitate to employ the worst strategy to spread fear among their political enemies (Al-Khalil, 1989). Women, if they were not the target themselves, were the fastest route to pressurise male political opponents. For example, an interviewee in regard with his personal experience under the Ba'th regime points out that "my sister and my mother both spent years in the prison in order to pressurise an escaped brother to return and face the execution punishment" (Osama, interviewed 2016). Moreover, female relatives of political prisoners or fugitives can be subject to rape or imprisonment which traditionally is believed to bring shame to the family and destroy its reputation (Al-Ali and Pratt, 2013). In Iraqi society, despite its modernity and historical civilisation (Cockburn and Cockburn, 2000), there are still some strongly held traditional values such as honour and family reputation (Shlash, 2009; Muthana, 2012; Aylan, 2015; Jabbar, interviewed 2016).

It is worth considering, that after the spread of the 'death penalty' and 'torture chambers' the regime of Saddam Hussein started to use religion principles as a new strategy in order to convince people of his legitimacy (Pratt, 2005; Cockburn and Cockburn, 2000). Therefore,

after the 1991 uprising due to the invasion of Kuwait and enforcement of international sanctions by the UN, Saddam Hussein (president from 1979 to 2003) started to enforce some of the Sharia Law rules (Cockburn and Cockburn, 2000). Rules such as "death penalty for prostitutes and preventing women from travelling abroad without a male relative" (Pratt, 2005:15) have been put in practice. The death penalty for prostitutes has been sometimes employed towards female political opponents, too. The male companion rule is to prevent the families of dissidents from joining their exiled male relatives, as one of the interviewee explained (Osama, interviewed 2016). These new regulations towards women have been utilised to convince people of the good will of the regime especially after the disaster of invading Kuwait in 1990. On the other hand, it was used to spot and track opponents. Women were the easiest tool to achieve this goal, an academic interviewee highlighted (Osama, interviewed 2016). To clarify this point, for example, attacking women accused of wrongdoing such as illegitimate relationships with men appears an utterly religious rule, although in reality the reason of attack is political rather than ethical. Hence, Iraqi families think carefully before agreeing for their daughters to be involved in political activities. There are always concerns about any accusation that may damage the family or tribe's image (Alamery, 2015). Understanding these challenges explains the lack of political experience including voting and balloting experience for women who have been through this type of social and political circumstances.

It should be noted that there is no statistical evidence in hand about the percentage of women who voted for women candidates in the last three national parliamentary elections in Iraq. Nevertheless, according to statistics published by The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) after the election of 2014, women candidates received only 11.15% from overall votes regardless the sex of voters, while 80.23% of the election turnout went to male candidates. Based on gender map women make up around 50% of the Iraqi population, if we assume that half of the 11% votes received by female MPs has come from female voters, the result will come up with around only 5% of female votes going to female candidates. This figure shows that women candidates receive a significantly low percentage from the overall voting turnout. This shows that women voters do not form a fruitful contribution for women's candidacy campaigns. And even if all women have voted for women candidates the percentage would not exceed the overall percentage of women voting which is only 11%.

However, this assumption cannot be confirmed as most focus groups interviewees stated that they have voted for male candidates.

Spiritual ideology, sect and intolerance for the ethnicity have a larger impact on women's voting decisions. However, the semi-structured interviews analysed in this chapter shows a noteworthy tendency of views blaming women's subordination to men in terms of voting preference, or what can be called male dominance in political issues. This insight, moreover, has been brought up in a report published by International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in 2007 titled *The Arab Quota Report: Selected Case Studies Quota Report Series*. It has been reported that "[In] many instances, women do not have the independence to vote for their preferred candidate, backing instead the person that the family supports." (IDEA, 2007: 14). This statement, although there are differences from one Arab country to another based on the social and political system, has a large extent of credibility for most Arab states. Political freedom, for example, in most of the Arab countries including Iraq during the Ba'th regime has its direct impact on women's views about political issues (Al-Amery, 2015; Osama, interviewed 2016; Jabbar, interviewed 2016). Furthermore, the pressure of radicalism, tribalism and ethnicity tendencies play part in women's voting trend rather than merely gender. This approach can be true, too, when applied to wider geopolitical areas such as some Middle-Eastern and Asian countries, Pakistan, for example, as Gine and Mansuri (2012) have argued. The problems voting behaviour need to be studied in non-conventional research itineraries "to provide fresh ways of understanding the complex relationship between gender, voting behaviour and public opinion" (Norris, 2004:15). It can be added here that regional and individual case studies may help in providing accurate understanding of each case far from generalised perception of voting behaviour (Kittilson, 2016). To enrich this topic, the next part will be discussing the voting problem from the angle of women candidates themselves and how their acts positively or negatively were reflected in the ballot.

4.8. The Political Behaviour of Female MPs

It is essential to examine how women MPs beneficiaries from gender quotas have acted in the parliament in order to represent their group. The fieldwork data showed that during

the parliamentary periods of 2006, 2010 and 2014 there were some political activities that were conducted by female parliamentarians. An interviewee female MP stated that women parliamentarians have had a significant role in the recent urgent questions, bringing government officials to be present in the Iraqi Representatives Assembly and answer their questions. Mrs. Abdul Wahid pointed out that this activity has been counted as an advanced step steered by female MPs to be politically actively present; (interviewed in 2018). However, an academic interviewee degraded this type of activities, stating that questioning ministers from other parties can be considered as evidence of political conflict guided by the political parties rather than female MPs themselves (Osama, interviewed 2016). This supports the previously mentioned argument in regard to loyalty preference of female MPs which often goes towards the selectors rather than women group. Moreover, none of the four urgent questions led by female MPs in the parliamentary period of 2014-2018 have had a clear link with women interests according to parliamentary session's record provided by the media centre in the Iraqi Parliament. It is worth considering that this type of political activity indicates a good level of bravery and debating skills by some female representatives. It, moreover, can be useful in motivating and empowering other women. However, it can be argued that this sort of activity, urgent parliamentary question for example, firstly it is very limited. Secondly, it has not been considered as an act of advancing the women's interests.

4.9.   Women Interests

First, we need to ask what women's interests are? defining and coding these interests must be taken into consideration before any further decisions about how to achieve these interests. It is worth considering that Iraqi Constitution of 2005 has clearly stated, in articles 14,15,16,17, 29 and 30 that personal freedom, work, public health, education and social security are equally granted for male and female citizens (Iraqi Parliament, 2015).Women, moreover, institute 52% from Iraqi labour force in the government institutions. As it has been discussed earlier in this thesis, the Iraqi Personal Status Law no.188 of 1959 looks advanced in terms of women's rights for divorce, finance and custody. The legal age of marriage has been increased to 18 in the amendment of 1978 in Article 1 of this Law. This significantly

restricted the under-age marriage among girls. However, there are some weaknesses when compared with modern and democratic legislations which require interference and amendments. For example, the article 409 from the Iraqi Penal Code that deals with "honour killing" (Debes, 2012) remains challenging. This paragraph from the Iraqi Law distinguishes between the crime of murder in general and killing for honour or reputation stating that "[A]ny person who catches his wife in the act of adultery or finds one of his close female relatives in bed with her lover and kills them immediately or one of them or assaults one of them so that he or she dies or is left permanently disabled is punishable by a period of detention not exceeding 3 years" (Refworld /UNHCR, 2017). The exclusion of honour killing or manslaughter from general punishment has since its publication in 1969, given rise to persistent killing of many women accused of adultery (Bayoumy and Kami, 2012; Iraqhurr, 2010). It is worth noting that practically the honour killing has decreased since the democratic system established in 2003. However, this legal loophole offers an excuse for such crime. Despite calls to reform this legislation, female parliamentarians did not show a convincing effort to change this critical article in the Iraqi law. This is, possibly, because these female politicians were not willing or fearing to risk their positions and their political future by confronting such tribal taboos. Considering that these women have only recently entered the political arena, they also miss the skills of debating and the strength of changing current controversial legislations. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the elected female MPs have entered the parliament with a low number of votes. This puts them in a weak position in front of their political party and the parliament in general.

It is worth mentioning that recently the Committee of Women, Family and Childhood in the Iraqi Parliament along with other concerned committees have proposed a first draft of 'protection from domestic violence act' in January 2017 (parliament.iq, 2017). This act can be counted as a gesture of development towards women-friendly policies. What is most important is that this proposal has come from a group of female MPs and specifically from the parliamentary Committee of Women, Family and Childhood which has a history of inaction. This committee has been previously accused as being inactive and usually does not reach the quorum of voting as its members; who are all women, do not attend the scheduled sessions (Humam, interviewed 2016; Abdul Wahid, interviewed 2018). This committee, during the first parliamentary period of 2006-2010, has offered three draft laws in relation to

public funds, disability and child protection. However, most of these proposals remained at the drafting level (Al-Nadawi, 2010; Iraqi Parliament, 2015). With a look at the activity record of the Women, Family and Childhood Committee, no further conclusions can be drawn.

Alongside the spread of positive discrimination schemes to increase women's representation, it can be noticed that the behaviour of female politicians has gone under scrutiny as privileged MPs rather than merely representatives of people. Therefore, their performance has been underestimated due to issues such as low activity during the parliamentary sessions, absence from public forums and low number of achievements in regard to women-friendly or parity policies. This leads to an underestimation of the behaviour of female candidates in general and being regarded as "second-rate politicians" according to Abu-Zeid (2006) in her analysis of the behaviour of Middle Eastern female politicians. This perception can be seen in the distribution of committees inside the parliament as women have not been participating in the main and effective committees such as political, economic and security (Al-Nadawi, 2010:57). It is worth mentioning here that out of 24 committees in the Iraqi Parliament there are only 3 lead by women. However, the parliamentary session's diary of 2010, 2012, and 2014 (parliament.iq) shows that the most ineffective committee in the council of representatives is the all-female Women, Family and Childhood Committee. It has been indicated, nevertheless, that if there is voting for legislation related to women or children issues, female MPs are actively involved (Humam, interviewed 2016). This finds an agreement with the view of an MP interviewee who stated that "women MPs are sometimes recipients of the actions of others rather than the ones with the initiatives" (Mohammed, interviewed 2016). Although this perception cannot be generalised, it leaves its impact on the overall reputation of women politicians.

In the same context, from the inner circle, a female MP has criticised the behaviour of some of her female colleagues stating that "they do not work to improve their skills in order to compete with men and other women" (Ashwaq, interviewed 2016). Furthermore, it has been said that most women MPs are not active inside the parliament as well as outside (Abdel Wahid, interviewed 2018; Maha, interviewed 2016). Al-Nadawi in a study conducted in 2011 has highlighted the same issues concerning women MPs behaviour. She listed a set of derelictions in their political performance for the period between 2005 and 2011 including a shortage of networking outside the parliament and inactivity inside it (Al-Nadawi, 2011). A

female MP agrees with this view, blaming women for not being brave enough to compete with men in the election (Ashwaq, interviewed 2016). This unpleasant image of the level of achievement by women MPs undoubtedly affects the present and future women's position in politics.

Furthermore, the fieldwork data and the records of parliamentary sessions provide no evidence that female MPs were more vulnerable than male MPs inside the parliament. One of the interviewed politicians stated that, women MPs enjoy all the legal and moral privileges as same as men and sometimes more as any act against any woman would be counted as an anti-feminist act, which male politicians do not like to be framed in (Mohammed, interviewed 2016). This shows that the spread of a feminist trend along with the legal advantages have been observed well at the level of political elites. The tribal tradition in Iraq, furthermore, degrades a man who verbally or physically attacks a woman and will be seen as a disgraceful member for the tribe and relatives. Therefore, women often act freely in the public spaces such as parliaments based on the legal and social advantages.

4.10. Level of Education

During the fieldwork research it was observed that six out of ten female MPs in one of the local councils have only a certificate of secondary school. However, statistics show that a considerable number, around 56 out of 85 of the female MPs in the national parliament hold qualifications ranging between higher diploma and PhD, while the majority of 35 out of 56 have B.A (Iraqi Parliament Monitor, accessed 2017). Therefore, the level of education among female MPs at the Iraqi Parliament seems significant and maybe cannot be challenged as a cause of poor performance. Of note is the fact that the level of education of female parliamentarians in Iraq is the highest compared with female parliamentarians in the other Arab states (Al-Nadawi, 2010). In the course of data collecting, including interviewing individuals and groups, it has been noticed that there were concerns regarding the awareness related to the worth and responsibility attached with the position of representative. Academic interviewees in particular showed uncertainty about whether female representatives have received the right knowledge about their duties.   An academic

interviewee highlighted that "most female MPs in the local council look like job brokers who make phone calls to mediates in order to find jobs for unemployed people" (Reyad, interviewed 2016). This behaviour, he assumes, does not meet the size of the responsibility they hold as people's representatives, referring this weakness to the lack of higher education (Reyad, interviewed 2016).

It is worth considering that the Iraqi society looks with special respect to those who hold a high academic degree and it is counted as a strong qualification for being a good politician. In the same line, there is an agreement among researchers of political science that when the level of education is high, the tendency towards political participation becomes more obvious (Jackson, 1995; Hillygus, 2005). The high level of formal education guarantees "verbal and cognitive proficiency" (Persson, 2013: 16), it has been assumed. Although the practical experience has proved that some successful politicians do not have higher education degrees (see; Carnes and Lupu, 2015). Researchers in the field of representation have mentioned a set of "informal criteria" such as "party service" and "legislative experience" (Krook, 2009: 45) that carries more value rather than merely the level of education. However, as the formal system of education from primary until postgraduate usually offers decent skills of writing formal papers, public speaking and awareness of social and political debates (Hillygus, 2005) it can be considered along with other criteria as an efficient dynamic for better political behaviour. It is worth adding here, the Iraqi Electoral Law in its last amendment conducted in March 2018 added a paragraph about the level of education stating that candidates for the national election must hold an undergraduate or upper qualification (parliament.iq, accessed Feb 2018).

4.11. Are Women more Democratic than Men?

The recent women studies assumed that women's political behaviour would offer a practical interpretation for democratic values such as human rights, child and elderly care (Paxton and Hughes, 2017). It is worth considering that researchers have frequently linked women's inclusion in politics with democratic values (Tripp and Kang, 2008; Dahlerup, 2009; Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2009). However, it is rarely discussed how women presence in

politics helps in establishing democracy. In other words, what can women offer in order to increase their democratic credentials? This is what we try to understand in the light of positive discrimination arrangements.

It has been noticed that women have a significant presence in the non-electoral activities such as rallies or participation in protests rather than the electoral or governmental activities (Kittilson, 2016). Nevertheless, what is most important for this research is to explore whether women politicians seek to advance women's interests which is, in one way or another, related to democratic principles (Cohen, 2016). It is worth considering that determination of women's interests and demands is not a simple task (Wängnerud, 2009). While most studies focus on western motives and outcomes (Kittilson, 2016) it seems they are very regional and, sometimes, cannot be controlled by global standards. An academic interviewee stated that: "we initially need a set of standards and criteria to measure the performance of women politicians" (Reyad, interviewed 2016). Nevertheless, another interviewee has provided figures with regard to being good or bad representatives, stating that, evaluating their work as more democratic or not seems very difficult. Only "30% of women representatives can be labelled as good delegates, while 70% are acting badly. In addition, women are not less corrupt than men" (Iyad, interviewed 2016). While another academic interviewee opposes this view, he supported the general mainstream in literature. Related to women's effort to advance democratic values, researchers proposed that "women are generally more supportive of welfare programs for the elderly, sick and poor, as well as government spending on education, health and urban development" (Norris, 2000:7; Swers, 2002; Pande and Ford, 2011; Cohen, 2016). A fieldwork interviewee clearly stated that women are supporting human rights, equality and freedom because "this is part of women's nature, women hold cleaner hearts" (Reyad, interviewed 2016). Although, he stated, female MPs in the local council are unaware of what democratic principles are when compared with MPs in the national parliament.

It is worth noting that when interviewees were asked whether gender plays a role in fulfilment of democratic values or not. Some said yes, referring that to the level of corruption between men and women politicians. It has been highlighted that women are less corrupt because they fear scandals and damage of reputation as well as the clan or family judgment. Therefore, they avoid suspicion of being corrupt (Reyad, interviewed, 2016). While

researchers have found a clear link between the increase of women's presence in politics and the rise of welfare state policies in established democracies such as Nordic countries (Wängnerud, 2009), the story can be different in other areas. Hence, due to the newness of the experience of women's political participation, the hastily surrounding their political presence and lack of precise records of political activities, there is no clear evidence of women being more democratic than men or otherwise.

4.12. Political Participation and Social Awareness among Women

Despite the international campaign to increase women's political engagement, reports from politically developed, developing and undeveloped states show a shortage of women in politics (Kittilson, 2016). Reasons differ as for this case study the urgency in selection of female candidates and lack of knowledge has been indicated as a ground for dissatisfaction among the interviewees. Academic interviewees have indicated that society must be initially prepared for accepting women in the top positions (Reyad; Iyad; Maha; Azhar, interviewed 2016). The Iraqi social structure in general does not reject women in the workplace as a doctor, engineer or businesswoman. However, seeing women in the leadership positions was limited (Aylan, 2015).

During the seventies, eighties and nineties political positions were allocated mainly for the top Ba'thist figures who were often men (Abdul Jabbar, interviewed 2016). In addition to the single party ruling system, the Ba'th leadership in Iraq was highly affected by the tribal mentality. As explained in chapter three, the tribal mind-set hardly accepts females in politics. Therefore, women's exclusion from politics during the Ba'th ruling period was due to two aspects; the single, totalitarian system and the clannish tradition attached with Ba'th party. The tribal control began to fade by the change of April 2003 as women even from tribal backgrounds started to gain confidence to compete for the political positions (Muthana, 2012; Aylan, 2015). Some interviewees pointed out that the dramatic change of 2003 was a large leap for people who spent around 30 years under a politically undeveloped system (Abdul Jabbar; Reyad; Iyad; Mohammed; Ayad, interviewed 2016). This leap requires a sort of intellectual and social preparation for public and decision-makers alike (Reyad; Osama,

interviewed 2016).A female academic, who leads a department in one of Baghdad's leading universities, highlighted that "the problem has to be investigated in our mind-sets, women and men alike" (Abrar, interviewed 2016). When she was asked that women, including her, are holding high positions in many administrative and political positions, she answered: "Women do lead many important offices and there are a large number of successful women here and there, but the struggle appears at the level of political positions'' (Abrar, interviewed 2016). Another academic strongly agrees with this assumption adding that "women succeeded in offices such as academia but not political leadership" (Iyad, interviewed 2016). With respect to literature, this view has been mirrored in some studies such as the works of Pande and Ford (2011) and Kittilson (2016). Paxton and Hughes (2017), moreover, have pointed out the problem of women's under-participation in politics compared with other fields stating that "[Although] women have made remarkable inroads into both higher education and traditionally male occupations, the political sphere remains an area where, despite the progress, women still have far to go" (Paxton and Hughes, 2017:16).

Society, especially women themselves, therefore, needs to be well prepared for and aware of the importance of placing women in political offices, academic interviewees suggested (Reyad; Abrar, Interviewed 2016). Lack of political, social and intellectual preparation would degrade women's political position, Kittilson (2016) suggests. In the same vein, an interviewee emphasised that "the society is not prepared for placing women in a leadership position; therefore, women do not vote for women because they do not trust each other" (Abrar, interviewed 2016). She supports the bottom-up strategy where the society is fairly well prepared to accept women in advanced political positions. The gradual change may result in more women in political office "more than the quota achieves maybe" she suggested. However, she was the only interviewee who proposes that "women need to accept that there are some jobs that psychologically do not suit them. Women should not forget their most important role which is looking after the family and bringing up children" (Abrar, interviewed 2016). Her view about the primary role of women is not common compared with most academics and politicians interviewees. Nevertheless, this view may find a level of agreement in religious literature based on the idea of the great value of motherhood. From Islamic perspective for example, mothers have been mentioned with high respect (Quran, 31:14-15; 17:23-24; 29:8; 19: 32; 46:15). The value of motherhood has been

mentioned in the Hadith –which is a record of speeches and actions of the Prophet Mohammed and counted as the second Islamic guideline after the Quran- as they hold the responsibility of bringing up children who will institute a good society protected by good citizens. Although, there is no gesture of opposing women's political or social engagement, the most respectful responsibility of motherhood in Islam has been sometimes understood as priority for women when compared with any other commitments. Nevertheless, this view apparently is fading by the time. For example, since the establishment of the new Iraqi state, it has been noticed that many women have overcome such obstacles leaving the responsibility of family management to their husbands in order to fully participate in the political activities (Abdul Jabbar; Osama, interviewed 2016). It is worth noting this approach finds some agreement in the literature in the context of women's political engagement. With this regard, researchers have debated that some social stereotypes such as traditional housewifery and childcare duties still have an impact on women's political participation even in politically established countries such as the USA (Murray, 2014).

Nevertheless, the indication that the society is not ready yet to deal with modern mechanisms such as the legislative gender quotas can be seen in the answers of other academic interviewees, too. They suggest that the gender quotas should have been introduced in detail prior to its inclusion in the constitution of 2005. The tribal leader Abdul Jabbar highlighted that "due to our miserable political situation during the Ba'th regime we are much behind other nations in terms of democracy and political systems; we needed enough time to observe what others have already achieved" (Abdul Jabbar, interviewed 2016). It is worth considering that empirical studies have found that in a wider context outside the non-democratic systems and conflict zone there is an evidence of a lack of knowledge with regard to the quotas for women (Kittilson, 2016). This perception has been noticed in focus group interviews, especially among teachers and housewives (interviewed in 2016). There is a noticeable lack of knowledge about the legislative gender quotas and how it works. The journalists' focus group (interviewed 2016) has shown a good level of awareness regarding the mechanism of parliamentary and local council quotas for women.

It is worth taking into account after a decade since the democratic change in Iraq there are clearly some academic debates about the advantages of incremental development with regard to social democratisation. Beside some interviewees (Reyad; Iyad; Mohammed;

Osama; Abrar; Maha; Jabbar, interviewed 2016), a number of Iraqi researchers such as Muthana (2012), Al amery (2015) Aylan (2015) have suggested that women empowerment is best achieved through establishment of democratic values. They have emphasised that merely legislation and enforcement of some women-friendly regulations may not do the job alone. The majority of interviewees have highlighted that gender quotas without social and intellectual preparation are likely to be misused. Such policy requires educating people of its pros and cons to avoid misuse and guarantee its effect. This insight can be seen in Krook's (2009) study of the global perspective of legislative gender quotas. She suggests that we must not overestimate the influence of law in advancing parity and placing women in a functional political place.

4.13. Conclusion

This chapter was thematically organised to answer the question of what was the procedure of adoption of the legislative gender quotas, who were the key players in this adoption and what was the role of feminist movement in this process? It also consulted views of the academic and politician interviews about women positions as candidates, how they have been selected and what were the standards of this selection if there are any? Furthermore, after the enforcement of women quotas in the Iraqi Parliament since 2005 through three national elections, the views of elites have been solicited related to the performance of women MPs beneficiaries of quotas. This chapter examined procedure of candidate selection in the light of the legal parliamentary gender quotas. The data showed that there were fundamental issues in relation to lack of knowledge and transparency regarding candidate selection among public, female candidates and selectors. by analysing the available outcome from the fieldwork, it can be said that there were no set of declared standards for candidate selection. The lack of criterion adds complexity and critics on the selection and later on the performance of female MPs. It has been observed that due to the dearth of female party members, political parties left with no choice other than accepting whoever comes forward for candidacy, overlooking merit or political experience. This happened to meet the legal requirement of 25% quotas for women. It has been noticed, too,

that there was not enough effort offered to establish special measures or certain plans from parties about recruiting more women for party membership. Women organisations do not look equipped to work toward encouraging women to genuinely participate in political activities including party membership. Academics and independent politician interviewees supported the idea of equal opportunities alongside with substantive representation. Interviewees from political parties were strong supporters of special measures as there was a strong belief that women will not be able to find their way to the parliament without the support of quotas.

5. Chapter Five: Data Analysis 'Focus Groups'

5.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the legislative gender quotas in Iraq based on data mainly collected from semi-structured focus groups. The aim of this approach is to understand the relationship between women and their representatives. How the performance of female MPs who benefited from the legislative gender quotas during the elections of 2006, 2010 and 2014 was received by non-decision makers women. How the procedure of the candidacy and voting behaviour has been reviewed, so far, by the women audience. The chapter mainly relies on fieldwork considering views from four women's focus groups coming from different professions and backgrounds alongside official minutes of parliamentary sessions and researches conducted by Iraqi academics. The elite's interviews will be utilised as a secondary source to compare between the group's and the elites' approaches in certain aspects such as the standards of candidacy and intellectual grounding for adopting gender quotas. This will help us to understand the impact of the legislative gender quotas on women's substantive representation. This chapter, also, looks at how this type of representation has been framed by the sample female audience in the context of the expected outcome of gender quotas, voting behaviour, networking and groups' interests. As the mechanism of gender quotas was, primarily, designed to solve the long-term exclusion of women as a gender group, including the voice of non-elite women was essential for this research. This was for the purpose of triangulation and offering equal space, as much as possible, to politicians and non-politicians to present their views about the experience of gender quotas in Iraq.

5.2 What is Gender Quota?

It has been noticed that a great deal of the focus group participants were unfamiliar with the term "gender quotas". Although journalists' focus groups were aware of this mechanism, some of the interviewed teachers and housewives seemed unaware of what gender quotas mean in the law. This may explain the arguments of some elite interviewees about the

importance of introducing such fundamental arrangement to the society prior to its adoption (Reyad; Mohammed; Osama; Abrar, interviewed 2016). It was essential to offer the interviewees a brief introduction about gender quotas in the Iraqi Constitution to clarify the concept and its legal framework. Gender quotas have been included in the Iraqi political system as part of the democratic package (Pande and Ford, 2011; International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2007; Dahlerup, 2005). Hence, the mechanism of gender quotas was not subject to a preparation or public debate so women audiences have a say in this procedure. The debate about inclusion of quotas in the law was limited to a small number of women who had personal networks enabling them to receive invitations for conferences and political forums. There was a clear uncertainty among the teachers and housewives focus groups (interviewed in 2016) about the method of gender quotas in the parliament , how does it work? What does exactly 25 percent mean? and how has it been worked out in the electoral list?

Furthermore, some participants in the focus groups were uncertain about whether this scheme is for their benefit or not. The majority of participants in the four focus groups have agreed that "the mechanism of gender quotas is to benefit the female parliamentarian rather than the women audience" (Teachers 1 and 2, Journalists, housewives Focus groups, 2016). It can be argued here that the mechanism of legislative gender quotas has not been discussed in a wide circle prior to its adoption due to the urgency in drafting the constitution, the top-down pressure to include quotas and the absence of women mobilisation and women decision-makers. At this stage and before beginning our argument about the political behaviour of women MPs and voters it is necessary to introduce the overall circumstances that surrounded women's political participation during the transitional stage in Iraq.

The hazardous circumstances that appeared in the immediate aftermath of 2003 such as the security threats from Al-Qaeda and its followers from radical groups played a role in women's political activities. The former Ba'thist military officers, in addition, who found themselves excluded from the governing system after being long-term rulers started to gather and attack supporters of the new system (Katzman, 2009; Stern and McBride, 2013). These circumstances caused some women to drift away or were prevented by family from engaging in any political activities immediately after the fall of Ba'th regime (Al-Ali and Pratt, 2008). As a result, women have had less or no experience in political activities, while men on the other

hand, those who returned from diaspora as well as insiders were readier for political engagement (Marr, 2007). Women's political engagement often was surrounded by social, security and political obstacles that have been mentioned in details in chapter three.

Taking into consideration the theoretical and factual evidence that women do not possess enough political experience has caused women to appear less attractive to voters. Men are socially identified as more interested in politics, as researchers have highlighted (Kittilson, 2016). The lack of experience was reflected in the difficulty to nominate women for the Iraqi Governing Council in 2004. The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in 2004 were looking to nominate women for the new government but "they couldn't find [any] suitable women despite the fact that seventy women had attended the July conference [The Voice of Women of Iraq]! They found three women. One had experience, and she was soon assassinated, one was a gynaecologist and one an engineer. The latter two had no experience...They said that they weren't even briefed as to what they would be doing" (Al-Ali and Pratt, 2009:91). Even later during the selection of candidates for election after the introduction of the legislative quotas, some female MPs admitted that they had no idea about the nature of the work inside the parliament (Al-Nadawi, 2010). These statements explain two facets concerning women's participation in the process of formation of the new political system. Firstly, the difficulty of finding aspirant qualified women in that early stage of democratic change due to the circumstances prior to 2003 (discussed in chapter three). Secondly, the security unrest that occurred immediately after the fall of Saddam's regime had an impact on political activities (Muthana, 2012; Aylan, 2015; Alamery, 2015). Moreover, there were some co-ordinated high-profile assassinations of those involved in the democratic process. These circumstance have possibly caused women stepping back from political participation especially after the assassination of Aqila Alhashimi in September 2003 (The Guardian, 26 Sep 2003). She was a member of the Ba'th Party, worked in the foreign ministry for Saddam's Regime but was keen to keep her position within the new system (The Telegraph, 2003). She had been exempted from the De-Ba'thification decree due to her good reputation as a professional civil servant. It was unclear who the attacker was exactly; Ba'thists who were unhappy with her cooperation with the new regime or Al-Qaeda as she was from the Shi'a sect who were the main target for Al-Qaeda. Another example was the attack on the female member of the

Governing Council who replaced Alhashimi; she lost her son in this attack (BBC, May 28th 2004).

Therefore, working in politics in those days had the possibility of triggering a threat from opposition militias from some Shi'a (Sadrists) or Sunni Salafi sect (Dobbins, Jones, Runkle and Mohandas, 2009). However, most attacks have been claimed by radical groups (Goodenough, 2014) who usually follow the "Salafi Jihadist" ideology (Lynch, 2008; Stern and McBride, 2013). The ideology of Salafism is mainly based on applying the original Islamic codes similar to the days of the Prophet Mohammed and his four successors. Spreading this ideology, based on the Salafi School, can be achieved at any price including violence and military acts (French, 2016; Melamed, 2017). In this radical ideology, women obligatory to segregate from men by avoiding any kind of direct contact, covering their faces and follow the same lifestyle as women in the early days of Islam (Mahmood, 2005; Nielsen, 2018). Although most Islamic schools of thought do not object to women's participation in political and public activities, Wahhabism has its exclusive influence in preventing women from public activities (Rajkhan, 2014). This intense ideological approach is interpreted into fierce activities such targeting the lives of non-compliant individuals and groups. In the same vein, working with Coalition Authority has been seen as a form of cooperation with infidels by Al-Qaeda and its followers in Iraq. These views and vicious attacks have sent a clear message that women are not exempted from the target of radical and terrorist groups (CEDAW, 2014). Women, due to their family's serious concern and objections, probably started rethinking their political participation. This can be one of the reasons behind less enthusiasm among women for direct political engagement. The terrorist operations targeted male politicians as well as ordinary civilians. For example, although there are no official statistics, by looking into media reports and unofficial statistics, it can be observed that women constituted 5-10% of casualties compared with around 90% men killed by terrorist attacks in Iraq during 2003 and 2004 (Muthana, 2012). While there is no sign of men stepping back, it appears that women's political participation was more affected by security struggles than men. Such issues can be explained in the framework that women can be easily blamed for jeopardising themselves or their families by participating in dangerous activities. In such events men are less blamed.

The second reason behind the paucity of female aspirants is social when men use their social authority to control women. Political activities, often, have been seen as less necessary

for women compared with caring for family and children. Therefore, "women have freedom to work in most fields but being politicians or decision-maker is not easily accepted in our tribal society. The leadership is, often, going to men rather women"(Housewives Focus group, 2016). This is, possibly, due to the social perception of the nature of political activities as male job. The journalists focus group (interviewed, 2016) agreed that "the Iraqi society is not familiar with seeing women in political positions". This becomes more apparent in the unusual circumstances such as security threats. It has been indicated by one of the Iraqi female politicians that despite the will of the Coalition Provisional Authority to include women in politics, "…the Iraqi male leaders were not ready to have us [women] in the picture. They thought that there was no place for women in the transition because this was a difficult period", (Al-Ali and Pratt, 2009:92). This view can be heard from female politicians as well as the public. It seems a deeply planted thought as it, often mentioned as the initial reason for women stepping back from the early days' activities post-2003 (Journalists Focus group, interviewed 2016). This claim continues even after the significant achievement in the political presence due to the establishment of 25% women quotas. In the event of the fourth election after 2003, a female MP, leader of a political bloc in the Iraqi Parliament, candidate for a top political position in 2018, has emphasised that men do not treat women equally. Noteworthy that the international community, the CPA and Iraqi leaders were keen to support women's rights in politics and adopting women-friendly schemes. Parties, possibly, are willing to express themselves in the most up-to-date and modern position as Dahlerup (2007), Tripp and Kang (2008) and Krook (2009) agreed on. However, it seemed that the social, political and security issues played a bigger role than the tendency or pre-planned schemes in relation to inclusion of women in politics.

The suggestions of gender quotas made by the Coalition Authority with the agreement of Iraqi decision-makers can be seen as an example for political opportunities offered to women (Dobbins, Jones, Runkle and Mohandas, 2009). This was a significant ideological development related to equal opportunities amongst these parties. Examples of activities for politically empowering women immediately after the fall of the dictator regime such as conferences and workshops (Wibben, 2016; Muthana, 2012; Al-Ali and Pratt, 2009; Dobbins, Jones, Runkle and Mohandas, 2009) have been provided in chapter four. This does not abolish the

possibility that they were willing to appear modern, not excluded from the international trend and not to be framed as anti-feminist as researchers have assumed.

The third aspect in relation to women's hesitation about political participation is the doubt of working with foreign authorities under certain circumstances. The relationship between Iraqis and the Coalition Authority, especially the U.S, was unclear after April of 2003. Despite the great desire of establishing a new system and disposal of any remnants of the Ba'th regime, working with the U.S's authority was not a straightforward decision for individuals; men and women alike. Despite this, a considerable number of women were participating in a variety of activities and workshops and training courses conducted by the international organisations. Some Iraqi women received financial support to open small businesses. Considering the financial struggle due to ten years of economic sanctions, financial development was a priority for decision-makers and women themselves in that time rather than political engagement. Lack of awareness about gender quotas and women's political participation in general can be compromised considering these circumstances. However, uncertainty about the mechanism of women quotas, its legal method and its benefits after three elections is concerning. The fieldwork data showed no evidence that noticeable work was done by women in the political offices, female MPs to raise the level of knowledge about the mechanism of quotas among women.

5.3 Do women vote for women?

In this part, this study focuses on the motives and the factors that influence the voting behaviour of women. The aim of studying voting behaviour is to determine the overall picture of women's electoral participation. It helps this research to understand why and how women in Iraq act in the ballot and the impact of the legislation of gender quotas on women's presence in political offices. How does this act affect the credibility of the legislative gender quotas? Do women vote as a bloc? What are their preferences? Is it agenda, sect, ethnicity, men's recommendations or gender that determines their voting outcome?

Empirical studies reveal uncertainty with regard to women's voting behaviour (Smith and Selfa, 1992). It is useful to know some facts about women's voting behaviour in other countries in order to compare with the case of Iraq. Although each country has a unique experience, learning from each one may demonstrate what the differences are in order to recognise the reasons and the problems of women's voting behaviour. In a study conducted in the 1990s about the gender gap in the US, Jody Newman (1996) showed that there was not enough strong evidence that the majority of women back women candidates in the ballots. Although the statistics offer a good basis for the insight that women are likely to win with women's votes, political orientations -such as Democratic or Republican in the USA- most likely play a crucial role in the voting preference. The study of Newman (1996) concludes that "[W]omen are slightly more likely to vote for women candidates; they do not vote as a bloc, like men voters" (Newman, 1996:12). women votes were usually crucial in the US elections. In 2016 during Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. A significant percentage of women in the US showed no interest in voting for Clinton while supporting other male candidates (Chapin, 2016; Bayat, 2016). While the gender-based results showed that a 54% of women voted for the female candidate (CNN, 2016; The Telegraph, 2016). The unexpected result of the 2016 of the US elections meant that the first female candidate for presidency lost the bet in a country where women constitute the majority of voters. This result will doubtlessly reshape the debate regarding women's voting preference. It surpasses the traditional approach that women voters are most likely to elect women candidates (Plutzer and Zipp, 1996; Newman, 1996). It may introduce a different approach that women voting preferences may include ideology, agenda and interests rather than only gender in the ballot. Moreover, party stereotypes such as evaluation of the party towards member candidates and the partisan behaviour of these candidates could have more impact than gender as Dolan (2014) has suggested.

The case could be completely different in the politically developing and undeveloped countries when women struggle to decide on who is the best representative as Gine' and Mansuri (2012) highlighted in their study of voting behaviour in Pakistan. The situation of women voters in a fresh democracies such as Iraq is more complicated based on the previously mentioned circumstances. It indicates that women either in Iraq or in other politically developing states may not vote as a bloc to support women candidates merely

because they are women. the voting preference could be affected by culture, tribe, family and the history of women's movements. In Iraq women voters in general do not make an effective figure in the overall picture of the Iraqi elections for the last decade. The official statistics published by the Iraqi High Electoral Commission shows only 11 per cent of the total electorate are women (IHEC 2014). It therefore can be assumed that agenda, ideology, party preference and gender do not play a key role in women's voting outcome. As this low percentage in women's voting reveals that women are likely not to have a strong motive to participate in the general elections. In the context of voting motivation, interviewees have indicated the lack of trust between women candidates and voters as one of the central reasons behind women's voting turnout (Teachers Focus group, interviewed 2016). In this regard there were some examples that add more uncertainty about women's voting behaviour. For instance, the electoral campaign of the Iraqi Communist Party in 2014 with their agenda included reforms of the political system, advancing women's rights and establishment of democratic values, the party managed to secure only 3 seats out of 328 in the Iraqi Council of Representatives (Parliament.iq, 2017). The widely known women-friendly agenda of this party did not attract women voters to support both; female and male candidates of this party. Moreover, the only female MP from this party received 1417 votes which is a significantly low number compared with her male colleagues. In this example it was impossible for this female MP to win the parliamentary seat without the support offered by the legislative women quotas. Therefore, the widely agreed on theory that women voters turn to left parties (Caul, 1999; Caul, 2001; Tripp and Kang, 2008; Kittilson, 2016) does not have enough credibility in this case study. The fieldwork data showed that religious affiliation have had a significant role in women's political engagement especially in encouraging women to vote for the constitution of 2005. Furthermore, Islamic parties have placed more women in the legislative assembly in the Iraqi national elections of 2006, 2010 and 2014. This is, however, not necessarily due to women-friendly politics of these parties. It is, probably, due to the size, strength and the recruiting procedure in these parties. Therefore, it can be assumed that generalising women's voting behaviour can lead to misjudgement from one case to another.

5.4 Political Behaviour of Female MPs

Women's inclusion in politics has witnessed a struggle in the first days after the radical change in Baghdad in April 2003. As explained in the previous sections, women's political participation has been confronted with problems such as dearth of interested women in politics. This hesitant start of women's political participation may explain the constant lack of confidence between women representatives and women voters. In a recent study, Paxton and Hughes (2017) have suggested that women's representation can be argued in two routes: first; "that increasing women's participation improves the quality of deliberation" (Paxton and Hughes, 2017: 16). This trajectory assumes that women's presence in the political offices can make change in terms of human rights, family-friendly policies and democratisation. Although the concept of women's political presence looks wider than the domain of this study which is women representation, both notions are firmly linked with advancing women's interests and resolving the matter of their underrepresentation. Hence, women's political behaviour will be examined from two angles. First is whether the adoption and application of legislative gender quotas has an impact on women's development as MPs and politicians in the front line. Second is if women's interests as a group has been protected, advanced and defended by female MPs who benefited from this positive discrimination arrangement.

The performance of female politicians is not limited only to the proposals or achievements. It is also connected to the idea that these women are alleged to be 'role models' for other women, suggested Paxton and Hughes (2017) in their second argument about women's representation. Kittilson (2016) has indicated this point too in her study about the relationship between gender and the political behaviour. After the widespread international trend in upholding gender quotas, a 'second generation' of women quotas studies (Krook and Zetterberg, 2014) focuses on the deliberation of this scheme rather merely the presence of women. Therefore, the responses of interviewees would be evaluated in light of the arguments of 'role model' and the 'quality of deliberation'.

It is worth noting that the general view of the focus groups and individual interviewees is that selected women for the electoral list often hold no political experience. Women candidates have been selected, some respondents assumed, based on their loyalty to the

selectors rather than the commitment towards women's interests (Journalists Focus group, 2016). This assumption, at first glance, seems very general. Nevertheless, interviewees have highlighted that the performance of these female MPs explains the lack of experience and weakness in decision-making activities. This assumption is difficult to prove while there is no specific evidence provided to support it with no examples provided by interviewees. When interviewees were asked to provide examples for that, they highlighted the problem of lack of communication between MPs and women audience. It has been noticed, moreover, that most male MPs usually open office in their constituency as a first step after winning the parliamentary seat, while women often do not pay enough attention to this step. Another issue that has been mentioned as an evidence of the insufficiency of political experience is the rarity of participation in the debates of parliamentary sessions as well as the media (Journalists Focus group, 2016). These two points mentioned by focus groups interviewees; lack of communication and lack of debating skills were highlighted by the researchers that 'critical act' such as representing excluded groups requires a 'critical actor' (Dahlerup, 1988; Childs and Krook, 2009; Child and Lovenduski, 2012). When some of these skills are missing or incomplete, the character of the representative looks inoperative. Consequently, women representation would be affected, especially in the formation period such as the case of women in Iraq. This can cause women politicians to be rated as 'second-grade' politicians as Abou-Zeid (2006) highlighted in her research about the behaviour of women politicians in the Middle East.

Focus groups interviewees seemed aware that there must be a room for them in the current democratic system due to their long-term exclusion from politics. In addition, their representatives must be qualified, experienced and able to advance and defend their interests as a group. Although the standards of good representatives do not seem clear, the interviewees were aware that their representatives ought to be qualified and trustworthy. Some group interviewees have highlighted that being in the representatives' assembly is not an opportunity to raise personal rewards and women MPs must look at their position as a group's representatives rather than as individuals (Housewives; Journalists Focus groups, 2016). The Iraqi legal text has clearly stated in the temporary Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) in Article 30 that women representation must not be less than quarter of the national assembly (Research Center/ Iraqi Parliament, 2011). In the same vein, in the literature of

political representation, it is argued that the mechanism of gender quotas has been introduced and adopted to increase women's representation in order to resolve the matter of long-term exclusion (Dahlerup, 2006; Viterna, Fallon and Beckfield; Tripp and Kang, 2008; Paxton, Hughes and Painter, 2009). As long as the debate of gender quotas revives around women as a group rather than individual citizens, whoever benefits from this legal advantage ought to act as a group representative who is women in this case. The same can be applied for any under-represented group such as religious, ethnic or colour groups. For instance, eight quotas have been allocated for minorities in the Article 45/4/11. The Electoral Law of 2013 - amended in 2017 and 2018- designated five seats for Christians, one for Yazidis, one for Sabians and one for Shabak (ir.parliament.iq, 2017). This is due to the lowliness of their population that is unlikely to reach the electoral threshold which has been set as 100.000 Iraqi citizens in the Electoral Law of 2005. The MP who is legally recognised as representative for the group of Iraqi Christians, for instance, ought to represent and act on the behalf of this group. This perception can be understood from the legal framework of his/her presence whether the whole group voted for him/her or not. This can be true for women quota MPs and their behaviour towards women as a group.

In the context of political experience and independence, some interviewees have stated that women in the political arena do not hold political views or even determined ideology. This approach can be clearly seen in the most answers of group interviews (Journalists; Teachers Focus groups, 2016) as well as individuals (Iyad; Reyad; Abrar; Abdul Jabbar, interviewed 2016). This criticism has accompanied women's political participation even after the formation of Transitional Government in 2005 and the establishment of electoral system and national government later in 2010 (The New York Times, 2009; Mason, 2009). Moreover, women MPs have been criticised as the 'yes' women for the political parties too (Teachers; Journalists Focus group, 2016).

However, researchers and decision-maker have built their argument of gender quotas on the assumption of women audience or voters would highly support women candidates (Phillips, 1995; Wängnerud, 2009). Thus, it is reasonable to raise the following question of why women MPs beneficiaries of gender quotas should act to represent women's interests if women do not vote for women. Although this question requires a wider area of research that is out of the scope of this thesis, what belongs to this research is the relationship between

women voters and women MPs. This relationship is the main engine of any current and future political development related to women's political engagement. The general expression of focus groups was they were not satisfied with the political behaviour of female MPs and with the relationship between women voters and women MPs. This point was found in a report published by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance in 2007 about Arab women that stated the "coordination and cooperation between women's movements and women parliamentarians, which is usually very high in well-established democracies, is still minimal in certain countries in the Arab world"(IDEA, 2007). It is worth noting, that the expectation from 'quota MPs' as a group's representatives usually is higher than individual MPs who did not benefit from this mechanism. Female MPs who won the seat with the support of the positive discrimination mechanism will be framed as a group of delegates who must protect the interests of the whole group regardless of their religion, ideology or ethnicity.

5.5 Do Women Make a Difference?

There is a widespread assumption that women make a difference through adding, subverting and transforming as Phillips (1995) pointed out. Moreover, women in the decision-making positions ought "to care more about, know more about, and do more about women's issues" (Reingold, 2006:6). These approaches give a general guideline for any potential female representative who is willing to act for women as a group. Making deference in the legal procedure and political leadership (Lovenduski and Norris, 2003), needs to be precisely absorbed by female representatives prior to their election. The performance of MPs who benefited from the gender quotas is one of the engines for our judgment about making difference. In the case of Iraq, the legislative gender quotas is a new scheme, therefore, viewing the behaviour of who benefited from it plays a central role in the general analysis of this special arrangement. It determines whether the legislative quotas succeeded to raise the level of the performance of women legislators or not.

In the course of the research, it has been noticed that the quantitative sources about the behaviour of women parliamentarians was very limited. Statistics such as the number of legislations proposed by female MPs, how many of these legislations belong to women's

issues, the amount of activities of the Parliamentary Committee of Women and Children were essential for this research, but they were not available in the database of the Iraqi Parliament. However, upon the request of this research, the media center of the parliament provided some useful papers and promised to help in making a number of tables for the benefit of further research.

5.6 Lack of Communication

Communication between MPs and their constituencies is one of the central tools for both sides to feel connected to each other. This often happens through public gatherings, offices and regular visits to the represented area. This is especially important when the parliamentarians representing a disadvantaged group and they have benefited from quotas to represent this group. Focus groups were asked what their expectations from their representatives were, some of the interviewees answered that "when the election is over, we are no longer able to meet or discuss our concerns with these MPs" (Teachers Focus group, 2016). They added that "female representatives do not share our concerns and interests, if they do not listen to us how they would know about poverty, unemployment and domestic violence against women" (Teachers Focus group, 2016). Although this was a group of teachers and they were all employed, they felt excluded from female MPs' attention. All they needed was to be listened to or have the confidence that they are being represented. In the same line, an academic researcher stated that it took her a year to contact some female MPs (Al-Nadawi, 2010). The same happened during planning for the interviews for this research, some female MPs have had no official registered phone numbers, no active email address and most importantly had no office in their constituency. However, others were reliable and easy to be reached and cooperated well. These MPs were usually known as publicly active and politically experienced female MPs who secured their seat with their own rights and without need for women quotas. It is worth noting that some women politicians were cautious of public engagement or interviews because their public speaking skills were not good enough. Moreover, they were sometimes concerned of any account that does not satisfy the party or the bloc leaders (Al-Nadawi, 2010).

Therefore, the feeling of being 'not represented' by women voters may have its impact on the future elections. This approach was apparent in the group's view, linking the behaviour of current female politicians with their participation in the following elections. The majority of focus group participants have pointed out that they will not take part in the next elections due to their "severe disappointment" in the current behaviour (Journalists Focus group, 2016). Others have stated that they will not re-elect the same candidates (Teachers; Journalists Focus group, interviewed 2016). It is important to mention here that in this specific point elite and focus groups have agreed that lack of communication between female MPs and women is one of the main issues in the political behaviour of female MPs. A professor from Al Mustansiriya University supports the view of the focus groups with regard to the current behaviour of female MPs. She highlighted her discontent with the performance of current female MPs "because they excluded themselves from the society, they even do not know what our demands are; they work for their parties or sect rather than the nation or women" (Maha, interviewed 2016). Therefore, the distance between public and female members of parliament can be counted as one of the biggest barriers for women voters and MPs to exchange trust and eventually the mutual support to each other.

5.7 Trust or Gender preference

In a comparison between men and women parliamentarians, teachers and journalists focus groups have shown that the chance to see active and effective males MPs is higher than female MPs. They also stated that they will turn to the male MPs to resolve their problems (Teachers; Journalists Focus group, 2016). A few other interviewees opposed to this view stating that women politicians are less supported therefore they are less effective (Journalists Focus group, 2016). It has been said that both; society and political parties are not offering enough support for women who are willing to participate in political activities (Journalist Focus group, 2016). looking at the Iraqi Law this view has low credibility as, by law, female MPs have equal opportunities. According to the Iraqi Labour Law of 2015 women have equal rights with men in terms of work wages, safety of the workplace, respect and dignity. Moreover, women can receive full payment for 28 extendable weeks for maternity leave and

one-year unpaid leave (Iraqi Local Governance Law Library, accessed December 2017). These work regulations seem advanced in terms of equal rights. Therefore, equal rights in the workplace, freedom of movement as well as equal financial opportunities such as equal salaries could offer a cornerstone for parity in the political and social sphere. In other words, the equal opportunities for men and women MPs ought to offer at least similar outcome and eventually similar level of satisfaction among voters. The problem needs to be examined in qualification and experience rather than limitation in opportunities.

Some of the focus group interviewees have shown a high degree of understanding that gender does not pose a problem for purposeful representation as long as interests have been advanced (Teachers, Housewives Focus groups, interviewed 2016). Some female interviewees have declared that they find male politicians are more capable to solve their problems than women (Teachers Focus group, 2016) as discussed earlier in this chapter. Nevertheless, some interviewees have expressed their concerns about whether men are able to understand women's problems (Housewives Focus group, 2016). In general, there was no objection of gender-neutral representation among the fieldwork elites and groups interviewees. The concern was who best could represent rather than the gender of the representative as long as they know the value of this responsibility. None of the interviewees showed a clear concern with regard to the gender of the representative.

To reach a precise answer in regard to the evolution of behaviour of female MPs' as a groups' representatives and how satisfying their behaviour was for the parliamentary periods of 2006, 2010 and 2014. The answer of the majority of focus groups was revolving around trust. Few of them have given more than 50% satisfaction in relation to the level of trust of women MPs. While the majority of the four groups revealed that they have lost trust in the current female politicians. About 75% of groups' interviewees have given between 0% and 30% to the current political behaviour of female MPs. Some of the interviewees highlighted that they rate the behaviour of women politicians between 20% and 30% because only there was no clear evidence that these women were corrupt. The same interviewees elaborated that this rate does not belong to the efficiency of these female politicians as we have no evidence in hand of any noteworthy political activities (Teachers Focus Group, 2016).

However, in the course of my research, figures were obtained upon request from the HR center in the Iraqi Parliament in 2017. It reveals that 55 out of 80 female MPs have been re-elected at least twice. In addition, 10 women MPs out of the 55 have been in the legislative position three or four times. These figures seem promising in terms of forming a female political class in Iraq, who presumably will influence any decisions made for the future of women in this country. Re-election, moreover, provides a great opportunity to female MPs to master their political experience. It is worth considering that four out of seven publicly known urgent questions launched in 2009, 2011, 2016 and 2017 in the Iraqi parliament have been conducted by women. Although, the number of this type of women politicians is significantly low, it is a gesture of improvement in terms of political skills and the accumulation of public engagement.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter examined the legislative gender quotas from women's perspective as voters, candidates and parliamentarians in Iraq based on data mainly collected from semi-structured focus groups conducted in 2016. The collected data for the purpose of this research targeted the impact of the legislative gender quotas on women's behaviour as voters and legislators. This helps us to understand why the enthusiasm of utilising the gender quotas among politicians is higher than among women non-decision-makers. This study learnt that the political transitional circumstances, security threats and the social perception of women's political participation have their impact on women's engagement in politics. However, the wide public participation including women's participation in the referendum of the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 can be taken as a gesture of confrontation of these challenges. Women were keen to have a voice in such decisive events of the pre-dictatorship era. The impact of religious recruitment, negatively and often positively, was noticed during the early days of the democratic transformation in Iraq. Nevertheless, in the following elections of 2006, 2010 and 2014 this phenomenon faded and did not manage to increase women's voting rate more than 11%. Hence, after more than a decade since the adoption of 25% legislative gender quotas, the lowliness of voting rates need to be discussed in frameworks other than exclusion and security unrests.

It was observed that social awareness and the stereotypes have played a role in the voting preferences. Nevertheless, the political behaviour of female parliamentarians and the way introducing themselves as group's representatives played the key role in attracting female voters or vice versa. In the early stage of political change in April 2003, it is understandable that Iraqi women have had almost no political experience due to the lack of political freedom under the control of the Ba'th regime, wars with Iran and Kuwait and the ten years economic sanctions. This has been taken into consideration for women's first entry in the representatives' assembly. However, after three parliamentarian rounds and the advantage of the legislative gender quotas, the behaviour of female parliamentarians was under serious criticism. It has been learned from the reviews collected from elites and focus groups interviews that female MPs beneficiaries from the mandatory quotas have not been able to convince female -and male- voters about the quality of their performance as group representatives. This chapter, furthermore, found no reflection of the argument of the 'role model' on the image of female politicians among the collected views from the interviewees.

In regard to the preferences of gender or agenda in the ballot, this chapter corresponds with the literature that women do not vote as a group, giving higher attention to the agenda of the electoral list rather than the gender of candidates. Nonetheless, the left ideology did not have a noticeable impact on women's voting behaviour. On the other hand, the social trend and publicity of the religious parties finds a widespread tendency among female voters and those who are willing to stand for elections. This orientation could be temporary but, heretofore, the otherwise assumption cannot be confirmed. Despite the political success of some female MPs, the lack of communication and networking, weakness of debating skills, loyalty to the party rather than women's interests and dereliction of advancing women's interests have been mentioned as core reasons for dissatisfaction among women voters. Furthermore, the amount of attraction of female voters towards supporting women candidates in the ballot has been seen as an evidence of lack of communication between women as a politically under-represented group and the female candidates and MPs as representatives for this group.

The argument of this chapter may support that the application of the legislative gender quotas in this particular case study does not bring a substantive representation up to the practical stage. Through studying the behaviour of female MPs beneficiaries from gender

quotas, it appears that they behaved as an individual member of parliament (with all pros and cons) rather than group representatives. This perception has been observed through study of the amount of achievements with regard to women-friendly legislations and the abolishment of unjust legislations. Through analysing the collected data and revising the parliamentary sessions, there was limited evidence to confirm the relationship between descriptive representation resembled by women quotas and advancing women's interests. In any case, the enquiry in regard to women's substantive representation remains empirically unanswered when the focus continues on the descriptive representation in the light of quota discourse.

Conclusion

This chapter summarises the key findings of this thesis with regard to how the legislative gender quotas in the Iraqi Parliament have been reviewed since their adoption in 2005. These findings related to the primary questions asked in the thesis, namely: How did the female parliamentarians who benefited from the quota acted in terms of advancing women's interests? What was the role of political parties in the selection of female candidates? And what were the demands of women as a gendered group? Is it substantive or descriptive political representation? This chapter concludes that the mechanism of gender quotas often serves numerical representation. However, evidence for substantive representation for women within the bounds of gender quotas were very limited. Substantive representation is unlikely to be achieved unless other variables such as political system, social traditions and feminist movements were subject to fundamental development. Candidate selection was one of the central issues that affected the behaviour of female MPs beneficiaries of gender quotas and how this scheme was reviewed by fieldwork interviewees.

How do gender quotas look like after the elections of 2006, 2010 and 2014 in Iraq?

Women's political representation in Iraq has been looked at in the post-conflict context which was, often accompanied with critics targeting the US policy in Iraq. Furthermore, in most occasions, achievements or improvements related to women status since the fall of the dictatorship in Iraq was overlooked. To avoid prejudgment and generalisation of resolutions and the outcomes (Kenworthy and Malami, 1995; Viterna, Fallon and Beckfield, 2007; Thames and Williams, 2010) there was a need for regional and cross-country studies (Wängnerud, 2009; Murray, 2010). During the fieldwork it has been noticed that the discussion about the impact of legislations such as gender quotas has started to show in the academic sphere in Iraq such as studies conducted by Baghdadi (2010), Muthana (2012), Al

amery (2015), Baghdadi (2015) and Aylan (2015). This shows a level of advancement of the debate as the country stepping toward more women-friendly and functional legislations which put Iraq at a good level compared with surrounding politically undeveloped or developing states. A year after the change of the regime in Iraq and the surfacing of debates regarding women's rights, there were good signs of improvement in women's situation in the Arab World. In the election of June 2003, when no woman has succeeded to win a parliamentary seat in the neighbouring Jordan, the king has ordered for the reserved seat mechanism to be enforced by appointing six female candidates (Norris, 2004; Pande and Ford, 2011). Another significant phase was in the Arab League summit held in May 2004 when the Arab leaders for first time have "expressed their commitment to enhance women's participation in the political, economic, social and educational fields and reinforcing their rights and statues in society" (Al Maaitah, Al Maaitah, Olaimat and Gharaeibeh, 2011:14). In 2005 Kuwaiti women were granted the right to vote for the first time and to make 1.5 percent of MPs in the parliament (Abou-Zeid, 2006). In Saudi Arabia, moreover, women were allowed to participate in politics in 2015 (CNN, 2017; Alharbi, 2015). In such circumstances the debate about the impact of constitutional gender quotas on the quality of representation and women interests in Iraq can be counted as an advanced stage compared with women's circumstances and struggles for the right to vote or stand for elections in the neighbouring states. This is due to the fact that Iraq was the first among the Arab states that stepped forward toward democracy, about ten years before the so-called Arab Spring. Due to its centric geopolitical position (Spencer, Kinninmont and Sirri, 2013), the political shift in Iraq was the motive behind this uprising (Makiya, 2013; Husain, 2013).

Researchers have stated that the outcome of quotas is expected to vary (Krook, 2010; Viterna et al, 2007; Kenworthy and Malami, 1999; Murray, 2010). This research found the variation of outcomes was primarily related to the circumstances surrounding the implementation of gender quotas. At another level, the success of quotas in the context of substantive representation remains controversial. Considering the method of selection, the number of votes received by female MPs and, most importantly, their political performance, the fieldwork data revealed that 'quota women' in the Iraqi Parliament have often been seen as less active and less effective than their colleagues. This perception can be seen in the literature when researchers have highlighted in relation to Middle Eastern gender quotas,

where the beneficiaries in some parliaments have been viewed as second-rate politicians (Abou-Zeid, 2006). Therefore, understanding the political representation in each case and how this quota was deployed played a key role in the overall conclusion. Looking at the adoption circumstances discussed in chapter three and four, this thesis found that the practical steps of implementation of gender quotas, on some occasions, does not harmonise with the theoretical framework of political representation. The theoretical framework of representation, authority and the qualification of representatives were not given enough attention by the local designers or recommenders of gender quotas which adds inconsistency to the overall understanding of this mechanism.

Descriptive Representation and Gender Quotas

Looking at the current numerical presence of female parliamentarians, this research agrees with the literature regarding the positive impact of gender quotas in increasing women's descriptive representation (Pande and Ford, 2011; Dahlerup, 2006; 2007; Kuku, 2007). On average, women's presence in the Iraqi Council of Representatives in 2017 was 25.3%, more than double the 10.8% of the 1990s (The World Bank, 2018). Since the inclusion of the mandatory gender quotas in the Iraqi Constitution of 2005 and the subsequent elections of 2006, the numerical presence of women in the Iraqi parliament was no less than 25%. However, it must be noted that the figurative representation has not surpassed this figure since (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2018).

Nevertheless, a country such as Iraq would not have had the chance to test its capability to increase women's substantive or descriptive representation without legislative gender quotas. By April 2003, as part of the country's attempts at forming a new political system, the legislative gender quota was immediately put in place to meet the international trend of women quotas. Although the state of Iraq has existed since 1924, the real challenge of democratising its political system — such as free national elections and a constitutional referendum — only began after 2003. Considering this as a starting point for the genuine attempt at state governing, comparison of 'before and after' to seem merely an assumption rather than factual evaluation made upon de facto evidence. The question of 'What would

women's political representation at this democratic turning point be like without the quota system?' remains unanswered. The mechanism of quota was immediately in place and there was no room to test the possibility of improvement without quotas. This thesis agrees with the literature that the impact of quotas on increasing women's descriptive representation is often guaranteed. Nevertheless, the credibility of quotas related to advancing substantive representation sometimes remains unachieved (Caul, 2001; Tripp and Kang, 2008; Josefsson, 2014; Murray, 2014) such as in this case study. This piece of research emphasises that any increase in female numerical representation was met by two limitations. First, women's numerical presence in the Iraqi Parliament has remained at 25%, as designated by electoral law, and has not succeeded in going beyond it. Second, comparing women's numerical representation in the legislature before and after the adoption of quotas is obsolete due to the political circumstances in Iraq before 2003, which was discussed thoroughly in chapter three. Therefore, any judgment related to the impact of quotas on increasing women's representation cannot be taken as an approved outcome as circumstances differ.

Substantive Representation and Gender Quotas

This research has argued that the social perception of women's political participation, the political system and, most importantly, women's political experience are all playing a key role in delivering qualitative representation. Back to Pitkin's (1967) and Phillips' (1995) accounts, qualitative representation carries a significant women representation. It was observed from the fieldwork data that there was a considerable gap between the theoretical framework of substantive representation and the political behaviour of female representatives who benefited from gender quotas. Nevertheless, there was a notable variation in views between the public that was resampled by focus groups and elite politicians and academics interviewees. It can be said here that this variation was a result of how the policy of gender quotas was analysed and reviewed. Politicians (interviewees) see the mechanism of gender quotas as an advanced democratic step. It is, moreover, a potential step towards modernising and democratising the political system. Also, it forms the fastest route to women inclusion in the political and legislative process. It was perceived from the fieldwork data that political

parties look at this 25% quota as a legal advantage for increasing their credit in the representative assembly with legally exempted seats.

The group interviewees, on the other hand, look at this mechanism from the perspective of outcome and achievement such as role model, advancing groups' interests, and establishing parity and equal opportunities. The fieldwork showed that the interviewed Iraqi women look at gender quotas as a commitment to women as a group. Elites see this mechanism as a commitment towards the international community and establishment of the democratic system. While agreeing that increasing the representation of women as a disadvantaged group is challenging and problematic, this research argued that under-represented groups such as women in need of substantive representation. The descriptive representation can be effortlessly achieved, easily manipulated and less likely to be controlled by voters. This is due to the threshold exemption offered by the mechanism of gender quotas to women candidates. Representing women in government requires unified efforts of decision makers, female voters, female MPs and women organisations. This is likely to help in producing or organising a set of interests and demands of the majority of women which is a vital step on the path to substantive representation. Absence of a set of agreed on interests can be seen as an indicator of lack of communication between women as a gender group and their representatives. It furthermore, makes the responsibility of representation more troublesome for female MPs. Both unified women's movements or organisations and shared interests provide a decent basis for understanding women's demands. This likely provided the substantive representation with a significant boost. Female elites, armed with knowledge about pre-agreed interests, may work in more confidence toward a shared goal. The possible viability of coded interests can be more complex and challenging when women organisations are rare or inactive, such as in this case study. Throughout the scope of this research, a simple, yet inevitable, question came up: What these interests are in the case of Iraq? To answer this, we need to look initially at Iraqi Law. The Personal Status Law No. 188 of 1959 and its amendments (see chapter five) seems advanced in relation to women's rights. For example, legislation related to marriage, divorce and work are often women-friendly and harmonsis with CEDAW and the recommendations of the Beijing Conference of 1995 (Baghdadi, 2009). Politically, female citizens have been included in all paragraphs of the Iraqi Constitution, with no exemptions. Yet, there are still areas that require legal effort, such as domestic violence

and financial protection in the context of social service at the national level. Some aspects, moreover, need empowerment and encouragement rather than legal interference. Yet, further studies are required in relation to women's interests and how to organise and advance them in front of decision makers.

This study finds that a unified set of interests alongside gender-neutral politics may better support representation with fewer critics. It is worth mentioning here that the Iraqi government has conducted some fundamental actions in this regard, such as installing gender balance units in the ministries (see chapter five). Considering the government's gender-neutral schemes, some top positions that were previously 'men only' have been opened up to women. These include mayoral and judicial roles, positions within The Independent High Electoral Commissioners and other governmental institutions. These sorts of acts introduce a more established balance and parity in regard to numerical presence. Under such developed policies, the qualitative presence will be achieved, too, as the above-mentioned positions often will be handed to experienced and qualified females. An unqualified woman (or man) is less likely to become a commissioner or mayor due to the appointment procedure, while the story could differ in relation to the parliamentary seat through the arrangement of gender quotas.

Fast-Track Discourse and Generalisation

With reference to the question 'where the problem lies? This thesis emphasises that the political situation in the Middle East is incredibly complex. Thus, the findings of this case study were in agreement with the theoretical approach that "similar policies produce differing results" (Krook, 2009). Considering the findings of this thesis and the other Middle Eastern examples, the ideal exemplary mechanism related to women's representation (Abou-Zeid, 2006; Krook, 2009; 2010) looks unsettled, yet. The continuing political development in the Middle Eastern and Arab states, especially in the last decade, indicates how the story from country to country varies. This piece of research suggests that the intellectual development might need to be treated equally with the political development in the context of "rethinking gender in more multiple ways" (Squire, 1999). On another level, though Middle Eastern

nations share many common circumstances such as language, religion and political traditions, there were some specifications that make them very different. For example, there are some differences among the Islamic schools of jurisprudence — Sunnism, Shiism, Wahhabism, etc. — which have some influence on women's political participation. Culture and traditions of each country also need to be taken into consideration during examination of each case. For instance, the Islamic approach to the status of women in the Saudi system differs from the Iranian version, though both Islamic states. Hence, regional studies may help in updating the global understanding of women's representation. Theorising political activities such as women's under-representation in politically undeveloped or developing areas requires deep social and political realisation. This thesis agrees with the belief that the type of governing system influences women's political engagement (Josefsson, 2014) and women under the undemocratic or authoritarian regimes become "passive and inactive" (Abou-Zeid, 2006:169). As a supporting example, women in Iraq have been excluded from political activities for around 30 years under the Ba'th regime. This undoubtedly had a role in keeping women away from political experience such as candidacy and voting.

The fast-track discourse was a result of seeing the problems, obstacles and expectations related to women's under-representation similar to each other. As a consequence, women's position and resolutions were generalised, too. Gender quotas have become an internationally pre-agreed mechanism. In reviewing the fieldwork data, it must be recognised that, as a policy, the legislative gender quotas were not subject to blame per se. Yet, the argument was made that ready-made policies suggested by outsiders such as the UN and the International Coalition may not meet the expected outcome at the local level. Especially the mechanism of gender quotas has not been adopted in mature democracies such as the US, despite the paucity of women in the political arena there. In the course of research, it has been observed that, after three elections since the application of the 25% statutory gender quotas in the Iraqi Parliament, the debate revived around why there is a quota for us and not for them? Academic interviewees looked uncertain regarding why women in the United States (a country that suggested legal quotas for Iraq) do not have quotas despite their low percentage in political offices. This thesis argued the problem can be looked at in the context of empowerment and equal opportunities rather merely increasing women's descriptive representation. Women in established democracies can compete for the presidency and

premiership with no need for gender quotas; such is the case in the US and in the UK. In this case study the inclusion of legal quotas for women was, initially, celebrated as a big leap towards democratisation in Iraq. Nevertheless, after a while, especially when those urgent circumstances vanished, the question of efficiency of top-down quotas surfaced. When women's political participation remained in the circle of tokenism, the argument of meritocracy and qualitative representation started finding its way at the level of research and academic discussions. This thesis also finds that, when women's quotas were applied as a top-down scheme, such as in the Iraqi case, the implementation has to have planning and preparation at social level especially about the technical aspects of candidacy and voting. As discussed in this thesis, women mobilisation had no noticeable role in the adoption of gender quotas in Iraq. Therefore, intellectual and technical grounding was unlikely, too

The fieldwork data support the idea of that gender quotas during the first years of the democratic transformation seemed a necessity. This was to introduce the path of parity and normalise women's involvement in the decision-making institutions, especially parliament. It has been suggested that, after a certain period, the need for special measures automatically fades and women will be able to compete openly with their male counterparts based on their qualification and experience. Meritocracy, presumably, facilitates three achievements: firstly, female MPs look equal to male MPs, which gives them the power to act equally, not as privileged by quotas. The second presumed achievement is that a layer of elite female politicians will be formed as time goes. Thirdly, female MPs will not be attacked as unqualified group's representatives, because they act as representatives of a constituency rather than of their gender. Therefore, this research finds that the need for legal quotas in the representatives' assembly is temporary rather than permanent demand and it is worth consideration before adopting any type of quotas. The academic and politician interviewees have pointed out that the unusual circumstances may need uncommon measures but after a while the benefit of these arrangements need to be reconsidered.

Candidate Selection and Legal Requirements of Quotas

There is great deal of agreement between the theoretical approach and the fieldwork perception regarding the importance of the selection procedure. Political parties play a key

role in selection candidates during the last three elections in Iraq , as it was theoretically agreed on. This case study finds that the selection procedure is one of the core challenges facing the enforcement of quotas at the level of standards and qualification. In the context of informal standards, it was not attainable to pinpoint any transparent or declared set of standards or criteria set up by the political parties. Female candidates often get included in the electoral lists in the run-up to elections when the candidacy list must meet the legal requirements. Article 47 of the Constitution of 2005 and the Election Law of 2013 stated that each electoral list must include 25% female candidates, otherwise sanctions will be applied. This puts great pressure on the political parties to include the required number of female candidates regardless of their qualification. Looking at the essential requirements for efficient representation offered by researchers (Rahat, 2008; Krook, 2009), it was difficult to identify most of these requirements in this case study. The interviewed politicians justified the overlooking of these conditions due to the infrequency of female candidates holding the necessary qualifications especially party membership. Hence, this study finds that priority was given to the legal requirements of age, citizenship, inclusion of the 25% female candidates and recently (in the amendment of 2018), college qualification. However, most of the informal and qualitative principles such as political experience, party membership and sources for election campaigns were overlooked. Female MPs who meet the informal criteria party membership or social networking those who do not need the exemptions of quotas and they were of very limited number.

It was observed that both political parties and female politicians did not place enough effort in increasing party membership among women. Recruitment could be noticed in the event of public gatherings, demonstrations or election campaigns. However, in observing the declared agendas of political parties and media records, this research hardly finds any activities related to systematic political engagement such as increasing party membership among women. The majority of female candidates have had no party membership or even ideological connection prior to their selection during the last three elections of 2006, 2010 and 2014. This has caused hesitation in the relationship between female MPs and their selectors. The relationship between female MPs and their female audience has been affected by this chaos, too. The other criterion to consider was that competition among candidates may disappear when the number of qualified female aspirants is limited. The demand for

women candidates under the pressure of the legal requirements, in this case, is higher than the availability of female candidates. encouraging more women to be engaged in systematic political activities requires consideration from decision maker

To understand how candidate selection impacted the mechanism of gender quotas it was essential to examine the relation between 'quota MPs' and political parties (the selectors). This case study showed that the sample interviewees did not fully comprehend the extent of the relationship between political parties and female MPs. A frequent criticism of female MPs was that they are prioritising party agenda over women's interests, therefore representing their party rather than their gender group. This takes us back to whether these female MPs have preserved the core notion of the gender quotas and their group's political representation. The question of whether this legal mechanism has been offered to women as a disadvantaged group or as individual female citizens comes to the surface again and again. However, the general understanding among academics and political elite is that the parliamentary quota is an opportunity given to women as a group. Therefore, whoever benefits from this advantage ought to act as a group representative.

The Iraqi Electoral Law of 2013 have clearly stated that women's representation must be no less than 25% in the Council of Representatives. The law was targeting women as a group rather than as individuals, because individual female citizens have been included in Article 8, which is related to the right of candidacy. Drawing on Iraqi Electoral Law and the views from fieldwork, it can be said that gender quotas in parliament have been offered to women as a group rather to individual female citizens. Otherwise, this special measure looks like no more than a 'priority seat' offered to an 'unable person'. There was a considerable agreement among interviewees that until now quotas seemed to have been employed by female candidates and political parties during the election season and during calculating votes. However, the debate of quotas will be rarely heard afterward during the actual representation challenges. Degrading the opportunities offered to women by law such as legislative gender quotas, may result in a loss of confidence and trust in women's abilities in politics. Voting preference and candidacy and women's inclusion in politics will be affected too by this expression though the law tries to deliver another story. Women as a gender group were seldom seen as a target of electoral activity during the last three elections. In the course of this research it was observed that some female MPs beneficiaries from quotas represent

women from their own ethnic or religious group rather than women at the national level. In the case of Iraq, it is common to see that Shi'a MPs beneficiaries from gender quotas represent Shi'a women and female Kurdi MPs represent women from their ethnic group rather than women in general.

By comparing the circumstances of before and after 2003 in Iraq it can be said that the debate about women's political engagement, their interests and their shares in politics has significantly improved since then. Discussing how female MPs have not fully leveraged the gender quotas to accumulate a convincing level of achievement shows that women and those interested in women's rights now have the confidence to talk about such advanced approaches. This research has argued that placing women in the Council of Representatives through legal positive discrimination scheme cannot be preserved as an important matter while the quality of representation is not. Political representation is a package that cannot be divided into parts. Changing the traditional composition of parliament and serving the interest of the disadvantaged group both are serving the purpose and the aim of representation. Sacrificing substantive representation for the sake of descriptive representation may lead to disappointments in delivering successful political representation for women as a disadvantage group.

The Political Behaviour of 'Quota Women'

In considering the theoretical framework offered in chapter one about substantive representation, this research observed that public dissatisfaction can be classified under three headings. First, lack of communication and networking between female audiences and female MPs was one of the challenges. It also could be the main reason behind the criticism targeting women legislators, as well as low rates of voting among women. Voting turnout was as low as 11% in the last three elections of 2006, 2010 and 2014. Lack of communication among female MPs and potential female voters, along with lack of political independence among female voters, could be the reasons behind this shortfall in voting activity. Nevertheless, the actual causes behind this voting behaviour vary and require a fundamental further study, which is out of the scope of this research.

Secondly, and in relation to the first point, non-elite women (pulled from focus group interviews and continual informal debates) missed the feeling and trust of being represented by female MPs. This may not hold entirely true, but due to lack of direct contact and lack of transparency between the two parties, achievements could go unnoticed. The third is that social enthusiasm to accept such positive discrimination scheme has to be considered and acknowledged prior to its adoption. Intellectually preparing a society for this type of change is necessary to ensure stability and succession. This case study revealed that women as a group were unaware of the purpose, mechanism, advantages and proposed outcome of gender quotas. The absence of operative feminist NGOs and intellectual centres to lead effective debates on women's political engagements could be one of the reasons behind the current uncertainty related to voting and women's political behaviour. This can be applied to democratic principles such as equality, elections and party politics during every transitional stage. Iraq has gone through a sudden shift to democracy after long-term isolation from any political, economic or technical development due to a dictatorial system and economic sanctions. This has entailed epistemological efforts to introduce new values.

Final Remarks

The legal gender quotas have been the focus of this research because it is the first experience of positive discrimination related to gender in Iraqi Law. Moreover, it is the first experience of its type in the surrounding region; none of Iraq's neighbouring states have thus far adopted a constitutional, permanent quota of 25% for women in a process of total political transformation. The variation in circumstances of adoption of women's quotas and their outcomes increases the value of the local studies. It, moreover, reduces the level and the value of generalisation of standards and outcomes. This research proposed to discuss the impact of the legal gender quotas on women's substantive representation by answering three primary questions. The first was whether gender quotas had worked in the Iraqi Parliament, with reference to substantive and descriptive representation? It can be said, in answer to this question, that the mechanism of quotas faced a significant limitation in building a trustworthy foundation for substantive representation. On the other hand, the descriptive representation

in the Iraqi Parliament looked significant, with around 85 women becoming members of the Iraqi parliament in 2018.

The second primary question sought to identify key problems related to the implementation of gender quotas. In answering this question, this research viewed the circumstances of adoption of this scheme and a lack of awareness among female candidates, MPs and potential voters as the core problems. The hesitation in the candidates' selection procedure and the relation between parties, female candidates and voters significantly affected the improvement of political representation of women. This study perceived that the selectors do not see the importance of informal qualifications as same as legal and formal requirements. The third question concerned women's needs and interests as an underrepresented group. Was the answer qualitative or simply quantitative representation? More importantly, were women as a group consulted before and during the inclusion of gender quota? It was theoretically established that the scheme of gender quotas was theorised and designed to increase women's representation as a group rather than individuals. The fieldwork data showed that women as a group were not consulted about the enactment of gender quotas. This was simply because there were no established or known women organisations or NGOs in Iraq during the adoption of the legal gender quotas. As a top-down policy, the quotas aligned with international discourse and came as a fragment of the democratic package. In this case study, women's interests as a group look less likely subject to classification, public discussion and advancement. This is due to lack of established women's organisations, lack of communication between female MPs and audience, and lack of awareness among 'quota MPs' related to the intellectual and practical understanding of political representation.

This research finds that, in both fast-track and incremental routes, debates and experience strengthen women's position in politics. Between quality and quantity in women's representation, there is a wide space that can be occupied by focused studies regarding needs and expectations. However, preference between the quality and quantity of representation remains controversial and is firmly related to the local need of women's groups, social mind-set, and the legal and political system of each case study. The urgent need for numerical balance justifies, sometimes, the overlooking of qualitative representation. In countries where women have achieved a significant level of parity in the workplace and have reached

top decision-making positions, but their numerical presence in government is low, quota could be the solution. Nevertheless, in those states where women as a gender group look for substantive representatives to advance their interests, the expectations are more than only figurative representation.

List of Interviewees

Abdel Wahid; member of Iraqi Parliament 2014-2018, interviewed in Baghdad/Iraq 2018

Abrar; academic from Al-Mustansyriah University, head of department interviewed in Baghdad/Iraq 2016

Ashwaq; member of local council, candidate for the general elections of 2014 interviewed in Thi Qar/ Iraq 2016

Azhar; academic from Baghdad University, Department of Political Science, candidate for the election of 2006 interviewed in Baghdad in 2016

Ayad; academic from Thi Qar University interviewed in Thi Qar 2016

Humam; head of Constitutional Drafting Committee 2005, member of Iraqi Parliament 2006, 2010 and 2014 interviewed in Baghdad in 2016

Iyad; member of local council, Secretary General of the Iraqi Parliament 2006-2016, interviewed in Baghdad in 2016

Abdul Jabbar; tribal leader (Sheikh), candidate for the elections of 2014, interviewed in Nasiriya/Iraq in 2016

Osama; academic, civil servant interviewed in Baghdad/Iraq in 2016

Maha; academic from Al-Mustansiriya, head of department, interviewed in Baghdad/Iraq 2016

Mohammed; member of the Iraqi Parliament 2010-2014, religion scholar, interviewed in Najaf/Iraq in 2016

Rafid; civil servant in the Independent High Electoral Commission, interviewed in Nasiriya/Iraq in 2016

Reyad; university professor, dean of university of Thi Qar, interviewed in 2016

Focus Groups:

Housewives; seven females, aged between 20 to 50 years, their education level between primary, secondary and college level, interviewed Najaf/ Iraq in 2016

Journalist; five females aged between 25 to 40, working in a news agency and TV channel interviewed Nasiriya/Iraq in 2016

Teachers 1; six female teachers aged from 25 to 50, interviewed in Nasiriya/Iraq in 2016

Teachers 2; six females and males teachers aged from 27 to 60, interview in Nasiriya/Iraq in 2016

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