Child Labor in Iraq

by

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ABSTRACT

One in six children in the developing world is engaged in Child labor. Child labor is considered an issue that violates children's rights in many countries and Iraq is no exception. In 2004, Iraq had 1,300,000 children between the ages of eight and sixteen years engaged in work (UNICEF.com, 2004). This study identifies the major causes of child labor in Iraq and investigates the consequences of this issue. In this thesis I draw on the comparison of former regimes in Iraq and Egypt and how those regimes were mistreating their citizens by making them live under poverty and oppression while they were receiving support from the U.S. Poverty is the major cause behind Iraqi children engaging in work. I used the data I collected in Iraq, in the city of Nasiriyah, of 28 working children to explain the relationship between poverty, students drop out of school, family attitude towards education and the child engagement in work. At the end of the thesis I offer a list of recommendations to try to address the problem of child labor in Iraq. The recommendations and regulations are for Iraqi government and the NGOs to take into consideration in trying to resolve and regulate the issue of child labor to rescue the children in Iraq from more exploitation in the future.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my supportive family especially:

To my mother for her support for me throughout my study.

To my father for being there in my life.

To my brother Mohammed for his support.

To my sisters for their assistance throughout my study.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview/Objective:

It's sad to see children in their first years working. Stress and the pictures of frustration are imprinted on their little innocent faces. When we see such awful scenes several questions come to mind such as, what has urged those children to leave the playground, their peers, and their school books and engage in the workforce? What are the causes that urged those children to abandon their childhood years in its fun and sweet moments and rush themselves to deal with responsibility, tiredness and bitterness of the workforce? What are the consequences of their work, and how can we, as social justice and human rights advocates solve the issue of child labor and try to come up with solutions and recommendations that may limit the child labor issue from expansion so we can rescue the future children of Iraq from more exploitation and deprivation of their childhood. In the year 2009, Iraq as a developing country had 12% of the children between the ages of five and fourteen years engaged in work (United States Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs, 2009).

In this thesis I used the data I collected in Iraq in the city of Nasiriyah, during the summer of 2011. The data was collected by having the research study participants answer few questions. The study questions that I used to collect the data for this research study are in Appendix A. I also examined various media sources to analyze the relationship between child labor and the educational, social and political system in Iraq. The purpose of this thesis is to identify the major causes of child labor in Iraq and investigate the consequences behind this issue. Child labor is considered an issue that violates children's rights in many countries and Iraq is no exception.

1.2 Definition of Child Labor

Child labor is a term that is broadly defined and almost every research study comes with a specific definition for this term according to the area and culture under consideration. The way a researcher defines child labor is based on the social/ cultural limits and regulations of the geographical location where the research is conducted.

According to UNICEF, child labor is defined as work that exceeds a minimum number of hours, depending on the age of child and on the type of work. Such work (child labor) is

considered harmful to the child and therefore should be eliminated. UNICEF also set a limit of hours a child can work depending on the age of the child and the work type:

Ages 5-11: at least one hour of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work per week.

Ages 12-14: At least 14 hours of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work per week.

Ages 15-17: At least 43 hours of economic or domestic work per week.

In this study I use the term child labor when it means work that puts a heavy burden on the child and threatens the safety, health and child's welfare. It also means the work that exploits the labor of children as a cheap alternative for adult work, a work that takes advantage of the weakness of the child and their inability to defend their rights; a work that is being done by children but it doesn't contribute to their development. Child labor also means work that hampers the child's education, training, and cause a negative change in the child's life.

1.3 Methodology

I conducted an ethnographic study in the southern part of Iraq, in a city called Nasiriyah from July 21st, 2011 to August 10th, 2011. This city was oppressed and harmed by the Saddam

regime, due to their opposition to the former Iraqi dictatorship. The purpose of my study was to explore the causes and consequences of child labor in Iraq where children being exploited and their basic rights were denied.

That data for this study was collected in about three weeks through intensive studying of the field site, doing observations, and giving questionnaires to the working children. During those three weeks, besides observing the children working environment and the type of work the children do, I interviewed 28 children in the city, it is a relatively small number of participants but due to the time limit I had prevented me from interviewing more working children. The average time of each interview went from 10- 30 minutes. Those interviews were conducted at the children work place, the only language used in the interviews was Arabic.

The study participants were varied in their work type, some of their work appeared hard and dangerous and other work seemed easy but it contains hidden problems that children themselves were not aware of. Of the whole data I collected, there were six children working as shopping cart pushers, 3 in bakeries, 3 selling plastic bags, 3 in food stores, 2 as trash collectors, 2 selling vegetable, 2 selling gas cylinders, and one

child working as a beggar in the street. All were boys. The girls who participated in the study were all working as house maids. The children, who worked at the food stores under the management of the store owner, were considered owner assistants but in fact they did most of the store work there except for cashiering. The store owners also told me that there were more children workers during summer than in other season, and this is indication of why we found more children attending schools. The study was conducted during summer break when children are not going to schools. When I asked them about their first reason for working, they said they need to support their families.

Table 1: Research study data.

Type of Work	Age	Pay Rate	Work Hours/day	School Attendance	Whom to Support
Pushing shopping carts	10	$4 a day	8 hours	No, D at 5th grade	2
Pushing shopping carts	12	$3 a day	12 hours	No, D at 3rd grade	3
Pushing shopping carts	15	$4 a day	13 hours	yes, 8th grade	5
Pushing shopping carts	11	$5 a day	8 hours	yes, 5th grade	3
Pushing shopping carts	11	$4 a day	11 hours	No, D at 4th grade	2
Pushing shopping carts	14	$5 a day	12 hours	yes, 10th grade	5
Bakery store	12	$6 a day	14 hours	no, never attended	7
Bakery store	10	$5 a day	9 hours	no, never attended	5
Bakery store	7	$3 a day	6 hours	Yes, 2nd grade	self
Car Washing	10	$3 a day	7 hours	yes, 4th grade	self
Plastic bags seller	7	$4 a day	8 hours	yes, 1st grade	self
Plastic bags seller	8	$5 a day	9 hours	no, never attended	2
Plastic bags seller	6	$3 a day	8 hours	yes, 1st grade	self
Ice Cream seller	8	$8	9 hours	yes, 2nd grade	4
Works at a food store	7	$3 a day	9 hours	yes, 1st grade	self
Works at a food store	15	$5 a day	10 hours	yes, 9th grade	3
Works at a food store	15	$8	10 hours	yes, 9th grade	self
Street begging	5	$2 a day	8 hours	No	self
Selling oil	10	$6 a day	6 hours	yes, 4th grade	3
Selling vegetables	7	$3 a day	7 hours	yes, 2nd grade	self
Selling vegetables	12	$7	12 hours	no, never attended	5
Trash collector	13	$5 a day	7 hours	No, D at 4th grade	4
Trash collector	15	$6 a day	8 hours	No, D at 3rd grade	3
Selling gas cylinders	14	$7 a day	7 hours	yes, 7th grade	2
Selling gas cylinders	12	$5 a day	6 hours	yes, 5th grade	self
House maid	12	$2 a day	12 hours	no, D at 2nd grade	2
House maid	10	$2 a day	12 hours	yes, 3rd grade	self
House maid	13	eat for free	all day	No, D at 4th grade	self

Data were collected from a research study was done for 28 working children in Iraq, Nasiriyah during the summer of 2011.
D= Dropout of school.

1.4 Review of the Literature

To date, there are few studies on child labor in Iraq. However, I found several studies about child labor in other developing countries. In Nigeria, a study shows that thirty-nine per cent of parents indicated that they thought their school-aged children should work (Omokhodion & Uchendu, 2010). Also a

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study about child labor in Brazil reveals a "link between children's participation in labor and local constructions of childhood as a period of ontological uncertainty and impending transition" (Mayblin, 23). Research conducted in the Gaza Strip in Palestine -- a country that has common factors with Iraq such as religion, culture, and language -- looked at the association between labor-related variables and mental health problems among 780 working children (aged 9-18 years, mean 15.8). The results show that children mostly came from large families with eight or more children have mainly worked to increase family income. The study also concluded that working children's mental health problems are associated with socio-economic determinants (Vostanis, 2011).

A study conducted by Munmun Jha about child labor in India examined the inherent cultural constrains and the role of values in perpetuating child labor. Munmun studied the relationship between education and child labor. Munmun concludes the importance of the need to discard attitudes that are discriminatory, and the "need to adopt a rights-based, child-centred approach to offset the increasing number of child workers" (Munmun, 2009, 206).

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There are similarities between these countries and Iraq, yet to date there are no studies about child labor in Iraq. This shows the significance of my research on child labor in Iraq. My study investigates the problem in a unique way by examining what are the causes and effects of child labor and connect them to the political, social, and religious factors in Iraqi society.

1.5 Chapters Outline

Chapter one: Is an introductory chapter provides an overview of the child labor issue in Iraq and explains the research study questions and objectives. In this chapter I also explained the methodology that I used to collect the research data.

Chapter two: Explains the geographical location of Iraq, I review the former governments that led Iraq before Saddam Hussein was in power. I also provide a brief history of the wars that Iraq went through, and talk about the U.N. sanctions against Iraq and its consequences on the Iraqis. Moreover, I present the way Iraqis were living under the regime of Saddam Hussein. In addition, I provide an explanation of the effect of U.S. troop's withdrawal from Iraq.

Chapter three: By providing a brief history on the U.S-Egypt relationship, I use the comparison of Iraq and Egypt

former regimes as a framework to explain the U.S. relationship to these countries and how this relationship affected these countries' citizens. I also compare Iraq to Mexico as they are both undeveloped countries and explain how Iraq appears less developed than Mexico.

Chapter four: in this chapter I explain the major causes and effects of child labor in Iraq using my data along with other sources.

Chapter five: I use the study data and other sources to explore the relationship between poverty, students drop out of school, family attitude towards education and the child engagement in work.

Chapter six: In this chapter I offer a list of recommendations for Iraqi government and NGOs to take into consideration in trying to resolve the issue of child labor.

Chapter 2

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

2.1 History of Iraq

Iraq as a rich country known for its various wealthy economic, cultural, social resources and the old civilizations that were created on its soil. Contemporary Iraq sits on the ground of Mesopotamia, which is considered the cradle of ancient human civilization. Iraq extends along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. It is located north of the Persian Gulf, south of the Taurus mountain range, and parallel to the Mediterranean Sea. Iraq was in the medieval center of the Islamic Empire, and Baghdad was the capital of a political and cultural site, from Morocco to the Indian subcontinent (Lawrence, 2000). However, the invasion of the Mongols in the thirteenth century limited the extent of Baghdad's until Iraq won its independence from Britain in 1932 (Porch, 2004).

After the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958, Iraq transitioned to a republican system, and henceforth, the country has witnessed a number of military coups (Kennedy, 2005). The latest of the coups brought the notable Baath party to power in July 17, 1968. Baath Party or the Arab Socialist Party (Baath means Resurrection in Arabic) is a political party mixing Arab

nationalist and Arab socialist interests, opposed to Western imperialism and calling for the resurrection of the Arab World and its unity in one united state. Its motto "Unity, Liberty and Socialism", refers to Arab unity, freedom from non-Arab control and interference. Its ideology of Arab socialism is particularly separate in origins and practice from classical Marxism. In July 1968, Baath party was brought back to power by coup led by General Ahmed Hassan Al-Bakr, Saddam Hussein and Salah Omar Al-Ali, and that is when Al-Bakr became president and Saddam eventually used his growing power to set Al-Bakr aside in 1979 and took the power until 2003 (Devlin, 1991).

The Baath party first came to power through the coup of February 1963 against the government of Abdul Karim Qasim. After the success of this coup, the first Baath government was formed, and Abd al-Salam 'Arif became president. It then soon engaged in a dispute between the moderates and extremists, culminating in an attempted coup by Arif in November 1963 that served to discredit the party. After Arif's takeover, the moderate military Baath officers initially retained some influence but they were gradually eased out of power during the following months (Dawisha A & Dawaisha K, 2003).

Iraq is a country that holds the second largest oil reserve in the world (Barakat, 2005), and when Saddam Hussein became president in 1979, following President Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr (Zakaria, 2003), oil was considered the main economic source. The oil industry accounted for 95 percent of the country's hard currency (CIA The World Factbook.com). However, during the Iraq/ Iran war from 1980 to 1988, and the Gulf War that followed Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and then the international sanctions that followed have drained Iraq's capabilities and adversely affected the great economic and social institutions, such as hospitals, universities, corporations etc (Moghaddam, 2006).

2.2 Who is Saddam Hussein?

Saddam Hussein was born on April 28, 1937 in the home village in the province of Salah Al-Din. Saddam never knew his father, Saddam's father died before the birth of his son at five months of gestation. His uncle, Khairallah Telfah, began sponsoring Saddam when he was in his early years. Subha later married again and gave birth to his three brothers. Her second husband was Ibrahim Hassan, who abused Saddam on multiple occasions, profoundly scarring him and his psyche for the rest of his life. Later, under the guidance of his uncle, Saddam joined

the national secondary school in Baghdad (Kelidar, 1992). At the

age of twenty in 1957, Saddam joined the Baath party, which his

uncle greatly supported. A year after Saddam's joining of the

Baath party; officers led by Abdul Karim Kassem overthrew the

monarchy under the leadership of King Faisal II of Iraq, and

claimed the power. The supporters of the Baath party were not

fond of the socialist system led by the Prime Minister Abdul

Karim Kassem, therefore they attempted to assassinate him in

1959. The attempt failed, leaving Saddam wounded. Fearing the

worst, Saddam fled to Syria and from there to Cairo. Through

arduous tasks, Saddam was able to prove himself and his

abilities in managing a country while he was in exile and that

resulted in Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr to appoint Saddam as a vice-

president. As a de facto leader, he exercised an extraordinary

amount of power for his title. Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr's regime

grew weak over time and Saddam saw this as his chance to take

control. Eventually, Saddam began taking a more prominent role

as a leading figure in the Iraqi government, both nationally and

internationally. He quickly became the planner of Iraq's foreign

policies and represented Iraq in all diplomatic situations.

Saddam's ongoing practice led the world to accept him as a

leader before he actually became one (Kelidar, 1992).

Over time, he slowly began accumulating power until he finally achieved the title of official ruler of Iraq in 1979. He carefully established relationships with other members of the Baath party and quickly made his position secure, creating a strong circle of support within the party. Moreover, his relatives from his hometown of Tikrit had the greatest impact on his life. Through slipshod counseling and support from others, they were able to achieve and maintain positions in the government. However, these individuals were not capable of administrating a country, which led the country into an abyss (Kelidar, 1992).

2.3 Iraq/ Iran war

Before the war broke out between Iraq and Iran, there had been conflicts between the two countries. There was a long history of border disputes since April 1979, and Saddam Hussein also was aiming to replace Iran as the dominant Persian Gulf state because of the Shia[1] majority in Iraq influenced by the Iranian revolution. There was also a border dispute between Iran and Iraq, it continued to escalate until it culminated in September 22, 1980, when Iraq attacked Iran by sea, land, and air. The motive for this war was the issue of the border, as the Iraqi officials stated at that time (Oberdorfer, 1983).

The border issue was the result of Iran's lack of compliance with the Algiers Accord[2]. The border dispute is as old as the Persians and Arabs themselves, and the issue often fluctuates in importance from time to time. Nevertheless, there have been allegations from both sides about their claim to land in this region (Razi, 1988).

At the end of 1971 Baghdad decided to cut off diplomatic relations with Iran. Three years later, a fight broke out on the border, bringing the border dispute to light. On June 13, 1975 an agreement was signed in Algeria, and the two countries began the implementation of its provisions, but the 1979 Iranian Revolution[3] led to the deposition of the Shah of Iran Mohammed Reza Pahlavi and the Declaration of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Sutton, 1979).

The Iraqi government believed that giving time for the new system in Iran to be in power will make the Iranian government stronger and the country become more stable, and that may encourage Iran to not implement the Algeria Convention. Particularly with regard to handling Iraq its territory, which was under the control of Iran. Moreover, the leaders of the new regime in Iran began to issue repeated statements and successive reports ignoring their commitment to the Algeria

Convention, and had no interest in handing over the land to Iraq. Iraq entered into a long and bitter war with Iran from 1980–1988 that caused severe economic damage, and put Iraq in huge debt to its surrounding countries, most notably Kuwait. The outcome of the Iraq/Iran war was that Iraq got off the war having the largest military forces in the Middle East on behalf of a country destroyed economically (Butters, 2009).

The war lasted eight years, leaving behind it destruction and desolation, which continues to affect both countries to this day. The war claimed the lives of about 400 thousand people on both sides and left about 750 thousand injured. The bodies of the victims of war continued to be discovered until 2001. The value of economic losses and loss of oil revenues for each of the two countries accumulate to more than $400 billion (Sluglett, 1990). The war ended and Iraq as a country did not gain anything out of this war but loss of people lives, more orphans and widows, and destroying of the country's wealth.

2.4 Iraq/ Kuwait war

On August 2nd, 1990 Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait (*Los Angeles Times*, August, 2nd 1990). The Iraqi regime's invasion of Kuwait came after the failure of numerous negotiations between

the two countries. This action also seemed as a direct threat to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, especially after Iraqi forces massed on the border of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, an international coalition led by the United States address this threat and to address the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait came into play. That is when the Gulf War I broke out in January 17, 1991 between the Iraqi regime on one hand and the Alliance of 39 countries led by the United States on the other hand. This war started because of the non-compliance of the Iraqi leadership against the United Nations resolutions on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990 (Sluglett, 2002).

The Arab countries that joined the coalition are the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, UAE, Qatar, Oman, Egypt, Syria, and Morocco; and at the global level, Britain, France, and the United States of America played a prominent role in this war. The United States and the coalition countries represented the United Nations' crucial role in the passing the Security Council Resolution in November 1990, which called for the use of any means necessary to expel Iraq from Kuwait no later than Tuesday January 15, 1991 (Sluglett, 2002).

One of the causes of the war was that Iraq accused the Kuwaiti government of pumping more oil than allowed by OPEC

during the first Persian Gulf War (known as the Iran-Iraq war), and this led to a decline in the prices of oil at the global level. Iraq also accused Kuwait of pumping oil from the Rumaila (Iraqi oilfield) that extends between the Iraqi-Kuwaiti borders (Karam, 2005). Iraq declared more than once that Kuwait was part of its territory, that it was part of the mandate of Basra under the Ottoman Empire in the eighteenth century AD. At the end of Turkish domination of Iraq in the early twentieth century, Kuwait was no longer part of that mandate, and then both Iraq and Kuwait signed an accord under British mandate; Iraq got its independence on 1932 and Kuwait on 1961. However, Iraq did not recognize the independence of Kuwait until 1963, but did not recognize Kuwait's boundaries and that did not end the dispute over the common border between the two countries (El-Najjar, 2001).

The second reason for the war was that after the Iran-Iraq war, a dispute between the Iraqi government and the Government of Kuwait rose regarding the debt owed to the State of Kuwait. Iraq was demanding cancellation of the debt; however, both countries needed to aid their respective economy. Additionally, Iraq might have felt a sense of military might after the cease-fire in the first Gulf War. A chance of victory

encouraged the Iraqi regime to carry out the occupation of

Kuwait. There is no doubt that the Iraqi government believed

that attacking Kuwait and its oil wealth would lead to

strengthening Iraq's position within OPEC. On the other hand,

the location on the coast of Kuwait, the Persian Gulf, and the

port of the long beach is an excellent, strategic position. These

issues later became the grounds relied upon by the Iraqi regime

through its movements, diplomacy, and media coverage to

justify the invasion of Kuwait.

On August 2, 1990, Iraqi troops started crossing the

Kuwait- Iraqi borders with hundreds of Iraqi tanks and armored

vehicles. After less than twenty-four hours, Iraqi troops were in

control of Kuwait. On August 8, 1990, Iraq declared Kuwait as

the nineteenth province of Iraq. The Arab States issued an

immediate condemnation against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

Numerous resolutions by the UN Security Council were issued,

and even the League of Arab States and other international

organizations demanded the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi

forces from Kuwait. All were in vain, for the Iraqi regime refused

to give priority to the voice of reason (Sluglett, 2002).

In New York, the U.N. Security Council met and issued a

resolution condemning the Iraqi occupation, and on August 6,

1990 the UN Security Council Resolution imposed sanctions on Iraq. On the same month, the United States announced that it would send troops to the Gulf region. It did not take long to form a coalition against Iraq. The United States led the Kuwait liberation Operation (Desert Storm) with nine Arab countries, including Kuwait, and thirty non-Arab states.

On November 29, 1990, the U.N. Security Council issued a resolution requesting for the use of all necessary means to eject Iraqi forces from Kuwait if Iraq did not withdraw by January 15th, 1991. Ultimately, the armies of the Iraqi regime did not withdraw from Kuwait, and another war started in the region. The war resulted in political and economic oppression against Iraqi citizens in particular, and the Arab people in general.

In mid-January 1991, Coalition forces in the Arabian Gulf reached about 670,000 troops equipped with about 3,500 tanks and armored vehicles, 1800 air-crafts, navy forces of about 200 warships, including six American aircraft carriers and warships. The United States alone sent about 425,000 troops, exceeding the other armed forces from 27 countries, including France, England and a few Arab countries (i.e. Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria). States that did not send troops contributed sums of money or equipment. In anticipation of the expected attack by

these forces, Iraq deployed about half million troops equipped

with armored vehicles and about 4500 tanks and 550 war

airplanes to Southern Iraq near Kuwait (Sluglett, 2002).

On January 17, 1991, coalition forces launched an aerial

bombardment of industrial and military targets in Iraq, and later

in Kuwait, for five consecutive weeks. The first stage of this

process was designed to destroy Iraq's offensive power. Another

objective was the destruction of the arsenals of biological, and

chemical weapons of the Iraqi regime, and destruction of the

Iraq's air force. Moreover, the invasion disrupted the capacity of

the Iraqi regime to obtain information, as well as limiting combat

capability of the Iraqi army in Kuwait. Saddam's regime fired

Scud missiles at Saudi Arabia and also launched some of these

rockets into Israel in an apparent attempt to break the Arab

isolation around Iraqi regime. However, that plan did not seem

to achieve its objectives (El-Najjar, 2001).

February 24, 1991 was the beginning of the second phase

of the war, when coalition forces launched a ground offensive on

several fronts simultaneously advanced toward Kuwait and

southern Iraq. At that point in time, resistance by Iraqi forces in

Kuwait was fragile, due to their lack of supply lines. Two days

after Saddam Hussein ordered his forces to withdraw; the

Coalition on February 28, 1991 declared a cease of all military operations against Iraq. On April 11, 1991 the Security Council declared a formal end of war after Iraq agreed in April 6, 1991 to a cease-fire resolution pledging to implicitly compensate Kuwait for war damages, and to destroy all the facilities that produced biological weapons. Factories producing military equipment were also ordered to be compensated for. Later, the United Nations were commissioned to monitor Iraq's progress in its commitments to destroy weapons of mass destruction as well as to ensure that the ban was still in play (El-Najjar, 2001).

According to some estimates, about 100,000 Iraqi soldiers were killed in this war, while the casualties among coalition forces had reported only about 480 people. Members of the alliance were able to drop bombs on Iraq to destroy the transportation and communications networks, and most of the major factories and infrastructure like water and electricity were cut-off. The economy collapsed; however, it was essentially weak before the war. After the great battles there were unrests and disturbances especially in Kurdish areas in northern Iraq and the Shiite areas in the south. Iraqi troops responded strongly and were able to control them. As a result, many of the Shiites escaped to Iran and Kurds fled to the remote mountains

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separating northern Iraq from Turkey. In the period from April to July 1991, the United States and other allies established security zones and refugee camps in northern Iraq to protect the Kurds. On May 1993, the Security Council issued a decision demarcating the border between Iraq and Kuwait, which caused Iraq to give eleven Iraqi oilfields to Kuwait. In November 1994 the Iraqi government recognized the sovereignty of Kuwait and the United Nations announced Iraq's recognition of the legitimacy of the Kuwait entity (*The Baltimore Sun* newspaper, November 12, 1994). At that time Iraqi children were the biggest victims of Iraq's environment pollution due to the use of U.S. troop's radioactive depleted uranium weapons during the Gulf War in 1991 (Harris, 2004). The result was a significant increase in the incidence of malignant tumor, leukemia, and congenital malformations among children in the contaminated areas of cities such as Basra, Nasiriyah, Samawah, and others. The use of depleted uranium weapons was like an organized crime to destroy the children of Iraq since the radiological impact of the use of these weapons will continue its effects on children for thousands of years to come.

2.5 United Nations Sanction against Iraq

In 1990, the U.S. imposed comprehensive economic sanctions on Iraq under Security Council Resolution 661 on 6/8/1990. This sanction was like an open war against the children of Iraq (Alansrawi, 2001). Below, I highlight some of the effects of the sanctions and the aggression against Iraq.

The sanctions resulted in exceeded the mortality rates of children under the age of five. According to the UNICEF, 4000 children were dying per month, and this led to the deaths of half a million Iraqi children in the period between 1990 and 1998. The infant mortality rate in Iraq continued to increase until the year 2003 due to the effects of the long years of sanction. A UNICEF report published in October 1999 indicates that malnutrition as a result of the sanctions caused an increase in mortality rates among children up to the highest in the world. Maternal mortality increased from 50 per hundred thousand births in 1989 to 117 per hundred thousand births in 1997 (Ismael, 2007). The proportion of deaths among children under five years of age raised from 30.2 per thousand births to 97.2. The lack of birth weight (less than 2.5 kg) increased 4% in 1990 to about a quarter of registered births in 1997, due to malnutrition at birth. Today there are approximately 3.5 million

Iraqis living in poverty, 1.5 million of malnourished children are under the age of five. One fifth of Iraqi children are under five year ages are malnourished, and a hundred infants die every day due to starvation (UNICEF.com). About 70% Iraqi women suffer from anemia, and there is evidence that a mental disorder in children under fourteen years has increased significantly (UNICEF.com).

2.6 Iraqi's Lifestyle Under Saddam Hussein Regime

Iraq was a terrifying state for those who lived under Saddam's regime. People suffered from constant fear due to the continuous accusations of being opponents of the regime. The Iraqi regime was urging people to report any suspicious activities of members of their own families and neighbors. Iraqi Security Forces were expected to raid homes at any time, arrests and arbitrary killing were common. Between three and four million Iraqis fled their country because of the regime's misuse of power, representing about 15% of the total of population. They chose to live as strangers away from their home country rather than living under the oppressive iron fist of Saddam Hussein (Rubin, 2011).

Those serious violations of human rights were not the work of motivated individuals nor they were the acts of certain

individuals, instead they were part of a deliberate policy pursued

by the regime. Fear was the way Saddam chose to stay in power

(Human Rights Review, 2003). Testimony of Iraqis in exile and

the evidence collected by the reporters from the United Nations,

human rights and intelligence agencies, show the huge price that

the Iraqis were paying due to the Saddam Hussein's control of

Iraq. Saddam Hussein was taking the lead at the subject of

Iraq's record on torture and the treatment of women, prison

conditions, arbitrary killings, executions without trial, the

persecution of Kurds and Shiites, and the prosecution of

opposition figures outside Iraq (Human Rights in Saddam's Iraq,

2003).

The UN Security Council and the International Committee

for Human Rights repeatedly condemned for several years the

human rights record in Iraq. But Iraq continued to disrespect the

Security Council resolutions and to ignored its international

obligations towards human rights. The Commission of

International Human Rights, on 19 April 2002, approved the

resolution that drew attention to the Iraqi regime widespread

violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

Those human rights violations resulted from the tyrant's

oppression of defenseless Iraqi people. For ten years, Saddam

Hussein did not allow United Nations' investigators who were concerned about the mistreatment cases of human rights violations to visit Iraq. However, Andreas Mavromatis, a U.N. reporter at that time was able to make a short visit to Iraq in February 2002. He was accompanied by Iraqi officials in each place during a limited program; therefore, his visit was restricted (Kanan, 1998).

Saddam Hussein along with close members of his family and a number of partners, most of whom come from his hometown of Tikrit, were aggressively ruling the country. Those individuals were the only people trusted by him. Through a large network of trusted members of his security forces, Saddam had direct control of Iraqi society. Saddam and his inner circle were directly responsible for human rights violations. Saddam assumed the responsibilities of President, Prime Minister, Leader of the only political party (Baath Party) and Chief Commander of Armed Forces. In addition, Saddam was the head of the powerful Revolutionary Command Council, which enacted the laws and decrees that control all other institutions in the country. Many of the decrees issued by the Revolutionary Command Council gave full authority to the security agencies to arrest the opponents of the regime without being subject to any legal accountability or

due process. The Decree Revolutionary Command Council announced in 1992 guaranteed immunity for Ba'ath party members who caused damages to individual's properties, physical harm, or even death during the persecution of the enemies of the Baath party. Through the Revolutionary Command Council Saddam Hussein issued a series of rulings that would punish through severe penalties (amputation, branding, cutting off ears or other forms of mutilation) to anyone who might oppose the laws. In 2000, Saddam announced a new law permitting to cut the tongue as a punishment for speaking against the regime, the President or his family. Those punishments were mainly applied to political dissidents. As a warning to other citizens, Iraqi official Television broadcasted pictures of the punishments (Magnier, 2003).

Uday Saddam Hussein was the eldest son of Saddam Hussein. He was repeatedly accused of raping and murdering young women. Uday kept a private torture chamber, known as the "red room" and would use electricity to torture his victims in a building on the bank of the Tigris River. He personally executed dissidents in Basra during the uprising that followed the Gulf War in March 1991 (Newsweek, July 17, 2011).

There is also tangible evidence that the Iraqi regime tortured children. John Sweeney, a reporter for the British Broadcasting Corporation BBC, in a report during his visit to the Kurdish safe zone in northern Iraq, told the story of Ali; an Iraqi man who was working for Saddam Hussein's son Uday. After an assassination attempt against Uday, Ali was afraid that he might be questioned for the assassination attempt that he did not commit so he decided to flee to Northern Iraq, leaving behind his wife and a two year old daughter. The Secret police came to his wife, and tortured her so she would tell them Ali's location. But their torture of Ali's wife did not guide them to Ali whereabouts so they had to torture the daughter by trying to crush her feet. When he met John Sweeney two years later, Ali's daughter was still limping and Ali was worried that she would become handicapped for the rest of her life. Sweeney also met six other witnesses in northern Iraq who had firsthand experience with the torture of children, including members of the perpetrators of decisions of Saddam - and was imprisoned in a Kurdish prison- where the investigator told Sweeny that they can do anything to torture kids; "We can make a kebab from a child that we

wanted"(BBC website).

2.7 The Fall of Saddam and U.S. Withdraw and Effects on Iraq

Between the ninth of April 1980 and the ninth of April 2003, Iraqis wrote chapters of sacrifices. The pure blood painted features on a map of a suffering country. Tales and stories of joys and sorrows cannot be removed from the memories of the Iraqis who witnessed the seemingly never-ending nightmare moment by moment of Saddam's regime and its brutality. April, 1st 1980[4], marks the beginning of the tragedy and injustice, tyranny and oppression, deprivation and poverty, wars, the "joy" of killing, and the confiscation of freedom (Efraim, 2003). On April 9th 2003 Baghdad fell to U.S. and UK forces and Saddam Hussein was removed from power.

The fall of Saddam's statue in Baghdad and the removal of the dictatorship that was perched on the chest of Iraq and the Iraqis marked a new beginning. Songs of victory and the blood of martyrs echoed Firdous Square peacefully. The blood of the triumphant and the sorrowful stories will not be forgotten; Iraqi's memories will always remember the sorrow and pain of years of dictatorship and war. It was on this day that Iraqis celebrated the fall of the Hussein regime and believed that all kinds of

oppression will go away. But Iraq has remained a corrupt state (Hampson, 2003).

Since his arrest on December 2003, Saddam spent the last three years of his life in U.S. custody; he spent those years in a cell in a military prison after being living a luxurious life in his mansions not caring how his people were living. The tyrant Saddam was executed in Baghdad after being convicted for crimes against humanity. Saddam Hussein was executed leaving a free Iraq after him. The Iraqi people have learned many lessons from Saddam's oppressive era. The Iraqi people now know they need to let their voices be heard and tell their new government how they want to live their lives. Iraqis now are more vigilant about their present and future than any other time. However, they need to not give up and continue walking on their path towards the first democratic country in the region (The Fall of Bagdad, 2003).

After the U.S. troop's mission was accomplished, and their target was reached, it became necessary for them to withdraw. On October 21st, 2011, U.S. President Barack Obama announced that the remaining U.S. troops in Iraq would be withdrawn from the country before the end of December (*The Telegraph*, October 2011). The withdrawing of U.S. and coalition forces is good as it

signals Iraq's independence. Yet, it could cause an adverse effect on the residents especially the less advantage people. As Iraqis remove the dictatorship that ruled Iraq, the new governmental system and the Iraqi citizens are beginning to taste democracy. Democracy, however, is difficult to achieve in the first years. Democracy is like a new "creature" just born in a new society where people design it the way they like. The meanings of democracy depend on how specific people perceive it. In Iraq, the top ranked officials need to direct the citizens to be more careful in treating this new "creature" before it dies, and they also need to teach the people how to welcome this creature in the system and make use of the good concepts it is bringing and implement it in curing other social, political, and economic issues in following democracy in its right form.

The French social theorist, Alain Touraine discussed that democracy cannot be practiced without a sense of belonging to political collectivity; he also suggested some conditions before democracy can be practiced in a certain place. The conditions that resemble democracy include the act of responsibility of the citizens of a country. Touraine also believed that democracy is a concept based on the free creation of a political realm, the sovereignty of the people, and political freedom of choice that

exists independently of any cultural heritage (Scranton, 1997).

These conditions cannot be fulfilled in Iraq today because

political parties themselves are not feeling responsible for their

country; rather most of them are working toward foreign

agendas. How can the citizens feel responsible toward their

country if they see and are being led by irresponsible political

parties? The second condition by which sovereignty can be

achieved is when the country's borders are respected by other

countries. However, the most controversial issue in Iraq today

refers to border protection because every single country that

shares borders with Iraq is not protecting their borders from

violators. This includes attacks from Iran and Turkey on Iraqi

soil. The last condition is political freedom independent of

cultural heritage and that is impossible given that Iraqi citizens

and officials are attached to their culture more than they are

attached to the country.

The circumstances in Iraq today are not encouraging,

especially to those who would prefer to see U.S. forces withdraw

because there are numerous political parties and officials who

are working for their own benefit, if not for the benefit of the

foreign agendas. Their goal is to destroy Iraq and leave it as a

hopeless place. The Iraqi citizens now, as has always being the

case, are the last ones they think about especially less

advantaged people (uneducated, poor, disabled) and the

children. These social groups are almost forgotten and

oppressed by the government ruling Iraq. I believe that U.S. and

foreign forces should stay in Iraq until the time when Iraqi

citizens set democratic institutions and keep working for the

rights of the people, without asking for help from outsiders.

Asking for help from United States is also considered as asking

help from outsiders, but Iraqis now are excused to ask for help

from the U.S. because Iraqis are just starting a new democratic

system and the U.S. has been considered a democratic country

for centuries. Therefore, when Iraqis ask for help in such matter

is considered advisable than letting U.S. forces to withdraw from

Iraq before fully institutionalizing the country in a democratic

way.

　　　Until Iraqi officials believe that the governmental system

has been changed from a dictatorship to a democratic system

and forget about leading the people according to those officials'

interests, democracy will not take hold in Iraq.

Chapter 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Comparison of Iraqi and Egyptian Former Regimes

In this research study I want to draw on a comparison between the former political regimes in Iraq and Egypt and how the United States helped those political systems over the years they were in power and how then United States defended those political systems. And in doing so, the U.S. affected the citizens of those countries and one of those negative effects was poverty which then led to child labor.

The United States and western countries were very supportive of Saddam Hussein the former Iraqi regime especially when it opposed a government or an ideology viewed unfavorably by the United States (Hagopian, 2000). This is why it supported and empowered Saddam Hussein's stand against Iran. For example, The Security Council issued a resolution condemning Iraq's use of chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq war. However the United States and other Western countries did not stop their political and military support to Baghdad until the last stages of the Iraq's war against Iran (Hagopian, 2000). Relations between Western countries and Iraq converged during the Iran-Iraq war, which reached its peak during those years.

The West feared the growing strength of the Islamic system in Iran; therefore, they wanted to prevent an Iranian victory. The United States removed Iraq from the list of states sponsoring terrorism in 1982, and two years after reestablished their diplomatic relations with Baghdad after they had been terminated due to the war between Arabs and Israel in June 1967.

During the Iran-Iraq war the Soviet Union was the strong ally of Iraq and the main source of its weapons. However, several Western countries, including Britain, France and the United States supplied Iraq with weapons and military equipment too, and Washington also exchanged intelligence efforts with the Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein.

In the final stages of the war, Iraq and Iran fired their weapons into commercial oil tankers in the Gulf to hinder the gains from each other's oil exports. The United States, Britain and France sent warships that had the U.S. flag to the Gulf to accompany several Kuwaiti oil tankers that were facing Iranian attacks (Bekker, 2004). With the development of a "war of oil tankers," the U.S. destroyed a number of Iranian oil platforms and shot down an Iranian passenger plane carrying 290 people.

The U.S. has claimed that it was an accident that occurred as a result of an error (Cook, 2007).

Nevertheless, Western countries continued their support for Saddam's regime until the invasion of Kuwait by the Iraqi troops. At this point, the U.S. and its allies plan was only to get Iraqi troops out of Kuwait even though the U.S. was aware of the human rights violations that were happening in Iraq; and knew how Saddam was considered dangerous to humanity inside and outside Iraq. After the defeating of Iraqi troops in the 1991, many Iraqi citizens started criticizing Saddam's regime publicly. People were trying to find reasonable justifications for the consecutive wars that the country was suffering. Furthermore, people were questioning the reasons for losing their beloved ones during the long years of dictatorship and this led to further development in the political situation; people started holding meetings to discuss the negative consequences of wars and the international siege which left a bitter feeling in most Iraqi families. The heated talks among regular Iraqi nationalists along with President George H.W. Bush speech urging the Iraqis to overthrow the regime out led to an uprising against the regime. It was a significant milestone in the history of Iraq.

In March 1991, angry Iraqis picked their weapons and started protesting the humiliation they suffered from Saddam's dictatorship. Iraqis were not used to protesting prior to 1991. The regime controlled every neighborhood and street; people were scared to criticize the regime even among their own family members. The uprising was a wakeup call for Iraqis seeking better ways to govern themselves.

The rebels who were responsible for carrying out the uprising did not have significant political backgrounds to set a good local leadership team. Many of them were living in the marshes and did not have formal education to plan systematically for a better government that could offer a better life for Iraqis and alleviate their suffering (Nakash, 2003). Therefore and due to the nature of Iraqi culture, people sought help from clerics and religious people who come from the descent of Prophet Muhammad. Clerics tried to control the society by issuing Islamic religious rulings asking people to follow law and order and prevent more blood shedding. Regardless of the continuous clerics' efforts to bring stability to their cities, many criminals were released from the prisons and cases of murder, looting, and burglary was reported in most of the country except for a few places in Baghdad and Salah-al-Din.

The uprising lasted for approximately 25 days and it caused a shift of mind among Iraqi people. Iraqis started to believe that the day to oust Saddam from power was getting closer and that they could live a peaceful life just like the rest of their neighboring countries. The dream did not last long and the bad news announcing that the American Forces in Basrah lifted the siege from the Iraqi Republican Guards (IRG) and that was the major cause behind the failure of the uprising. The Iraqi elite combat troops were members of the IRG and they had the most advanced weapons. They were led by Saddam's cousin Ali Hasan Al Majeed who was well known for his crimes in gassing more than 100,000 Kurds with chemicals (Eisenberg, 2003).

The Iraqi Republican Guard started fighting rebels in Basrah; they made their way to Nasiriyah after controlling Basrah. The clashes between the IRG and rebels led to the killing of many innocent Iraqi children and women, houses were demolished and schools were burned down. After gradually regaining power from the rebels, the IRG started conducting campaigns to arrest individuals who were involved in the uprising. Thousands of people were publicly executed and many others were reported missing after they were arrested. The uprising revealed one fact about the cruelty of Saddam's regime;

it bombed the religious shrines of Karbala and Najaf provinces. During the Gulf War in 1991, many Iraqis left their provinces and sought refuge in Karbala and Najaf because they knew that the Americans will never bomb them. The case was different during the uprising for those Iraqis who looked for shelter and safety in the shrines in Karbala and Najaf; Saddam's Forces heavily bombed the holy cities and committed one of the most brutal massacres in the history of the two cities. Bodies of children, women and men were laid on the streets and buildings were burning everywhere.

The opportunity for Iraqis to escape from the black overshadowed life seemed to end. There were several reasons as to why the uprising fell. First, there was no spirit of cooperation and patriotism among some parties, which led to the weakness of military cohesion. There was also lack of coordination between the Iraqi parties where each political party was thinking of their particular interest and not the country as a whole. Moreover, the use of helicopters by the Iraqi Air Force to attack rebels had a significant role in the failure of the uprising, especially in the northern cities. Lack of weapons and medical supplies was another reason for the failure of the upraising. Weapons and medical supplies were requested by the rebels from the U.S.

military when they were on the outsides of cities, and the U.S. promised to help but did not fulfill its promise. The deliberate U.S. inaction resulted the Saddam's regime committing massacres and genocide in southern Iraq. Iraqis realized the brutality of the regime they were dealing with and asked for help from the Multi National Forces stationed in Basra. The U.S forces built small camps in Basra and Samawa to receive Iraqi refugees and also provided protection and basic living needs for the refugees. The number of refugees increased until it reached 50,000 in the two locations.

As a result of U.S. diplomatic talks with neighboring countries, Saudi Arabia decided to host the Iraqi refugees. When Saudi Arabia agreed to take in the refugees, many had spent about 45 days on the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. The day of announcing this arrangement marked another milestone in the history of Iraq. Prior to the announcement, Saddam used to claim to the media that he treated Iraqis with respect and dignity. However, the Saudi announcement made it clear that Iraqis were suffering and needed to escape from the tyrant's ruling. The refugees were transported from Basra and Samawah to Saudi Arabia and Iran by airplanes (Naser, 2006). They were also stationed in the cities of Rafha and Artawiyah in Saudi

Arabia. After living in a desert for about 7 years, some people left the camp and immigrated to Europe and the United States; some stayed there for twelve years until 2003 when they were able to return to Iraq. The U.S. did not think of overthrowing Saddam during the tough years between 1990 and 2003 when Iraqis and neighbor countries suffered from the brutality of the regime.

The U.S. did not plan to overthrow Saddam's regime until after the events of September 11, 2001 even though the U.S. did not have an empirical proof of connecting the 9/11 attacks to Saddam. The U.S. was convinced that Saddam was not a good partner anymore. The terror attacks and the accusation that Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction were used as excuses for the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the overthrow Saddam's regime.

At the same time, Egypt was considered one of the strongest allies of the United States in the region. The relationship between the United States and Egypt was shaped by regional and global conflicts when Gamal Abdel Nasser was in power from 1956-1970; however the era of Anwar Al-Sadat from the years 1970-1981 and Hosni Mubarak from 1981-2011 were considered the years of cooperation between U.S. and Egypt.

Therefore the U.S. Egyptian relationship was measured by the political regimes in power rather than by the citizens of Egypt and U.S. There were three issues that affected the U.S. and Egyptian relationship during the 50s and 60s: the Cold War, Arab Nationalism and Israel as a strategic alley. This relationship started when President Nasser asked the United States for military support during the Arab Israel conflict and the U.S. denied support. Nasser turned to the Soviets who supplied Egypt with weapons, and when he got closer to the Soviet Union and articulated Arab Nationalism led United States to work toward undermining the Egyptian rule.

When President Nasser died in 1970, the new president Anwar Al-Sadat worked to bring Egypt closer to the United States and the relationship between U.S. and Egypt started to improve. This relationship started when President Sadat asked the Soviet military advisers to leave Egypt and as a result President Richard Nixon requested congress to authorize $250 million in aid for Egypt. Then the relationship between the U.S. and Egypt continued to improve, and Egypt's viewpoint changed from an Arab Nationalist and anti Israeli to an Israeli/ U.S. friendly (Henry, 1975).

The Camp David Accords[5] resulted in Egypt becoming an ally of the U.S. The signing of the Camp David Accord bought an end to the conflict between Egypt and Israel. As an incentive for Egypt to sign the accords, the United States promised substantive aid packages for Egypt including military aid that continued until this year. The United States gave Egypt an average of $2 billion annually from 1979 to 2011, much of it was given as a military aid. The combined total of what Egypt has received of U.S. aid makes Egypt the second largest recipient of U.S. aid after Israel. Therefore, U.S. Egyptian relationship has been increasingly improving ever since (Cowper, 2000). In addition, Mubarak continued al-Sadat's policy toward Israel, which was to be a good partner to U.S. Mubarak worked to reintegrate Egypt into the Arab countries after it was isolated due to the Egypt-Israeli peace treaty[6] (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, 2011). Mubarak worked to let other Arab countries to believe that peace between Arab countries and Israel was possible. Egypt has been playing what is perceived to be a moderate role in the Middle East, and usually follows American policy on regional issues (Gerges, 1995). Additionally, both countries had benefited from an increasing level of economic cooperation. However, according to the Central

Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 2005 20% of the Egyptian

population lived below the poverty level, and the unemployment

rate was 9%. There are also two million children in Egypt in the

workforce and they make about 7.6% of the work force in the

country. Therefore, despite the various economic sources that

Egypt has, its citizens do not make a decent living and have

been subjected to various human rights violation especially

during Mubarak era (Abdellatif, 2011).

3.2 Comparison of Iraq to Mexico

Because of its natural resources Iraq can be compared

with other wealthy and prosperous countries where the child

labor is an unseen phenomenon. Iraq is a rich country with a

GDP for the fiscal year 2011 is estimated of $120 billion and

$3,300 per capita, it has the second largest budget among the

Middle Eastern countries. It is equivalent to the budget of four of

Arab countries that don't suffer of the child labor issue as much

as Iraq is suffering.

However, due to sanctions and decades of wars, if a

reasonable comparison has to be done then Iraq should be

compared with some undeveloped countries where child labor is

common and essential to keep the economy running. Therefore,

it is interesting to compare Iraq to Mexico. Some might think

this might not be a reasonable comparison because the two

countries have different economic status. Iraq has more natural

resources and other economical factors than Mexico, therefore,

the rates of child labor and other development indicators would

vary. Iraq has more wealth resources and a geographical

strategic location. However the results are shocking. As it is

shown on Table 2 the literacy rate in Iraq is 78% while it is 93%

in Mexico. Given that both countries are considered undeveloped

and where child labor is a common issue, there is a big

difference on the secondary school enrollment ratio between Iraq

and Mexico. Secondary school enrollment ratio in Mexico is 87%

while in Iraq 56%. According to the United States Department of

Labor it is estimated that in Mexico 25% of children are under

the age of 15 years, and 12% in Iraq are working (United States

Department of Labor website, 2011). Yet the rate of secondary

school enrollment in Mexico is higher than in Iraq.

Table 2: Statistical comparison between Iraq and Mexico.

Indicators	Mexico	Iraq
Total adult literacy rate (%), 2005-2008*	93	78
Number per 100 population , 2008, Internet users	22	1
Primary school enrolment ratio 2005-2009*, gross, male	115	106
Primary school enrolment ratio 2005-2009*, gross, female	113	89
Primary school enrolment ratio 2005-2009*, net, male	98	93
Primary school enrolment ratio 2005-2009*, net, female	98	81
Primary school attendance ratio 2005-2009*, net, male	97	91
Primary school attendance ratio 2005-2009*, net, female	97	80
Survival rate to last primary grade (%) 2005-2009*, admin data	92	70
Survival rate to last primary grade (%) 2005-2009*, survey data	-	93
Secondary school enrolment ratio 2005-2009*, gross, male	87	56
Secondary school enrolment ratio 2005-2009*, gross, female	93	37
Secondary school enrolment ratio 2005-2009*, net, male	71	46
Secondary school enrolment ratio 2005-2009*, net, female	74	33
Secondary school attendance ratio 2005-2009*, net, male	-	46
Secondary school attendance ratio 2005-2009*, net, female		34

Sources:UNICEF.org; 2009, At a glance: Mexico

Therefore, in spite of Iraq holding various wealthy resources such as oil, tourism, and its strategic geographical location that connects Europe to the Middle East, Iraq is still considered as a poor undeveloped country. When it is compared

to other undeveloped countries Iraq seems as similar or even less developed. Because more than a third of the population lives under the poverty line and about more than a million children engage in work (UNICEF Website, 2011).

Chapter 4

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD LABOR

Figure 1:
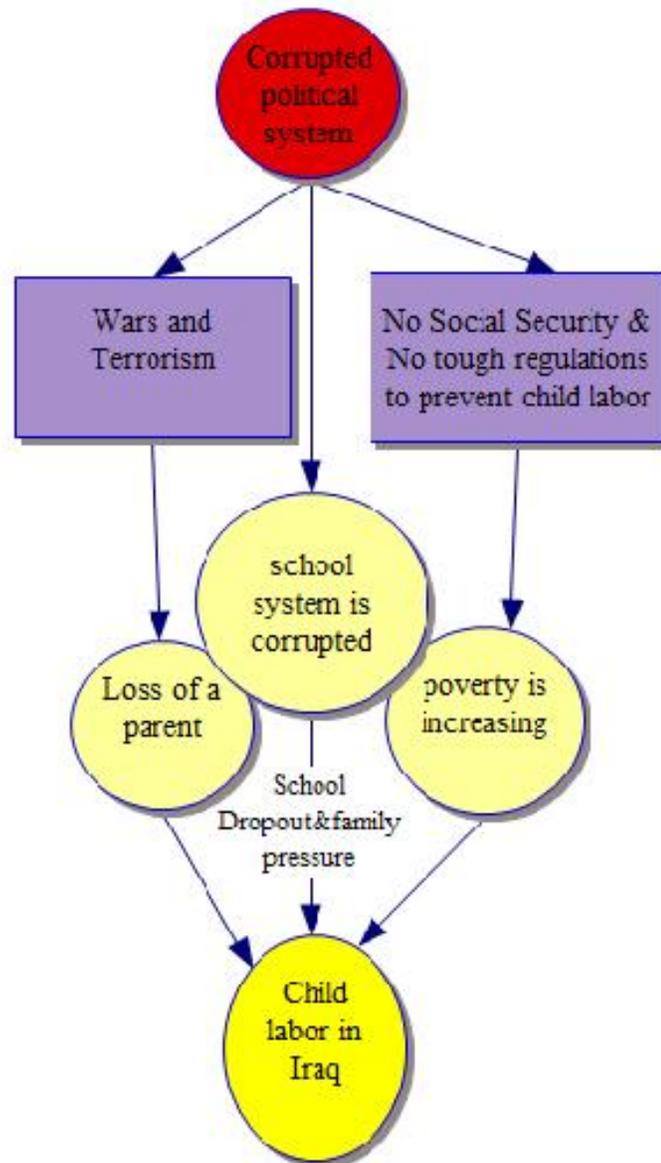
This diagram represents the causes of child labor in Iraq

4.1 Corrupted Political System

The decades of wars, sanctions, and the terrorism that Iraq suffered changed the status of the country from being a rich and prosperous to a poor and devastated country. Iraqi citizens are paying the price for the former Iraqi government's wars as they are in debt to many countries around the world. During the wars and through U.N. sanctions, Iraqi families started to look at ways to make money, even if those ways could physically and psychologically harm the families and their children. The Iraqi government lacks the bureaucratic system that should look for the well-being of its citizens. We see many countries engage in wars but for a good reason, for example, countries engage in wars to get back their people's dignity like the case in Palestine, or some countries engage in war to get their land back like the case of Lebanon war against the Israelis. However, the case in Iraq is different where the president made the citizens engage in war only because he wanted to start a war. Moreover the former and present Iraqi governments have not thought of a social security system that would help improve the livelihoods of families so they no longer need to rely on children's labor, or a system that financially secures the Iraqi people from poverty or

the need for financial aid from other countries. 16 children of the 28 who participated in the study are working to support themselves and their families. If the government had a good social security (welfare) system that provide a decent living for the family when they lose their breadwinner, children would not need to engage in work because they would know that their financial needs are met and their family is supported.

Decades of wars and sanctions have produced a large population of orphans and widows. It is estimated that there are five million people mostly women and children who live without a breadwinner and this causes children to look for means of livelihood in order to support themselves and their families in the absence of any social security system in the country. A country with an estimated budget for fiscal year 2011 is approximately $82 billion in light of rising world oil prices --which is the equivalent to the budgets of four Arab countries including Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt. However, it is estimated that 23% of Iraq's population now lives below the poverty level and the state does not provides any kind of assistance or social security for the citizens especially orphans and widows, and this results in the presence of the phenomenon of child labor (The World Fact Book, 2011). As another result of the corrupted political

system in Iraq most of the educated people do not get a job upon their graduation. Graduates can only find a job if they know someone who is already working and can manage to help them find work for the graduated student. However, belonging to a specific political party and their affiliations cannot help them get a job whether it matches their qualifications or not.

4.2 Child Work as a Social Norm

Arab and the Iraqi societies are controlled by social norms more than being controlled by religious laws or government legislation. Individuals tend to care about the social traditions, what other people say, and what people feel toward others without paying attention to what really works for the benefit of that individual. That being said, most Iraqi families send their children to work at a younger age because they see their friends or neighbors are sending their children to work, or the children themselves go to work when they see their peers work for money (Alwardy, 2001). Parents also send their children to work as a way to give them an opportunity to learn a new profession or trade that could help them in the future to make a living. Some people think working is an indication of someone being mature especially children when they like to feel grown up. When they start working may let the people around them know

they are not children any more. This act is done by children to assure adults that they (the children) are grown up, since most of people value the person based on how much money they make. Moreover, in Iraqi society people value young adults because they work and neglect children when they don't work. These attitudes encourage many children to go to work. Furthermore, as a social norm, the women in Iraq are less likely to work outside the home, especially before the year 2003 and the small rate of employment among women which estimated to be only 17% on the year 2008 has resulted the family being relied on child work's income (*Los Angeles Times*, February 15, 2009).

4.3 Problematic School System

The deterioration of the educational system because of the embargo has resulted in higher dropout rates. Educational development indicators show a downgrade from highly developed educational services, similar to developed nations, to one of the most backward countries in the world (Mazaheri, 2010). A research conducted by the ministry of education in Iraq in cooperation with UNICEF showed that the majority of Iraq's schools lack the basics to provide an appropriate level of education to their students. The survey covered more than 20

thousands schools and educational institutions around the country, and the result showed that two thirds of the primary schools are not equipped with water or health facilities (UNICEF website, 2011). Schools in Iraq lack every means for the success of the student; schools lack even the furniture and usually packed with twice the capacity of students than the school can take. As a result the teachers cannot pay attention to every student and that make the teachers incapable of educating the students and preparing them to be productive individuals in the society. The schools also do not provide the students with a good nutrition system. Therefore when the student enter the school's gate, he or she will be forced to stay in school without providing them with any kind of meal, and this will cause health problems to the students and will also result in students running away from school or even dropping out. In an unstable country like Iraq, it is clear that this system cannot be a system that produces a knowledgeable and well prepared generation.

Moreover, from my experience in the Iraqi school system, many teachers and top officials only cared about themselves and how to make a living for their families regardless of whether they were teaching or being just to their students. During the era of UN sanctions, teachers used to help the students pass

their exams by getting some rewards from their students in return (bribes). This act made the students equal regardless of how they performed, given that the hard working and non hard working students would pass their classes anyway, in fact the hardworking students may not pass their classes unless they pay the teachers. Students in this situation were judged on how much they would give to their teachers of valued materials goods rather than how they do on their exams in order to pass, or more importantly what they were learning.

In an undeveloped country like Iraq, students go to schools to get a degree that would help them qualify for a better job and make a better living in the future. However, the unemployment rate in Iraq is estimated at 15% for the year 2008. Therefore, when children see generation after generation of students who have completed their degrees and are unable to find a job that would reward them for the hard work they have done in school, they do not see the point in staying in school or to work hard to get good grades. Their parents will also be less likely to spend money on their children to go to school when they know there would not be any reward in the future.

Several schools were and still are ethically corrupted. When parents think that by letting their children go to school

they will interact with indecent peers who lack good morals, then those parents will be less likely to let their children go to school. Also, if those parents are uneducated and do not think about the future of their children, especially girls those females more likely will stay home rather than to go to a school that would corrupt instead of chasten their morals. For example, Ali Almussawi, an NGO worker in Bagdad said to the IRIN (Integrated Regional Information Networks): "Nowadays, you can find drugs being sold near school entrances in many districts of the capital and some children even smuggle drugs into school," Mussawi added. "We have informed the police about the situation but they say that are too busy with the daily violence to deal with such matters" (IRIN website, 2011).

As a way to limit child labor in Iraq the education system has to be improved in a way that encourages students to return to school. When the school system is bad and the parents know that there would be no benefits in the future for sending their children to school, it will be less likely they would send them (Edmonds and Pavsnik 2005).

Child Labor Consequences

Figure 2:
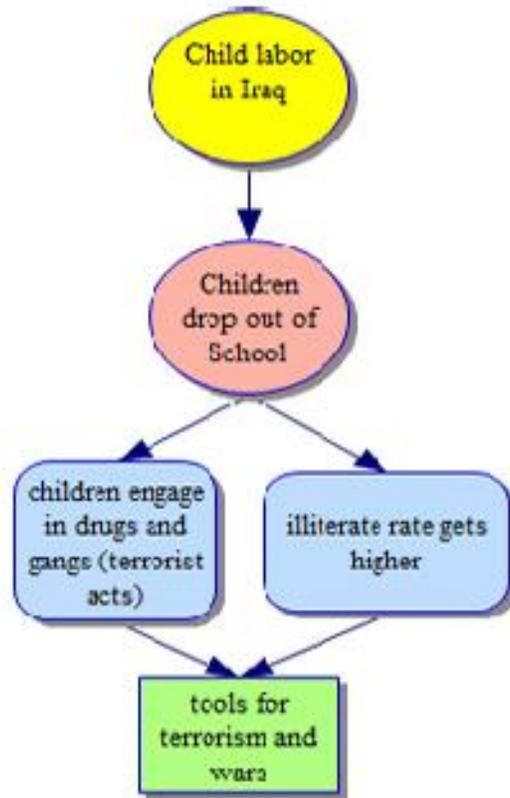
This diagram represents consequences
of child labor in Iraq

4.4 Drop out of Schools

Child labor is caused by several reasons and it also has negative consequences for the children, parents, and the society as a whole. The circumstances in Iraq have forced many children to leave school in order to work and or beg in the streets to help their families. Children in Iraq are required to attend school until the age of 11. This caused children between the ages of 12 to 15 years to be exploited in the worst forms of child labor as they are not required to be in school. The image of seeing children working or begging is becoming a familiar one and a natural thing for poor families. Today, there are about seventy thousand students who have dropped out from school in all governorates (cities) of Iraq. According to UNICEF, there are also about two million children of primary school age do not attend school in Iraq.

Dropping out from school is one of the main negative consequences of child labor. When a child engages in a specific work for pay, it is more likely that he/she focuses on economics rather than intellectual endeavors. The child might be enticed to collect money to support themselves and their families instead of thinking of how they can get better grades at school.

The second reason children might dropout from school is that once they start working they do not have enough time to do everything they need to do. The child then has to choose between working, studying, and playing. And for a young child who has been constrained by financial obligations is very likely he or she will place work as a priority, and if they have fulfilled their financial obligations school would be their last thing they might think about.

4.5 Children engage in Drugs and Gangs

Children can be innocent, but if they have been neglected they can also be corrupted by society. Because children are innocent and easy to be deceived by strangers it is difficult to leave children free in the labor force. Many children have been used in prostitution, gangs, and terrorist acts. Children who suffer from starvation will not think of ethics and of the legitimacy of the source of money they get. Their goal will be to get food on the table. Many articles published in 2007 in the IRIN website talked about children being a source for gangs and terrorism and there are several reasons as to why children are chosen to be employed in terrorist acts. Children are fast at their work and they accept lower pay rate. Children also do not look suspicious even if they are engaged in criminal acts because

people and policemen look at children as innocent creatures and the last group of population to threat the security of the people. According to the (IRIN) website, poverty drives children to work for armed groups. Abdul Rafiz a child who worked for an armed group was interviewed by the IRIN, said: "We work about eight hours a day and we are supervised by two men. They give us food and at the end of the day we get paid for our work. Sometimes we get U.S. $7 and sometimes we get $10, depending on how many bombs we make".

Another illegal act that a child might be engaged in is drug abuse. When the children work and get some money then they will do whatever they like because they think it is their money and it is their right to spend it as they want including drugs because it symbolizes maturity. Gangsters take advantage of children's vulnerability, and deal and communicate with the children or young adults in a way that makes them feel they are old enough to do whatever they like, especially if those gangsters want to exploit the children's need for money. Claire Hajaj UNICEF communication officer at UNICEF Iraq Support Center (ISCA) in Amman said during a report for the IRIN talking about children engaging in drugs, "Their environment makes them more vulnerable, with an increasing number ending up on

the streets after being displaced, orphaned or separated from their families. Many are also living with intense psychological stress as a result of the ongoing violence" (IRIN Website, 2007).

4.6 Health and Psychological Problems

Big responsibility, little pay, difficult job and more work than the child can handle, are factors that may cause health and psychological problems for the working child. There are signs of psychological problems affecting the children who are working in hazardous work more than those who are not working or work in the light work. Those children become more aggressive as the physical and psychological abuse they go through will result in poor psychological and social harmony with non-working children and with people in general. Moreover those working children will always be complaining as a result of their sense of social oppression inflicted upon them and the lack of sense of social justice, between them and other non working children.

Most children are working in an environment that is lacking any health or safety regulations. Two participants in the study were working in bakery stores and their ages were between 10 and 12 years. Those children were managing the store and they were getting close to the bread oven without any type of protection or guarantee of safety. The same thing with the

participants who work in selling gas cylinders, those children were carrying full and empty cylinders without being cautious of the amount of the weight or the hazardous material that they were carrying. Children are working in a society that is free from any law or regulation to prevent harm to the working children. Many of the working children who participated in this research study were working for long hours under the sun without any type of protection; in the winter they work under the severity of the cold weather.

Working children face health and psychological problems as a result of work. Throughout different life stages, children experience different aspirations and needs. If those needs and aspirations cannot be fulfilled in time then it will cause negative effects on the child's health and personality. For example, when a child wants to use his or her leisure time to play and meet with peers but he or she can't have this free time they very likely might feel something missing inside. The level of communication with older people is also going to cause a negative effect on working children.

The work place is an adult space with people who are much older than the children, whose thinking style, body language, and behaviors might not be suitable for children.

Moreover, those behaviors might not be monitored given that most of these interactions happen in the streets or shopping centers. As Iraqi children engage in different types of work they are in contact with different groups of people at different age levels due to their engagement in work. Working children, then, are in a situation in which they can start to have an adult view to their childhood and they became exposed to adults talking and behaviors. When children work in an open work field as shopping centers without any type of supervision the children can be absorbing any negative acts and behaviors that they can see/hear in the workplace. That is, children are in a place where they can hear and see everything that can be destroying the child's personality.

Iraqi society is not accepting of the work that the less privileged engages in, and there is discrimination against the individuals who work in fields such as pushing shopping carts and garbage collectors. Therefore children might end up doing any type of work that gets them some money to live of, but when they get older and learn about the complexity of the society then they might feel ashamed of themselves and regret of what they did. Most working children will not be able to marry the partners they like because families will not let their

daughters marry individuals who worked devalued work. These social traditions will continue to cause psychological problems to the working child as they become adults.

In some countries child labor is considered a way to raise children, however child labor in Iraq cannot be considered as a method that raises a child and teaches him or her how to be responsible; in fact the child labor is something that dehumanizes the child and makes him or her a money making tool. 15 of the participants in the study mentioned that they gave their income to their families at the end of the day or week and they manage the family expenses. Therefore a child engaging in work does not mean they are learning how to manage the family life financially.

Chapter 5

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

5. Analysis/Discussion

The study investigated several factors behind child labor in Iraq such as poverty (urge the child to work and support themselves and or someone else), problematic school system, peer pressure, family and society pressure. I observed all these issues during my fieldwork. As we can see from Table 2, there were 10 children who were not attending school at the time of the study, 4 of them never attended school, and 6 dropped out of school between 2nd to 4th grade. Five of the 10 children (who dropped out or never attended school) at the time of the study wished to go back to school. Four of those 5 children had not attended school. Therefore the children who wished to go to school are the ones who never tried the school system, also their urge for learning how to read and write is the reason behind their hope to go school. The other five children who participated in the study dropped out of school during their 2nd and 4th grade and did not wish to go back to school. Therefore, we cannot say that children dropped out of school because they don't believe they will get a job and good pay in the future (as discussed in the previous section), because those participants

were in their first years in school when they dropped out (2nd-

4th grade. However the results of the study show there is a link

between child labor and school dropouts. Yet school drop can

partly be blamed on the school system. Most of the participants

dropped out of school during the first years of their education.

According to the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of

International Labor Affairs, 12% of the children in Iraq between

the age of 5 and 14 years are working, 69.6% are attending

school and 9.9% of the children age of 7-14 years are working

and attending school at the same time (see table 3). Therefore,

almost all the working children are attending school but half of

the children in Iraq attend school.

Table 3: Statistics on working children and school
attendance, from the year 2005-2010.

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	12.40%
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	69.60%
Combining work and School	7-14 yrs.	9.90%

Source: United States Department of Labor's Bureau of
International Labor Affairs.

We also can conclude that in addition to the educational

system the family's attitude toward school led the children to

engage in work. Traditional factors such as rigid cultural and

social roles in certain countries further limit educational

attainment and increase child labor (Siddqi, n.d.). Because of the economic situation in Iraq and poverty many families do not look for alternative ways for their children to attend school. Due to their financial circumstances they cannot afford to send their children to private schools. In fact those families may see a financial opportunity when their child drops out of school because they can send their children to work instead of going to school. Therefore the hard economic situation in Iraq-- which it is caused by the corrupted political system-- has pushed Iraqi families to accept and welcome the idea of sending their children to work rather than school.

Another issue we can conclude from this research study is that poverty is the main reason why Iraqi children engage in paid work. 16 children of the 28 children who participated in the study were working to support their families. If there were a good social security system in the country that help people secure their basic needs we might not see as many children working as we see now. If the family had stronger financially support, they would be able or willing to encourage their children to stay in school even in a bad educational system. When the family is not convinced in the school system and cannot find

some governmental program that could help them financially,

the family might encourage their child to work and depend on

their child's work income.

Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

5.1 Recommendations

The number of participants in this study might be considered small, but to date, no studies have been done to examine the causes and consequences of child labor in Iraq. As a result, this study can be considered as significant and used as a start to further investigate the issue of child labor in Iraq. Following are a series of recommendations that I'm suggesting in order to address the problem of child labor in Iraq.

· Governmental agencies have to produce reliable and accurate statistical information about the number of children who work and are under the legal age and find the areas that has most working children.

· Government and Social agencies also need to conduct a comprehensive study of the reasons behind why children leave school and engage in working, and investigate the motivations for that.

· The State has to establish a legal framework through labor laws aimed at the regulation of child labor and the prohibition forced child labor.

· The need to educate the public by establishing a

comprehensive media campaign explaining the dangers of child

labor and exploitation of children, and the diseases and injuries

which children are exposed to at the work field.

·   Establish a time line to meet the goals to eradicate the worst

forms of child labor.

·   Provide the basic needs for children and their families and

consider that the duty of the government, also the need for

allocation of appropriate budget for social security and health

care system and stimulate/encourage social benefits for families

of working mothers.

·   Activation of social protection system of the children's families

and securing adequate resources to support them and prevent

children from dropping out of school to work, make plans to

promote private developmental projects to raise families income.

·   The government needs to establish a program that provides

cash stipends to low income families to keep their children in

school (Mayblin, 2010).

5.2 Limitations

Iraq is a new democracy and everyone in this country

needs to work toward the development of a democratic

infrastructure. It will be very difficult to prohibited child labor in

a country where thousands of their citizens considered it as a social norm. Therefore, I am not asking for prohibiting child labor, rather I am asking for management of this issue by not letting work ruin the education, health and psychological well-being of the child. I am urging Iraqi officials to put some limitations and enforce those limitations such as the amount of hours the child can work during the week and what type of work is the child allowed to do.

This research study was limited by several factors such as the time constrain I had for doing the study, and the place condition where I did the study was a little bit dangerous and lacking the basic services. Therefore I faced some difficulties to include more than 28 participants. For resources, I mostly relied on websites and newspaper articles because to date there are no study being done on child labor in Iraq. Despite this study is covering small number of working children, it is considered as a good contribution to the society in discussing and finding solution to this issue. However, I recommend a national study for this issue where the researchers include more working children, and address the issue from other perspectives.

5.3 Regulations

Article 29 of the Iraqi constitution deal with the child's right, it "guarantees the protection of motherhood, childhood and old age and shall care for children and youth and provides them with the appropriate conditions to further their talents and abilities." Iraqi government officials and NGOs need to urge the public to take this part of the constitution into consideration when dealing with children. The government also needs to issue laws and policies that punish anyone who might break the law of child protection in the Iraqi constitution. Part three of the Article 29 in the Iraqi constitution also prohibits economic exploitation of children "Economic exploitation of children shall be completely prohibited. The State shall take the necessary measures to protect them." Therefore, government needs to issue a policy to punish and persecute any person who tries to make use of children work and the policies in this matter need to be firmer and law should be above all regardless of the person economic or social status.

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APPENDIX A

RESEARCH STUDY QUESTIONS

- How old are you?

- How old were you since you first started working?

- How many hours do you work during the week? And how much you get paid?

- Do you support yourself and/or anyone else?

- How many siblings do you support?

- Do you go to school? If not, if you get the opportunity to attend school then will you attend school?

- How long have you attended school? In what grade did you stop going to school?

- Do you face any risks at work? If yes, do you think that risk worth the money you earn?

- Do you think that by working you have accomplished something for your future?

- Does working have affected your view of the future? If yes, how?

- Do you want to add anything else?

APPENDIX B

ENDNOTES

1- Sunni and Shia Islam are the two major denominations of Islam. There approximately 80–90% of the world's Muslims are Sunni and 10–20% are Shia, with most Shias belonging to the Twelver tradition and the rest divided between several other groups. Sunnis are a majority in most Muslim communities; in South East Asia, China, South Asia, Africa, and most of the Arab World. Shīʿīs make up the majority of the population in Iran, Iraq, Azerbaijan and Bahrain, and Lebanon. The historic background of the Sunni–Shia split lies in the schism that occurred when the Islamic prophet Muhammad died in the year 632, leading to a dispute over succession to Muhammad as a caliph of the Islamic community. Over the years Sunni–Shia relations have been marked by both cooperation and conflict, often with deadly violence. A period of relative harmony during most of the 20th century has been replaced by conflict, particularly following the start of the Iraq War.

2- Algiers Accord: Was on January 19, 1981. During the convocation of the OPEC Summit Conference in the Algerian capital and upon the initiative of President Houari Boumedienne, the Shah of Iran and Saddam Hussein (Vice-Chairman of the Revolution Command Council) met twice and conducted lengthy talks on the relations between Iraq and Iran. These talks, attended by President Houari Boumedienne, were characterized by complete frankness and a sincere will from both parties to reach a final and permanent solution of all problems existing between the two countries in accordance with the principles of territorial integrity, border inviolability and non-interference in internal affairs (*Washington Post*, May 9, 2011).

3- The Iranian Revolution (also known as the Islamic Revolution or 1979 Revolution) refers to events involving the overthrow of Iran's monarchy (Pahlavi dynasty) under Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and its replacement with an Islamic republic under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the leader of the revolution.

4- On April 1st 1980 a thousand college students and officials at the University of Almustansiriya, in Baghdad

gathered, and there also were number of Arab and foreigners who came to participate in the World Economic Forum, which was organized by the National Union of Students of Iraq in cooperation with Association of Asian students. In that event, Deputy Prime Minister and a member of the Revolutionary Command Council Tariq Aziz was there when he survived from an assassination attempt. The security forces arrested the suspect who threw the bomb and who could throw the second bomb, which led to injury of other persons, later the suspect name appeared as if he was originally from Iran. His name was Ghulam Mir Samir. The next day Saddam visited Almustansiriya University where the incident took place and vowed revenge. Saddam fulfilled this promise and executed Samir and his whole family and began a campaign of deportation for thousands of Iraqis to Iran because they were Iraqis of Iranian origin after impounding their movable and immovable properties. In this incident Saddam declared that those "Iraqis of Iranian origin were uprooted from the Iraqi soil, so that they won't dishonor the Iraqi soil, the Iraqi air, and won't dishonor the Iraqi blood when their blood mixes with the Iraqi blood through marriage.

Thus, the revolution uprooted them from the roots to end them… So that the pure Iraqi nationalist, the honorable, remain with his forehead high forever…". In the same month, April 1980, a death sentence was implemented against Grand Ayatollah Imam Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadr and his sister Amina Bint Alhuda this death sentence was also appeared as a reaction to the Almustansiriya incident. This incident also was the beginning of the Iraqi/Iranian conflict as well as the begging of the Iraqis sufferings (The Case of Iraqis of Iranian Origins, 2009).

5- Camp David Accords: Were signed by Egyptian President Anwar El Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin on September 17, 1978, following thirteen days of secret negotiations at Camp David. The Accords were the result of 18 months of intense diplomatic efforts by Egypt, Israel, and the United States that began after Jimmy Carter became President. Efforts initially focused on a comprehensive resolution of disputes between Israel and the Arab countries, gradually evolved

into a search for a bilateral agreement between Israel and Egypt.

6- Egypt- Israel Peace Treaty: Was signed in Washington, D.C. on the 26th of March 1979, following the 1978 Camp David Accords. The peace treaty was signed sixteen months after Egyptian President Anwar Al Sadat's visit to Israel in 1977 after intense negotiation. The main features of the treaty were the mutual recognition of each country by the other, the cessation of the state of war that had existed since the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, and the complete withdrawal by Israel of its armed forces and civilians from the Sinai Peninsula which Israel had captured during the Six-Day War in 1967.

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS IRB APPROVAL

Office of Research Integrity and Assurance

To: C Elenes
                         FAB

From: Mark Roosa, Chair
                    Soc Beh IRB

Date: 04/19/2011

Committee Action: **Expedited Approval**

Approval Date: 04/19/2011

Review Type: Expedited F7

IRB Protocol #:   1103006203

Study Title: Child Labor in Iraq

Expiration Date: 04/18/2012

The above-referenced protocol was approved following expedited review by the Institutional Review Board.

It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to obtain review and continued approval before the expiration date. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without approval by the Institutional Review Board.

Adverse Reactions: If any untoward incidents or severe reactions should develop as a result of this study, you are required to notify the Soc Beh IRB immediately. If necessary a member of the IRB will be assigned to look into the matter. If the problem is serious, approval may be withdrawn pending IRB review.

Amendments: If you wish to change any aspect of this study, such as the procedures, the consent forms, or the investigators, please communicate your requested changes to the Soc Beh IRB. The new procedure is not to be initiated until the IRB approval has been given.

Please retain a copy of this letter with your approved protocol.