

City and Identity in Iraq

Baghdad's Role in Nation and Identity Building

Theoretical Framework



... is where the majority of people live.
... is the **core** of socio-cultural processes.
... facilitates and influences identity building.
... is influenced by social processes in return.

... plays an important role in social, cultural and political discourses.
... is a social construct.
... evolves through **interaction with "others" in space.**

Cities offer spaces where people of different backgrounds interact and negotiate their identities. In return, these spaces reflect the identities of their residents in their arrangements and representations. Theoretical findings suggest that social diversity in urban spaces is crucial for the development of collective and personal identities as well as social cohesion. This research strives to understand the relation between city spaces and identity building as well as to develop concepts and tools for urban analysis.

The Concept of Cultural Capacity

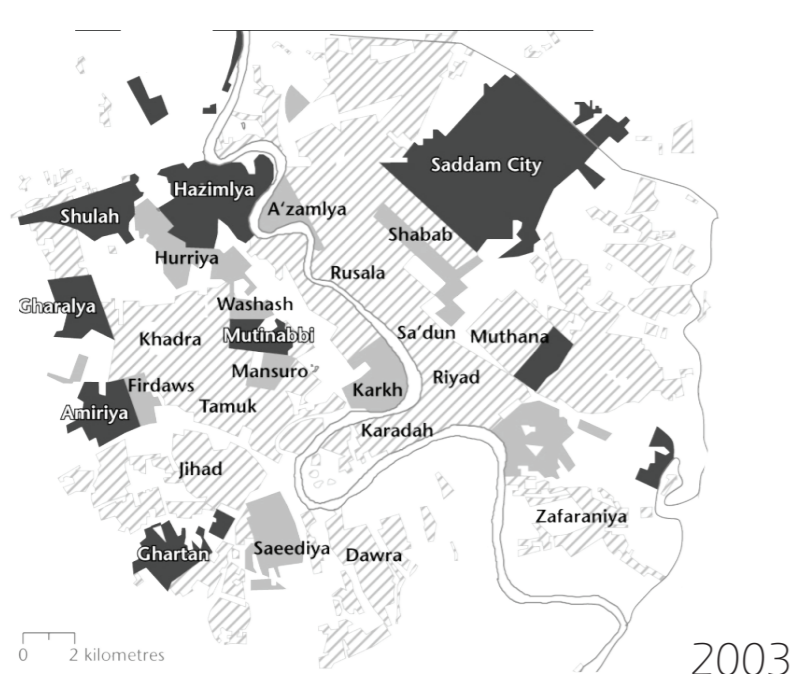
Cultural capacity is a concept developed by this research to provide theoretical basis for understanding the dynamics of city and identity building and analyze them on macro, mezzo und micro urban levels. Cities with the highest cultural capacity are those with the biggest number of **accessible** spaces for all of their residents, the most **heterogeneous** societies and where the identities of their residents are equally **visible**. Such cities allow their residents to represent and negotiate their identities freely in space to develop a higher sense of diversity and cohesion.

Baghdad: A unique case-study

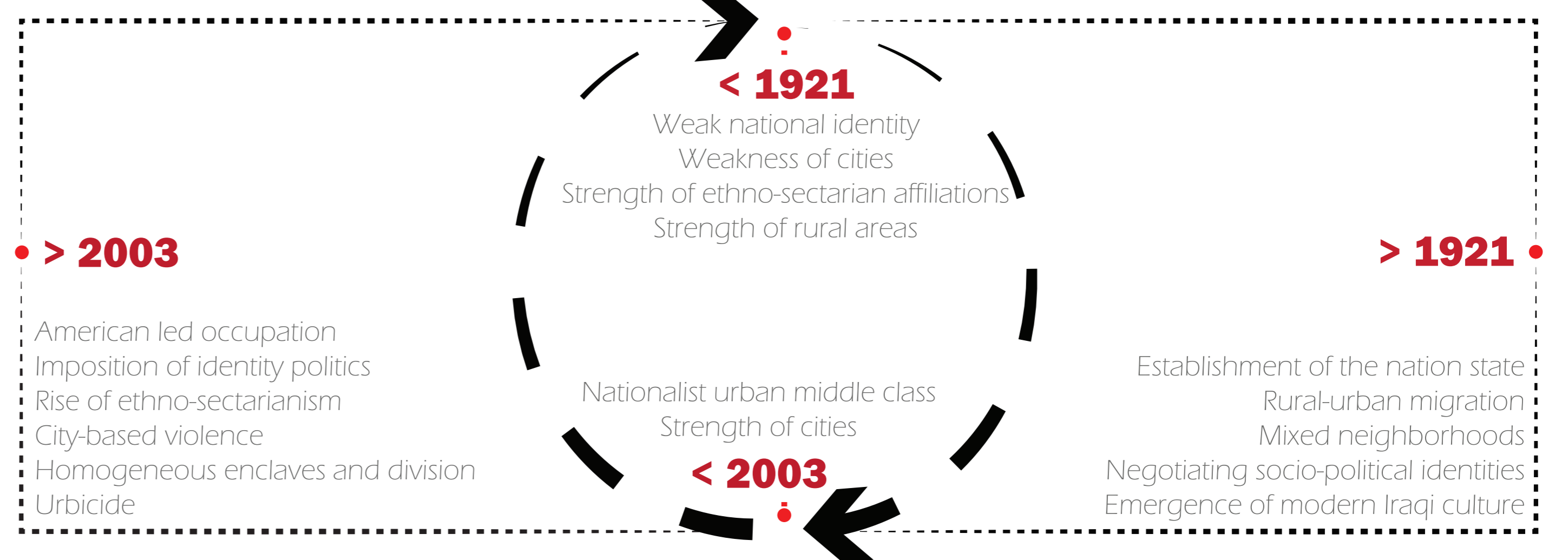
Understanding the dynamics of city and identity in Iraq through the spaces of Baghdad offers a lot of insights into this topic and the possible future development of the city and its diverse social fabric. The city went through different phases from being a "melting-pot" for all its residents with their different cultural backgrounds to a contested and divided city after 2003. Each of these phases offers a lot of information about processes of identity and nation building which can barely be found elsewhere in the world.

Analyzing cultural capacity in Baghdad from 2003:

Macro Analysis
Social heterogeneity and accessibility



Dynamics of city and identity in modern Iraq



Mezzo and Micro Analysis:

Mapping relevant spaces for social interaction and identity building in the city center of Baghdad

