

The Situation In Southern Kurdistan In Two Periods Of Shaykh Mahmud's Rule: 1918-1923

Dilshad Sabri Ali

Abstract

This article utilizes the historical sociology viewpoint to portray the elements of two distinct times of Sheik Mahmud's authority in Southern Kurdistan in light of Max Weber's concept of conventional power (Patrimonial). This paper looks at how the English upheld Shaykh Mahmud's authority in the Kurdish regions and looks at it as the cutting-edge regulatory framework that the English imagined, as opposed to Shaykh Mahmud's old hereditary kind of power. The article is a historical sociological investigation of the explanations behind the English support of Shaykh Mahmud as the head of Southern Kurdistan, especially in the outcome of the Ottoman Empire's fall, by analyzing the historical background intently. It sheds light on the geopolitical factors that influenced their decisions by examining the divergent political philosophies in British political circles regarding the administration of the Kurdish areas and Mesopotamia. Moreover, the paper looks at the reasoning for Southern Kurdistan's annexation to Iraq, explicitly considering Sheik Mahmoud's statement of Kurdistan unilaterally and the retreat of his promises to the English and King Faisal of Iraq. The contention between Sheik Mahmud's traditional heir rule and the English quest for a contemporary bureaucratic system arises as a critical issue, shaping the political environment nearby. Finally, this article features the traditional innate (Patrimonial) power while analyzing Sheik Mahmud's convictions, standards, and political construction. It features how Shaykh Mahmud's procedure contrasts with the contemporary administrative vision that the English elevated in their endeavors to control the area.

Keywords: *Shaykh Mahmud, Southern Kurdistan, Patrimonial Power, Historical Sociology, Max Weber.*

1. Introduction

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in 1918 in the region, especially in Mesopotamia and Syria, the Middle East map should have been redesigned. At the same time, after the victory of the British forces in WWI and their entry from the Southern Iraqi border to the middle, then to the Mosul district, in late October 1918, the whole of Southern Kurdistan fell under their control. Therefore, the British aimed to dominate the region, especially in Mesopotamia (McDowall, 2004; Jwaideh, 2006). However, the British disagreed on managing Mesopotamia and Kurdish areas within themselves. For example, Winston Churchill, head of the Colonial Ministry, believed that several political officers must indirectly manage the areas under their control with the support of local forces. At that time, the British could not use a significant military force directly because of their economic collapse in WWI. However, there was also the opposite opinion on direct management of the region by the British, such as Percy Cox and

Gertrude Bell. Eventually, the British concluded that the region would be indirectly managed due to the economic cost (McDowall, 2004).

Therefore, the British attempted to create an area under their supervision, especially in the Kurdish regions, that would become a reassuring boundary for Mesopotamia, especially in the face of the Turkish threat. Thus, after the British came to this region, Shaykh Mahmud was considered one of the most prominent figures of the Kurdish people at that time. He sent them letters, such as Arnold Wilson, in Baghdad and asked them to support him in establishing a Kurdish ruler who ruled himself under the supervision of the British (Eskender, 2001; Jwaideh, 2006). Consequently, Major Noel, a British officer considered a supporter of Kurdish demands, visited the Kurdish areas and met prominent Kurdish people, especially Shaykh Mahmud. Hence, he suggested the British create a Kurdish government led by Shaykh Mahmud in Kurdistan regions, especially in Sulaymaniyah (Kilic, 2018: 27). On this basis, on 1st December 1918, Arnold Wilson visited Sulaymaniyah and met with Shaykh Mahmud and 60 Kurdish tribal chiefs. Wilson understood that the Shaykh was not entirely acceptable to all Kurds and the heads of some Kurdish tribes, such as Kifri and Kirkuk, and the Jaff and Pishderi areas that people disagreed with the fact that the Shaykh should become the ruler of the region. Nevertheless, in the end, the British decided to establish a Kurdish government led by Shaykh Mahmud (Kaymaz, 2014:283; McDowall, 2004). It can be claimed that the British authorities, after the triumphant arrival in the Middle East and Mesopotamia, especially Southern Kurdistan, had no plans to manage the region, particularly the Kurdish areas. Therefore, after several events and decisions from British authorities on ruling the region, it would reach the way of management in the region.

The British initially needed a clear policy towards managing Mesopotamia, especially the Kurdish regions, so they had different opinions. These differences in managing the borders of Mesopotamia and Kurdistan regions will be resolved due to the passage of time and changes in the region (Eskander, 1999). Eventually, one opinion will dominate others. The changes in the political situation in Mesopotamia caused the British to turn away from their promises to the Kurds. He believes that the British primarily aimed to ensure security for Iraq through the Kurdistan areas. There could be more factors that the British have withdrawn from supporting the Kurds, especially Shaykh Mahmud. For example, Shaykh Mahmud was arrogant after taking power under both rules. He tried to build a secret relationship with the Turks and broadly gave power to other Kurdish regions unilaterally, without thinking about the power he had created for him that was due to the British (Eskander, 2001: 172). One of the reasons mentioned above is the weak economic situation caused by WWI by the British government. After the British political commanders reached a consensus on how to govern Mesopotamia, especially the Kurdish regions, to give independence to Southern Kurdistan led by Sheikh Mahmud because they wanted to use the Kurdish regions as a barrier to the threats of the Kemalist Turks to the region.

This article will discuss the situation in Kurdistan during the two rules of Shaykh Mahmud, especially in Sulaymaniyah, and Why the Kurds could not secure their rights, especially with the British. A historical sociological analysis is also being made of the events that occurred during this period of traditional and patrimonial power in the view of Max Weber. In traditional power, governance is in the hands of the tribal chief or family. In this kind of governance, the power of patrimony, which Weber had used for the Middle East, was observed. The extension of family power into society is based on the power of the father and children within the family. Other characteristics of this type of power are the complete reliance of the system of power and decision-making on the personality of the president or the king. That is, consultation with experts in power management is not considered, but sometimes, in such powers, people close to people influence the first person according to their interests (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2017; Eisenberg, 1998). With the help of Patrimonial ideas, attempts are made to show how both Sheikh Mahmud's rules were governed during the British rule in Mesopotamia, especially in Southern Kurdistan.

2. Nature and structure of Kurdish society under the first period of Shaykh Mahmud's rule

One of the fundamental factors that Kurdish opponents have been able to understand the social structures and revolutions of the Kurdish nation, to a large extent, finds itself the family and tribal interests. Because the leadership of most of the Kurdish people's revolutions had in mind the interests of the family and tribe, their decisions were also primarily based on individual understanding. Therefore, many British military and political officials, for example, Arnold Wilson, who came from the British Empire in India, believed that the inhabitants of the occupying areas, which have a tribal structure, had no experience and ability to govern themselves. Therefore, they should be managed under the supervision of direct British representatives. Therefore, they wanted to repeat India's experience in Kurdistan through the tribal institution led by the tribal chief (Edmonds, 1957A; McDowall, 2004; Kaymaz, 2014). As mentioned above, after the British entered Mesopotamia, especially the Kurdish regions, due to the weak economic situation, the British decided to give the region's power to the Kurdish tribes themselves to manage them. Because the British, having experience with this type of ruling in India, considered it one of the most appropriate methods of management that suited the nature of the region at that time.

Therefore, the British considered formulating their policies in the region, especially Mesopotamia, so they sent Major Noel to the Kurdish areas. After his visit, he proposed the establishment of three Kurdish political centres under British rule as follows: Central Kurdistan, which is Mosul, is the centre of this part. The Western Kurdistan was the centre of Diyarbakir, with most of the Kurdish areas of the Ottoman Empire in the region, and Southern Kurdistan, which consists of Sulaymaniyah, Erbil, Rwanduz, Kirkuk, Kifri and Khanaqin, which is the capital of Southern Kurdistan had to be Sulaymaniyah (Kaymaz, 2014; McDowall, 2004).

However, Wilson believed that their work with the Kurds must secure and protect the border for Mesopotamia, unlike what Major Noel proposed. All the positions and basis of working with the Kurds must be to provide assurance boundaries for Mesopotamia. He was like this: Such a border should not be searched in the plains, but it should be found in the mountains of Kurdistan, which requires the existence of a tribal policy (McDowall, 2004). Therefore, the British views and strategies were based on the boundaries of defense capabilities because Britain had financial problems then. Hence, the connection of the Mosul district, especially the Kurdistan areas, will help them militarily to monitor the mountainous borders that fall into the plains to prevent the continuing threats of the Turks—defending the plains required twice as much force than defending the mountainous areas in Kurdistan (Jwaideh, 2006; McDowell, 2005). As the researcher explained, the British decided to give the Kurdish regions to themselves under British supervision because this would protect Mesopotamia from the threats of the Kemalist Turks. After all, the Turks considered Mosul as their territory and threatened to take it away. Direct defense of these areas from the Turkish threat to the British was impossible because it required much force and financial resources, which was difficult for the British authorities. The Kurds in the region were, therefore, the best factor in empowering them to defend themselves against Turkish threats.

Shaykh Mahmud told his British that he agreed with their wishes if a Kurdish government was established under the supervision of the Shaykh. Therefore, the British considered their interests on the border of Southern Kurdistan and the Turkish threat; they considered Shaykh Mahmud's request and decided to make Shaykh the ruler of Sulaymaniyah (Jwaideh, 2006). However, after taking power, Shaykh Mahmud moved against the British, tried to expand the areas under his control, and built secret relations with the Turks to ensure their support for this expansion. When the British felt that Shaykh Mahmud was using his power extensively to establish relations with the Turks, without considering that Shaykh Mahmud had the power, he was with the help and support of the British. It caused the British to be bored with Shaykh and made the British authorities, especially Arnold Wilson, tried to restrict Shaykh's border power. In particular, Major Soane decided to replace Major Noel for this purpose (Kaymaz, 2014: 285 McDowell, 2005).

These restrictions on Shaykh Mahmud's power led to anger and weakened and completely broke down his relationships with the British (Jwaideh, 2006). Shaykh Mahmud stood up to the British by fighting, injuring, and arresting several people, and expelled the British from Sulaymaniyah on 23rd May 1919. This victory encouraged Shaykh Mahmud to try to control other parts of Kurdistan. These victories led to Shaykh unilaterally introducing himself as the ruler of the whole of Kurdistan. Nevertheless, the British tried to stand up to their forces with a large military force and advanced weapons in Bazian Pass. Shaykh Mahmud was wounded in the same battle; they were taken hostage and finally expelled to India. This ended the first rule of Shaykh Mahmud (Wehrey, 2002; McDowall, 2004).

If analyzing the power and governance of Shaykh Mahmud at this stage, according to the evidence presented, Shaykh Mahmud tried to follow a traditional patrimonial power in its own rule that he should take advantage of his closest people and decide on the situation according to his thinking. This means that his governance system contradicts rationality/procuracies, in which all social institutions participate in decision-making. For example, Jwaideh (2006) illustrated that Edmonds pointed out that these reactions to the limits to the rule of Shaykh Mahmud by the British were not in line with the nature and personality of the Shaykh. He was very tired of limiting his power to the areas specified. Even in the Turkish era, he, as an official citizen, had instilled fear in the city's heart through his associates. However, now he is officially ruled by Noel's advisory board.

Looking at the character of Kurdish society during the primary period of Shaykh Mahmud's rule uncovers numerous fundamental perspectives, such as complex interactions between clan and family interests shaped the Kurdish rule and its responses to external forces, particularly British colonial policy. It was decided to use the tribal institutions in the Kurdish areas as a form of indirect power by the British forces to control the borders of Mesopotamia. This decision may be due to the experience of the British in India because the British had financial problems on the one hand and fear of the Kemalist Turks approaching the Kurds on the other. As a result, cooperation between Shaykh Mahmud and the British was disrupted because Shaykh Mahmud tried to use his power and influence by ignoring the British. This eventually led to the expulsion of the British from Sulaymaniyah by Sheikh Mahmud. It can be noted that the administration of Sheikh Mahmud's rule resembled a traditional hereditary paradigm, which highlighted individual power in decision-making, which was contrary to the expectations of obedience imposed by British colonialism.

What is remarkable about Shaykh Mahmud's rule in the first phase is that it showed the complex elements in Kurdish culture between the tendency to self-rule on the one hand and colonial intervention on the other. The contention between ordinary power structures and outside pressures features the fundamental inconsistencies between independence and outer control. However, it caused the expense of increased instability and brutality; Shaykh Mahmud's rebellion against English limitations exhibits the Kurdish organization's tirelessness even with pioneer burdens. This period exhibits the Kurdish society's continuous fight for sovereignty and self-determination, which opposing interests, regional politics, and historical legacies have influenced. The primary period of Shaykh Mahmud's rule laid out the establishment for impending challenges and desires chasing after Kurdish autonomy and character, as events that followed would illustrate.

3. The second period of Shaykh Mahmud's rule

After the expulsion of Shaykh Mahmud to India, the situation in the Kurdish regions was heading towards more confusion. On the one hand, Shaykh's supporters demanded his return. On the other hand, the propaganda was spread that the Kemalist Turks wanted to attack the region, especially the Mosul district. Therefore, the British feared this instability would spread to Sulaymaniyah. They should have thought of a solution to remove the threat of the Turks from the Rwanduz and its surroundings. Therefore, the British considered establishing a Kurdish ruler to calm this situation. Therefore, they tried to get closer to the Kurds, and at the same time, they were looking for a Kurdish person to adapt to their goals, and his interests should be more important than the public and national interests. However, after several people

tested, they failed to find a suitable person so that they could calm the situation. Finally, they were forced to think about the return of Shaykh Mahmud because he was considered a strong person to gather around him and calm the situation (Jwaideh, 2006).

There were many changes when Shaykh Mahmud returned to Sulaymaniyah in September 1922. One of the events was that the Cairo Conference was chaired by Winston Churchill, the minister of the Colonial Ministry, in March 1921, in the presence of British political and military experts. The fundamental goal of the conference was for the region in general and Iraq in particular to protect Britain's power and interests (McDowall, 2004). If it looks at the situation in the Kurdish regions after the removal of Sheikh Mahmud from power, the situation in the region deteriorated, primarily due to the threats of the Kemalist Turks who wanted to return to the Kurdish regions. Therefore, it cannot be controlled by different Kurdish personalities except Sheikh Mahmud. Therefore, if we look at the family power of Sheikh Mahmud, there are positive aspects of this type of power to control the population of the region who are both used to family power, and they also prefer this type of power to some extent as a leader who takes power democratically.

However, at the Cairo (Egypt) conference, political officers who supported the Kurds could change Churchill's opinion on the issue of Kurdish rights. According to Churchill, the Kurds who fall within the Arab state, supported by an Arab army, maybe neglectful towards the Kurdish nation and create problems for them. Nevertheless, at the same time, Wilson, Gertrude Bell, and Percy Cox, who attended the Cairo Conference, convinced Churchill and told him the Kurdish issue would be resolved. As a result, they decided on the Kurds differently, and the idea of creating an independent Kurdistan in the south would be marginalized entirely as part of Iraq. Finally, the conference members concluded that Faisal became the king of Iraq with the help of the British to rule Iraq (Arikanli, 2010).

Interestingly, it was the issue of Kurdish areas for King Faisal, which was not only strategic and natural resources such as oil. Instead, King Faisal told the British he could not do so if the Kurdish areas were not annexed to Iraq. This proposal of King Faisal, not only because of the external threat but if the Sunni Kurds were not with the Iraqi state, he could not maintain a balance in Iraq between the Shiite sect majority and the Sunni sect minority (Kaymaz, 2014:290-291; McDowall, 2004).

On the other hand, the British were appropriate to annex Kurdish areas to Iraq because they needed a more considerable number of military forces to protect the new Iraqi state to protect the new Iraqi state. Because the Kemalist Turkish forces had achieved a great victory over their opponents, they once again talked about the return of the city of Mosul to their control. For this purpose, they began to spread pan-Islamism propaganda in the region (Eskender, 2001; Kilic, 2018). This shows that some people believed that the British decided the region's fate from the beginning. However, the British had different opinions, especially in the Cairo Conference on Iraq and Southern Kurdistan. These differences were resolved due to changes in the region and over time.

As mentioned above, based on these tensions in the region, a meeting was organised by the British (Major Soane) with the city elders for these tensions in the region, dissolving the cold relationship between them. The British authorities said the British government had decided to establish a Kurdish ruler in the city and leave Sulaymaniyah by the British. Therefore, it was proposed that Shaykh Qadir, the younger brother of Shaykh Mahmud, should take over as the supervisor of government institutions to protect Sulaymaniyah from the threats of the Turks and the opposition tribes. However, the Kurds suggested that Shaykh Mahmud return, which can be said that Shaykh Qadir, the brother of Shaykh Mahmud, had a high hand in this proposal (McDowall, 2004; Jwaideh, 2006).

It is worth mentioning that the British had previously transferred Shaykh Mahmud to Kuwait on the pretext of India's air conditioning for his health. So, in September 1922, it was decided to return to Baghdad from Kuwait to meet with Wilson and King Faisal to determine how to establish a Kurdish government. Shaykh Mahmud also promised to help the Kurds with the right to self-determination in the League of Nations Wilson if Shaykh Mahmud prevented the Kemalist Turks and tried to suppress the unrest in the region (Edmonds, 1957A: 303-304;

Wehrey, 2002: 26; McDowall, 2004). After the return of Shaykh Mahmud to Kurdistan and the completion of his reception ceremony, he announced his cabinet in October 1922 and declared Sulaymaniyah the capital of his rule (Gorgas, 2008: 540; Edmonds, 1957A). Meanwhile, Shaykh Mahmud's cabinet was as follows: His cabinet consists of tribal chiefs and close associates, without regard to the expertise in management, which can benefit from their abilities and expertise in his governance (Gorgas, 2008: 540). Although there are comments on Sheikh Mahmud's behavior in administering his powers and entrusting some of them to inexperienced people, it is interesting that the British political commanders came to believe that the nature of the Kurdish population was such that a family figure like Sheikh Mahmud It could control the situation and the population of the area. Therefore, the British failed in several attempts to appoint another suitable person to normalize the region and finally decided to return Sheikh Mahmud.

However, what is interesting is that after his government's announcement, Shaykh Mahmud acted against expectations and quickly pretended to lead a particular area because his rule of governance in Sulaymaniyah did not cross. Also, he thought that the British would not take any steps in the interest of the Kurdish nation except for their interests. Therefore, instead of opposing the Turks, he, as promised to the British and King Faisal, began to exchange letters and sent a delegation to Turkey to establish relations with them to ensure their support for his rule. This attempt was made to return to his religious background and those close to him, known as supporters of Turks (Durham, 2010: 126-128; Edmonds, 1957B). As Gertrude Bell said on this subject, "She did not doubt the position of Shaykh Mahmud on this issue, and Bell stresses that the Shaykh's position was under the strong influence of the men around him (Jwaideh, 2006). According to her, these men encouraged Shaykh to take a harsh and competitive attitude towards the British instead of encouraging him to hold a peaceful and spontaneous dialogue.

This shows that the rule of Shaykh Mahmud was the dominant traditional regime or a patrimonial power. If the decisions of Shaykh Mahmud and his cabinet members are examined, it can be seen that the authorities and decisions had been in his own hands. Shaykh Mahmud's closest people needed to be more experienced in power management and unfamiliar with Weberian's rational bureaucracy system. These people influenced the decisions of the Shaykh according to their interests, mainly resorting to the Turks to support them; on the other hand, it can be noted that this traditional form of governance in the rule of Shaykh Mahmud, with the contemporary thoughts that the British had to run a bureaucratic and rational rule in the region. From the beginning, the British wanted to create power or governance and had a completely new administrative system based on the abstract concept of the state. As Jwaideh (2006) pointed out, Gertrude Bell's views on the rule of Shaykh Mahmud, "the weakness and incompetence of Shaykh Mahmud's revolution was that he did not destroy the thousands of people behind him, his active supporters and loyalists from three hundred". Bell's view may deliberately reduce the importance of Shaykh Mahmud's rule. However, it shows that he tried to follow the traditional patronage power and make decisions unilaterally regardless of the situation the British supported to return and take power Shaykh Mahmud.

It can be seen, at the end of November of the same year (1922), Shaykh Mahmud chose the title of King Kurdistan instead of the name of the rule and the promises he made to the British and King Faisal to remove the Kemalist Turks and suppress the instability of Kurdish areas (McDowall, 2004). In response to these behaviors, the British and Iraq stated in December 1922, as follows: Both governments recognized the rights of the Kurd nation and created a local government for the Kurds within the Kurdish-Iraqi border. Between themselves, the form of the government, and the border they want to cover. It is worth mentioning that those who had prepared this statement knew that the Kurds were more scattered among themselves instead of reaching a consensus and understanding. Therefore, the announcement aimed to remove Shaykh Mahmud from Kemalist Turks, preventing the expansion and eliminating the chaos and propaganda of the Turkish supporters in Sulaymaniyah (McDowall, 2004; Durham, 2010). Shaykh Mahmud's attempts during this period showed his diplomatic, political, and management weakness and inexperience.

According to McDowall (2004), when the British and Iraq felt that Shaykh Mahmud continued to broadly demand power and establish secret relations with the British opponents, he accused Shaykh Mahmud of retreating from the treaties he had agreed on without their consent. Therefore, they decided to cancel the rule, and once again, the city of Sulaymaniyah was reoccupied at the end of May 1923.

The Kurdish regions experienced significant instability after Sheikh Mahmud's deportation to India. His deportation led to further tensions on the one hand and the aggression of the Kemalist Turks on the other, which led to further unrest. In response, the British tried to protect their interests and restore stability in the region by appointing a Kurdish person to defuse tensions and reduce the threat of the Kemalist Turks. After trying several people to suit their goals, they must still fulfill the British requests. After assessing Sheikh Mahmud's return from exile, the British realized the importance of Sheikh Mahmud's role and ability to unite the population and bring stability to the region.

Consequential geopolitical factors, such as the Cairo Conference chaired by Winston Churchill, significantly impacted the developments that followed Sheikh Mahmud's return to Sulaymaniyah in September 1922. Despite the change in alliances and the threat of the Kemalist Turks, emphasized at the conference, Britain still had strategic interests in the region, especially in Iraq and Kurdish areas. It can be noted that the motivation for Sheikh Mahmud's return from India to Sulaymaniyah was due to the tribal dependence on family power that the Kurdish people accepted for the region's stability. Regardless, the contrast between established power structures and new bureaucratic models – espoused by the UK – underscores the difficulty of managing the region characterized by conflicting interests and inherited traditions.

4. Conclusion

This article attempted to demonstrate the situation between the two rulers of Shaykh Mahmud in the Kurdish areas under a historical sociological analysis of the traditional power of patrimonial power. The reasons for the British support of Shaykh Mahmud's request to become Kurdistan's ruler in Sulaymaniyah and the reasons for the fall of the first rule of Shaykh Mahmud were presented. On the other hand, the factors supporting Shaykh Mahmud's return from India to Kurdistan should be shown, such as the unrest that had hit the region, especially the threat of Kemalist Turks to return to the Mosul district. Also, the British decision on Faisal to be the king of Iraq at the Cairo Congress and, finally, the annexation of Southern Kurdistan to Iraq, especially after Shaykh Mahmud's attempted expansion of his power and unilateral decision to introduce himself to the king of Kurdistan, and regardless of the factors that the British had supported to return to India and defending against Turkish threats.

According to the evidence presented and historical sociological analysis given in this article, the results have been achieved that those who believed that the British have the primary purpose of their only purpose was to ensure security for Iraq through the Kurdistan regions therefore, in the end, turned their backs on the Kurdish and Shaykh Mahmud's self this article showed that the British disagreed on how to manage Mesopotamia and Southern Kurdistan at home until the passing of time and changes in the region will decide on an opinion.

However, it can be noted that this traditional system of Shaykh Mahmud followed and was incompatible with the contemporary thoughts of the British to govern a bureaucratic and rational state. Because the British wanted to create power from the beginning, it should have a fully neo-modern bureaucracy based on the state's abstract. Nevertheless, this is different from Shaykh Mahmud's traditional patronage system. This has shown the weakness and inexperience of Shaykh Mahmud in diplomacy, politics and management because it could have continued its rules better and based on rational power.

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