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# **Successive Wars on Iraqi Society after 2003 and Their Reflections on Women's Cultural Identity / An Analytical Study**

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**Abstract:** The successive wars in Iraq after 2003 are an important axis of research and analysis, especially about their impact on women's cultural identity. This analytical study aims to understand and appreciate how these wars affect the cultural identity of Iraqi women. The study examines the social, psychological, and cultural effects of wars, as well as their effects on the role and status of women in Iraqi society. Factors that have influenced the change in women's cultural identity, such as legislation, cultural practices, and social changes, are analyzed. An analytical methodology is used based on the study of secondary data and academic references related to the subject. It is expected that the study will contribute to shedding light on the impact of wars on the cultural identity of Iraqi women and understanding their transformations and development during this difficult period, which may enable them to take effective steps to support women's rights and enhance their role in building society in the future

**Keyword:** Successive wars, Iraqi society, cultural identity, Iraqi women, social influences.

## **Introduction**

The successive wars that Iraqi society witnessed after 2003 are among the most prominent challenges facing the country and have left profound effects on the cultural identity of Iraqi women. Iraq is witnessing a succession of wars and armed conflicts, which have greatly affected the social and cultural structure of society.

Successive wars are characterized by their, multiple complexities, its repercussions include economic, political, and social consequences, but the most notable impact concerns culture and identity. Iraqi women are one of the most affected segments by wars, suffering from deteriorating living conditions and insecurity, affecting their rights and position in society.

Understanding the impact of wars on Iraqi women's cultural identity is extremely important, as it contributes to identifying ways of action to promote women's rights and achieve gender equality in society. Examining this issue through an analytical study can shed light on the cultural transformations that Iraqi women have been exposed to as a result of wars, and help develop strategies and policies that enhance their role and position in society.

In general, research on this topic is of great importance to understand the impact of wars on the cultural identity of Iraqi women and to identify the needs and challenges they face. The research aimed to study the transformations that occur in women's self-concept and focus on women's experiences during conflicts by contributing important inputs to the policies followed to enhance their role in building peace and developing war-affected by wars.

## **Methodology:**

The use of the analytical research method entitled "Successive wars on Iraqi society after 2003 and their repercussions on women's cultural identity", is essential to understand the complex interactions and effects of this phenomenon. The analytical approach aims to understand the causal relationships and effects of successive wars on Iraqi society, as well as the nature of changes in women's cultural identity, as follows:

First, the analytical approach involves analyzing the available data in depth, allowing a deeper understanding of phenomena and interrelated relationships. This consists of analyzing the social and cultural causes and repercussions of successive wars, as well as their effects on Iraqi women and their cultural identity.

Second, the analytical approach helps to understand the political, economic, and social factors that contribute to the complexity of the situation in Iraq after 2003. This approach makes it possible to examine changes in the social and cultural context of Iraqi society and to determine their impact on women's identity.

Third, the analytical approach allows for critical and in-depth analysis of data resulting from previous studies and field research, which contributes to guiding the research, its conclusions, and recommendations more accurately and comprehensively.

Using the analytical approach, facts and events can be logically and systematically interpreted, analyzing the complex interactions occurring in Iraqi society after 2003, and determining how they affect women's cultural identity.

**Results:**

1. Social divisions in Iraqi society have worsened as a result of successive wars.
2. Increasing poverty and unemployment rates among Iraqi women due to wars.
3. The level of education and health of Iraqi women has declined due to insecurity and instability.
4. The growth of extremism and rigorism in Iraqi society, which affects women's rights and status.
5. Changes in the social and cultural roles of Iraqi women as a result of economic and social transformations.
6. The impact of wars on the mental health of Iraqi women and the high rates of depression and anxiety.
7. Fluctuations in the Iraqi family, increased divorce rates, and the collapse of social relations.
8. The impact of wars on the cultural identity of Iraqi women and a change in cultural practices and values.
9. Lack of economic and educational opportunities for Iraqi women due to the wars and their impact on their future.
10. An increase in cases of violence against women under difficult socio-economic conditions.
11. Transformations in women's political role and participation in decision-making as a result of social transformations.
12. The impact of wars on family relations and interactions among members of society, affecting the consolidation of cultural values and social traditions.

**Discussion:**

We have found that violence is on the rise within society as a result of the effects of wars, as follows:

1. Social effects: The propaganda that takes place during the war appears in many countries, including Iraq, how forms of gender are strengthened before, during, and after the war, which lies in the resonant slogans that are raised, the idea that women represent the "honor of society" from this point of view cases of assault against women are seen as an attack on an entire society, the phenomenon of violence is a method of exploitation as a result of destabilizing the relationship of lack of equal power between two or more parties<sup>(1)</sup>. And because women in most societies are considered the fragile party, they are the most exposed to violence in the group because they are within a vulnerable group and in general because they are women, in the sense that they are targeted, as a result of discrimination against them due to the specificity of their social gender, and this is known as "gender-based violence."
2. Economic impacts: Women are more affected than men by the economic remnants of wars because they suffer from poverty and unemployment because they bear all responsibility when the breadwinner and the place that shelters them are lost<sup>(2)</sup>. This made her take the role of breadwinner, and this is what led to an increase in the percentage of female breadwinners for their families during wars. This is what drives her to work in various professions to support her family, as Iraqi women suffered from difficult conditions after wars and economic sanctions that greatly affected their economic situation and partially deprived them of achieving their identity<sup>(3)</sup>.
3. Environmental and health effects: The environment in Iraq has been exposed as a result of wars to a lot of pollution, and this came as a result of the use of internationally prohibited weapons, and the deliberate targeting of natural resources in Iraq, in addition to military remnants of war, pollution of the marine environment, and oil installations<sup>(4)</sup>. All of the above generated a polluted and toxic environment, resulting in the spread of epidemics and cancer diseases that the Iraqi individual still suffers from woes in the absence of treatment means. Air pollution was not only caused by the presence of war rubble, such as fine particles "such as cement and sand", but also by building materials and heavy metals used in painting walls, in addition to chemicals in the production of explosive ordnance. This led to the destruction of many Iraqi cities as a result of military operations that led to mass destruction, such as the city of Mosul, where the rubble left by the war in the city was estimated at 10 million cubic meters<sup>(5)</sup>.
4. Intellectual and cultural effects: The bloody events of wars always target cultural frameworks and basic structures of society to make cultural changes that lead to the framing and absence of the culture of society from private to public in the long term, relying on the war on technology, ideology,

and this is what was commonly practiced during the Iraqi wars a long time ago <sup>(6)</sup>, which was characterized by deliberate violence involving political motives, cultural fragmentation and religious extremism against individuals and society, targeting the infrastructure of Iraq to incite sectarianism and stir up strife, and this is what he suffer. Iraq suffered from the sectarian war of 2006-2007, where civil war prevailed as a result of the division and sectarian fanaticism planted by the occupier. The Iraqi individual was disappeared and killed according to sectarian identity<sup>(7)</sup>.

## Conclusions

The woman as a qualitative representation is half of the society and one of its basic pillars throughout time. Her requirements and rights were the subject of great controversy between supporters and opponents, which led to the emergence of systems defending them and demanding their rights, so many international regulations and conventions were issued in human rights institutions that aimed to protect women from various types of violence and reduce its indicators, where the Iraqi legislator pointed to the need to combat violence against women<sup>(8)</sup>. And provide legal protection during crises by addressing laws that allow gender-based violence such as honor killings, Article 398, which reduces the absolute sentence on those who committed a crime out of honor" and the work of national laws that honor women on their social roles and protect their entity, the situation of Iraqi women today is in an unfair position, because whatever you do and whatever you reach it will remain linked to the concept of guardianship by the social reality, law and society<sup>(9)</sup>. Despite the attention paid by the international community to the issue of women, there are still discriminatory gaps in the legal framework in all regions of the world, so there must be a government capable of amending regulations that are good at performance and pave the way for women to access them without institutional difficulties that prevent women's access to justice<sup>(10)</sup>. So, we conclude from this study the following most important points :

1. The fetishism of Iraqi society, in the sense that the cultural and popular oral heritage, thought, literature, politics, and the misunderstanding of religion, burdened women as they limited their ability to move intellectually and restricted socially that they are unable to see<sup>(11)</sup>.
2. Stereotyping the image of Iraqi women and exporting them in weak situations is the oppression of women under one identity, which is their feminine identity<sup>(12)</sup>. So, any attempt by them to tweet outside the flock will remove their femininity and expose them to violence, as they have gone beyond the level of societal expectations<sup>(13)</sup>.
3. If women had the same conditions and rights as men, we would have witnessed a radical change in their social, economic, identity, and educational status<sup>(14)</sup> as Virginia Woolf says: Women were not educated like men they have devoted their lives to supporting their families, so how can they compete with men in the culture industry? <sup>(15)</sup>.

Finally, it can be said that this research paper tried as much as possible to shed light on the effects that target women during wars including economic, health, environmental, and social in an attempt to analyze them, hoping that one day they will contribute to provide realistic treatments to improve the situation of women.

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**Future Research Directions:**

1. Need for deeper future studies: Deeper future studies should be conducted to understand the effects of wars on Iraqi women's cultural identity more broadly.
2. Development of women's policies and programs: Sustainable policies and programs must be developed aimed at enhancing the role of women and promoting their rights in light of the increasing social and economic challenges.
3. Promoting awareness and education: It is important to promote awareness and education about women's rights and their role in society, through social media, education, and public education.
4. Encourage research and development: Research and development should be encouraged to examine the effects of war on women's cultural identity and explore ways to better deal with these challenges.
5. International cooperation: Dealing with the effects of wars on women's cultural identity requires effective international cooperation and concerted efforts by the international community to support Iraqi women and promote their rights and contribution to building society