

Visualizing the Political Landscape

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Abstract

Analysts and decision-makers are not well supported by current intelligence tools in terms of defining problems, identifying collection requirements, and communicating both problems and analyses. The authors have developed a technique – the *issue-player matrix* (IPM) – to integrate these activities for a specific class of problems, with the expectation that this technique can be extended to other classes. The approach is designed to be easy to use and easily communicated. In this paper we present our technique for representing and visualizing a decision-making body with a case study from late 2004 projecting the key groups and the issues facing a future representative government in Iraq. In addition to defining and visualizing the problem, discussion will also include use of this approach to understanding the mental models of the analysts (e.g. prior and tacit knowledge and bias). The case study was supported by ARDA.

Introduction

Political analysts study *complex systems* – systems which are difficult to define accurately and impossible to forecast precisely. The issues of political analysis are sufficiently important that considerable effort has been devoted to the cultivation of expertise and exploration of technologies to address them, complexity notwithstanding¹. Although experts readily understand that analysis is inexact and prone to error, the inability of technological approaches to reflect this – let alone adapt to it – has been a major barrier to the adoption of analytical technologies.

A reasonable goal, then, is to develop technologies to illuminate, if not unravel, these analytical snarls. One technology that can assist the analytical process is modeling – developing minimal abstractions that capture the essence of a system's behavior. The goal of modeling is to assist analysts to do *better* what they already do well. Models can systematically encode and explore analysts' knowledge, allowing analysts to think about their problems more rigorously. Computer simulation of models allows analysts to systematically explore the causal outcomes of their abstracted versions of reality. The authors feel that even in the absence of simulation there is great value in the modeling process itself. For example, models can serve as a *lingua franca* within an analyst community, making it easier to share knowledge and insights, focusing attention on the sharp edges rather than struggling with fuzzy notions. Formal models also provide the ability to revisit reemerging issues at a later date.

¹ For a state-of-the-art appraisal within the intelligence community, see [Moore, et al]. The classic work from 1949 is [Kent]. A recent update, with an emphasis on psychology, can be found in [Heuer].

Traditionally, modeling is bound to simulation (hence the term *modeling and simulation*, or *M&S*). In the traditional M&S process, modelers replace analysts in the analytical process; they develop a model, run simulations, and present the results to decision makers. While this approach has met with some success, it is inappropriate for many complex systems. The problems are simply too complex and too dynamic for technical experts, who lack the requisite deep domain expertise, to model effectively. Often, by the time a full model is developed, simulations performed and results interpreted, the conditions and assumptions of the original model are no longer valid.

The study presented here followed an alternative approach to quantitative modeling of political systems. In this view, modelers support analysts in their tasks, much as the analysts support decision makers. Domain expertise is elicited from analysts and encoded into the model. Developing a useful initial abstraction is critical to the early success of the endeavor, so models are designed to be as streamlined and flexible as possible, allowing analysts to add, change or delete factors and assessments. As an analyst's model matures, technical experts can then perform simulations and present results to the analysts for interpretation. Shortcomings of the model (or models) are identified and the process iterated. Assumptions and biases are made explicit, while differences in opinions between analysts are readily captured by different encodings.

The focus of this study was to develop an abstract representation of the political landscape in Iraq in late 2004, leading up to the legislative election on 30 January 2005. Exploration of the causal implications – including simulation and refinement – will be pursued in subsequent studies. The purpose of these initial abstractions was to identify likely causes and outcomes in this highly dynamic developing system.

The following paragraphs describe the process of eliciting knowledge from three experts and the development of models based on the abstractions derived from their expertise. Although simple, this descriptive structure provides immediate, non-trivial insights about the political situation in Iraq and the role of analyst subjectivity in the description.

IPM: Design Criteria for a Successful Modeling Methodology

Cognition is a form of modeling: any mental representation of a real-world situation requires simplification and can be regarded as a model [Wilson]. This implicit modeling and simplification is a necessary heuristic for understanding the situation. Formal modeling is the systematic application of a simplifying heuristic. An important direct advantage to formal modeling is that it incorporates a framework for organizing information about a problem, the ability to systematically track large numbers of details, the axiomatic exploration of causal consequences, and a common language for communicating knowledge and details to other analysts or decision-makers. Less obvious features of formal modeling include: explicit declaration of assumptions and biases, a set baseline for trending or *what-if* analysis, and the capacity to support collaboration between multiple analysts, agencies, decision-makers, etc.

The difficulty of formal modeling is that the complexity of real-world systems works against simplification. Our goal is to create idealizations that accurately capture this complexity while remaining simple enough to impart the advantages of modeling. In systems subject to the effects of a butterfly's fluttering wings, determining which detail to discard can be challenging [Gleick].

In this work, we have focused on developing a modeling formalism for a very narrow class of systems: group decision making. This formalism explicitly neglects many aspects of decision making and negotiation, focusing on one overriding drive: the group's interest structure. We call this formalism the *Issue-Player Matrix* (IPM). In the IPM approach, experts specify a given decision-making process by identifying a set of participants, or *players*, in the process and a set of topics or *issues* that are the focus of the decision to be made. By systematically modeling the position of each player on each issue, many novel features of the real-world system may be deduced.

In developing IPM, we have tried to adhere to a number of design targets for a successful modeling methodology [Reynolds]. These include:

- Easily Integrated With Analyst Workflow All fields of analysis use formal models as tools for organizing information. Link charts, for example, are common in the field of political analysis. Widespread adoption of link charts – and the rejection of many other methodologies – reflects how easily these techniques integrate with current analyst workflow. Analysts tend to reject technologies which appear to disrupt normal workflow, that impose heavy additional cognitive loading, or which rely on inscrutable *black-box* processing. The IPM methodology integrates with conventional analyst workflow in the early stages of data collection: *who* are the players, and *what* do they care about?
- Provide Management for a Large Number of Details Many seemingly simple problems become complicated quickly under careful analysis. Five players with five issues represent a 25-dimensional problem space. The introduction of new players, issues, or conditional configurations (*i.e.*: “This would only happen if...”) can move the problem to a level of complexity that few people can get their heads around. IPM makes it *possible* to track a problem of any dimensionality, but doesn't directly address the associated *practicality*. In other words, it is possible to create a model with hundreds of players concerned with dozens of issues, but confidence in such a large model is likely to be low. With *distance plots* (visual representation of the distances between players' positions on each issue) it is possible to reduce the dimensionality of the landscape by clustering like-minded groups into virtual coalitions or alliances. This is an area of ongoing research in IPM.
- Provide a Common Analytical Language The biggest problem with expository reporting among analysts and between analysts and decision-makers is a lack of common definition. It is possible (though not always practical) to include a glossary with every report, but miscommunication is more often conceptual rather than verbal. Formal models make explicit what may otherwise be mistakenly considered common knowledge, facilitating communication among analysts, among decision-makers, and between the two. This also allows a user to pick up the vocabulary with ease after an extended hiatus from the discourse. IPM, as a formal modeling methodology, supports this exchange beginning at the earliest possible stage: information gathering.
- Make Explicit Analyst Biases and Assumptions The soundest reason for arguing that computers will never completely replace humans in political analysis is that human behavior is usually a product of *heuristics* rather than rationality. While

most heuristics may be the product of rational processes, the reality is that they are learned behaviors based on what can best be called *intuition*. Game theory, artificial neural nets, and other automated techniques can sometimes successfully *mimic* human heuristics, but the major value of human experts is their grasp of human heuristics. IPM is designed to record rather than replace or eliminate the biases and assumptions that make it possible for analysts to glean insights for otherwise intractable problems. Making assumptions explicit sets the bounds of validity of a model, indicating when a model can be applied to another problem with or without modifications.

- **Provide a Baseline** Understanding the evolution of conventional thinking on a problem over a period time requires concise snapshots of what was and was not known about the problem at each stage. Formal models provide these snapshots. Additionally, a flexible model, like IPM, is a valuable starting point for counterfactual *what-if* analysis – often the only way to anticipate surprise outcomes.
- **Enable Collaboration** Although analysts typically work individually, their problems are becoming more complex in part because they are more integrated: economic, political, judicial, and military considerations, among others, are intertwined. Formal models provide a basis for collaboration between analysts from very different backgrounds, environments, and agencies. Collaboration may take place in real time or with significant breaks, such as when one agency picks up a thread from another’s past study.

The IPM Process

The process for developing an IPM representation of a decision process is straightforward. Having identified a decision process of interest, the analyst specifies, first, the players who will take part in the process, then, the topics to be decided by the group. A matrix is then formed with the rows being the players and the columns being the topics. For each topic, the analyst assigns a numerical scale, typically from 1 to 5 (or 1 to 10 or $-n$ to $+m$), with 1 being “strongly against” and 5 being “strongly in favor.” In our experience, if it is not obvious how to assign a scale to a given topic, that topic is typically composed of numerous sub-topics – breaking such a compound topic down into its constituent topics usually solves the problem (if it does not, then it is likely that the IPM formalism is inapplicable to the problem).

For each cell in the resulting matrix, which represents a player’s position on a topic, two numbers are specified:

- The player’s position from 1 (“strongly against”) to 5 (“strongly in favor”).
- The player’s *flexibility* on the topic, from 1 (“very inflexible”) to 5 (“highly flexible”).

The resulting matrix is then a representation of the analyst’s knowledge of the decision-making process. This representation neglects many important features of real decision-making, such as affinities between players, but it provides a foundation for understanding the fundamental structure of the decision process based on the players interests.

Refinements of this understanding can then be layered upon this foundation by the analyst.

The Player Distance Model

The IPM representation can be used as a starting point for any number of axiomatic approaches to understanding the decision-making process. Here we will use a formalism called the *Player Distance Model*, which enumerates the level of disagreement between players on both a topic-by-topic and aggregate basis. In this model, a matrix of player versus player is constructed. A matrix is constructed for each topic and one representing all topics. Each cell of each matrix represents the level of disagreement between the players on the given topic (or all of the topics). The matrix diagonal, representing the interaction of a player with himself, is not used. For each player combination, there are two cells – one each in the upper right and lower left triangles of the matrix.

The lower left cell contains the raw player disagreement – the difference in positions for a single topic or the Euclidean distance for all topics. The upper right cell contains the level of disagreement weighted by flexibility – disagreement levels are reduced by a factor that increases monotonically with each player's level of flexibility. The precise functional form of this reduction factor is relatively unimportant, so long as the various combinations of player positions and flexibilities are well-resolved.

Modeling the Political Landscape of Iraq

This paper presents an application of the IPM approach by three different analysts to the decision-making processes of the Transitional National Assembly, set to convene in February 2005². The assembly as modeled will be a deliberative body of representatives elected by the Iraqi people and will decide on Iraq's constitution. The assembly will consist of 275 delegates representing the interests of various subgroups of the Iraqi population. The following assumptions are used in modeling this body:

- Although composed of a large number of individuals, the assembly will represent a finite set of interest groups (groups of individuals united by common interests). These groups will be represented by different numbers of representatives.
- Group power, within the assembly, will be proportional to representation. This factor can be modified to represent other forms of soft and hard power commanded by the group (*e.g.* religious power, control of insurgent groups, *etc.*).
- There will be a small number of central issues considered by the assembly. Groups will be differentiated by their positions on these issues.
- Each group there will assign different priorities to these – on core issues the group will be adamant, on other issues they will have some degree of flexibility.

This systematic breakdown of the assembly into groups differentiated by interests provides a platform for investigating Iraqi politics. The tabulation of the groups and visually representing the differences between them provides immediate value by

² For general background on the elections in Iraq, see <http://www.riia.org/pdf/research/mep/BP0904.pdf>.

providing a prototype representation of Iraqi politics. Points of convergence and divergence and analytical opinion provide guidance towards identifying areas that are well understood and areas requiring further study.

Since groups are differentiated by interests, the selected subset of issues should be broad enough to differentiate the various groups – two groups who share identical views on all topics cannot be realistically differentiated within the framework. Conversely, topics upon which all identified groups agree only complicate the picture unnecessarily. Group interests may be moderated by ideology, history or charismatic leadership.

Limitations of this approach are very explicit. Subdominant topics may divide players who otherwise agree on major topics. Some groups may not participate in the parliamentary process at all. Other participating groups may opt out of political process if outcomes are too unfavorable. Understanding these shortcomings is essential to bounding the applicability of these models.

These models can serve as a starting point for studies based on predictive methodologies. Example studies include using group decision theory to infer likely coalitions within the Transitional National Assembly, projection of likely parliamentary decisions and the stability of coalitions and alliances. Other studies can identify the sensitivity of the model to missing or incomplete information. Situations can be identified where deviations in the initial assumptions can lead to very different outcomes.

The Models

Experts concur on the gross features of Iraqi society: Kurds in the North, Sunni in the Center, Shi'i in the south. Miscellaneous groups include Turkmen and Christians. Individual Iraqis may fall into multiple groups based on ethnic, religious and tribal affiliations.

The present study involved three anonymous subject matter experts (SMEs). Each SME was asked to construct a simple model of a representative Transitional National Assembly within the constraints described above. This was accomplished through structured interviews: the SMEs were asked for the *key players*, the *key issues*, and each player's position and flexibility on each issue.

Players

Each SME had a different view of the key players, ranging from a high-level reduction to seven groups to a more detailed division into 14 groups. As will be seen in the analysis, level of detail is the single most important factor in finding alliances and coalitions. This illustrates the importance of identifying the issues and circumstances under which the small groups will vote and act independently versus those situations in which the larger blocs are unified.

Key Issues

While the Iraqi political system will have to deal with many problems and questions there are some key issues that will shape the future political system. The saliency of these core issues will compel the political groups to take positions on them, working with or against other groups depending on specific issues. To a substantial degree the positions the political groups adopt will define the differences among them; but equally important is the degree of flexibility which the groups display. Deal-making

is already evident in the new political process, as was evident in the August 2004 National Assembly held to select a 100 seat Interim Council to oversee the functioning of the transitional government.

1. Role of the Central Government This is a critical issue because it concerns the essential power relationships within the new state. Should the central government be stronger or weaker relative to other levels of government, especially the regions? The converse of this is how much power will reside in the regions or locally. The positions of political groups on this issue and their flexibility regarding it will be at the heart of the process of defining the nature of the new state. Already this can be seen as an important issue generally differentiating Kurds from Shi'i, with the positions of Sunni elements likely to be crucial to resolution and contingent on developments within the political system. The Shi'i will broadly support a strong central government as they expect to dominate it. Under almost any foreseeable circumstances it is difficult to see the Kurds supporting a strong central government. If the emerging political system is either subject to substantial Sunni influence or likely to become so, the Sunnis are more likely to support a strong central government. Conversely, a central government dominated by the Shi'i is unlikely to appear as an attractive proposition to the Sunni. In almost all cases however there is some room for flexibility; that is, there is the opportunity to form coalitions to support or oppose the notion of a strong central government.
2. Sharia Law Sharia law, the notion that the state should be governed more or less in accordance with Islamic jurisprudence, is another defining political issue. Here there seems to be substantial differentiation within and across the major blocks in Iraq, as well as a substantial degree of flexibility. Again this suggests the possibility for cooperation and flexibility across ethnic and sectarian lines.
3. Rule of the Jurist According to this concept, ultimate political power resides with the supreme religious authority. It is essentially the Iranian model and represents an extreme case of the application of Sharia law. This concept is not broadly supported in Iraq and would be polarizing, with many important political groups strongly opposed. The formation of a coalition stoutly opposed to this, and that would cross ethnic and sectarian lines, is predictable.
4. Attitude Toward The United States Attitudes toward the United States held by the political groups in Iraq reflect a full range, from near total commitment to fundamental opposition. Kurds are closest to the United States and are strongly committed to that position. The Ba'thi, Salafi, and some Shi'a based groups, especially those more closely associated with Iran, are opposed to the United States. Nevertheless, with the exception of the most polarized groups there is some degree of flexibility on this issue.
5. Distribution of Wealth and Power While the authority of the central government relative to the regions is a key issue, it does not encompass the entire question of

the relationship between the central government and other elements of Iraqi society. There are and will be many issues revolving around the distribution of resources (wealth) and power (military/security force capability). One obvious area in which this issue will exist is the relationship of the increasingly influential tribes to the three major blocks. For example, Shi'a tribal interests may conflict with the interests of the Shi'a block as a whole. The existence of these issues provides another area for compromise and confrontation among and within the political factions.

All three SMEs were presented with the first four issues and all agreed that they are the key issues facing the Transitional National Assembly. SME 3 introduced the fifth issue, *Distribution of Wealth and Power*, which is included in the third model only. The issues, as well as the rating scales used, are summarized in Table 1.

Flexibility

Each SME also rated each group in terms of flexibility on each issue. For example, the Kurds generally oppose Sharia, but given a large degree of autonomy, they could be very flexible on its imposition on the rest of Iraq. Former Ba'thists strongly oppose continued U.S. presence, and have no flexibility on that position. Flexibility will be used to weight the differences, where flexibility effectively reduces the distance between parties on an issue.

Model 1

This is a high-level model that considers only the major subdivisions within Iraq, identifying the seven key groups shown in Table 2.

SME 1 follows the Iraqi Shi'a community closely and believes that the majority of Iraqi Shi'i are eager for elections and an opportunity to take part in governing the country. Among the Shi'i, SME 1 identifies the old guard resistance (Da'wa), the major armed party (SCIRI) and the charismatic upstart, al-Sadr. Secular Shi'i, important in the commercial sector, are not yet organized but are poised to exercise significant economic – if not political – clout.

Among the Sunni, SME 1 singles out Salafi, representing very traditional religious Sunni, and Awda, a catch-all for and secular Sunni including former Ba'thists.

Model 2

SME 2 follows the Iraqi Sunni community, and takes the position that personality can be as important as numbers. For this reason the model includes relatively obscure groups like Muslim Brotherhood and the enigmatic Al Fudaalah. There are eleven groups as shown in Table 4. The table accounts for only 74% of the population, considering only the core membership of each group. SME 2 believes that, among the remaining 26%, tribal, ethnic, and religious alignments are complex and impossible to predict.

Model 3

This is the most detailed of the three models, identifying fourteen principal players. SME 3 is focused on military and security issues in Iraq and this is reflected in

assessment of both players and issues. Of particular importance to this model are the influence of players with standing armies and the issue of *distribution wealth and power*.

SME 3 breaks out secular and tribal components of both the Shi'a and Sunni communities. Although these groups are significant fractions of their communities, they are not yet politically organized or have established leadership. The model shows that they can be important links between the communities, however.

Important, also, in Model 3 is the division of the two major Shi'a parties – Da'wa and SCIRI – into Nationalist and pro-Iranian factions. Unlike SME 1, who considers the Iraqi Shi'i largely independent of Iran, and SME 2 who considers them fundamentally allied, SME 3 makes careful distinction between Iraqi nationalists and Iran-leaning Shi'i. In this model, secular, tribal and nationalist interests tend to soften the hard lines between Shi'a and Sunni.

Another unique feature of this model is the separation of the two Kurdish groups, PUK and KDP, with the PUK showing greater moderation toward their Sunni neighbors (and former masters).

Analysis of the Models

For this preliminary analysis of the models, the first question studied was the distance between each of the groups considering all the issues. Subsequent studies will investigate distance on specific issues and potentials for coalitions and alliances based on specific issues.

Distance is defined as the Euclidean distance over the issues. That is, the square root of the sum of the squares of the distances on each issue. Two representations of distance are shown for each model (Figures 1 – 3). The first is unweighted, showing the distance as computed above. The second is weighted by flexibility. Thus, the distance on a specific issue is reduced between groups where one or both is flexible on that issue. Distances are coded monochromatically, with white as a minimum, a dark color as a maximum, and increasingly intense pastel shades in between.

At the end of Part 1, a number of likely outcomes for the future of Iraq were discussed. Here we examine these predictions from the point of view of the models developed here.

Shi'a Hegemony

It is predicted that the Shi'i will likely play a dominant role in Iraqi politics, and find some allies amongst the Sunni, although not with Sunni Insurgent Groups.

Examining the models, shared interest structures favor some Sunni-Shi'a bridges more than others.

All models show an affinity between the Sadrist Shi'a factions and the Salafi Sunni faction and affinity between the Secular Shi'a and the Secular Sunni.

- Model 1 shows the Sadrist/Salafi affinity as the only positive relationship between Shi'a and Sunni factions.
- Model 2 shows affinities between the Shi'a Dawa and the Sunni Moslem Brotherhood, between the secular Shi'i and the Secular Sunni and between the Fudallah and the Salafi

- Model 3 shows the most links between the Shi'i and Sunni, with affinities between the Tribal Sunni and the Tribal Shi'i the Tribal Sunni and the Nationalist Shi'i.

One important question is the extent to which these groups will have organized representation in the assembly – this information is beyond the scope of the present models. Should organized representation not emerge for groups like the Tribal and Secular Shi'i and Sunni, then perhaps more analysis should be focused on the Moslem Brotherhood, which only appears in model 2, but is the only evident link between organized Shi'a and Sunni factions other than the Sadrist-Salafi link.

Kurdish Autonomy

It is predicted that the Kurds will attempt to defend their autonomy by forming allies within and outside of Iraq – outside alliances are again not encompassed within the model, but within Iraq, the models show a number of likely avenues for the Kurds to pursue alliances.

- Model 1 shows the Kurds have the highest affinity to the Secular Shi'i and the secular Sunni (Awda).
- Model 2 shows the Kurds have the highest affinity to the Moslem Brotherhood and, to a lesser extent, the Secular Shi'i.
- Model 3 has two Kurdish factions, the KDP and the PUK, with both having strong affinities to the Tribal and Secular Sunni, with a somewhat weaker affinity between the Salafi and the PUK. Both KDP and PUK have affinities to the Tribal and Secular Shi'i, although the KDP is less aligned with Secular Shi'i than the PUK. These Shi'a relationships could prove important should the Sunni insurgency grow to the point where the Kurds must choose between joining the insurgency or opposing it.

Summary

In general, the selection of factions in Model 1 shows the fewest pathways for agreement between the three main players in Iraq. Model 2, by incorporating the Moslem Brotherhood provides pathways for compromise not present in Model 1. Model 3, which incorporated tribal Sunni and Shi'a factions, provides the most mechanisms for agreement between the main factions in Iraq. By focusing on these pathways for compromise, these models suggest new topics for investigation beyond the current models, such as the importance of organized political structures in helping establish these pathways.

Conclusion

IPM modeling represents a new mode of interaction between analysts and information. After even minimal investment of time and effort describing a political system, analysts have found new features, new arenas of common interest or irreconcilable difference, and areas of critical missing information. These discoveries have lead to completely new or more concise hypotheses, and to precise, well-focused information collection requirements.

Recent initiatives in automating analytical tradecraft have stressed the importance of facilitating analytical “conceptual leaps”, while others have invested heavily in eliminating analyst bias. The authors have found that where analysts benefit most from automated support is in information reduction and fusion. In this sense, IPM serves not only as a work area for information synthesis, but also as an entrée to less intuitive automated tools. Similarly, IPM is a means for recording analyst bias (as well as prior and tacit knowledge) without impairing analysts’ intuition.

Many questions arose in the course of this study, most of them as yet unanswered. At the time of writing, the results of the January 30 election having been just announced, those questions may be more important than ever. Turnout among Iraqi Sunni was low, as anticipated, giving that segment of the population a disproportionately small voice in the Transitional National Assembly. Turnout among the Kurds was very high, which, together with low Sunni turnout, gives them a significantly larger voice in drafting the new Iraqi constitution. Shi’i may have made up as much as 70% of those who voted, but the mainstream Shi’a party received less than 50% of the vote. A voting model by Loring and Jeffrey White [White], which made very accurate predictions of voter turnout, implies that secular interests may have influenced as much as 31% of the Shi’a vote.

Many of the interesting features revealed by IPM in this study bear further investigation. Similarly, IPM case studies in succession of power and group decision-making in other regions have lead to far-reaching insights and dozens of additional potential research topics, The authors anticipate presenting some of these results in the near future.

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Table 1 – Key Issues

Sharia	1 = none 5 = strict	The Islamic legal system is preferred by the majority of Iraqis, though the details of <i>whose</i> interpretation of those laws could be divisive. Secular Shi'i and Sunni, as well as Sufi Kurds and non-Muslim populations of the north, oppose Sharia.
Central Government	1 = weak 5 = strong	Shi'i generally prefer a strong central government in that it mirrors the Iranian model, and the fact that Shi'i form the majority of Iraq's population means that a central government is a Shi'a government. For this reason, Kurds and Sunni (though many Sunni are under the impression that <i>they</i> are in the majority) generally oppose central government. Secular Iraqis are caught in the middle, generally preferring a central government for technocratic reasons, but opposing a religious central government.
US Presence	1 = out now 5 = indefinite	Religious fundamentalists and Iraqi nationalists generally oppose the presence of U.S. troops in Iraq, while threatened minorities support it.
Clerical Government	1 = secular 5 = like Iran	The Iran-style (Khomeini-ist) form of government by clerics is the one divisive factor among the Shi'a groups. More traditional Shi'a leaders feel that clerics should focus on matters of Islamic law and stay out of direct governance. Non-Shi'i, aside from the fundamentalist Salafi, oppose clerical government.
Distribution of Wealth and Power	1 = local 5 = national	Regional and ethnic groups with natural resources or standing armies (the Kurds, most notably) will be reluctant to put them under national control. The Shi'a majority, for the most part, will favor nationalization, but Shi'a tribal factions may wish to keep some power and resources under local control.

Table 2 – Key Players (Model 1)

	% Population	Description
Shi'a Factions		
Da'wa	26%	Islamic Da'wa Party (IDP), having been founded in 1958, is the oldest opposition group in Iraq. It supports a Muslim government in Iraq with close ties to Iran, who harbored and funded IDP during Saddam Hussein's reign in Iraq.
Sadrists	20%	Muqtada al-Sadr is a charismatic Shi'a religious leader admired by large numbers of poor Iraqi Shi'i (the big slum of Baghdad is called Sadr City after Muqtada's father). Sadrists support a Muslim government in Iraq, but oppose close ties to Iran.
SCIRI	10%	Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq. This is a militant group, with 10,000 men at arms (Badr Brigade). There are close ties to Iran.
Secular Shi'i	10%	Secular Shi'i are, for now, not represented politically as a group, but are important because of their high socio-economic influence.
Sunni Factions		
Awda	12%	Awda means <i>return</i> – this is the remnants of the Ba'thi, and generally loyal to Saddam Hussein. They are thought to be the source of much Sunni insurgency, are presumed to have access to Saddam Hussein's offshore fortune, and there are rumored links to Islamic groups like Al Qaeda.
Salafi	7%	Salafi are fundamentalist Sunni, and, as a group, represented the religious opposition to the secular Ba'th among the Sunni. They support the imposition of Islamic law.
Kurds	15%	Mixed offshoot Sunni, Shi'i, and Sufi, Kurds have little to gain from a religious government imposed by either Shi'i or Sunni. Now largely autonomous, the Kurds are most interested in retaining their autonomy. Ethnically mixed Kirkuk and its nearby oil reserves finds Kurds at odds with their Turkomen, Assyrian and Sunni Arab neighbors.
Others	<1%	Turkomen and Christian Assyrians.

Table 3 – Issues and Flexibility (Model 1)

	Issues				Flexibility			
	Sharia	Central Government	US Influence	Rule of the Jurist	Sharia	Central Government	US Influence	Rule of the Jurist
Da'wa	5	5	1	1	3	2	4	5
SCIRI	5	5	1	1	2	1	4	2
Sadrists	5	5	1	5	1	1	1	1
Secular Shi'i	1	5	5	1	3	2	1	4
Salafi	5	1	1	1	1	3	3	4
Awda	1	1	1	1	4	2	1	5
Kurds	1	1	5	1	5	5	5	5

Table 4 – Key Players (Model 2)

	% Population	Description
Shi'a Factions		
Pro-Iran Da'wa	2.5%	About half the active Da'wa (see Table 2) maintain close ties to Iran, and they will support a Khomeinist strong, central and clerical government.
Nationalist Da'wa	2.5%	The other half of active Da'wa are more nationalistic and wary of placing Iraq in Iran's political shadow. These tend to be nominal followers of Al Sistani.
Sadrists	10%	See Table 2.
Al Fudaalah	1%	This is a very little understood offshoot of the Sadrists, composed of students and intellectuals. It is thought their impact could be similar to the student uprising in the Iranian revolution.
SCIRI	6%	See Table 2.
Secular Shi'i	10%	See Table 2.
Sunni Factions		
Secular Sunni	9%	This includes upper socio-economic components of the Sunni community as well as remnants of the Ba'th party.
Rural Salafi	5%	Rural Salafi (see Table 2) are thought to be more fundamentalist than their urban counterparts.
Urban Salafi	5%	Urban Salafi, like other urban Iraqi, tend to be affluent and worldly.
Muslim Brotherhood	5%	The original <i>Jamiat al-Ikhwān al-Muslimun</i> was organized in Egypt in 1928. The organization gained popularity among religious Iraqi following the first Gulf War. It is thought that Muslim Brotherhood is widely supported among middle-class Sunni.
Kurds	18%	See Table 2.

Table 5 – Issues and Flexibility (Model 2)

	Issues				Flexibility			
	Sharia	Central Government	US Influence	Rule of the Jurist	Sharia	Central Government	US Influence	Rule of the Jurist
Sadrists	5	5	1	5	1	1	1	1
SCIRI	4	5	4	5	3	3	4	2
Da'wa – Iran	4	5	1	5	1	2	1	1
Da'wa - Nationalist	4	5	4	1	3	3	4	5
Al Fudaalah	4	5	4	3	2	2	2	3
Secular Shi'i	1	5	5	1	5	5	5	5
Muslim Brotherhood	3	3	3	1	3	4	4	5
Secular Sunni	1	5	3	1	5	2	1	5
Rural Salafi	5	5	1	1	1	2	1	5
Urban Salafi	5	5	1	1	2	2	1	5
Kurds	1	1	5	1	5	5	5	5

Table 6 – Key Players (Model 3)

	% Population	Description
Kurdish Factions		
KDP		Kurdish Democratic Party. Political movement among Iraqi Kurds (see Table 2) led by Barzani.
PUK		Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Political movement among Iraqi Kurds (see Table 2) led by Talabani.
Sunni Factions		
Salafi		See Table 2.
Ba'th		Remnants of the former ruling party with links to the ruling Ba'th Party in Syria.
Tribal Sunni		Tribal affiliations are thought to be taking on increased importance.
Secular Sunni		This includes upper socio-economic components of the Sunni community.
Shi'a Factions		
Da'wa – Iran		Da'wa (see Table 2) following Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran.
Da'wa – Nationalist		Da'wa (see Table 2) following Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani.
Sadrists		See Table 2.
SCIRI – Iran		SCIRI (see Table 2) following Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran.
SCIRI – Nationalist		SCIRI (see Table 2) following Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani.
Tribal Shi'i		Tribal affiliations were instrumental in defending al-Sistani from al-Sadr supporters in 2004.
Secular Shi'i		See Table 2.
Mainstream Shi'i (Sistani)		See Table 2.

Table 7 -- Issues (Model 3)

	Issues					Flexibility				
	Sharia	Central Government	US Influence	Rule of the Jurist	Wealth/Power Distribution	Sharia	Central Government	US Influence	Rule of the Jurist	Wealth/Power Distribution
KDP	1	3	1	5	1	5	3	4	5	4
PUK	2	3	1	4	2	4	3	4	4	3
Salafi	2	5	1	1	2	3	5	5	5	3
Ba'th	3	1	1	1	2	3	3	5	4	3
Tribal - Sunni	3	3	1	3	2	3	3	4	2	2
Secular Sunni	3	1	1	2	3	3	4	5	4	2
Da'wa - Iran	5	5	5	3	5	4	4	4	3	4
Da'wa - Nationalist	5	5	4	3	5	3	3	3	2	5
Sadr	4	5	4	2	5	3	4	3	4	4
SCIRI - Iran	5	5	5	2	5	4	4	4	3	4
SCIRI - Nationalist	5	5	3	3	5	3	3	3	2	4
Tribal Shi'i	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	2	2
Secular Shi'i	4	3	2	3	4	4	2	2	2	3
Mainstream Shi'i (Sistani)	5	5	2	3	4	4	4	2	2	4

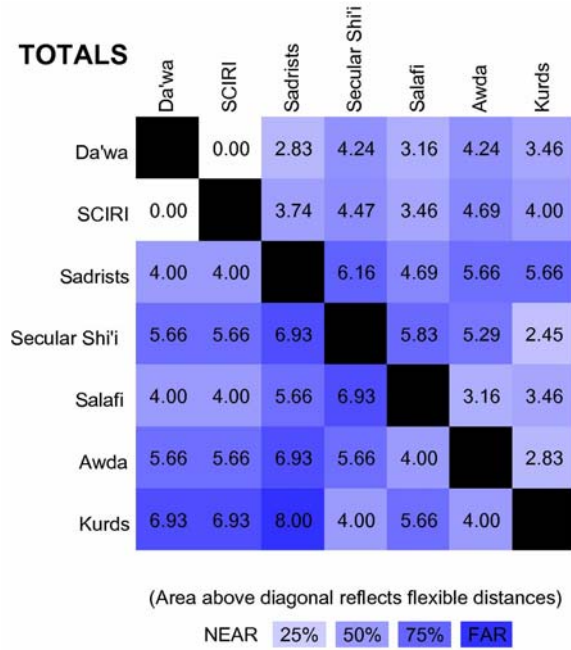


Figure 1 – Model 1 Distances

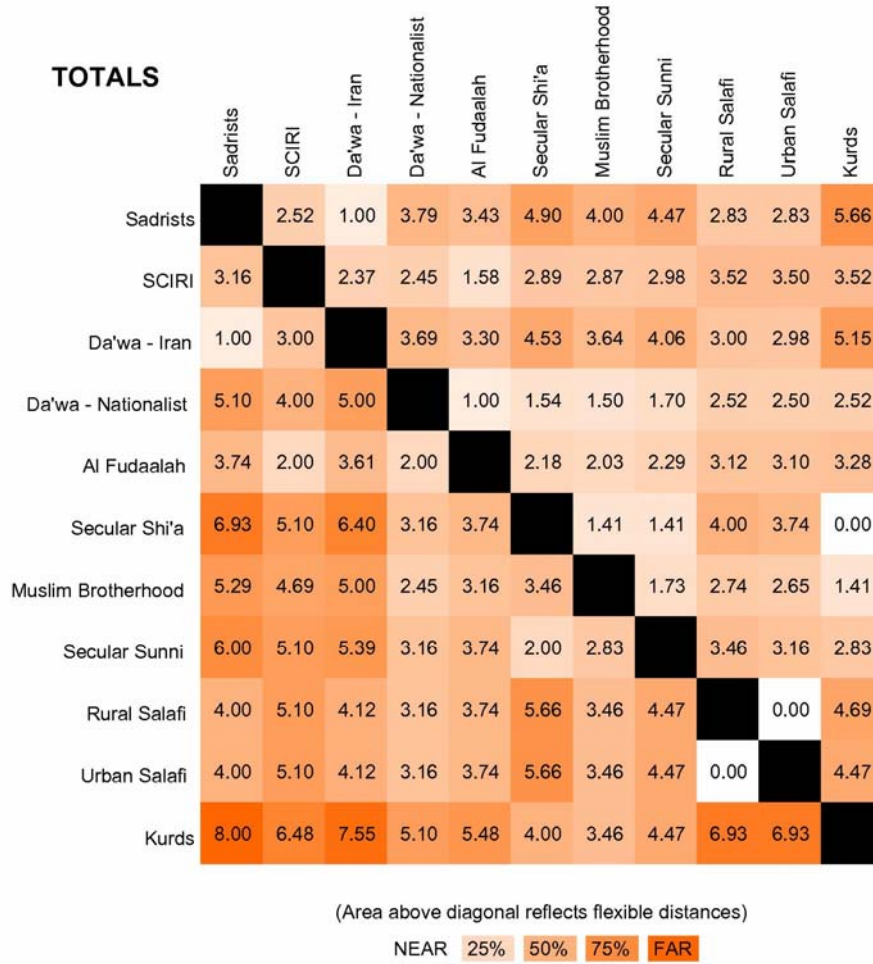
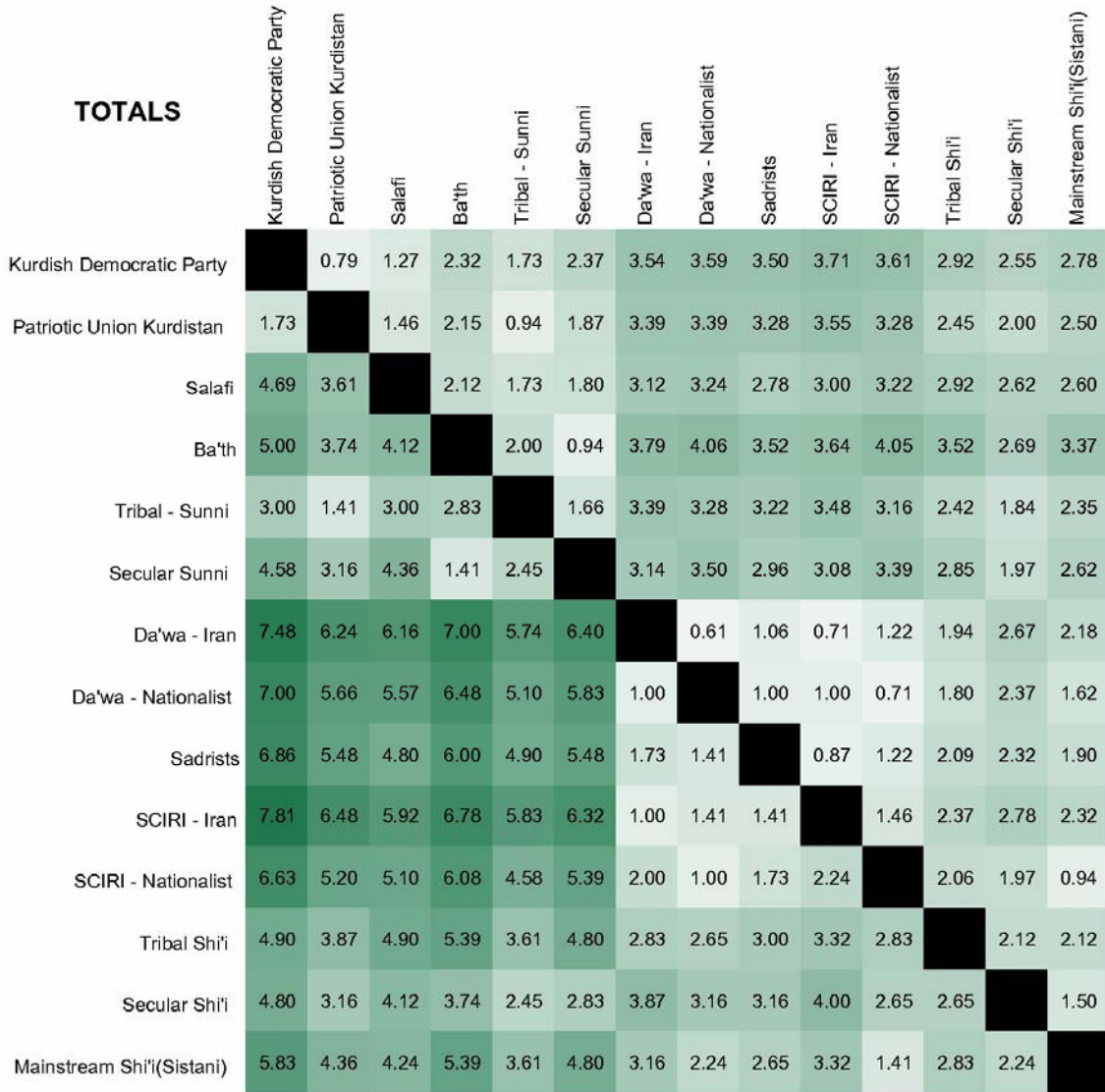


Figure 2 – Model 2 Distances



(Area above diagonal reflects flexible distances)

NEAR 25% 50% 75% FAR

Figure 3 – Model 3 Distances