Iraqi AlAmal Association

Results of the Field Survey
For Needs and Opinions of
The Poor in Iraq

September 2008

Supervisor

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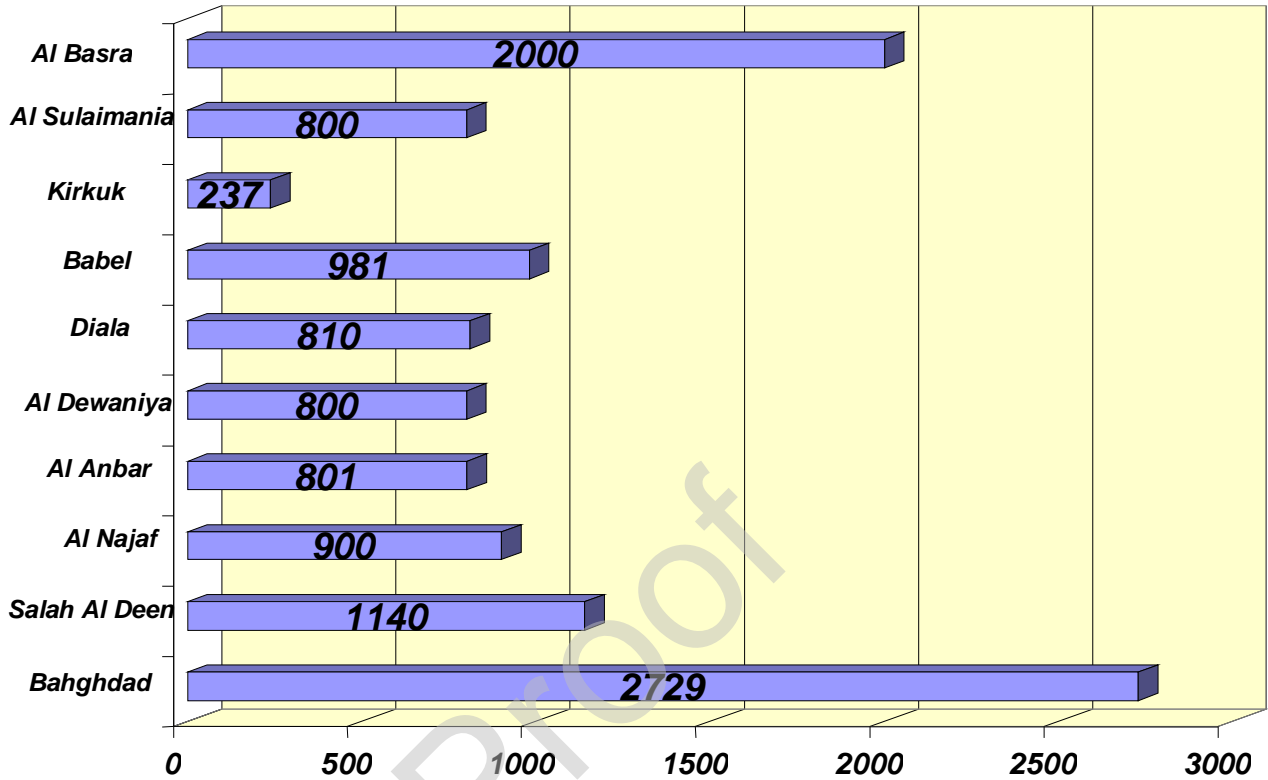## College of Arts

University of Baghdad

Methodology and study group:

Alongside the food meals project (Iftar Ramadan), a questionnaire was given to the families benefiting from the project. The main provider of the family was asked to fill in the questionnaire then return it to us. The total 1ry sample population was over 26000 families, questionnaires returned were about 20000. After a primary check up to eliminate the incomplete or inaccurate forms, a large number had to be neglected leaving 11198 to be considered with high credibility in answering the questions.

Thus, the final studied population consists of 11198 units, from 10 governorates from northern, middle and southern of Iraq & according to the population density in each. Also keeping in mind that this is a stratified random sample including poor families from the governorates where the Iftar project was held.

In this survey, social screening was applied, with a family being the study unit. We have 11198 families representing the studied group.
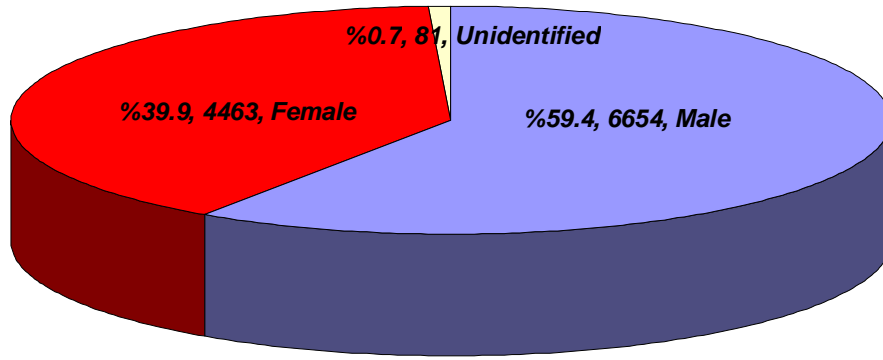
Table and Figure (1) show the geographical distribution of the study population:

Governorate	Number	Percentage
Baghdad	2729	24.4
Saladdeen	1140	10.2
Al Najaf	900	8
Al Anbar	801	7.1
Al Dewaniya	800	7.1
Diala	810	7.2
Babel	981	8.8
Kirkuk	237	2.1
Al Sulaimania	800	7.1
Al Basra	2000	17.9
Total	11198	%100

We can notice that the studied group is distributed over 10 governorates with the highest percentage in Baghdad (24.4%) followed by Al Basra (17.9%) then Saladdeen (10.2%) and so on. The population density and number of families living in poverty were taken in notice during the sampling.

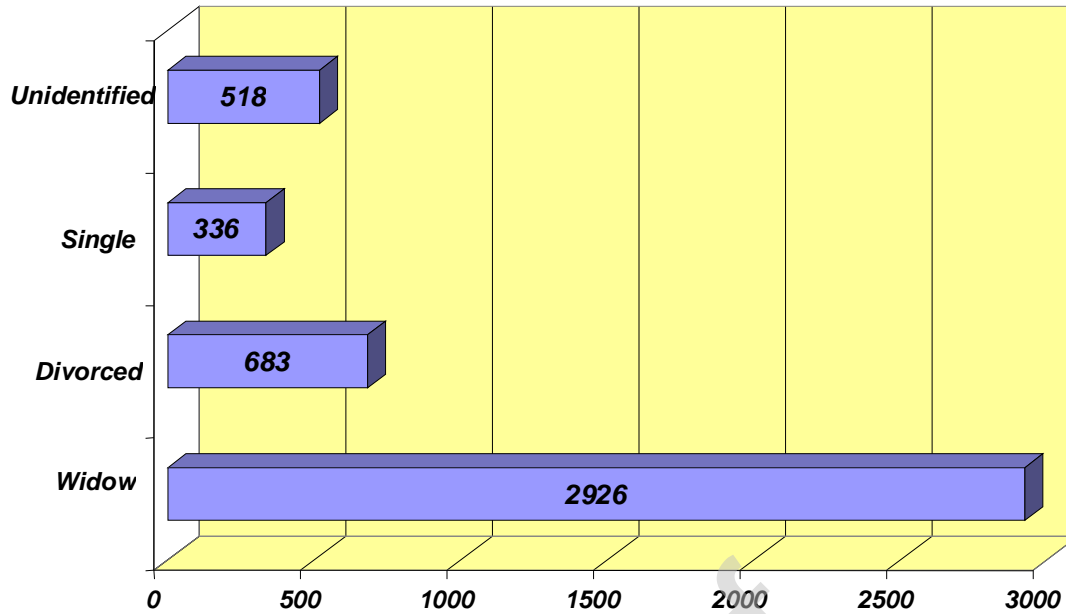# Figure and table (2) show the gender of the main family provider:

Gender	Number	%
Male	6654	59.4
Female	4463	39.9
Unidentified	81	0.7
Total	11198	100%

In the above table the study population was divided according to gender of the main provider for the family into males (59.4%), females (39.9%) and unidentified (0.7%).

These findings need an observing pause. If you consider that an Arab, Middle Eastern family is normally led by the male, and that that female only takes over the family in case of death of the male provider, these statistics (39.9%) are considered relatively very large. Trying to find the roots of this finding, we'll discover that the wars and violent attacks on Iraq for the last 3 decades resulted in an increase in number of widows and orphans, a large number of those living below the line of poverty. This problem requires deep and intensive studies to find solutions, as these families need constant and special care.

The researcher would like to emphasize on the fact that the studied group selection was completely random so these results may represent accurate indicators, and can be one of the significant outputs on the bad living conditions on the ground, needing further investigation and studies.
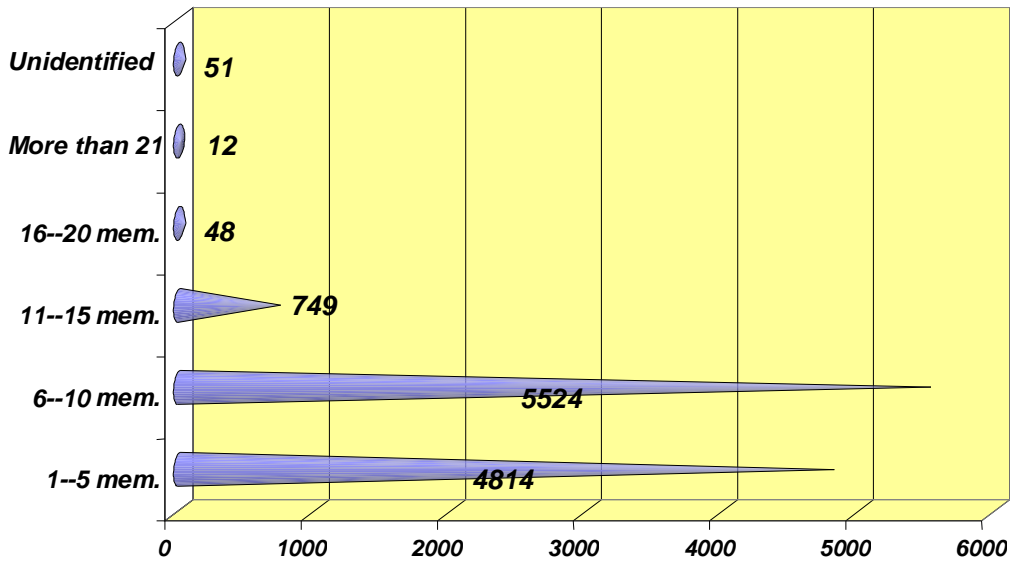
Figure and table (3) demonstrate the marital status of the female provider:

Marital Status	Number	%
Widow	2926	65.6
Divorced	683	15.3
Single	336	7.5
Unidentified	518	11.6
Total	4463	100%

The above table is a continuation for the previous one. The marital status of women providing for families were further investigated and divided into widows (65.6%) – a result that emphasizes our previous finding- divorced (15.3%) –another very indicative number- and single women (7.5%), which shows how the dangerous the situation is in Iraq, as war and violence target men especially young ones and that consequently leads to a lot of females losing the opportunity to get married. There are many studies on this issue confirming the widespread of spinsterhood among females and the fact that it's becoming quite a visible problem in Iraq.
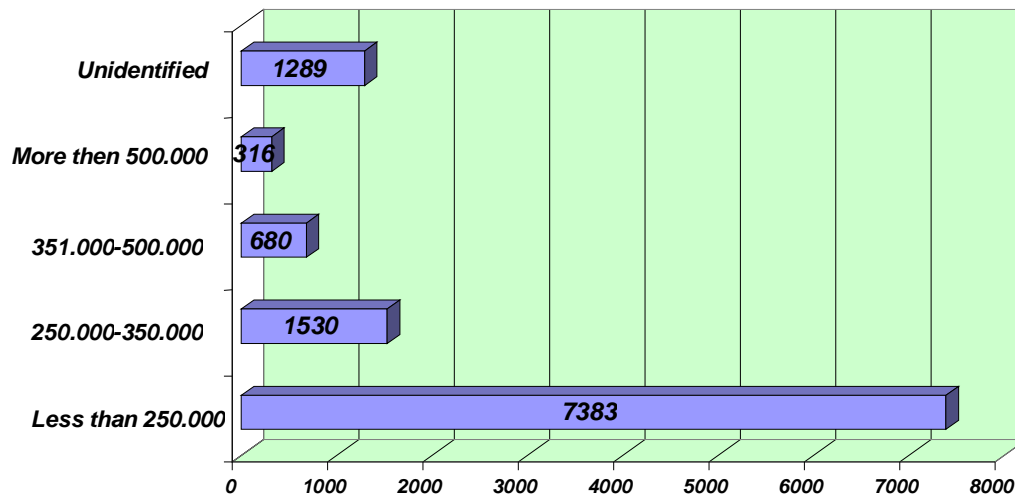
Figure and table (4) demonstrate the number of family members:

Family members	Number	%
1--5 members	4814	43
6--10 members	5524	49.3
11--15 members	749	6.7
16--20 members	48	0.4
21 or more	12	0.1
Unidentified	51	0.5
Total	11198	100%

The Iraqi family is considered a large one, a usual case in Arab countries. The category (6-10 members) is the most common (49.3%), then comes (1-5 members) by (43%). Here we would like to mention 2 points; the first is that these are poor families so it is common to have multiple pregnancies among females of that social class. The second point is a serious need for the government to start a national program to organize and control the size of the family as this major increase is completely disproportionate to the state of the Iraqi economy. It is also noticed that the only method the government used for birth control is supporting governmental employees with 10.000 Iraqi Dinar (the equivalent of 8.5$) per child and for only 4 children. This is practically the only measure taken by the authorities to control birth rates in an attempt to improve the Iraqi economy.

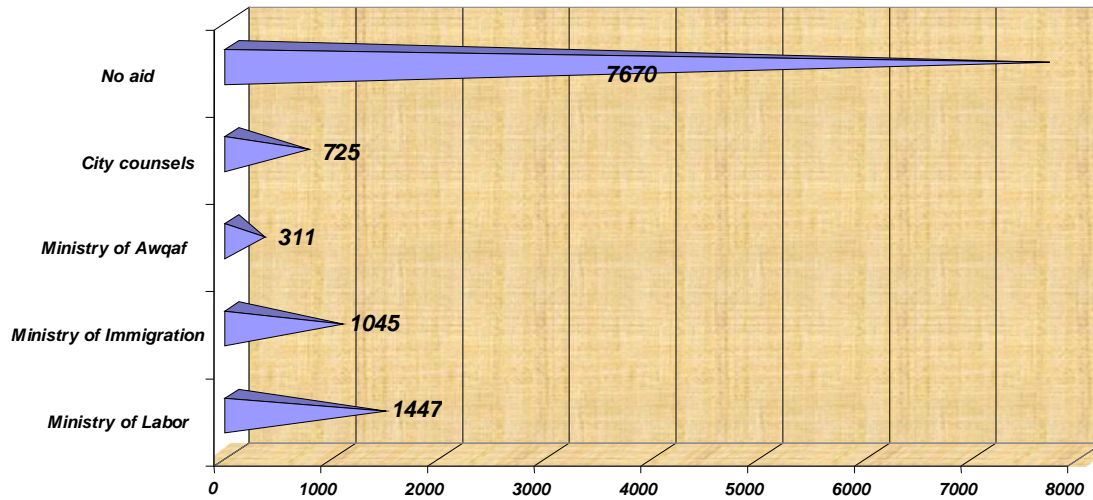## Figure and table (5) show the monthly income of the family:

Monthly Income (Dinar)	Number	%
Less than 250.000	7383	65.9
250.000-350.000	1530	13.7
351.000-500.000	680	6.1
More than 500.000	316	2.8
Unidentified	1289	11.5
Total	11198	100%

For a clearer vision on the previous issue, in this table we find that families with income less than 250.000 Iraqi Dinar –the equivalent of 210$- were (65.9%) i.e. the majority. Further analysis of these figures through dividing the total family income in USD by the number of family members shows that the share of a single family member is 420$ per year, i.e. 1.1$ per day. While the international line of poverty is set by 500$/year, then those 65.9% of families are internationally considered below the line of poverty.

Another observation is that the major criteria in these families are poverty accompanied by a large number of family members. Of course this can be justified by the fact that the study was originally aimed at lower social classes but this doesn't mean that it can't reveal the extent of poverty in the Iraqi society.

More details can be seen in the following charts especially those concerning basic needs available for lots of other societies while Iraqis are deprived of them.

Figure and table (6) show the extent of official aids:

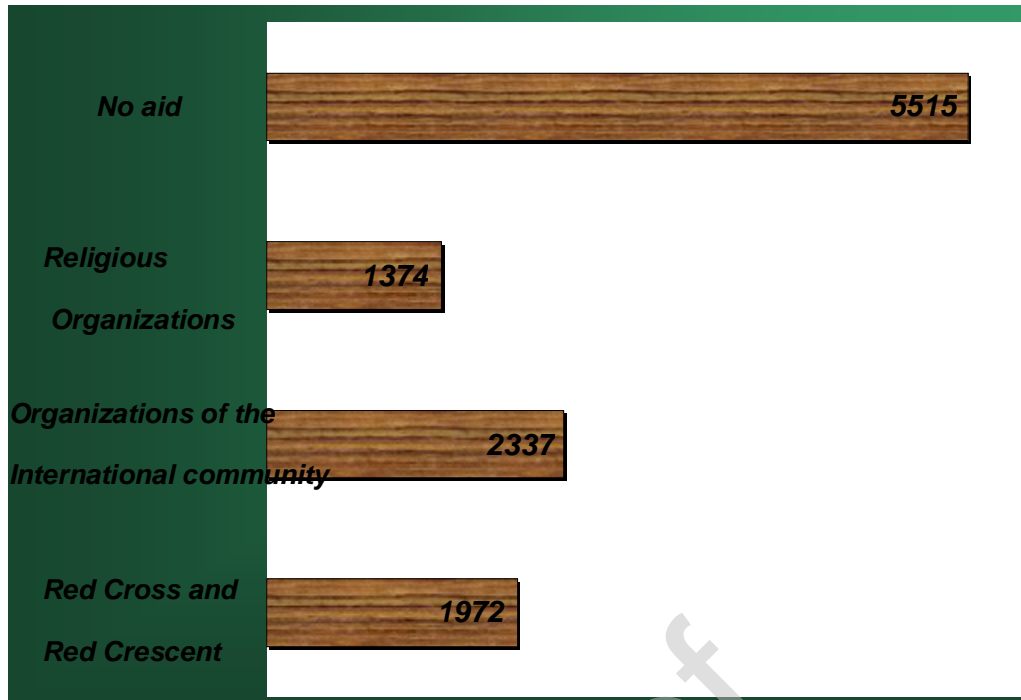| Source of Aid	Number	%
Ministry of Labour	1447	12.9
Ministry of Displacement and Migration	1045	9.3
Ministry of Endowment (Awqaf)	311	2.8
City counsels	725	6.5
No Aid	7670	68.5
Total	11198	100%

Since the studied group includes poor families, it is obvious that they are in constant need of aid and support from both official and non official organizations. That's why we approached the family with a question whether they received aid or financial support first from official sources.

It turned out the majority of the families didn't receive any kind of aid from official organizations (the government), this category was (68.5%) of the study group. Which is a very serious issue since The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs -the ministry responsible for helping the poor in Iraq- only aided 12.9% of them, while The Department of Displaced and Migration -which is responsible for supporting the displaced inside Iraq- only aided 9.3% of them, especially if we knew that (6781) of the studied group are of the internally displaced due to sectarian violence. Those represent more than half of the study group and suffer from terrible conditions.

As for The ministry of Awqaf/Endowment, it only aided 2.8% of them, city councils helped 6.5%, and as we mentioned before, the majority didn't receive any form of aid from the government which has a negative influence on the people and their feelings about governmental effort, something you will notice in the questions related to the elections and people's attitude towards the candidate lists for the provincial assemblies.

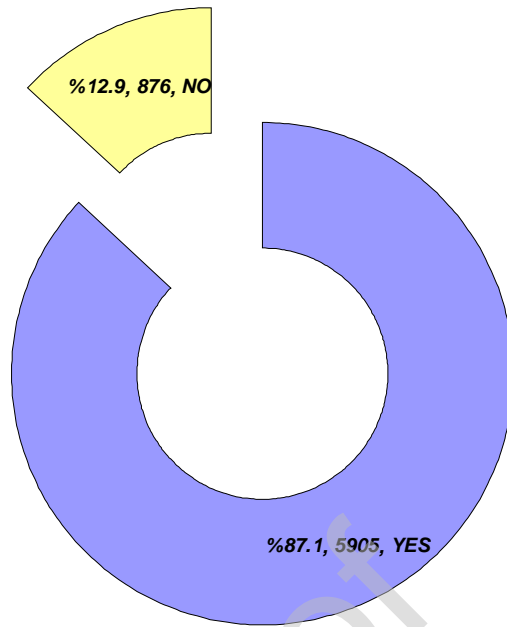# Figure and table (7) show the extent of non official aid:

Source of Aid	Number	%
Red Cross/Red Crescent	1972	17.6
Organizations of international community	2337	20.9
Religious Organizations	1374	12.3
No Aid	5515	49.2
Total	11198	100%

Non Governmental organizations were not much better than the governmental ones, although little difference was noticed in the percentage of people not receiving any form of aid; here it was slightly less than half of the sample (49.2%). The largest share came from Organizations of international community (20.9%) a percentage that equals those of ministries of labor and immigration together, which emphasizes on the efficiency of the civil society organizations even though more involvement is expected from them. Next comes The Red Crescent (17.6%) then religious organizations (12.3%).

To review the last 2 tables, we find that non official organizations were better help to the poor than official ones, yet, it is still not meeting the needs of this social class.
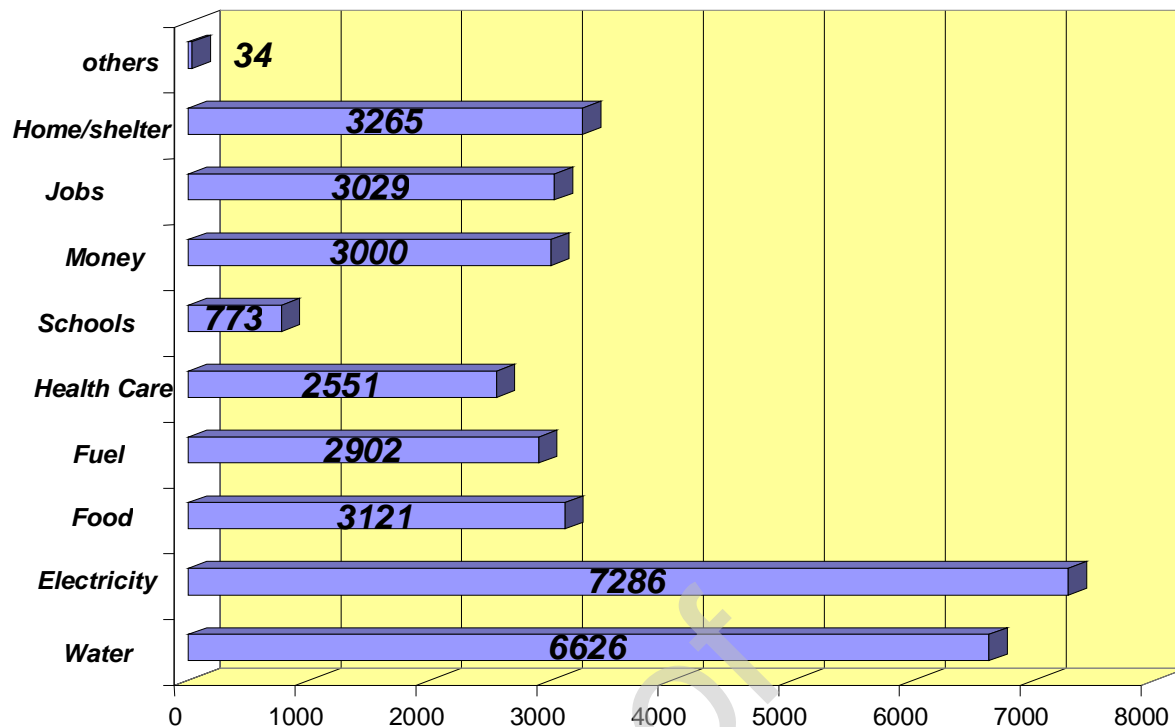
Figure and table (8) demonstrate whether families want to go back to their homes in case of improvement of the security situation:

%12.9, 876, NO

%87.1, 5905, YES

Displaced wish to move back	Number	%
Yes	5905	87.1
No	876	12.9
Total	6781	100%

Immigrants and the displaced form 60.5% of the study population due to their severe state of poverty as illuminated by the study. They were asked whether they would like to go back to their homes in case the security situation was improved, 87.1% agreed to go back which is a good motive for the government to work harder on security issues, while 12.9% said they refuse to go back even if it got better, an answer that shows constant fear of the deterioration of the situation and the return of sectarian violence due to the fragility of security in a lot of areas as proved by many reports.

Figure and table (9) demonstrate the basic needs for the family:

Basic needs of a family	Number	%
Electricity	7286	22.3
Water	6626	20.3
House/shelter	3256	10.1
Food	3121	9.6
Jobs for the unemployed	3029	9.3
Money	3000	9.2
Fuel	2902	8.9
Health Care	2551	7.8
Children schooling	773	2.4
Others	34	0.1
Total	32578	100%

The subjects were asked to choose the three most important needs for their families out of a list of ten; the results came out as shown in the table above, electricity came first in the pyramid of needs with a percentage of 22.3%, next came water (20.3%) then Housing and shelter (10.1%).

These three came first, this simple triad that worries simple Iraqi families makes us wonder if there is another country in the world with resources similar to the ones in Iraq and people still suffering from the lack of this electricity-water-home triad. This particular point means that they leave with no homes, no water and no electricity, which subsequently leads us to thinking what exactly has been done to help these people for the last 5 and a half years..

Next in the pyramid come another triad, food (9.3%), job opportunities (9.3%) and money (9.2%).
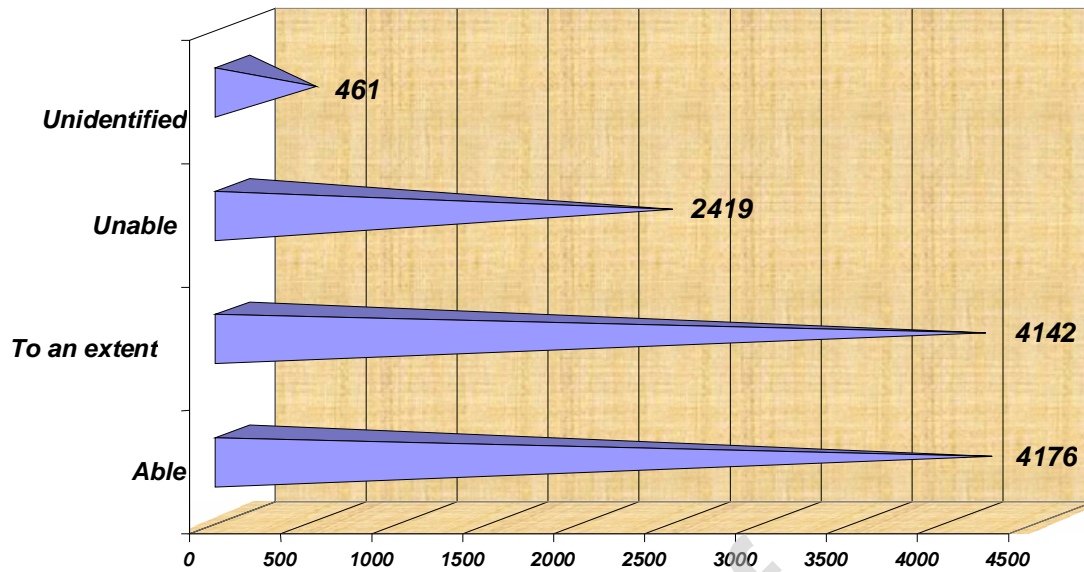
This triad too cannot be underestimated as no job means no money and no food.

The third triad consists of fuel (8.9%), health care (7.8%) and schools for children (2.4%), this triad I will call the services triad.

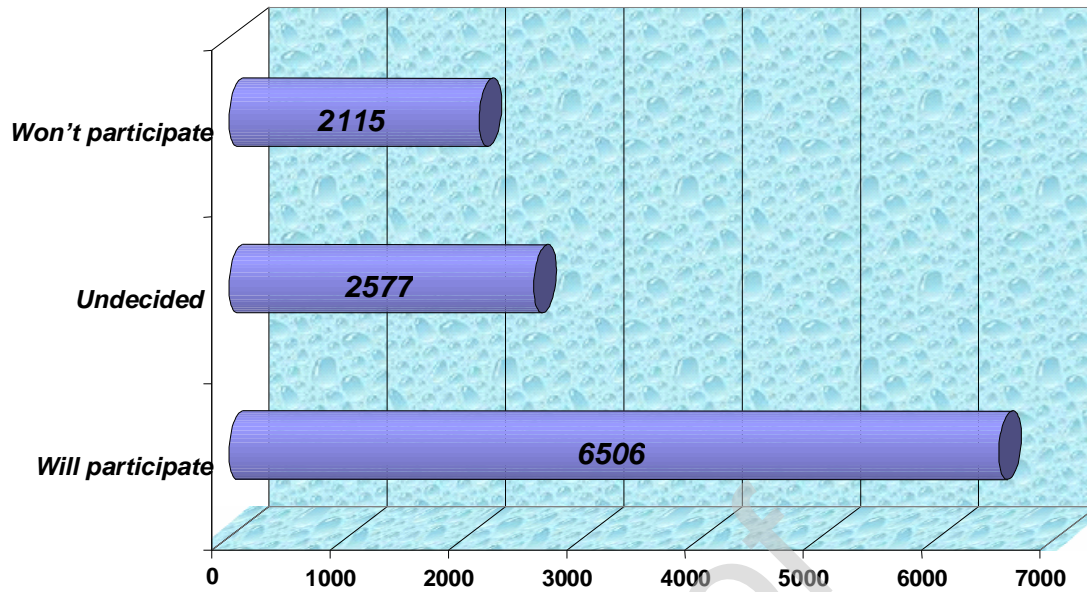This way we have the 3 triads (security-employment-services), and we will call them the triad of Iraq suffering.

Figure and table (10) show the subject's opinions on whether they think the government can meet their needs or not:

The government's ability	Number	%
Able	4176	37.3
To an extent	4142	37
Unable	2419	21.6
Unidentified	461	4.1
Total	11198	100%

To what extent can the government meet people's basic needs, the ones we mentioned in the previous table? This question was asked to subjects of the survey. The answers came slightly towards the positive side as 37.3% i.e. just over third think it is able to, 37% said to some extent while the negative opinion came the least with 21.4% who think the government is unable to provide them with their basic needs. The high percentage indicate that people still have hope and faith in government's ability to do something for the poor. While small percentage shows fading anticipation in government, also shows that trust in Gov. Ability is (37+ 37.3), while the government itself didn't take action. From the table above, the question is: when ability turn into action, this is that hope that Poor people in Iraq are waiting for.

Figure and table (11) demonstrate the subjects' desire to participate in the elections:
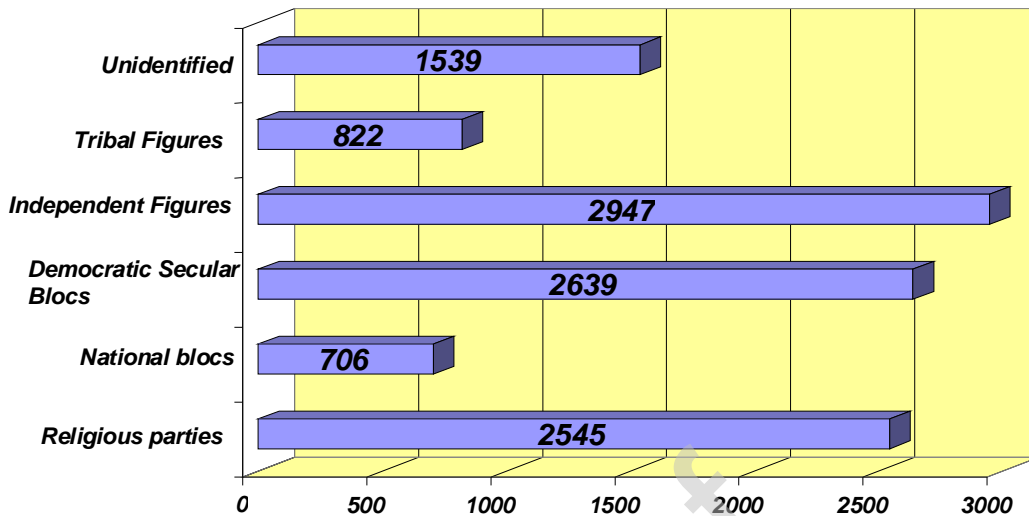

Participation in elections	Number	%
Will participate	6506	58.1
Undecided	2577	23
Won't participate	2115	18.9
Total	11198	100%

In the middle of the great poverty, need and hope in the government, we wondered about subjects' desire to participate in the upcoming elections whether by renewal of support or change. Subjects were asked to answer whether they do or do not, the slight majority (58.1%) said yes, they would participate while (23%) hesitated and said they are undecided yet. Only (18.9%) said they refuse to vote.

These stats make us feel optimistic about the upcoming elections as the majority of the poor, who form the largest social class in Iraq, they are going to vote, but the more important question to ask is who they will be voting for, A question that is answered in the following table.

Figure and table (12) show who the subjects will choose if they were to vote:

Chosen list	Number	%
Religious Parties	**2545**	**22.7**
National Blocs	**706**	**6.3**
Democratic Secular Blocs	**2639**	**23.7**
Independent Figures	**2947**	**26.3**
Tribal Figures	**822**	**7.3**
Unidentified	**1138**	**12.4**
Total	**11198**	**100%**

To answer the previous question we gave the subjects a set of choices to elect, being completely neutral while selecting these choices, no certain stream, party or political bloc was mentioned by name, but rather the overall orientation that controls them. They were categorized into religious, national, democratic/secular, independent and tribal.

Religious parties were put as the first option in the print to give it the advantage of 1ry selection as a lot of the subjects tend to pick the first choice for easiness and convenience. Even though, the results came as expected, a negative attitude towards religious parties and blocs, they came third after independent figures

(26.3%) with the largest support coming from Al Basra governorate. Second came democratic/secular blocs (23.7%), followed by religious parties third as we mentioned before, then tribal figures (7.3%) and national blocs (6.3%). The 13.7% left remained neutral or undecided.

These stats lead us to some new facts:

- The negative attitude from the Iraqi street towards religious parties who made it to the House of Representatives and government on previous elections and didn't offer anything, leading to a general sense of disappointment and frustration associated with them.

- People being more withdrawn to independent figures probably caused by the chaos and quotas as we have over 300 different streams, parties and blocs in Iraq. Something that led the voters to a state of confusion and a decision to drop all of them and respond to independent figures (26.3% of subjects)

- There is a rise in support of democratic and secular blocs, an indication of the recognition and awareness of the street to the process of separating religion from state.

- The Iraqi citizen is starting to come out of the tight circles around him restricting his thoughts generally, that's why he bluntly rejected tribal, national and religious sectarianism and chose to vote for it less. So we think that the Iraqi citizen is warning these blocs from continuing with their narrow thinking and inviting them to Iraq's vast arena of citizenship, which would represent all Iraqis.

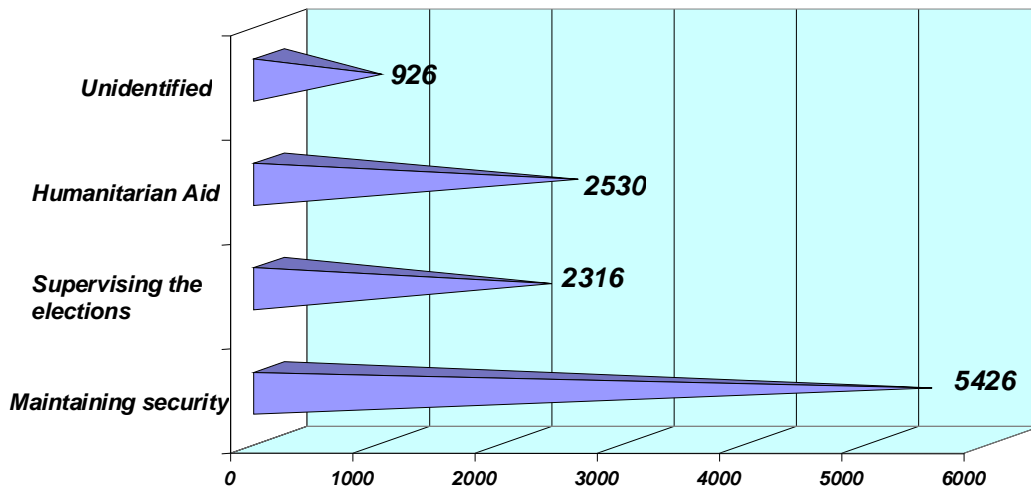## Table (13) demonstrates the relation between the residence area and the list the subjects will be voting for:

Governorate	Orientation of bloc						Total
	Unident.	Religious Parties	National Blocs	Democratic/ Secular blocs	Independent figures	Tribal figures	
Baghdad	427	579	106	828	656	133	2729
	15.6%	21.2%	3.9%	30.3%	24.0%	4.9%	100.0
Saladdeen	16	487	135	388	69	45	1140
	1.4%	42.7%	11.8%	34.0%	6.1%	3.9%	100.0
Al Najaf	9	388	56	234	120	93	900
	1.0%	43.1%	6.2%	26.0%	13.3%	10.3%	100.0
Al Anbar	2	52	4	273	79	391	801
	.2%	6.5%	.5%	34.1%	9.9%	48.8%	100.0%
Al Diwania	8	461	39	144	128	20	800
	1.0%	57.6%	4.9%	18.0%	16.0%	2.5%	100.0
Diala	42	149	46	270	262	41	810
	5.2%	18.4%	5.7%	33.3%	32.3%	5.1%	100.0
Babel	551	182	8	111	114	15	981
	56.2%	18.6%	0.8%	11.3%	11.6%	1.5%	100.0
Kirkuk	20	16	115	11	60	15	237
	8.4%	6.8%	48.5%	4.6%	25.3%	6.3%	100.0
Al Sulaimania	63	159	195	307	55	21	800
	7.9%	19.9%	24.4%	38.4%	6.9%	2.6%	100.0
Al Basra	401	72	2	73	1404	48	2000
	%20.1	%3.6	%0.1	%3.7	%70.2	%2.4	100%
Total	1539	2545	706	2639	2974	822	11198
	13.7%	22.7%	6.3%	23.7%	26.3%	7.3%	100.0%

The researcher didn't stop at who the subject chose to elect, but a deeper analysis to find out the ranking of each party in every governorate:

1) The Democratic/Secular blocs got the majority in 3 governorates (Baghdad, Diala, Al Sulaimania), and they came second in 4 governorates (Saladdeen, Al Anbar, Al Najaf, Al Diwania), so they have the highest chances in 7 of the 10 surveyed governorates. These stats can provide a road map for these particular parties in the next elections.

2) Religious parties won the majority of votes in 3 governorates only (Saladdeen, Al Najaf, Al Diwania) & they came second in Babel only, that's 3+1 governorates.

3) Independent candidates got their biggest support from Al Basra which ranked them first. They came second in Baghdad, Kirkuk &Diala.
The reason for Basra giving them the highest ranking is probably because that specific area was subjected to a lot of dispute over power due to its oil and location. That's why people of Al Basra feel disappointed with all parties and streams & decided to support Independent figures (70.2%) while 20.1% refused to specify a certain list. Thus, 90.3% of Al Basra citizens refuse to re-elect current parties, a serious finding that requires a separate study.

4) National blocs received majority in Kirkuk where the dispute between national sects Arabs, Turkmen and Kurds was the most prominent and the primary leading cause of political directions in this governorate.
The national blocs came second in Al Sulaimania, a point these parties should notice as the popularity seems to be shifting from them to democratic/sectarian blocs.

5) Tribal figures only won the support of one governorate which is Al Anbar, a natural result minding the fact that tribal involvement in this gov. to keep the security made it one of the safest and secure governorates in Iraq.

6) Babel was an undecided governorate as the majority of its people refused to name a specific list to vote for, but religious parties came second even if it was by a very small fraction (18.6%).

These are the primary readings of the geography of elections, should be followed by further detailed studies about each of these points as the elections and how Iraqi citizens feel about them is a very important issue.

<u>Figure and table (14) demonstrate the subjects opinions on the role of the United Nations in Iraq:</u>

The role of the UN	Number	%
Keeping security	5426	48.5
Supervising the elections	2316	20.7
Humanitarian aid	2530	22.6
Unidentified	926	8.2
Total	11198	100%

One last thing to ask the subjects was their opinion on the role the UN plays in Iraq, they were given 3 options, maintaining security came first (48.5%), which reflects the following:

1) The role the UN should be playing in Iraq, something they did in many other countries but fail to achieve it in Iraq.
2) The trust Iraqis give to this international power, maybe because of their frustration towards American and the coalition forces and the chaos they spread in Iraq which made them look up to the UN force because they don't think they have a special interest to stay in Iraq being international forces.

Secondly, came the humanitarian Aid (22.6%), something the UN is already working on even though not up to the expectations.

Third came supervising the elections (20.7%) and (8.2%) didn't mark a certain role. That's why the UN needs to reassess their role and try to improve their situation in Iraq.

Conclusion

After analyzing results of the questionnaire each in details, here we will enumerate the main conclusions of this study:

1- The number of families led by a woman is increasing drastically especially among the poor who form the study population. 39.9% of families have a woman instead of a man as the main provider due to widowhood (65.6%) caused by sectarian violence and older wars.

2- An Iraqi family gives birth to an average of more than 4 children, leading to an increase in population and more poverty. In this study, families of 6-10 members are the majority of 49.3%.

3- Most families have a monthly income less than 250.000 Iraqi Dinar, the equivalent of 210$, which means 420$/person/year, which is below the global line of poverty.

4- The majority of poor families didn't receive any form of aid from official organizations (68.5%) nor from non official ones (49.2%), a sign of deliberate negligence.

5- The majority of the forcibly displaced (87.1%) would like to go to their original homes in case of improved security situation.

6- The basic needs of a family were divided into 3 triads, the first is (electricity + water + shelter /home), the second is (food+ jobs+ money) and the third is (fuel + health care + schooling). The first priority was electricity, the last was schooling for children and the rest came in between.

7- The opinions of subjects of the studied group swung between how far the ability of government to respond to their needs, without settling to a majority, however, on this quest, the general trend is still positive, where (37.3%) see the government can, while 37% see it can but only to some extent, and (21.6%) refused its ability.

8- The majority of the study group would like to participate in the upcoming election (58.1%), (23%) hesitated and (18.9%) refused to participate.

9- Choices about who to choose in the upcoming elections differed, first came independent figures (26.3%), then democratic/secular blocs (23.7%) and back to third comes religious parties (22.7%) then tribal figures (7.3%) and national blocs (6.3%). As for the geographical distribution of these stats:

* The governorates Baghdad, Diala & Al Sulaimania supported democratic blocs as their first choice while Sala Al Deen, Al Najaf and Al Anbar and Al Diwania made it their second choice.

* Saladdeen, Al Najaf and Al Diwania supported religious parties as their first choice while the governorate of Babel ranked them second.

*Independent figures came first in Al Basra and second in Baghdad, Diala and Kirkuk.

*Tribal figures came first in Al Anbar only.

*National blocs are first in Kirkuk and second in Al Sulaimania.

* 6 governorates (Baghdad, Al Anbar, Diala, Kirkuk, Al Sulaimania and Al Basra) refused to make religious parties their first choice neither second but as third. That's 60% of the target population, which indicates the decrease in their popularity.

10- The biggest role Iraqis expect from the UN is contributing to keeping security followed by humanitarian aid then supervising the elections.