

Civil Society Organization in Iraq and Its Impact on Democratic Transformations

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Abstract

Civil society organizations are a civilized necessity that indicates the progress, renaissance and progress of peoples, and states take care of their establishment and support through the enactment of laws, regulations and legislation that help them build their administrative structure. The birth of Iraqi civil society organizations was not a natural and easy one, despite the history of the emergence of these organizations, which dates back to the beginning of the last century. The period following the events of 2003 witnessed the establishment of hundreds of civil society organizations throughout Iraq, with some of them ineffective. It is no secret to anyone the great role played by the international organizations that worked in Iraq after the change in providing a helping hand and assistance to a large number of organizations represented by training and preparing the cadres of organizations in courses inside and outside the country and financing the programs and activities that contributed significantly to building these organizations. Civil society organizations have been able, within a short period of time, to play important and essential roles, including providing humanitarian aid to victims of war and acts of violence, providing legal support to marginalized and vulnerable groups, spreading and consolidating the principles of peace and peaceful coexistence, a culture of human rights, gender equality, women's empowerment, combating corruption, and monitoring parliamentary elections and portfolio councils. And many other topics. However, despite these important roles, many Iraqi civil society organizations faced many problems, challenges and difficulties as a result of the political and security situation that the country is going through, the decline of honest sources of funding that form the lifeblood of these organizations, and financial corruption that erodes the credibility of some of them.

Keywords: (social society, democratic transformation, non-governmental organization, social human rights, nongovernmental, political role)

Introduction

Hyman says in his book (Political Upbringing): The process of an individual learning social norms through the various institutions of society is an absolute necessity dictated by the basics of conscious and purposeful political action, because political upbringing is part of social upbringing through which the individual acquires the prevailing attitudes and values in society. Also, political upbringing and democratic awareness are a means to correct the deviant political culture in society, and to create a new and civilized civil culture to cross society from a state of backwardness and ignorance to progress, freedom and learning.

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Democratic and dictatorial political systems try to influence the political and democratic upbringing of the individual by targeting his ideas by instilling information, values and practices through which he can form his attitudes and intellectual trends that affect his political behavior. This behavior plays a role in the individual's political effectiveness in society, so the ruling political regimes resort to creating values and ideologies that are acceptable and legitimate in the eyes of their people.

Since political and democratic upbringing is a rehabilitative, educational, educative and educational process that the individual undergoes in order to activate his role in society, the civil society institutions should bear the responsibility for the political and democratic upbringing of the individual, as they are independent institutions. Thus, it has the ability to positively interact in dealing with the concept of political upbringing as an educational material away from preconceived purposes, through the role it plays within the framework of society and its relationship with the state.

It is called more than others in the process of political upbringing and democracy in particular, by rehabilitating and educating the individual as an influential political being in society within a certain political given, and this comes as a result of the development and political transformation of society and the nature of its prevailing political system and its intellectual standards and its democratic flexibility and openness locally, regionally and globally (Ibrahim,1995).

Therefore, this task is considered essential in the work of civil society organizations because it creates a human rights awareness of human rights and society, and despite the huge numbers of civil society organizations that were established after the change in 2003, the indicators of their impact on society and the state remained vague and weak, as well as their absence from The field of actual awareness field work. Today, there are many questions that have arisen about the work done by these organizations that contributed, even in part, to providing moral or material benefits to society (AbuSaif,2005).

The building of civil society organizations in Iraq has developed very slowly with the long history of its inception, so there were parties and currents gatherings and interfaces for all segments of society workers, farmers, students and other professions, but their problem lies in the authoritarianism and ideological commitment that hindered them from freedom of movement, with that they had a role In revolutions, uprisings and demonstrations stage.

Therefore, in order to succeed, more educational and media role is required to take an active role in adopting the interests and rights of the people, regardless of the acceptance of governments or parties supporting them and the transparency of their programs and political orientations.

But in order to understand its role, it is necessary to define what the term civil society is, "The concept of civil society, as is the case with democracy, is not a scientific term that can therefore be defined systematically. And its comprehensive and non-specific functions, and as a result, it is subject to different interpretations according to the researcher's point of view and its intellectual, categorical and class connection (Ahmed,2005).

Some people tend to define it as "a society in which governance is exercised on the basis of a partisan political majority, and in which the citizen's political, social, economic, and cultural rights are respected to a minimum (El-Baz,1997).

The term “civil society” refers to a set of political, economic, social, cultural and legal structures within which a complex network of relationships and practices are organized between the social forces and formations in society and this occurs in a dynamic and continuous manner through a group of Voluntary institutions that are established and operate independently of the state (Al-Jeddah,2002).

There are those who define civil society as “a set of political, economic, social and cultural structures, within which a network of relations and practices are organized between the various forces, formations and social structures in society. power. (Al-Hassoun,2011).

Concepts expand and functions differ according to political goals and ideological formations...the thinker Karl Marx defines it Infrastructure that determines the parameters of the superstructure, in other words that civil society is an arena for class struggle (Khazali,2006)

The concept of civil society has a long history. He matured in the West at the hands of the philosopher Aristotle Thales, who called for the formation of a political society (Parliament) in which freedom of expression of opinion prevails and the legislation of laws to protect justice and equality, but participation in this political society is limited to a group of elites in society without giving the right to women and workers .

As an extension of the same idea that calls for the necessity of political society, John Locke contributed in the seventeenth century to the establishment of a movement within the political community with executive authority and powers to address differences, organize the state of chaos and find solutions to the tendencies that may arise. The concepts of civil society remained floating until Hegel came in the nineteenth century, where civil society was included between state institutions (with authority) and the commercial-economic society (based on profit) in an effort to raise society's ability to organize and balance. In the same footsteps as Hegel, the socialist thinker Gramsci (1891-1937 Antonio Gramsci) sought to develop this concept by involving the organic intellectual in the process of opinion formation and raising the cultural level. In this was the call for the necessity of forming social, professional, union and pluralist organizations for an explicit social goal that puts the superstructure in a state that is not incompatible with the infrastructure and finds a way for the continuous vital interaction between them. And the Italian thinker Robert Putnam wrote, The more civil society institutions exist and perform their role, the stronger and more effective democracy will be (Al-Rubaie,2005) .

Most of those interested, specialists, workers and volunteers in the activities, events, works and culture of civil society agree that its most important pillars and basic components include:

- 1 Trade unions and professional organizations
- 2 Religious Institutions
- 3 Social and family organizations and activities
- 4 Popular and mass organizations
- 5 Social and sports clubs and youth centers
- 6 Labor and professional unions
- 7 Indigenous peoples' organizations.

Civil society is a vital subject and keeps pace with the political, economic, social and cultural developments that take place in society, which requires coordination and unification of efforts(.Al-Zawbai,2008) to carry out its main activities such as:

1. Providing humanitarian aid and relief projects.
2. Advocating and raising awareness of human rights issues.
3. Rehabilitation of residential areas and resettlement of human groups there Charity.
4. Educational, health and cultural activities.
5. .Environmental protection operations
6. .Economic reconstruction and development
7. .Promotion of democratic practices
8. The development of civil society.
9. .Promotion of gender equality

Carrying out any other non-profit activity that serves the public interest (Al-Asaad, 2021)

For the purpose of shedding light on this vital topic, we will address it through two sections

The history of civil society organizations in Iraq

Iraq is a country of civilization, science and progress whose existence spanned thousands of years. It organized its various activities in an orderly manner by laying down foundations and rules governing its work, including civil society organizations that had a prominent role in the political, social, cultural and economic situation at all stages, and so that we could prove a clear understanding of historical development. It has to be dealt with on the basis of the historical stages and the political nature of each stage objectively and impartially (Al-Saadi, 2021)

The first branch: from 1921-1958

The components of modern civil society have developed in Iraq since the reforms of Midhat Pasha (1872), and continued during the royal era (1921-1958), at an accelerated pace. In fact, it was a process of modernization of an agricultural society that moved from the forms of organization to its traditional kinship, such as tribes and clans, the homes of nobles and notables, and crafts, to a society that adopted the standards of wealth and modern education, without losing its traditional past at all.

It is a transitional society, in which the modern classes juxtapose with the traditional classes, and between the two are intermediate classes that bear some of this and that. A class of merchants, industrialists, bankers and contractors grew up in the private sector, on the basis of a market economy, and became a societal force to be reckoned with. Also, before her, a powerful class of great landowners arose (Al-Shamry, 2020) .

Modernization processes also led to the emergence of middle classes that depend mainly on modern education, just as they depend on property and capital on the one hand.

A working class has crystallized in modern industries, and a destitute peasant class in the countryside. With the emergence of social wealth as a relatively independent field, unions, associations and social movements have also grown, expressing and defending these interests, putting pressure on the political field. In parallel, press and a non-governmental information field have relatively flourished. (Al-Safa, 2021)

The dominance of feudalism and its ownership of all means of production played a role in the issue of civil rights, which they strongly owned. Therefore, the injustice and tyranny,

and historical references recorded their arbitrariness and the grievance suffered by the simple human being in regions of southern, central and northern Iraq.(Al-Islah,2001)

Section Three: After 2003

With the large number and diversity of civil society organizations and the diversity of their activities, they did not play their role effectively in removing the remnants of the long years of suffering experienced by the Iraqi person during the previous stages, as the goal of many of these gatherings was material profit at the expense of qualitative activity, and with great interest from the Before the authorities, but we did not notice their humanitarian action on the ground. (Al-Adly,2003)

Among the most prominent achievements in this field is (the creation of a ministry in the name of the Ministry of State for Civil Society Affairs, within the first government formation after the transfer of sovereignty from the Coalition Provisional Authority to the Iraqis on the thirtieth of June 2004 .(Al-Adly,2021)

Where the ministry had a prominent and important role He followed the development of its activity in a remarkable manner during the period of Mr. Alaa Al-Safi's tenure as its former minister, where many important and basic achievements were made to establish the basics of its work.(Al-Ani,2005)

The recent transformations in Iraqi society have concentrated their effects on the image of the Iraqi scene in general, and have resulted in new situations that include all aspects of public life. , and it is still in the beginning stage, it is in one way or another a natural nucleus for the successes of a voluntary civil society coming in Iraq (and it will undoubtedly have an active role in the political and democratic life in Iraq)”(Al-Alawi,1992) and despite the presence of more than one governmental institution concerned with the affairs of civil society institutions And NGOs in Iraq The Ministry of State for Civil Society Affairs was considered the main governmental institution concerned with spreading the culture of civil society in Iraq, and it works to organize and coordinate the activities of civil society institutions, organizations, associations and bodies, directly or through the NGO Help Office in order to draw up programs and plans To optimize the employment of civil society institutions, and supplement their activities so that they contribute to the promotion of comprehensive development programs in the country .

The Ministry of State for Civil Society Affairs plays a role in expediting the procedures of the Committee of Resolution No. (3) issued by the Governing Council 2004, a decision that regulates the work of federations, unions and professional associations, as the balances of NGOs included in the decision (wrong) were released due to the similarity of names, in addition to a partial release.

For the balances of some federations and unions covered by the text of the resolution until the completion of the legal procedures stipulated in Resolution No.3.

The federal and local government institutions support the programs of civil society institutions and non-governmental organizations working to support the law enforcement and national reconciliation plan, combat administrative corruption, and provide technical support to them through the establishment of workshops and training courses, as well as their participation in all seminars and conferences held by provincial councils. in civil society, holding seminars and workshops to search for alternative ways to the civil society program to provide grants to organizations, and initiating a project to train organizations to write projects

and submit projects to obtain international grant support, support and attributing effective organizations, guidance and guidance, and finding opportunities to provide grants to them by moving on donors Introducing them to them with the aim of building communication capabilities between these institutions, and opening channels of communication for civil society institutions with broad and useful activity in the official state institutions whenever necessary (Al-Fatlawi,2009) After the dissolution of the ministry, the Department of NGOs was formed in the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers... which addressed the work of civil society organizations, and the Department of NGOs in the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers .

It is one of the departments affiliated to the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers and concerned with the affairs of the registration of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), it was established in the Ministry of Planning, the NGO Registration Center in 2003, then separated to the NGO Assistance Office by order (16) in 2005, after which its address changed to the Organizations Department Non-governmental organizations by order (122) in 2008 in the secretariat of the Council of Ministers (Al-Fawaz,2003) .

Its tasks

It undertakes the task of supervising and following-up on the work of non-governmental organizations in its administrative and technical fields, and issuing technical decisions for the organizations according to Law No. 12 of 2010

These tasks also include preparing plans and programs to develop the work of the department and its owners to provide the best services to the government and society alike. Therefore, it is considered the authority authorized to supervise to register non-governmental organizations (local and branches of foreign organizations) and take measures to coordinate their activities and carry out financial verification of their records to give them legitimacy to practice their activities inside Iraq.

On the other hand, it follows up on the activities of non-governmental organizations in order to verify their compliance with the provisions of Law No.12 of 2010, and conducts activities and prepares periodic reports for them by attending seminars and meetings held by these organizations and taking legal measures against non-governmental organizations when they violate any item One of the provisions of the law related to suspension and cancellation

The responsibilities of this department include the following

- 1 Supervising the establishment of non-governmental organizations and registering them within the department's database and giving them a special registration number, which is the identification number for these organizations, which allows them to practice their activities inside Iraq .
- 2 Ensure that the submitted applications fulfill the formal, legal and financial aspects required for the registration of these organizations and the laws to be issued later that regulate the work of non-governmental organizations .
- 3 Providing local and foreign organizations with official letters that give them the legitimacy to carry out their tasks in Iraq .
- 4 Follow up the activities of the organizations by supervising the preparation of the studies and research submitted .
- 5 Coordination with the security authorities inside Iraq in order to follow up the movements and activities of these organizations and to ensure that they are moving in the right direction .

- 6 Informing the various authorities of the legality of the organizations' registration, by referring to the database prepared by the department, which contains all the organization's data or any other information related to it .
- 7 Auditing the financial accounts of the organizations directly and verifying the sources of funding and their legitimacy as well as the amounts of funding and comparing those amounts with the activities provided by those organizations and verifying their legality and objectivity and making sure that all accounts are reviewed by the offices of certified public accountants before submitting them to the department in the final form .
- 8 Review the periodic reports submitted by the coordination centers in the governorates on the activities of organizations that fall within the geographical areas of those centers .
- 9 Updating the database of non-governmental organizations by entering all the variables that occur .
- 10 Take the necessary measures against organizations that violate the conditions of registration or their refusal to provide financial accounts or any documents or reports requested by the department during the process of auditing the activities of these organizations (Al-Shamry,2020),(Iraq Basic Law,1925) .

Activities and events of civil society organizations

Civil society institutions and non-governmental organizations contribute to many public, social, educational, cultural, media and legal activities.. In the field of supporting the political process and the peaceful transition of power, civil society institutions work to educate citizens on political rights such as voting, election and nomination for political positions, and introducing concepts Constitutional, electoral and public rights, clarifying the citizen's relationship with the state and how to express his rights and duties, explaining the role and tasks of the three authorities in the state, and adopting a culture of non-violence and the centralization of opinion .

Civil society institutions and non-governmental organizations in Iraq continue to pressure government institutions, especially the parliament and the Independent Electoral Commission, towards the need to change the electoral system with the "closed list" to the open list, and they have achieved good results in pursuit of civil rights and just and equal citizenship far from ethnic affiliations and religious, with the actual participation of women.

In the media field, civil society institutions and non-governmental organizations continue their legitimate demands through the available media to allocate media spaces to introduce civil society institutions, and the need to establish a radio and newspaper to educate the people about the role of civil society institutions and their contribution to building these institutions, and legislating a law that guarantees the protection of journalists, and directing the media On an understanding scientific education, equality and the participation of women in decision-making, and a call to direct the media to how to rebuild the spirit of citizenship .

In the legal and judicial field, civil society organizations seek to monitor the proper application of laws, legislation and various procedures in judicial departments and their joints, and direct the media towards explaining the advantages and disadvantages of Iraqi legislation with the development or amendment of alternative legislation, and the preparation of legal programs broadcast through the media that work to educate the citizen legally .

On the social and economic level, most NGOs take care of the displaced families, help them find shelter, and provide them with food and gas for cooking.

She also gives her children psychological support and prenatal care, some civil society organizations demonstrate against terrorism and demand job opportunities for the unemployed and the improvement of ration card materials

Women's associations participate in many civil and social projects and work to establish homes for orphans and the elderly and residential complexes, and to provide technical assistance and equipment for women's training centers, schools and universities.

This is not to mention the training of specialists on basic issues in Iraq and the establishment of workshops for a number of activists in the social and media fields in raising awareness about issues of democracy and civil in Iraq, and violence against women, in addition to techniques of influence and improving teamwork, through intensive training that helps the trainees to Understanding the political and social obstacles to achieving equality in the Arab world (Al-Ketbi,2004).

We believe that the return of the Ministry of State for Civil Society Affairs at the present time is an urgent necessity to exercise its oversight and governmental role and to diagnose the fake organizations that have increased their spread in Iraq, and the need to support the active civil organizations financially and morally, through the volume of their activities and giving in society.

Democratic transitions and civil society organizations

Recent years, particularly since the beginning of the 1990s, have witnessed the rise of "democratic fever". It extended to the beginnings of the twenty-first century, which witnessed huge political transformations in all parts of the world, especially in the Arab region, which was called idiomatically the Arab Spring revolutions, which began in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya and is still unresolved in Syria. Emphasizing that the focus on the role of civil society institutions has drawn attention to an important aspect of the problem of democracy and that democracy is not limited to some political practices such as party pluralism, and the organization of governance according to constitutional principles that guarantee the separation of powers from each other and the selection of rulers through non-fake elections... etc. The correct democratic practice in politics presupposes the democratization of society. Without this formula, democracy does not take root on the ground of society, so it remains formal and superficial without gaining an irreversible legitimacy (Al-kuwari, 2000).

But what is democracy? Therefore, we must first define the concept of democracy. First of all, it must be said that democracy as a concept is inherently problematic. It's a multi-semantic concept. But democracy, in its simple definition, means the power of the people. The essence of democracy, then, is the rule of the people by the people for the benefit of the people. This essence has remained true since the ancient Greek era until the present day, despite the emergence of a dispute in the ancient Greek city over the concept of the people. And because democracy is a political reality, it means a set of institutions and mechanisms to organize governance, ensuring that this rule is by and for the people (Al-Hermasi,1998).

We can, therefore, develop this thesis by saying that democracy is a way of life and a style of governance that is based on the establishment of authority on the will of the people, the people's exercise of their freedom, their right to choose the authority that governs them, in a way they accept, and the guarantee of their basic political and social rights in equality,

freedom of expression and organization. Work and participate in the formulation of political and social life.(Al-Hilali,1956)

The vital role of civil society in promoting democratic development and providing the necessary conditions for deepening democratic practice and confirming its basic values stems from the nature of civil society and the roles and functions of its institutions in society, thus becoming an infrastructure for democracy.

When analyzing the structural dimension of the role of civil society institutions in the context of the democratic process, three levels can be indicated:

The first: It is an educational and cultural role through completing the circles and opportunities for political upbringing with a democratic content for citizens. And practical training on democratic foundations in the internal life of civil society institutions.

The second: It is a tactical role that is achieved by expanding the horizons of political participation and providing society with promising political cadres and leaders.

The third is the role of oversight, criticism and pressure on the government if it exceeds the limits of its constitutional legitimacy.

On the first level, it is necessary to accept the hypothesis that "democratic construction does not come except through sound political upbringing that adopts the values of democracy as its main foundation (Al-Najjar,2008)

There is a close link between civil society and democratic transformation. Democracy, as is well known, is a set of governance rules and institutions that regulate the peaceful management of conflict in society between competing groups or conflicting interests. This is the same normative basis for civil society, where we note that civil society institutions are among the most important channels Popular post. Although it does not engage in direct political activity and does not seek to gain political power, its members are the most willing sectors of society to engage in democratic political activities. In addition, the peaceful management of conflict and competition is the essence of the concept of civil society.

Iraq is currently going through two interrelated processes, by which we mean: building the foundations of civil society and the transition towards democracy despite the risks and challenges facing these two processes. The link between the two processes is strong, and they are closer to being one process in essence. At a time when modern social and economic formations grow and crystallize, they create with them their civil society organizations that seek to expand the foundations of participation in governance.

Thus, the important role of civil society in promoting democratic development and providing the necessary conditions for deepening democratic practice and emphasizing its basic values stems from the nature of civil society and the role and functions of its organizations in society. In turn, they serve as schools for democratic upbringing and practical training in democratic practice. (Amin,2004)

The wide use of the term civil society puts us in front of the problematic relationship between it and democracy. Does civil society make democracy on the basis that the non-governmental organizations that make up it will be a mediator between the citizen and the

state? Or is democracy the condition and the political basis for the existence of civil society, its development and progress towards real democratic changes.

The role of civil society organizations is to activate and organize citizens' participation in self-determination and confronting the policies that affect their lives, in addition to their role in spreading democratic culture in its correct form, creating self-initiative and affirming the will of citizens in historical action, as well as an active contribution to achieving social, political, economic, and cultural transformations. It plays an important role in the process of democratic transformations, whether by preparing and preparing for this transformation, providing the social and cultural environment for it, or contributing to the events of this transformation. As for democracy, which is the framework in which the individual exercises his rights to citizenship, including his right to establish or participate in civil society institutions, in addition to that democratic concepts and principles require strengthening the participation of modern organizations in decision-making, including civil society organizations to He expressed their national, religious and political diversity, in addition to their goals and interests, as they are social, not political, systems.

Including civil society organizations to express their national, religious and political diversity, in addition to their goals and interests, as they are social and not political systems.

Here, the link between civil society and democratic transformation appears clear. Democracy is a set of rules and foundations for peacefully managing relations between different or competing groups or conflicting interests. Thus, the basis for civil society standards is the basis for democratic standards, and vice versa as well.

Civil society institutions cannot grow, develop, and perform their role except under a democratic system. On the other hand, a democratic system cannot be established without the presence and participation of civil society institutions, as they are channels of political participation in which the democratic process is integrated.(Antonios,1983)

We believe that there is a negligible role for civil society organizations in promoting democratic transformations by working with the principle of the hypothesis, which is the reality that is supposed to contribute strongly to the process of changing it for the better. modernity and a thriving civil society.

Conclusion

Civil society organizations, with their organized core work, constitute an essential link in the process of democratic transformations in any country, especially in countries that are experiencing a state of fundamental change in constitutions and regulations. Positive and influential results, but provided that the elements of effective power, the right approach, and understanding and conscious leaders are far from all extremist political and ideological influences, that civil society organizations in Iraq, despite their tangible role, are still at the beginning of the road, but they need the right beginnings to form a basis for starting towards effective work, especially in Democratic transformations, that the most important pillars of the work of civil society organizations is the availability of financial and legal cover for their work in a clear and specific manner by the state, international organizations and its general body, which draws a road map for its administrative leaders without the state's guardianship and intervention, where the public authority is responsible for developing strategic plans, clear and studied work programs and priorities Projects, financial policy and elections, in addition to

evaluating the efficiency of performance and reviews. The goals, achievements and principles are achieved, and the negatives, errors and deficiencies are identified and revealed in a courageous, frank and democratic manner before public bodies to address and overcome them.

Civil society organizations can also evaluate their performance more effectively by identifying and surveying the opinion of the beneficiaries of their projects, services, works and activities through a special questionnaire prepared by all organizations containing all indicators, required statistical data and other information, then a specialized department in studies or statistics analyzes them in a scientific way impartial and impartial and to disclose its results to the General Assembly in a democratic way to enhance the transparency of this matter.

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