



The Historical Sociology of Class Formation in the Southern Kurdistan: 1921-1991

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Abstract

This article attempts to investigate the phenomenon of class formation in Southern Kurdistan from 1921 to 1991, during which the class structure of this society changed gradually. On this basis, a historical sociological reading of the political upheaval implications for class formation has been made in Southern Kurdistan. Since the establishment of the Iraqi state in 1921, under the supervision of a British Mandate, in Southern Kurdistan, which was regarded as a part of this country, the feudal system was dominant until the July 1958 revolution in Iraq and the coming to power of Abdulkarim Qasim, which began to reform agricultural lands. On the other hand, the successive uprisings of the Kurdish nation, especially the Eylul uprising in 1961-1975 had a significant influence on the formation and change of the class relations in Southern Kurdistan. As a result, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there were significant changes in class relations, which led to the formation of petit-bourgeoisie that played a crucial role in the coming years in Southern Kurdistan.

Keywords: Southern Kurdistan, class formation, class structure, feudal system, agha, sheikh, peasants, petit-bourgeoisie

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Introduction

The class formation is regarded as one of the most crucial topics to be researched, particularly by historical sociologists who wish to understand how classes have developed during a particular era. Such a study includes a long period in comparison with other historical research. Except for some studies on Kurdistan society in general and Southern Kurdistan in particular, there are few studies on its class formation. Therefore, practical research on class formation and class structure from a historical sociological viewpoint is needed in this regard

The years from 1921 to 1991, i.e. when Iraq was established as a protectorate state and later granted independence, the political upheavals in Iraq (particularly the 1958 revolution) and Eylul uprising in the Southern Kurdistan, and the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) are significant for the study of class structure and class formation because many socio-political upheavals occurred at the national and international levels had impacts on class structure

Also, the class structure of Southern Kurdistan went under a significant transformation as a result of the disastrous impacts of the Iran-Iraq war, and genocides. At the end of this historical era, many Kurdish peasants were forced to flee their homes and seek shelter in Kurdish towns throughout the 1980s and 1990s due to a long cycle of brutality by the Iraqi government. Baghdad's counter-insurgency tactics, culminating in the terrible Anfal Campaign of 1986–1989, were primarily intended to cut off the Kurdish guerrilla's supply lines by clearing hundreds of communities and depopulating the countryside. Due to this initiative, in Iraqi Kurdistan's army-controlled regions, hundreds of thousands of peasants were uprooted and transferred to oppressive communities, and primitive new towns were constructed beside important highways (HRW, 1993; Ihsan, 2017). These changes culminated in deep changes in the class structure of Southern Kurdistan, which will be studied in another study. But in this study, we limit our investigation to the 1921-1991 period, during which Southern Kurdistan had mainly a feudal class structure and class relations but gradually changed. Therefore, we have to present an introduction to the nature of feudal society because Southern Kurdistan was a feudal society in the major part of the era

The nature of feudal society

At least during a portion of the aforementioned historical period (1921–1991), Southern Kurdistan was in the feudal stage. As we know, feudalism is a mode of production in which the nobility and the peasantry constitute the two main social classes linked by a system of land ownership, in which a lord and his dependents oversaw a rural estate. At the same time, a populace of peasants laboured on the land to support both the lord and themselves (Bloch, 1962). Like other regions of the Middle East, Southern Kurdistan had a feudal age throughout the first half of the twentieth century. As a result, the feudal mode of production centred on connections between landowners and peasants, and a nomadic way of life predominated in the community. To stabilise the area, the nascent state of Iraq that ruled Southern Kurdistan replicated the feudal system

Kurdish rural life was mainly organised into tribes until the middle of the twentieth century, according to several specialists on Kurdistan's history. The most thorough academic study of Kurdish tribal civilisation describes the Kurdish tribe as a socio-political, typically also geographical and hence economic institution rooted in genealogy and kinship, actual or imagined, with a particular internal structure. It is logically split into several sub-tribes, and each of these sub-tribes is further divided into more compact groups like clans and



.(lineages (Van Bruinessen, 1992; Jwaideh, 2008

In sum, the term “feudalism” in the Kurdish context refers to the tribal aristocracy, or aghas and sheikhs, who by the end of the nineteenth century, had transformed into a class of large landowners by accumulating land that had previously been the common property of the tribes. The tribal elite pursued the capture of the agricultural surplus by extra-economic methods, much as in pre-capitalist feudal society, because of their military prowess and position of authority inside the Ottoman state. The Kurdish peasants are likened to the serfs of mediaeval Europe by Van Bruinessen: “Their rulers saw them as their property, owned in the same way as their sheep and mules” (Van Bruinessen, 1992). The growth of private land ownership in the second half of the nineteenth century and the tribal elite’s land-grabbing techniques forced many tribe members into a similar subordinate situation. After losing their traditional land rights, they worked as wage labourers or sharecroppers on their agha or sheikh farms (Van Bruinessen, 1992). Therefore, at the end of the Ottoman empire, a feudal system was dominant in Kurdistan, including our region of study, namely the Southern Kurdistan, which was mainly structured in two rural social classes, i.e. the aghas (aristocracy or nobles) who owned the agrarian lands and peasants who worked on the lands

In this regard, we have presented a historical periodization of political upheavals related to Southern Kurdistan, including the Ottoman era, the formation of the Iraqi state, the 1958 revolution, and the Eylul uprising .((1961-1975

Class relations in the Southern Kurdistan during the Ottoman Empire

As we know, the part of Kurdistan known as Southern Kurdistan was ruled by the Ottoman Empire indirectly (during the Kurdish emirates) and directly (after the collapse of the Kurdish emirates). As part of the long-term modernisation and centralisation goal of the Ottoman Empire, known as *Reorganisation (tanzimaat)*, the Land Law of 1858 profoundly impacted the Kurdish region to boost agricultural output and establish a taxable class of landowners; the Land Code encouraged landowners to own their property privately. The project intended to settle nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes in Kurdistan and other outlying regions by transforming herders into peasants. The year 1858 should be seen as the start of a lengthy historical change process because the actual application of the Land Code took decades and, in certain regions, was only enforced by governments that succeeded the Ottoman Empire. The Kurdish tribal elite benefited enormously from the long-term .(agricultural reform project, aided by the emirates’ fall (Esposti, 2020

The collapse of the emirates, the Land Code, and Sultan Abdul Hamid II’s creation of the Kurdish Hamidi army, which was made up of several Kurdish tribes, led to a significant rearrangement of the class structure in the region. After peasants lost traditional community privileges, the tribal aristocracy evolved into a class of large landlords. The bulk of their non-tribal serfs and many tribe peoples were transformed into sharecroppers or hired labourers, narrowing the gap between the two groups and considerably enhancing the tribal elite’s power over the rest of the Kurdish rural population. Understanding the historical context in which class formation emerged and grew is essential to understanding the social stratification process that persisted until the early twentieth century. The Kurdish tribal elite underwent a dramatic change as a result of the modernising policies of the Ottoman sultans, with many leaving the countryside and becoming absentee landowners. The control they exercised on their constituents, who were usually former tribesmen who had become peasants,



was justified by their tribal background, on the other hand (Jwaideh, 2008). In sum, despite dramatic changes in the dominant social groups, the mode of production in Southern Kurdistan was a kind of feudalism with its local features before the formation of the Iraq state

The formation of Iraq's state

After the formation of Iraq as a state, the class relations in Southern Kurdistan did not change and the feudal nature of its class relations continued. However, instead of referring to Kurdistan as a feudal society, some authors have adopted the phrase "tribal society." For example, Van Bruinessen (1992) underlines the importance of both social and political roles in tribal culture. The agha, the tribe's chief, presided over each level of the clan, sub-tribe, and tribe hierarchies and exercised political control over his fellow tribespeople. Van Bruinessen thought that although tribes were the major form of social structure among nomadic Kurds up to the twentieth century, Kurds were not entirely tribal. The Ottoman Empire's tribal policy had long-lasting effects on the Kurds, from the establishment of Kurdish tribal confederacies and their elevation to borderland princedoms in the sixteenth century to their destruction during administrative centralisation in the nineteenth century and the state-sponsored tribal revival in the Empire's final decades

Over the twentieth century, tribes saw a progressive deterioration in their social status, accelerated by urbanisation. Remarkably, the responsibilities of the agha and the sheikh changed significantly when capitalism spread over the Kurdish countryside. Aghas and sheikhs were allowed to claim land the tribe had previously possessed in their names, which helped them develop into powerful landlords. At the same time, members of their tribe started working for pay. The core forces relied on traditional power brokers to maintain control over the Kurdish periphery; hence, they strongly supported this process. This change resulted in declining tribal ties, substantially impacting the kinship-based solidarity that had historically kept tribes together. Many tribes (continued to play an important social role during the transition, which was far from easy (Jwaideh, 2008

The long-term effects of British colonialism, on the other hand, and perhaps more significantly, on Iraq's class stratification process, were primarily due to its tribal policy. The important study by Batatu on the social structure of monarchical Iraq skilfully depicts this period's social and economic history. *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movement of Iraq*, written by Batatu, has much information on the structural transformation in Iraq over its first 40 years. He went into great depth on how British administrators gave tribal leaders more authority in both the Arab and Kurdish parts of Iraq to create a ruling class of traditional landowners who were inherently pro-British. The Tribal Criminal and Civil Disputes Regulation, implemented by the British during the war in 1916 and ratified by royal decree in 1924, gave tribal chiefs enormous power and little accountability in the process of enforcing justice among the members of their tribe. The gradual de-tribalisation of Iraq, which had been occurring since the end of the 19th century as a result of its integration into global markets, was abruptly reversed, with villages' progress towards independence from neighbouring tribes being (disallowed and peasant tribe members' escape from the sheikhs' lands being forbidden (Batatu, 1978: 93

The enormous swaths of property were registered in the names of sheikhs and nobility of the towns, especially those who backed the British occupation because the measured outcome opposed the requests in the public interest. Politicians, members of the governing elite, and other bureaucrats could register enormous tracts of agricultural property in their names at the beginning of the twenty revolutions. The labouring peas-



ant populations in the tribal and agricultural areas were previously seen as wage earners. However, they had previously practised the values of harmony and collaboration within their tribe (The Central Bureau of Studies .(and Research, 1996

According to Batatu, the sheikhs' prosperity at the expense of their other tribe members eroded tribal allegiance, resulting in their ascent as a class and the decline of their other tribe members as a traditional status group. Nine notable peasant revolts, three of which occurred in the Kurdish region, broke out in Iraq between 1947 and 1958, as demonstrated by Batatu. The first of these riots, in 1947, was directed at Sheikh Latif, the largest landowner in Sulaymaniyah and the son of Mahmud Barzanji, who had presided over the Kurdish nationalist movements in the 1920s (1978: 47). Esposti showed that Iraq and Kurdistan were ardent supporters of communism in the 1930s and 1940s when it was gaining ground. They were fighting the aghas and tribal chiefs, accusing them of working with the imperialists. They assured the people that the Iraqi Communist .(Party would return all of the land seized from them by the aghas and tribal elders (2020: 114-115

The tribes and their heads were treated differently by the British during the conquest of Iraq and under direct administration between 1914 and 1932. First, Stephen Longridge urged small farmers to help them in their fight against the influence of powerful tribal chiefs and agricultural landowners, as well as their demands for land ownership and the overthrow of established tribal leaders. The second, led by Henry Dobbs, advocated for working directly with tribe leaders and offering support to landowners to create a social basis, advance the new political order, and stop the occupying authority from taking over the nation. British decision-makers eventually settled on the second alternative. They strengthened the tribal chieftaincy structure, which had weakened as a result of the current developments of the early twentieth century, after much deliberation. To reinforce the judicial authority of tribal chiefs, revive tribal groups, and subjugate them to simple and rural charters, the British government enacted the Tribal Civil and Criminal Proceedings Act of 1916. In 1918, the British government implemented this charter throughout Iraq's tribal and rural regions. It was enacted by the Iraqi government in 1922 as specific legislation from civil law, and it was in effect until the July 1958 Revolution .(tion (Batatu, 2021

To provide them with the authority to maintain security, the British government also attempted to recognise such a tribal structure. In exchange for their involvement in government through the Houses of Representatives and donations, they were given firearms, agricultural land titles, and other items in addition to maintaining law and order, apprehending criminals, protecting transit routes, and collecting taxes. The British authorities formed several particular administrative councils of tribal leaders in the provincial towns. Many of them received appointments to positions of authority in the districts. The value of tribal leaders was emphasised in 1922 by Gertrude Bell, the Eastern Secretary to the British High Commissioner in Iraq. Bell declared that they are the people I adore, and I am aware that each tribe leader in Iraq is crucial in some way. They form the .(nation's foundation (Batatu, 1978: 87

The accomplishments of the tribe chiefs grew significantly throughout the 1920–1932 mandate era and peaked in the early 1930s when numerous pieces of legislation were approved. Sir Ernest Dawson, a British expert who, in 1931, delivered his report on the issue of agricultural land in Iraq and encompassed the province of Southern Kurdistan, advocated this in support of the chiefs against the peasants and became Law No. 5 of 1932. The Law of Necessity No. 51 of 1932 and the Peasant Rights and Obligations Act No. 28 of 1935, which were the outcomes of the Land Rights Settlement, provided tribe chiefs with the legal authority to seize land that was common tribal property and register it in their names. Loans made to peasants in exchange for land



or to tribal leaders were regarded as outstanding debt that had to be repaid before starting work or relocating to other farms. This article brought up two ideas: the development of commercial and agricultural property relationships and the erosion of familial ties. Therefore, rather than tribalism, the property became the foundation of social class. Second, landowners (tribe chiefs) developed into a noble elite with connections to the urban affluent, businesspeople, and top government officials. (Batatu 2021; Batatu 1978). These socio-political changes paved the way for the triumph of the ideologies of redistributing lands, including socialism, that culminated in land reforms after the 1958 July Revolution

The Iraqi July 1958 revolution

As reported by Rubin, the country's traditional aristocracy was more fearful once the King was overthrown and a new revolutionary government came into power. A monarchy that acknowledged and legitimised old forms of power had been replaced by a government that spoke a language of modernity and portrayed tribal chiefs and sheikhs as forces of the past. Additionally, and probably more importantly, Abdulkarim Qasim's collaboration with the communists warned that the state would no longer protect them against insurgent peasants, and the land reform directly threatened their place within the country's class structure. In the Kurdish area, the tribe chiefs' concern about the communists' rise and alliance with the Kurdistan Democratic Party had a political and social component. Mullah Mustafa's return and close links to Baghdad further strained inter-tribal relations, which increased unease among tribes that had previously fought the Barzanis and their allies. The post-revolutionary decades' tribal conflict must be understood in light of the rapidly deteriorating power structures (2007: 364). Given that both the Iraqi revolution and the Kurdish uprising were related to the forces of the world system (including the Soviet Union and the impacts of Kurdish nationalism in other parts of Kurdistan) on the one hand, and the necessity of redistributing agrarian lands led by the US in the Third World to prevent from communism, on the other, these changes in class relations were not internally motivated but related to the external forces of the world system

A land tax was also put in place in the spring of 1961, and the government started implementing land reform in Southern Kurdistan. In June 1961, a delegation of tribal leaders from Southern Kurdistan journeyed to Baghdad to convince Abdulkarim Qasim to change and abolish the law. Due to Abdulkarim Qasim's refusal to meet with them, the tribal chiefs withdrew into Kurdish territory. They vowed not to pay the tax or allow the implementation of the agrarian reform. The support of the Kurdish landowners helped the uprising spread swiftly. The rebels improved their communication with Barzani during the summer (Rubin, 2007: 364). Esposti contends in his doctoral dissertation that the post-revolutionary Iraqi government's land redistribution and taxation policy caused the Kurdish insurrection, which started in 1961 and lasted until 1975, to have a vital class component. Only reluctantly did the Kurdish nationalist forces lend their support to the revolt in 1961, which was instigated by a spontaneous uprising of tribal landowners against the implementation of land reform and the empowerment of the peasantry (Esposti, 2020:106). Esposti said that the aristocracy and landowners in Southern Kurdistan rose against this reform to amend the land reform law. Esposti thought that the opposition to the Iraqi government's reform policies by the nobles and landowners was the cause of the Kurdish Uprising, contrary to Esposti's argumentation, the Kurdish nationalist uprising was not the outcome of their reaction; rather, they have been fighting for their national rights of the Kurdish nation for a very long time before the land reform. The history of the Kurdish national movement in Southern Kurdistan goes back to the first half of the nineteenth century and we cannot reduce it to a reaction to the land reform. Therefore,



such analyses that consider the Kurdish national movement as a reaction to the “progressive plans” of the central government function as a justification for the brutality of these regimes in their colonial policies against Kurdistan.

The class relations of the feudal and Aghas with the peasants and villagers in the Southern Kurdistan

According to Thompson, “social class” is primarily understood as a relation, making it clear that class is not a category but rather something that occurs in interpersonal interactions. The relationship must always be represented by individuals interacting in a genuine setting (Thompson, 1966: 9–10). By adopting such a theoretical posture, we can concentrate on the class relations throughout the aforementioned historical era (1921–1991), notably between landlords and peasants in Southern Kurdistan. On the other hand, colonialism’s effects—both those of the British colonial power in Iraq and of the Iraqi colonial policies in Southern Kurdistan—will be investigated because, by the Dependency theory’s theoretical underpinnings, the process of class formation in the periphery of the capitalist world system is not internally motivated but is instead influenced by external forces, particularly the global market.

The importance of tribal traditions and traditional relationships declined in the 1950s as the political and economic life of the urban population recovered. This was accompanied by increased national and civil awareness and the rise of revolutionary political organisations. Up until the July 1958 revolution, which passed Decree No. 30 of the Agricultural Reform Act and tried to put an end to the political and economic role of the tribal chiefs, the tribal chiefs lost a significant portion of the social base on which they relied and their political strength entered a losing battle with the new forces of civil society that were forming during this period (Batatu: 2021). Thus, the British mandate and the allegedly revolutionary changes in land ownership progressively impacted the social class of landowners and tribal leaders. As a result of these adjustments, the privileges of Aghas were lessened while a new urban class comparatively increased in income and influence, leading to certain modifications in class relations.

Additionally, many landlords and peasants fled their homes and lands and relocated to metropolitan areas because of several wars, including the Eylul uprising (1961–1975) and protracted Iran–Iraq War (1980–1988). This rendered the villages insecure. These modifications destroyed tribal and feudal relationships and replaced them with capitalist ones. Nevertheless, as was previously indicated, the demise of social classes does not always imply a quick elimination of the associated social values.

The class structure of Southern Kurdistan to the Kurdish national movement

Some authors believe that in the colonised territories, socioeconomic classes differ from those in free nations because a foreign power seizes all of the resources from the society, plunders them, and oppresses the populace. Colonialism impacts the social structure of a colonised or occupied nation in the long run. The same methods we use to study an autonomous society cannot be applied to a colonized society. The colonialist power manipulates the social structure of the colonized nation. This distortion, however, only seldom wastes resources and frequently fails unexpectedly in the best interests of the colonial nation (Kerimi, 2020).



Although some of their actions have had positive outcomes, Kerimi (2020) claims that colonial states have attempted to change Kurdistan's class structure to further their goals. The abolition of the feudal system was one of these concerns. While some analysts contend that feudalism never existed in the Middle East and Kurdistan, their argumentation is baseless and weak. He contends that feudalism, which has also existed in Kurdistan, is a stage of societal evolution that comes after slavery. It is demonstrable that there were two social classes in feudal Kurdistan: the agha or feudal class, who possessed the means of production, and the landless peasants, who did not. The relationship between the two classes was also based on agricultural production in general. However, according to Kerimi, nowadays the Kurdistan society has changed dramatically and it has transited to capitalism like other regions of the world system. He believes that all classes in the colonised countries are included in "the comprador slice" (a segment of the colonised society that collaborates with colonialists) and all classes are also included in "the national slice." In contrast to the terms "comprador bourgeoisie" and "comprador class" used by the New Marxists, he has created a new concept called the "comprador slice." Class and slice vary in that class is horizontal whilst the slice is vertical and contains all classes. It is obvious that this notion, like other ideas in the socio-political realm, is an "ideal type," meaning that people and groups exist somewhere between the two extremes. A person or social group may work with colonialists in certain circumstances and with nationals in others. However, from an ideological standpoint, the two different slices .(oppose each other (2020: 12–13

Suppose we try to apply the theory of colonialism to Southern Kurdistan. In that case, we can claim that until 1958, Southern Kurdistan, and the Iraqi government ruled in a traditional style of governmentality. It remained a colony, as previously mentioned, and the explicitly pro-tribal British strategy, which turned tribal chiefs into a powerful class of landowners who controlled Iraqi politics and provided a crucial social foundation for the Hashemite monarchy that the British imposed, greatly benefited the Kurdish tribal elite and their Arab counterparts. The land-grabbing and exploitative practices of the landowner class in the 1940s and 1950s led to a wave of rural conflicts that spanned the nation but were especially acute in Southern Kurdistan. The might of the organised peasants played a significant role in the 1958 republican revolution in Iraq. Understanding the disparities in class structures that emerged in the two Kurdish districts is necessary to comprehend the diverse paths taken by Kurdish nationalism in Iraq

The position of agricultural land had to be reviewed by the revolutionary leaders after the monarchy was overthrown on July 14, 1958, since it was among the concerns that needed to be rectified. This legislation redistributed agricultural ownership in a way that forbade oppression and contained several measures and concepts that protected the rights of peasants. The law sought to transfer land to peasants, limit significant agricultural ownership, and abolish landlords, sheikhs, and nobility. Despite the law's many flaws, the July 14, 1958 revolution was a significant societal advancement. The most important legal fundamentals were: It was established that no Iraqi person might hold more than 1,000 acres of irrigated land and 2,000 dunams (acres) of irrigated land combined (Article 1 of the law). Additionally, the language stipulates that contracts that violated the aforementioned clause and produced excessiveness must be revoked and not recorded. Agricultural land is also often exempt from or barred from "land endowments" (The Central Bureau of Studies .(and Research, 1996

The legislation grants peasants access to 60–120 acres of dryland and 30–60 acres of irrigated land. Before distribution, a particular committee known as the Interim administration oversaw the confiscated properties and was charged with establishing short-term agreements with the peasants. The retention of the procedural institutions and their continuous application of the requirements of Land Rights Procedure Law No. 29 of



1958 are some of the most prominent conflicts of this time (the implementation period of Law No. 30 of 1958) relating to land laws. This disagreement is made worse because the noble rule, whose procedural law is regarded as the most important legislative principle, was the main target of the revolution of July 14, 1958. Four revisions to the Future Procedure Act were adopted during this time, benefiting the government and landowners and transferring substantial amounts of land from peasants to landlords. The primary beneficiaries of the Reform Act No. 30 of 1958 were the aristocrats; as a result, the legislation was illegally applied, and the rights of compensation, land selection, and distribution among their family members were in the interests of the landowners. These circumstances and the law's legislative flaws precluded it from accomplishing its goals .(within five years (Karim, 2021: 5–6; The Central Bureau of Studies and Research, 1996

As it did in the rest of Iraq during these decades, politics in Southern Kurdistan was dominated by the growing movement against the monarchy and its colonial protector and the anti-landlord mobilisation of the impoverished peasants. Esposti asserts that the history of Kurdish nationalism in Iraq can be traced from the beginnings of the anti-colonial movement in the 1940s until the establishment of Kurdish self-rule in 1991. As the Kurdish tribal and landowning elite was assimilated into the nation's ruling class following the defeat of the interwar feudal revolts, Kurdish nationalism in Iraq deteriorated (2020:106). This process led to the emergence of a new ruling class that had two members. First, the PUK and KDP liberation war commanders rose to political power by commanding party armed forces, regardless of socioeconomic standing. Second, as the Iraqi economy evolved in the 1970s and 1980s, the Kurdish ruling class that fought against the Kurdish insurgency and stayed loyal to Baghdad shifted from landowners to owning enterprises supported by the regime. Since 1998, this new ruling class has used military dominance of the area to collect rent and impose a political duopoly between the KDP and PUK. The bulk of the Kurdish community was forced to rely on the patronage networks of the two parties that distributed state jobs, sometimes their sole source of income. These changes happened mostly to the world forces that affected the political economy of the region, especially the role of Southern Kurdistan in providing oil and gas resources for the world economy. Therefore, the gradual change in the Southern Kurdistan class structure is the result of the world economy, particularly the international .division of labour that has allocated the role of producing energy to this region

Conclusion

This article demonstrates the historical development of Southern Kurdistan's class system from 1921 and 1991. The main social classes constituted two groups: the aristocracy class, which was regarded as the higher class and held property in the villages, and the lower class, which comprised the peasants and the destitute, who did not own land but worked on the land of the nobles. Regarding socioeconomic status, Southern Kurdistan's cities and villages differed substantially. The nobility, however, possessed property, and other people could do business and were seen as belonging to the upper class. The conclusion is that Southern Kurdistan was a feudal .society in the era

However, after the formation of the Iraqi state with the support of the British authorities, for the Iraqi state to be able to control entire Iraq in the administrative and military aspects, it continued the feudal system which was predominant in the Ottoman Empire, followed by the British Mandate in Iraq. The feudal system was robust throughout Iraq, especially in Southern Kurdistan, until the fall of the Iraqi monarchy and the coming to power of Abdul Karim Qassim in 1958, which began to reform land ownership throughout Iraq. This



weakened the power of the nobles, and at the same time, some peasants were able to become the owners of the land. However, in addition to land reforms in 1958, the Kurdish revolutions, especially the Eylul Revolution from 1961 to 1975, greatly impacted land reforms in Southern Kurdistan. The reforms carried out on land were accompanied by the formation of new a class in Southern Kurdistan called the petit-bourgeoisie until 1991. This petit-bourgeoisie became their land owners in Southern Kurdistan; at the same time, they were able to establish trade relations with the Iraqi business people. This new class paved the way for the emergence of the bourgeoisie in this society after the relative triumph of the national movement in 1991. The mechanisms .of gaining power by the bourgeoisie is another story that should be dealt with in another study

In sum, the study indicates that the class structure of Southern Kurdistan has changed gradually during the historical period from 1921 to 1991 from a kind of feudal society in which two main social classes (land-lord and peasant) constituted the majority of the population to a kind of semi-bourgeois society in which petit-bourgeoisie formed gradually and played a major socio-political role in the coming years. However, the tribal system has continued even nowadays. The continuation of the tribal system in Southern Kurdistan does not mean that feudalism has continued because feudalism was a mode of production that vanished by the forces of the world system and as the result of aforementioned political upheavals while tribalism is an anthropological concept that can exist even in a capitalist society

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