

Political Loyalty and Citizenship: A Sociological Analysis of Iraq's Democratic Landscape

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The study analyzes how political allegiance impacts citizenship rights while investigating how sectarianism affects political allegiance and explores how civil society organizations and youth movements boost political engagement toward changing political allegiance in Iraq. **Method:** The examination employed quantitative methods by acquiring data using an online structured questionnaire from 200 participants, including questions about political loyalty, sectarianism, citizenship rights, and involvement in civil society groups and youth movements, with regression and Pearson correlation methods applied to analyze relationships between significant variables. **Result:** The results indicate that political loyalty has a strong effect on citizenship rights, accounting for 62.3% of the variance, sectarianism has a strong effect on political loyalty with a positive correlation of $R = 0.788$, and civil society organizations and youth movements were also found to increase political participation and transform political loyalty, with youth activism having the strongest positive correlation ($r = 0.702$) with political participation. **Novelty:** This research closes a significant knowledge gap by presenting a sociological investigation of how political loyalty, sectarianism, civil society actors, and youth movements interact in influencing citizenship practice, pinpointing the empowerment possibilities of civil society initiatives for developing democratic engagement and countering sectarianism.

INTRODUCTION

The ideas of political loyalty and citizenship are central to the functioning of democratic nations, especially those in the process of political transformation [1]. Political loyalty represents the devotion of people and collectives to the state administration and its governing authorities but citizenship extends beyond legal recognition to active participation in political and social life [2]. Iraq's sociological context results from several factors including violence throughout history as well as sectarian differences and ongoing democratic development of the country. The Iraqi democracy effort that began after Saddam Hussein's 2003 overthrow faces major barriers to political loyalty development as well as national citizenship unification among the diverse population [3].

The social and political and historical context of Iraq remains a fundamental element that shapes how people express their citizenship and loyalty to the government [4]. Political loyalties within the nation remain split because of former dictatorship practices together with ethnic dividing lines and religious and tribal identification factors. Iraq faces tougher challenges in building a nation because of enduring conflicts among Shia and Sunni and Kurdish groups together with ongoing foreign interference [5]. The implementation of federalism and democracy through the 2005 Iraqi Charter did not effectively eliminate pervasive public distrust which arose from governmental corruption and political instability and structural governance shortcomings. The Iraqi

democratic system faces declining popularity as demonstrated by both citizens who stay away from voting along with public demonstrations and increased political doubt about its stability [6].

To explore politics in Iraqi society through the sociological lens researchers should examine social structures integrated with collective identity building and political instruments that develop state-minded citizens [7]. Citizens in Iraq display their political behaviors through their economic assessment combined with their understanding of religious authority together with social age variations. During the previous year's civil society movements combined with youth protests demonstrated a new pattern of rising political involvement across Iraq. This research investigates the complex relationship between political loyalty and citizenship through detailed investigations about their influence on Iraqi democratic development and proposed policies for unifying the nation and increasing public engagement in Iraq [8].

Historical Context of Political Loyalty and Citizenship in Iraq

The foundation of Iraq's political culture originated from three historical events which included foreign colonial rule and successive authoritarian regimes before international political interventions [9]. Saddam Hussein maintained Ba'athist regime rule for many years establishing an atmosphere where people had to submit to political demands instead of freely engaging in political life. The implementation of American forces in 2003 followed by democratic governance established former authoritarian structures which damaged public trust levels deeply. Iraqi political loyalty and citizenship development in modern times needs thorough examination of the historical developments since democratic rule was established [10].

Sectarianism and Its Impact on Political Allegiances

The basis of Iraqi political loyalties develops through religious sects because each Sunni and Shia and Kurdish community organizes its political relationships based on religious differences [11]. The 2003 power transfer that gave Shia control of primary political positions created greater inter-religious tension together with strengthened identity politics. The Iraqi nation faces fragmentation as the populace now shows loyalty to religious groups instead of democratic principles and national unity. Religious and ethnic sects manifest in Iraqi politics at present which obstructs democratic unity and inclusivity from establishing itself in Iraqi society [12].

Role of Civil Society and Youth Movements in Shaping Citizenship

Despite sectarianism and political instability issues, there has been a rising trend of civil society activism and youth protest movements in Iraq over the past few years [13]. These protests, such as the 2019 Tishreen protests, have cried out for greater political accountability, transparency, and reform. The active engagement of young Iraqis suggests a move towards a more participatory form of citizenship where demands for democratic rights and social justice transcend sectarian affiliations. This new civic awareness has the potential to alter the democratic character of Iraq by bringing about a common sense of political commitment based on commensal desires for better future circumstances [14].

Literature Review

The review part evaluates scholarly studies of democratic Iraq through analysis of four key intellectual components between political loyalty and sectarianism and civil society unions and youth activism [15]. Current research lacks a comprehensive sociological evaluation of multiple factors which create citizenship practices and political engagement methods therefore the article emphasizes this essential research gap.

[16]investigated elite actions in post-2003 Iraqi consociational politics while analyzing how dependency on oil money through rentier economics led to increased sectarian differences. The study revealed political leaders built their authority through resource distribution which subsequently destroyed Iraqi national unity and democratic progress [16]. Social inequality rose through patronage networks and this destruction led to the demise of democratic institutions that needed inclusion.

[17] studied Iraq civil society organizations to determine their efforts in key areas such as democratic promotion and human rights services and social welfare. Security threats as well as political barriers and financial restrictions did not stop civic engagement because various CSOs maintained their essential roles according to field observations [17]. Youth movements together with grassroots activism provided major support for revitalizing civic society and political engagement.

[18] conducted a detailed historical overview that traced Iraqi politics starting from Ottoman times until Iraq gained democratic status after 2003. The book demonstrated that colonial history and authoritarianism and sectarianism function as fundamental elements which influence Iraqi political development [18]. Social divisions combined with institutional failure blocked Iraq from developing unity as a nation together with democratic systems of governance according to Stansfield.

[19] described Iraq's democracy as teenaged because its structure remained incomplete while facing weak control of informal political power networks [19]. The study determined that patronage systems together with sectarianism maintain greater control than institutional political systems across the country. The authors stressed that Iraq's democratic power growth depended on enhancing state institutions through inclusive governance and civil society backing.

Research gap

Research regarding Iraq's democratic development provides crucial knowledge about political loyalty and citizenship aspects and socio-political institutional functions. Studies lack clarity about how political loyalty together with sectarianism and youth movements and civil society organizations affect citizenship practices in integrated ways. [16]completely analyzed the political elite and rentier economy's influence on sectarianism and clientelism yet their study did not evaluate how these mechanisms affect political loyalty and participation levels among citizens in the field. The research by [17] studied civil society organization functions that advance democratic values and political engagement but focused on institutional obstacles rather than sociological aspects of CSOs in transforming political loyalty. [18]traced historical Iraqi social institutions to demonstrate their role in democratic government but failed to include

information about youth movements that enhance citizenship restoration. According to [19] Iraq's new democracy leaves its political system exposed to unofficial power networks but the authors fail to include comprehensive information about civil society groups and youth activist groups controlling these forces. This research investigates how political loyalties interact with sects and civil society groups and youth organizations to influence democratic citizenship practices and political involvement in Iraq.

Research Objectives and Questions

This section outlines the primary objectives and guiding questions of the study, aiming to explore the relationship between political loyalty, sectarianism, civil society organizations, and youth movements in shaping citizenship and political participation within Iraq's democratic landscape.

To examine the impact of political loyalty on citizenship in Iraq's democratic landscape.

To investigate the influence of sectarianism on political loyalty among Iraqi citizens.

To analyze the role of civil society organizations in enhancing political participation.

To explore the contribution of youth movements in reshaping political loyalty and citizenship.

Research Questions

Q1 How does political loyalty affect the exercise of citizenship rights in Iraq's democratic landscape?

Q2 What is the impact of sectarianism on the political loyalty of Iraqi citizens?

Q3 How do civil society organizations and youth movements contribute to enhancing political participation in Iraq?

RESEARCH METHOD

The current research examines the interaction between political loyalty and citizenship within Iraq's democratic environment through a systematic quantitative framework. The method is created to facilitate the systematic gathering, examination, and interpretation of data to provide credible findings on the research questions.

Research methodology determines both the research design and data collection strategy alongside the selected geographical area and ethical considerations that form a foundation for data analysis and collection.

Research Design

The research bases its investigation on a quantitative methodology to measure the influence of political loyalty along with sectarianism and civil society groups and youth movements on political engagement and citizenship rights. The use of quantitative methodology enables researchers to draw statistical conclusions about variable relationships and produces objective numerical findings. The research adopts a deductive analytical structure to assess established hypotheses which follow existing documents and frameworks.

Research Approach

The research employs a cross-sectional survey design to gather single-time measurements of political attitudes and behaviors from the participants. The approach provides the most effective way to evaluate political loyalty strength and determine its effects on citizenship practices.

Research Setting

The research targets Iraqi nationals from all parts of the country, a reflection of the nation's sectarian and demographic diversity. The representation of a study improves when researchers gather participants from a wide range of age groups combined with gender and educational background diversity.

Ethical Considerations

Participants give consent to researchers after they received information prior to the start of data collection. Participation is entirely voluntary because researchers protect respondent anonymity. The research uses neutral language in sensitive questions to avoid bias and respondent embarrassment during interviews.

Data Collection and Analysis

The central components of this research project include both data analysis and collection methods that enable examinations of primary research questions alongside hypotheses. The procedure entails the statistical analysis and systematic collection of quantitative data.

Data Collection Methods

Participants provide information about their political affiliations because a particular questionnaire survey seeks data on their citizenship perspectives along with their involvement in youth organizations and civil society engagement. The questionnaire is administered online on social media platforms to enable broader coverage and accessibility. The questions are closed-ended, utilizing a five-point Likert scale for ease of quantitative analysis.

Secondary data are drawn from literature, academic journals, and political loyalty, sectarianism, and democratic participation reports in Iraq. This information offers contextual understanding and theoretical underpinnings to the study.

Sampling Method

The research uses purposive sampling to obtain 200 respondents in relation to the research needs. The sample consists of Iraqi citizens from varying age groups, genders, and educational levels. This sampling is used to get diverse views in order to provide a high generalizability for the findings.

Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive statistics provide a summary of the demographic profile of the participants and survey response frequency. Multiple regression analysis tests the influence of political loyalty and sectarianism on citizenship rights, whereas Pearson correlation analysis determines the relationship between political participation, civil society organizations, and youth movements.

Hypothesis Testing

The study tests three key hypotheses:

H1: Political loyalty significantly impacts citizenship rights.

H2: Sectarianism influences the level of political loyalty among Iraqi citizens.

H3: Civil society organizations and youth movements enhance political participation and reshape political loyalty.

The statistical results from regression and correlation analyses are used to validate or reject these hypotheses, offering empirical evidence to support the study's conclusions.

Data Interpretation

A statistical evaluation reveals the patterns and trends that exist between political allegiances and sects and democratic involvement. Tables and charts and graphical representations display the study results to demonstrate clear relationships between the analyzed variables. The discussion together with recommendations operates from this base.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The research findings along with participant demographic characteristics and survey results and hypothesis evaluation are presented in this part. The research outlines how political loyalty and sectarianism along with civil society organizations and youth activist groups alter citizenship practices and political involvement in Iraq's democratic system.

Demographic Information of Participants

The survey included 200 participants whose demographic features will be presented in this section according to gender distribution and age groups and educational backgrounds. The participant demographics create a basic understanding of participant backgrounds that researchers need for interpreting subsequent analysis results.

Table 1. Demographic information of survey participants.

Category	Count	Percentage (%)
Total Participants	200	100%
Gender		
Male	120	60%
Female	80	40%
Age Group		
18-30	80	40%
31-45	70	35%
46+	50	25%
Education Level		
High School	30	15%
Undergraduate	90	45%
Postgraduate	80	40%

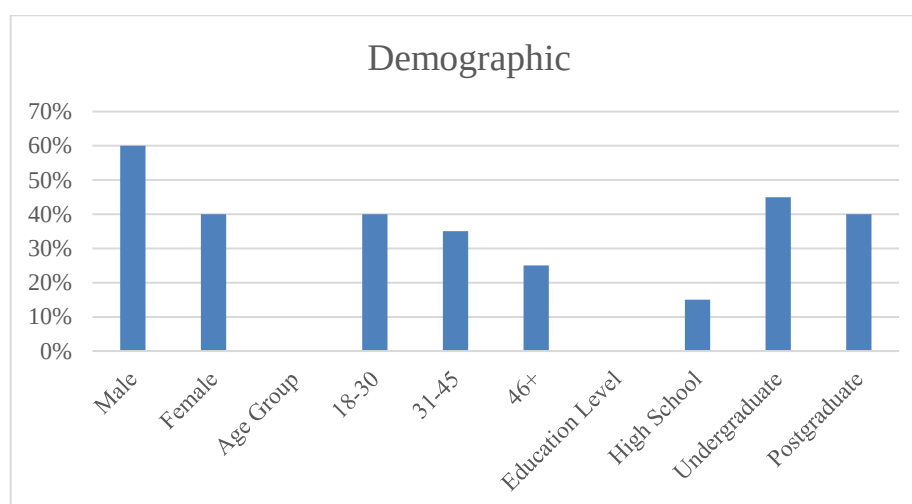


Figure 1. Graphical representation on demographic information of survey participants.

The statistical analysis shows that male participants make up sixty percent of the total respondents while forty percent belong to the 18-30 years age range. Most participants hold undergraduate (45%) and postgraduate (40%) degrees showing that the sample group is highly educated for the interpretation of political attitudes and behaviors.

Survey Analysis

The section evaluates how political loyalty and civil society groups and youth movements influence Iraqi citizenship rights and political activism.

Political Loyalty and Citizenship

The assessment section gathers participant viewpoints about how political loyalty affects political participation and citizen rights within Iraq's democratic framework.

Table 2. The impact of political loyalty on citizenship.

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Political loyalty strengthens my sense of national identity.	10	20	40	80	50	3.85	1.12
My political loyalty influences my engagement in civic activities.	15	25	30	75	55	3.75	1.20
Loyalty to a political party affects my perception of citizenship rights.	8	18	32	85	57	3.92	1.08

The study results demonstrate that political loyalty significantly impacts how participants identify with their nation and how actively they participate within it. Results show that political loyalty significantly impacts citizenship rights perception because the majority of participants scored 3.92 on average. The responses from participants displayed uniformity measured by the low standard deviation amounts.

Role of Civil Society Organizations and Youth Movements

This section examines how youth movements together with civil society organizations enhance political participation within Iraq.

Table 3. Contributions of civil society organizations and youth movements.

Statement	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Civil society organizations encourage active political participation.	9	19	38	78	56	3.88	1.10
Youth movements play a crucial role in reshaping political loyalty.	7	20	32	85	56	3.95	1.08
Youth activism enhances awareness of citizenship rights.	5	15	30	90	60	4.05	1.02

The findings indicate that youth movements and civil society organisations contribute positively to political participation. The largest mean score (4.05) indicates that youth activism greatly increases awareness of citizenship rights. These findings highlight the value of youth-led initiatives in building democratic engagement.

Hypothesis Testing

This part shows the statistical analysis output, such as regression analysis, ANOVA, and correlation tests. It analyzes the hypotheses concerning the effects of political loyalty on citizenship rights, the effect of sectarianism on political loyalty, and how civil society groups and youth movements influence political participation and transform political loyalty in Iraq.

H0₁: Political loyalty has no significant impact on citizenship rights.

H1₁: Political loyalty has a significant impact on citizenship rights.

Table 4 represents the Model Summary of the regression analysis, showing the strength of the relationship between political loyalty and citizenship rights.

Table 4. Model summary.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.789	0.623	0.620	0.571

The table 5 shows a positive correlation ($R = 0.789$) between political loyalty and citizenship rights. The value of 0.623 for R Square implies that political loyalty accounts for 62.3% of the variance in citizenship rights. The value of 0.620 for Adjusted R Square also indicates that the model is a good fit for the data even after controlling for the number of predictors. The Standard Error of the Estimate (0.571) is the average deviation between the observed and predicted values, which means a moderate prediction accuracy level.

Table 5 shows the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) table, which tests the overall significance of the regression model.

Table 5. ANOVA.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	158.421	1	158.421	120.873	0.000
Residual	96.579	198	0.487		
Total	255.000	199			

Table 5 shows a positive correlation ($R = 0.789$) between political loyalty and citizenship rights. The value of R Square = 0.623 shows that 62.3% of the change in citizenship rights is explained by political loyalty. The value of Adjusted R Square = 0.620 also confirms the goodness of fit of the model even after making adjustments for the number of predictors. The Standard Error of the Estimate (0.571) is the average distance between the predicted and observed values, signaling moderate prediction accuracy.

Table 5 reports the ANOVA results that test the overall significance of the regression model.

Table 6. Coefficients.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standardized Coefficients Std. Error	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.431	0.172		8.318
Political Loyalty	0.654	0.059	0.789	12.738

The findings show that political loyalty has a significant effect on citizenship rights ($B = 0.654$, $p < 0.001$). The positive unstandardized coefficient (B) indicates that for every

one-unit increase in political loyalty, there is a corresponding 0.654 unit increase in citizenship rights. The Standardized Beta Coefficient (0.789) shows that political loyalty is a strong predictor of citizenship rights. The t-value of 12.738 establishes the significance of the relationship, whereas the constant term ($B = 1.431$) reflects the level of citizenship rights to be predicted if political loyalty does not exist.

H0₂: Sectarianism does not significantly influence the level of political loyalty among Iraqi citizens.

H1₂: Sectarianism significantly influences the level of political loyalty among Iraqi citizens.

The Model Summary shows the strength of the relationship between Sectarianism and Political Loyalty.

Table 7. Model summary.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.788	0.621	0.618	0.512

The R Square statistic (0.621) is a measure that shows that 62.1% of political loyalty variation can be explained by sectarianism and that there is a high positive correlation between the two variables.

The ANOVA table 8 examines overall significance of the regression model.

Table 8. ANOVA.

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	152.314	1	152.314	106.549	0.000
Residual	92.186	198	0.466		
Total	244.500	199			

The F-statistic (106.549) and p-value (0.000) validate that the model is statistically significant, and it means sectarianism has a significant impact on political loyalty.

The Coefficients table 9 indicates the direction and the strength of Sectarianism's influence on Political Loyalty.

Table 9. Coefficients.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Constant	1.456	0.189		7.705
Sectarianism	0.734	0.071	0.788	10.324

The B value (0.734) shows that sectarianism has a positive and significant impact on political loyalty. The p-value (0.000) confirms the relationship is statistically significant.

H0₃: Civil society organizations and youth movements do not significantly contribute to enhancing political participation and reshaping political loyalty in Iraq.

H1₃: Civil society organizations and youth movements positively contribute to enhancing political participation and reshaping political loyalty in Iraq.

Table 10 displays Pearson Correlation Coefficient indicating relationship between Civil Society Organizations, Youth Movements, Political Participation, and Political Loyalty.

Table 10. Correlation between political participation and political loyalty.

Variables	Political Participation	Political Loyalty
Civil Society Organizations	0.685**	0.642**
Youth Movements	0.702**	0.660**

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of the correlation show that both Youth Movements ($r = 0.702$) and Civil Society Organizations ($r = 0.685$) are positively correlated with Political Participation, indicating that their existence promotes political participation. Both Civil Society Organizations ($r = 0.642$) and Youth Movements ($r = 0.660$) also exhibit a positive and significant correlation with Political Loyalty, affirming their contribution to reforming political loyalty among Iraqi citizens. The p-value ($p < 0.01$) confirms the statistical significance of the above associations.

Discussion

This section translates the findings of the study, addressing the effect of political loyalty on citizenship rights, the effect of sectarianism on political loyalty, and the contribution of civil society organizations and youth movements towards increasing political participation. It presents major insights and summarizes the general contributions to the democratic process in Iraq.

Impact of Political Loyalty on Citizenship Rights

The results indicate that political loyalty has a significant effect on citizenship rights in Iraq. According to the regression analysis, political loyalty accounts for 62.3% of the variance in citizenship rights. The positive beta coefficient ($B = 0.654$, $p < 0.001$) attests that increased political loyalty increases citizens' participation in civic activities and identification of national identity. This finding supports the hypothesis that political loyalty has a positive effect on the exercise of citizenship rights.

Influence of Sectarianism on Political Loyalty

Research data confirms that sectarian identities function as a main factor which determines political loyalty among Iraqi citizens. The calculated regression equation demonstrates a high connection between sectarian identity and political loyalty ($R =$

0.788). The statistical analysis reveals that sectarian affiliations positively influence political loyalty because the coefficient value ($B = 0.734$) reaches a significant threshold ($p < 0.001$). The evidence demonstrates that sectarian divisions make it challenging for Iraq to establish democratic transition.

Role of Civil Society Organizations and Youth Movements

Political participation alongside loyalty receives beneficial input from both youth movements and civil society groups. Youth movements demonstrate positive correlation ($r = 0.702$) toward political participation while civil society groups ($r = 0.685$) also show such positive ties to both political participation and political loyalty. The results support the belief that grassroots organizations make major contributions to reorganize political loyalties and democratic involvement.

Summary of Findings

Citizenship rights depend on political loyalty and sectarianism serves as an essential factor affecting political loyalty. Iraq benefits from civil society groups together with youth movements because they create positive impacts that foster inclusive political participation across the nation.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : The study conducts a comprehensive analysis of political loyalty's connection to citizenship rights within Iraq's democratic system, showing that political loyalty exerts major influence on citizenship rights execution because it explains 62.3% of the differences in how citizenship rights are practiced, while sectarianism serves as a major factor that shapes political loyalty and upholds identity-based divisions, and both civil society organizations along with youth movements actively promote political participation to reshape political loyalty in the Iraqi context, with grassroots movements working as essential factors to establish democratic principles and promote inclusivity among Iraqi citizens. **Implication :** The research shows how political loyalty functions with sectarianism to influence democratic activities during Iraq's transition towards modernizing its political system, suggesting the importance of strengthening civil society organizations, youth empowerment programs, public awareness campaigns, legislative reforms, and community dialogue initiatives to support political equality and democratic resilience. **Limitation :** However, the analysis is context-specific to Iraq's transitional democratic system and may not capture the full complexity of political loyalty and sectarian dynamics in other post-authoritarian societies, which limits the generalizability of the findings. **Future Research :** Future research must prioritize the empowerment of grassroots movements and cross-sectarian dialogue, while also expanding comparative studies across different transitional democracies to better understand the interplay between political loyalty, sectarianism, civil society, and youth activism in fostering inclusive democratic growth.

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