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The Fluctuating Attitudes of Youth towards Different Forms of Extremism in Iraq - A Social Study

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Al-Bayan Center Studies Series

About

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Ahmed Khudair Hussein Ayal*

Introduction:

This study sheds light on the phenomenon of extremism, which is one of the most significant social phenomena to witness growth as a result of the upheavals that shook the infrastructure of Iraqi society after the fall of the regime in 2003 and impacted on its security and stability.

If we consider the political, religious, social, economic and other aspects of society that have undergone change, we find that their overlap has created a crisis that has affected mainstream culture, educational systems, the media, family nurturing and the religious establishment. This in turn has compromised the development of the individual's values and choices, as well as his social awareness in terms of its economic, political and social dimensions and negatively affected most of the personal aspects of the individual. This shook his confidence in his beliefs and values; and this in turn led to frustration and a feeling of loss and the inability to satisfy his basic needs on which depend the continuity of life and survival.

The problem which the current study addresses concerns the dangers associated with the radicalisation of certain young people in their ideas, opinions and attitudes towards certain social, political and religious issues because they are the most socially susceptible class and at an age characterized by energy, vigour and strong desire. This study poses a fundamental question and seeks answers about the shifting attitudes of youth towards extremism in Iraq. The question has a sub-text regarding: what do we mean by extremism? What factors have helped its growth? And how has it influenced young people?

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This paper aims to identify the differences between university students regarding the nature of their attitudes towards extremism according to the following variables: age, gender, academic discipline or specialism and university; and to shed light on the causes responsible for extremism and its impact on young people.

Methodology, concepts and theoretical approach:

This paper utilises the survey sampling method and employs the questionnaire as a tool, with the aim of identifying the differences between university students regarding the nature of their attitudes towards extremism in its three dimensions: religious extremism, political extremism and social extremism, and to interpret the data and information gathered and to analyse it statistically.

The questionnaire comprised 12 core questions, which combined a mix of open-ended and closed-ended questions; rating scale questions; matrix questions, and others in a hierarchy of importance and priority. The questionnaire contained a special section on the demographics of the respondents, and another section concerning their subjective views on religious, political and social issues.

The study population was distributed over a geographical area which included the Universities of Anbar and Kufa. The sample was limited to 200 male and female students from the morning-study session. The questionnaires were distributed in clusters amongst the colleges of the respective universities and included all levels of study across the various scientific and humanitarian disciplines. The following table shows the distribution of the study sample by age, gender, income level and university, together with the academic discipline of the respondents.

Table (1) Distribution of the study sample according to the demographics of the respondents

Percentage	Frequency	Sample distribution	
26.5%	53	18-20	Age
38.0%	76	21-23	
35.5%	71	24-26	
51.5%	103	Male	Gender
48.5%	97	Female	
11.5%	23	Inadequate	Income level
67.0%	134	Adequate	
21.5%	43	More than Adequate	
50.0%	100	Anbar	University
50.0%	100	Kufa	
43.0%	86	College of Sciences	Discipline
57.0%	114	College of Humanities	

"Youth" in the sense used in this study includes the age range between the ages of 18-26 years, exemplified by the students of Anbar University and Kufa University for the 2019 academic year. This is because young people can demonstrate an ability and a potential to be positive agents of change, in addressing the problems surrounding their present and future, as well as their ability to build bridges of intercultural dialogue.[1]

"Attitude" means a conscious readiness towards a particular topic, demonstrated by an acceptance or rejection of the topic, expressed in a behavioural or verbal manner, or even with gestures of the face or eyes.

An attitude in this case may therefore be defined as a mental and neural state of readiness formed by an individual towards a certain topic or situation, exerting

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1 - Sahar Mohammed Darwish, Youth Attitudes Towards Voluntary Work in Alahliyya, Master Thesis submitted to al-Azhar University, Faculty of Arts, 2015, p.23

a negative or positive influence on his behaviour, with the response being fairly constant for similar situations[2]. Alternatively, a state of preparedness and readiness or a predisposition to evaluate a specific issue positively or negatively. Most of the individual's attitudes are based on the social, political, economic and ideological reality, or rather the product of the process of socialization as an interactive process between the individual and the community.[3] Thus, attitudes become framed within certain characteristics that are acquired, learned, not genetic, adaptable; linked to social stimuli, capable of measurement or evaluation, characterised by stability and relative continuity.[4]

"Extremism" means being intransigent and an espousal of exaggerated thought or behaviour towards a range of ideas that may be religious, political or social. The individual feels that he cannot tolerate controversy or debate and lives in isolation from society and separated from the social fabric.

It is axiomatic that extremism here transcends accepted intellectual frameworks or acceptable social behavioural norms; it is a rebellion against reality if a particular reality is not convincing or appealing, or escaping from that reality if revolution proves unattainable. Extremism is linked to mental stagnation and intolerance: in other words ideological stagnation and intellectual isolation; and in this sense, it is a narrow way of thinking that is characterised by the inability to accept or tolerate any beliefs that differ from the beliefs or tolerances of the individual or group.[5]

Extremism may take on different dimensions, including: religious extremism, political extremism and social extremism. These scenarios have an impact on individual and collective behaviour and on the relationship between the extremist and society and on the quality of interaction with others, since the majority of

2. Nihad Mahmood Mohammed, The Attitude towards Religious Commitment and its Relationship to Psychological Compatibility among al-Azhar University Students, Master Thesis submitted to al-Azhar University, Faculty of Education, Department of Psychology, 2011, p. 8.

3. Hussein Siddiq, Attitudes from a Sociological Perspective, University of Damascus Journal, Supplement 28, no. 3-4), 2012, p. 302.

4. Ibrahim Sulaiman Obaid, Attitudes of teachers and principals towards the role of educational mentors and coordinators of the discipline initiative at the Wakat al-Fawth schools, Master thesis submitted to al-Azhar University, Faculty of Education - Department of Psychology, 2010, p. 11

5. Samir Ahmed Naeem, The Economic and Social Determinants of Religious Extremism, Beirut, Centre for National Unity Studies, 1990, p.33

socities, regardless of size, tend not towards extremism nor adopt its behaviour or practices with the exception of societies that make extremism part of their sectarian political ideology or religion, which calls for extremism and exaggeration or hyperbole, or as others understand it to be as such. All of this means that the starting point for radicalization or extremism is a state of imbalance: in other words, from a platform that is not burdened by norms and knows no limits. This opens the way for extremism to usher in unethical manifestations such as violence, terrorism, aggression, assassination and the use of force and resorting to armed rebellion [6].

This study argues against the theoretical approach to the interpretation of extremism as a social phenomenon. Both Parsons and Merton have linked the emergence of extremism to the existence of a structural imbalance within the social system represented by the lack of integration of the individual into social groups and the prevailing culture; further compounded by the weakness of the control mechanisms and rules governing the conduct of the individual. Meanwhile, Marxists blame extremism on poor economic conditions which large groups in society live under, such as poverty, unemployment and deprivation, to the feeling of persecution, marginalization and exploitation in the spheres of life[7].

Religious Extremism: Dimensions and Field Indicators:

Religious extremism, in the sense deployed in this study, means the deviation of ideas in religious matters to the extent that an individual becomes blind to the views and opinions of others or cannot accept that others may hold a valid contrary opinion and subscribes only to his own rigid beliefs and opinions.

It is implicit that religious extremism involves defying the limits of moderation in religious behaviour in both thought and deed or deviating from or moving beyond the ancestral path in the understanding and practice of religion whether it be through intolerance, indifference or rejectionism[8]. Several foreign studies

6. Fouad Ghazi Thajil, Aspects of Political Extremism in Iraqi Society: An Analytical Study, Unpublished Master Thesis submitted to Baghdad University - Faculty of Arts - Department of Sociology, 2010, pp. 24-25.
7. Ghani Nasser Hussein Al-Quraishi, Theoretical Approaches to Social Science, Amman, Dar Safa for Publishing and Distribution, 2011, p. 206.
8. Haider Lazem, and Kadhem Mohsen, The Attitude towards Extremism and its Relationship to the Religious Attitudes of University Students, (al-Mustansiriyya Journal of Literature, No. 4, 2018), p.271.

have remarked on the finding that a religious group – from a religious precept – normalises irrational behaviour and the development of hatred towards other groups. It also means an extreme immersion in the superficial meanings of religious texts without bothering to understand their true meaning or purpose, leading many to become adherents of the rejected notions of exaggerated and embroidered religious doctrines [9].

Table (2) shows the evaluation of the responses of the respondents regarding the nature of the respondents' interaction with religious teachings

Total		Disagree	Agree	Degree of consonance in the replies Phrases
Percentage	Frequency			
	200	55	145	Only my religion is capable of providing personal growth
100%		27.5%	72.5%	
	200	163	37	I avoid praying alongside someone of a different sect
100%		81‹5%	18.5%	
	200	61	139	I believe my sect is superior to others
100%		30.5%	69.5%	
	200	160	40	I prefer my friends not to be from my sect
100%		80%	20%	
	200	122	78	I boycott anyone who has abstained from religion
100%		61%	39%	
	200	69	131	I try to change the beliefs of others through the strength of my faith
100%		34.5%	65.5%	
	200	142	58	Witnessing the rites of other sects bothers me
100%		71%	29%	

9. Jad al-Haq Ali Jad, Religious Extremism and its Dimensions: Security, Political and Social, (Cairo, Dar Um al-Qura for printing, no date) p. 8.

Table (2) shows the nature of the respondents' interaction with religious instruction. The results indicate that, in top place, with 163 respondents or 81.5% of the total sample population, the respondents do not refrain from performing their prayer besides those from a different the sect; whilst 18.5% would refrain from doing so..

❖ In second place, with 160 respondents or 80% of the total sample, prefer to be friends with others of their sect, with the remaining 20% preferring their friends to be from a different sect.

❖ In third place, with 145 respondents or 42.5% of the total sample members believe that only their religion is capable of providing them with personal growth, with 27.5% of the sample disagreeing with this notion.

❖ In fourth place, with142 respondents or 71% of the total sample, stated that witnessing the rites of other sects did not upset them, with 29% of the sample stating it did.

❖ In fifth place, with 139 respondents or 69.5% of the total sample, believe that their religious doctrine or sect is better than the others, with the remaining 30.5% expressing the opposite view.

❖ Next in sixth place, with 131 respondents or 65.5% of the total sample, seek to change the beliefs of others with the strength of their own faith, whilst 34.5% of the total sample do not seek to do so.

❖ In the last place, 122 respondents or 61% of the total sample of respondents said that they did not boycott those who abstained from religion, with 39% of the sample claiming that boycotted all those who abstained from religion.

Figure (1) shows the nature of respondents' interaction with religious instruction
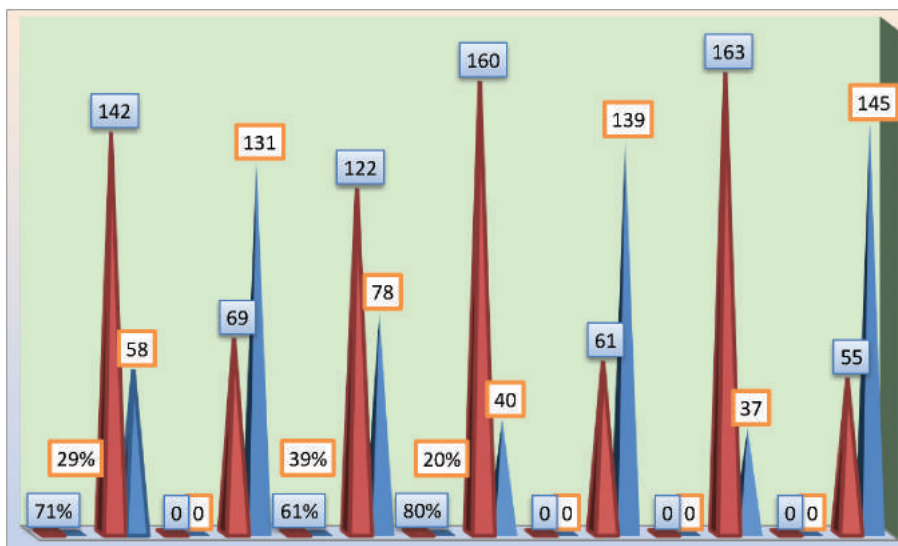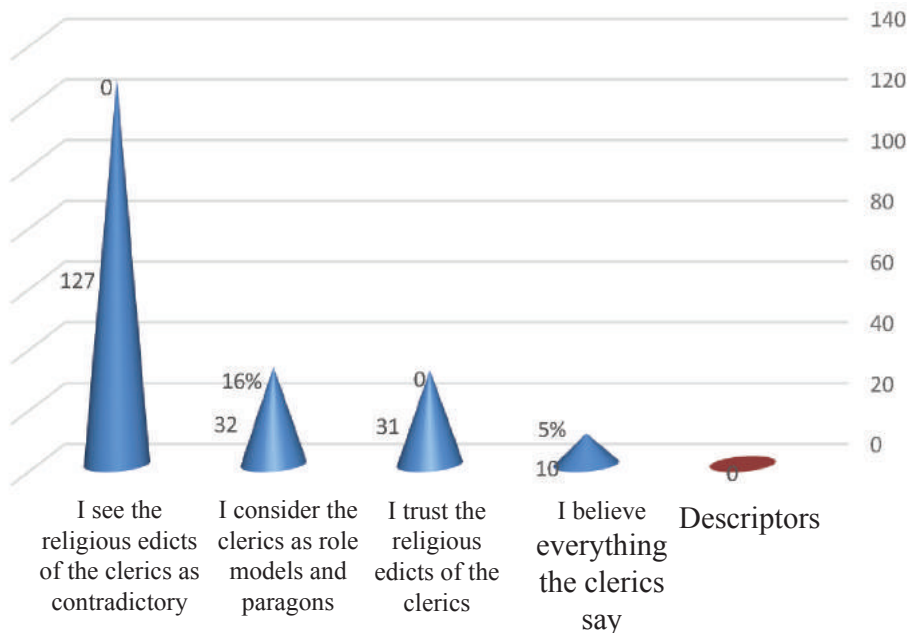

Table (3) shows the degree of influence which clerics are allowed to have in determining the respondent's interaction with them

Percentage	Frequency	Descriptors
5%	10	I believe everything the clerics say
15،5%	31	I trust the religious edicts of the clerics
16%	32	I consider the clerics as role models and paragons
63،5%	127	I see the religious edicts of the clerics as contradictory
100	200	**Total**

Regarding the degree of influence which members of the clerics are allowed to have in determining the respondent's interaction with them, it was found that 127 of the respondents or 63.5% of the sample units considered the religious edict of the clerics as appearing contradictory, followed by 32 respondents and or 16% of the total sample units who consider clerics as role models and paragons. It was also found that 31 respondents or 15.5% of the sample units had trust in

the religious edicts or fatwas of the clerics, with only 5% of total sample units saying they believed everything the clerics said.

Figure (2) shows the degree of influence which clerics are allowed to have in determining the respondent's interaction with them

Table (4) shows the causes of extremism

Third		Second		First		Order of Priority
Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Fre-quency	Source of information
13‹5%	27	12%	24	8‹5%	17	Educational curricula
7%	14	9‹5%	19	14‹5%	29	Places of Worship
14‹5%	29	9%	18	17‹5%	35	Family
4‹5%	9	15‹5%	31	23‹5%	47	Political Parties
23‹5%	47	18‹5%	37	9%	18	Media
10%	20	21‹5%	43	11%	22	Internet

19%	38	9%	18	8٬5%	17	**Sect**	
8%	16	5%	10	7٬5%	15	**Religious Institution**	
	200		200		200	Frequency	**Total**
100%		100%		100%		Percentage	

- Data from the first priority indicates that the responses from 66.5% of the sample units were divided amongst four main sources of information: religiously orientated political parties, family, places of worship and the Internet (social networking sites)

- Data from the second priority indicates that the responses from 67.5% of the sample units were divided amongst four main sources of information: the Internet (social networking sites), the media, political parties, and curricula.

- Data from the third priority indicates that the responses from 70.5% of the sample units were divided amongst four main sources of information: the media, sect, family, and educational curricula.

The combined data from the above table indicate that the highest percentages of respondents' responses were concentrated amongst four main sources, namely: religiously orientated political parties, the Internet, the family, and educational curricula. Respondents repeatedly referred to these factors in the first, second and third category of priority, which prompts us to acknowledge the impact of these sources and their responsibility for spreading extremism.

Political Extremism: Dimensions and Field Indicators

Political extremism in the sense employed by this study is a deviation of ideas in respect of subjects of a political nature, and the imposition of political opinions on others, of what is conceived to be a political opinion ...

Naturally, it is mindset that rejects any form of criticism and is fully convinced of its own ability to know the truth without reference to proofs or evidence. Rather, it is characterised by the immutability of its own beliefs and opinions such that it engenders fanaticism and narrowness of mind. The extremist uses various methods of domination and force to convince others of his own ideas and tendencies[10].

10. Mohamed Ahmed Al-Bayoumi, The Phenomenon of Extremism - Causes and Remedies, Cairo, Dar Al-Ma'rifah University, 2004, pp. 146-153.

Table (5) shows the nature of interest in subjects of a political nature

Percentage	Frequency	item
15%	30	I tolerate the different political views of others
5‚5%	11	I feel repulsed by those who disagree with me politically
5‚5%	11	I believe that my political ideas are more valid
4‚5%	9	I only interact with those who agree with my political principles
1‚5%	3	I dismiss political thought from my mind
68%	136	I avoid discussing politics with my friends
100	200	Total

As regards the nature of the interest in subjects of a political nature, it was found that 136 respondents or 68% of all sample units avoided discussing political issues with their friends; followed by 30 respondents or 15% of the total who tolerated the different political views of others. Whereas 5.5% expressed a degree of repulsion towards people who disagreed with them politically, the same proportion as those who believed that their political ideas were more valid. It was found that 9 respondents or 4.5% of the total sample units only interacted with those who agreed with their political principles, whilst only 3 of the respondents or 1.5% of the total sample units sought to dismiss political thoughts from their minds.
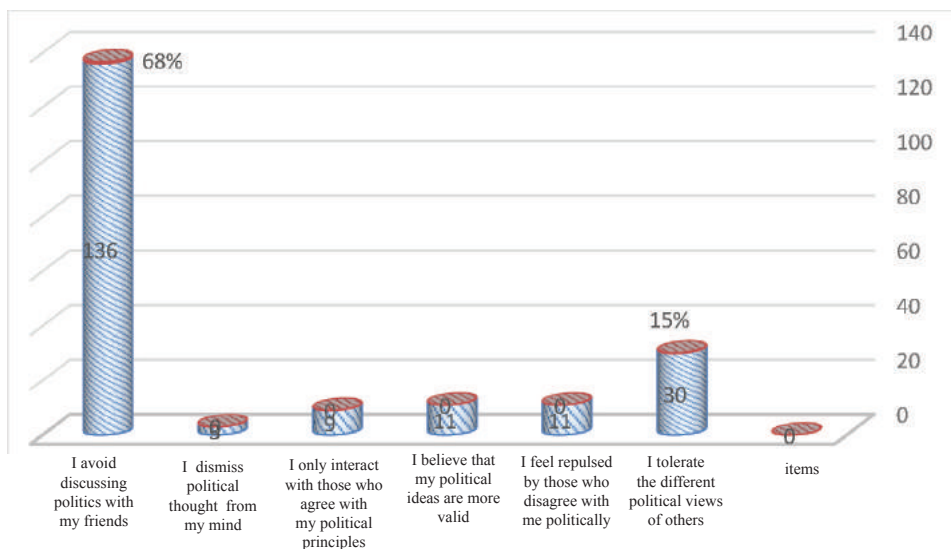
Figure (3): illustrates the nature of interest in subjects of a political nature

Social Extremism: Dimensions and Field Indicators

Social extremism, in the sense employed by this study, is "the deviation of ideas, behaviour, customs, traditions and concepts of a social nature." Social extremism is characterised by hyperbole and excess far removed from the mainstream or middle-of-the-road, moderate way of dealing with social issues facing the individual in his daily life[11]. Alternatively, extremism is the excessive, exaggerated expression or the abandonment of views and social ideas, whose essence is discrimination, intolerance and narrowness of mind in all aspects of life, thought and behaviour. The socially intolerant or extremist suffers from poor social harmony, he is socially and psychologically ill and discriminatory. He sees other people as inferior in status and even in their mental capacity with undesirable and peculiar traits; they are perceived with hostility whenever and wherever[12]. He represents rejection and protest in the absence of social justice in its various forms in society[13].

11. Middleton H. And J. Coum: The Relationship Between Aggressive Behaviour and Anxiety. Psychology, 1984, Vo. 36., No.7.
12. Muhammad Ahmad al-Bayoumi, The Phenomenon of Extremism: Causes and Remedies; Ibid., p.61.
13. Single/pluralist perspective of students at al-Azhar University and its relationship to extremism, published Master thesis submitted to Al-Azhar University - Faculty of Education, Department of Psychology, 2014, p.38

Table (6): shows an assessment of the respondents' answers regarding their acceptance or rejection of commonplace traditions and customs is not different from what is commonly acceptable in society at large

Total		Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Degree of consonance in the replies
Percentage	Frequency					Statement
	200	62	60	54	24	When I get angry, I turn my anger against others
100%		31%	30%	27%	12%	
	200	54	65	55	26	I only befriend those who share my values and principles
100%		27%	32‹5%	27‹5%	13%	
	200	33	42	70	55	When improving my-self I disregard social norms
100%		16‹5%	21%	35%	27‹5%	
	200	38	65	60	36	Necessity for limiting co-education in schools and universities
100%		19%	32‹5%	30%	18%	
	200	94	58	29	19	I end my relationship with friends who disa-gree with me
100%		47%	29%	14‹5%	9‹5%	
	200	53	45	41	61	I insist on the expul-sion of the Roma Gyp-sies from Iraq because they abuse our moral values
100%		26‹5%	22‹5%	20‹5%	31‹5%	
	200	53	50	38	45	I object to marrying someone of a differ-ent sect and national identity
100%		26‹5%	25%	19%	22‹5%	
	200	100	56	26	18	I avoid eating with people from other religions
100%		50%	28%	13%	9%	
	200	36	53	64	47	I get upset if I am not allowed to express my views on family matters
100%		18%	26‹5%	32%	23‹5%	

	200	55	41	41	63	I think homosexuals should be killed
100%		27‹5%	20‹5%	20‹5%	31‹5%	
	200	119	34	28	19	I accept the idea of dividing people and discriminating against them on the basis of their national, religious and ethnic affiliations
100%		59‹5%	17%	14%	9‹5%	
	200	47	20	46	87	The sight of young men wearing jewellery disgusts me
100%		23‹5%	10%	23%	43‹5%	

According to data from Table (5), an assessment of the respondents' answers regarding their acceptance or rejection of commonplace traditions and customs indicates that they are not very different from what is commonly acceptable in society. In first place, 156 of the respondents or 78% of the total sample units indicated that they do not avoid eating with people from other religions, such as during the festive season or on special occasions, in contrast to the 22% of all sample units who do avoid eating with people from other religions.

❖ In second place, 153 of the respondents or 76.5% of the total sample units rejected the notion of dividing people and discriminating against them on the basis of their national, religious and ethnic affiliations, whereas 23.5% of the total sample units accepted the idea of dividing people according to their national, religious and ethnic affiliations.

❖ In third place, 152 of the respondents or 76% of the total sample units indicated they would retain friends who disagreed with them and did not take their differences personally, whereas 24% of the total sample units were willing to cut off their relations with friends who disagree with them.

❖ Ranked fourth, 133 of the respondents or 66.5% of the total sample units agree that the sight of young men wearing jewellery was disgusting since it clashed with their inherited customs and traditions. Meanwhile, 33.5% of the total sample units did not consider the sight of young men wearing jewellery as disgusting.

❖ In the fifth place, 125 of the respondents or 62.5% of the total sample units stated that when it comes to improving themselves, they spurned social norms, and with 37.5% of the total sample units claiming that they did not depart from social norms.

❖ Next, in sixth place, 122 of the respondents or 61% of the total sample units indicated that when they get angry, they did not turn their anger against others. It was also found that 78 of the respondents or 39% of the total sample units turned their anger against others when they got angry.

❖ In seventh place, 119 of the respondents or 59.5% of the total sample units did not limit their friendships with only those who shared their values and principles; in contrast to the 40.5% of the total sample units who only befriended those who shared their values and principles.

❖ In the eighth place, 111 of the respondents or 55.5% of the total sample units got upset if they were not allowed to express their views on family matters. In contrast to the 44.5% of the sample units who did not get upset at all if they were not allowed to express views on family matters

❖ Ninth place, 104 of the respondents or 52% of the total sample units believe that homosexuals should be killed, in contrast to the 48% of the sample units who did not accept the idea that homosexuals should be killed .

❖ In tenth place, 103 of the respondents or 51.5% of the total sample units objected to marrying someone of a different sect and national identity, in contrast to 48.5% of the total sample units who saw no problem with marrying a person of a different sect and national identity.

❖ Ranked eleventh, 103 of respondents or 51.5% of all sample units did not see the need to limit coeducation in schools and universities; whereas 48.5% of all sample units believed that co-education should be reduced in schools and universities.

❖ In last place, 102 of the respondents or 51% of the total sample units, insist on the expulsion of the Roma Gypsies from Iraq because they abused moral values; whereas 49% of the total sample units do not insist on the expulsion of Roma from Iraq because they violate moral values.

The Results and their interpretation within the context of the field indicators

The researcher will deal with the results of the study and their interpretation based on certain hypotheses and in the process will attempt to explain the attitudes and trends of extremism among university students.

The hypothesis of the study

There are statistically significant variances among young people based on the variables of age, sex, university, specialism and the nature of their attitudes toward extremism in Iraq.

Results obtained from testing the hypothesis proved it to be a valid hypothesis and consequently applied to the current study as shown below:

• The variance between Age and Attitudes:

The results of the statistical analysis showed that there are significant variances between the ages of the respondents and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism to give a Chi-square **(X²)** value of 91.533 with a *[p-value or]* probability *[of independence]* of 0.001 *[with such a low probability it means that age and attitudes towards extremism are dependent on one another]* as shown in the following table:
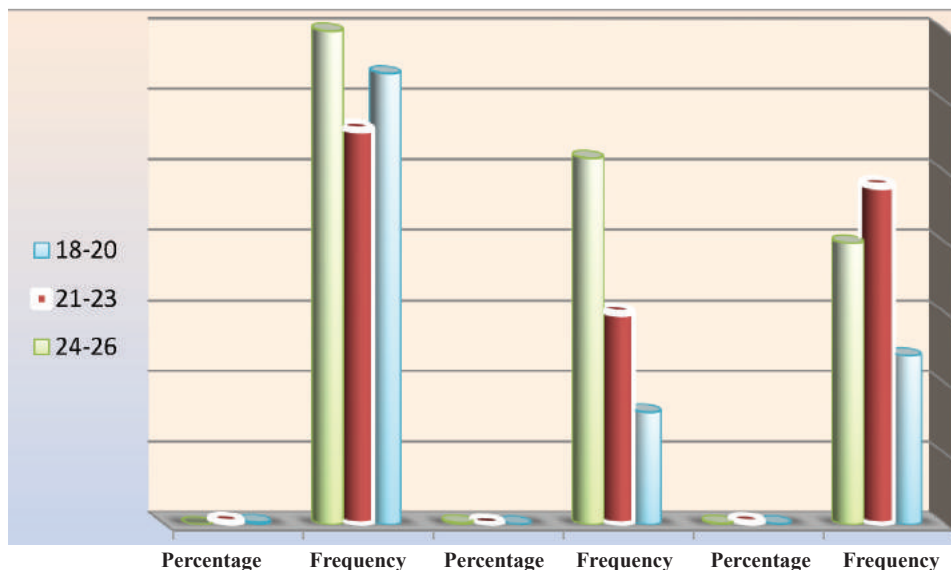
Table (7) shows the significant variances between respondents' ages and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism

Probability	Chi-square (X²)	Total		Social Extremism		Political Extremism		Religious Extremism		xtremism Ages
		Percent.	Freq	Percent.	Freq	Percent.	Freq	Percent.	Freq	
		26%	52	16%	32	4%	8	6%	12	18-20
0.001	91.533	33.5%	67	14%	28	7.5%	15	12%	24	21-23
		40.5%	81	17.5%	35	13%	26	10%	20	24-26
		100	200	47.5%	95	24.5%	49	28%	56	Total

Table (7) shows statistically significant variances between the ages of the respondents and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism. The age group (24-26) scored the highest percentage in their attitudes towards social extremism with 35 respondents or 17.5% of the total sample units; followed by the age group (18-20) with 32 respondents or 16% of the total sample units, and finally 28 respondents or 14% of the total sample units in respect of the age group (21-23) who recorded the lowest tendency towards social extremism.

The age group (24-26) recorded the highest number of respondents with attitudes towards political extremism, numbering 26 or 13% of the total sample units; followed by respondents with attitudes towards religious extremism who numbered 24 or 12% of the total sample units in the (21-23) age group; followed by the (18-20) age group with the lowest percentage in their attitudes towards political extremism with 8 respondents or 4% of the total sample units.

Meanwhile, the (24-26) age group scored the highest percentage for religious extremism with 20 respondents or 10%; followed by those with attitudes towards political extremism who numbered 15 or 7.5% of the total sample units among the (21-23) age group; finally with the lowest percentage for those with religious extremism who numbered 12 or 6% among the (18-20) age group . This points to a significant variance between the ages of the respondents and the nature of their attitudes toward extremism. This leads us to accept the alternative hypothesis in the study and reject the null hypothesis .
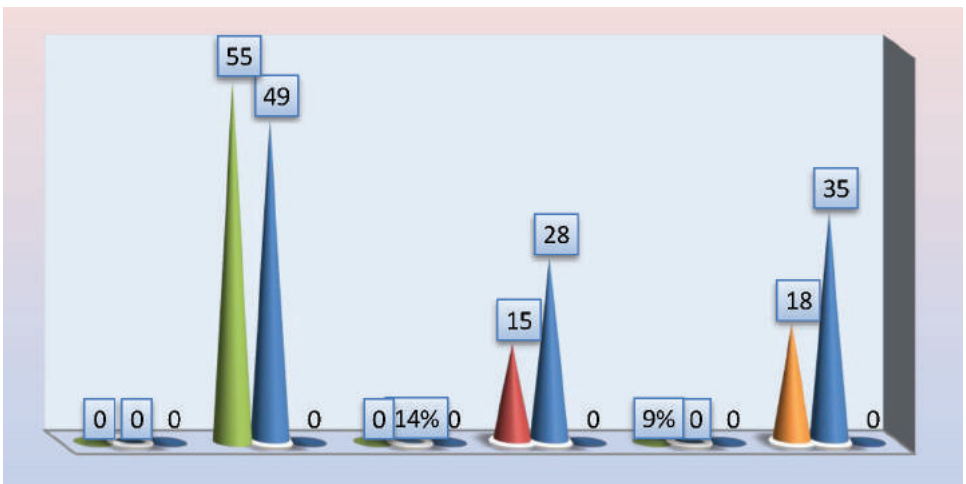
Figure (5) shows the significant variances between respondents' ages and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism

• **The variance between the sexes and the nature of the attitude**: The results of the statistical analysis indicated that there are significant variances between the sex of the respondents and the nature of their attitudes toward extremism. The value of Chi-square (X^2) is 70.931 with a probability of 0.02 as appears in the following table:

Table (8) shows the significant variance between the sex of the respondents and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism

Probability	Chi-square (X^2)	Total		Social Extremism		Political Extremism		Religious Extremism		Extremism Gender
		Percent.	Freq	Percent.	Freq	Percent.	Freq	Percent.	Freq	Male
		56%	112	24.5%	49	14%	28	17.5%	35	
0.02	70.931	44%	88	27.5%	55	7.5%	15	9%	18	Female
		100	200	52%	104	21%	43	26.5%	53	Total

The data clearly points to a significant variance between the sex of the respondents and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism. It was found that social extremism amongst females was greater than that found amongst males. The number of females was 55 with a percentage 27.5%, whereas the number of males was 49 with a percentage 24.5%. Meanwhile, religious extremism amongst males was higher than that of females accounting for 35 male respondents at 17.5%; while the number of females was 18 with 9% . In contrast, it was found that political extremism amongst male students was higher than their female counterparts, accounting for 28 with a ratio of 14%, compared with 15 females and a ration of 7.5%. This means that there is significant variance between the sex of the respondents and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism. This allows us to accept the alternative hypothesis in the study and reject the null hypothesis.

Figure (6) shows the significant variance between the sex of the respondents and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism

• **The variance between specialisms and the nature of the attitude**: The results of the statistical analysis showed that there were significant variances between the respondents' specialisms or academic fields and the nature of their attitudes toward extremism. The Chi-square (X²) value is 73.082 with a probability of 0.018 as can be seen from the following table:

Table (9) shows the significant variance between respondents' specialisma and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism

Probability	Chi-square (X²)	Total		Social Extremism		Political Extremism		Religious Extremism		Extremism Specialism
		Percent.	Freq	Percent.	Freq	Percent.	Freq	Percent.	Freq	
0٠018	73٠081	47%	94	25%	50	9.5%	19	12.5%	25	College of Sciences
		53%	106	27%	54	12%	24	14%	28	College of Humanities
		100	200	52%	104	21.5%	43	26.5%	53	Total

The data in Table 9 indicates that there is significant variance between the respondents' specialisms and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism. It is clear that social extremism amongst the students of the humanities colleges is greater than that of the scientific college, accounting for 54 respondents with a ratio of 27% within the humanities colleges., compared to the science colleges which recorded 50 with a ratio of 25%. Meanwhile, religious extremism in the humanities colleges was higher than the scientific colleges accounting for 28 with a ration of 14%. By contrast, the scientific colleges recorded 19 with a ratio of 9.5%. It was also found that political extremism amongst students of the humanities colleges was higher than that of the scientific colleges recording 24 respondents with a ratio of 12% whilst the scientific colleges recorded 19 with a ratio of 9.5%. This indicates that there is a significant variance between the academic disciplines or specialisms of the respondents and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism and this allows us to accept the alternative hypothesis in the study and to reject the null one.
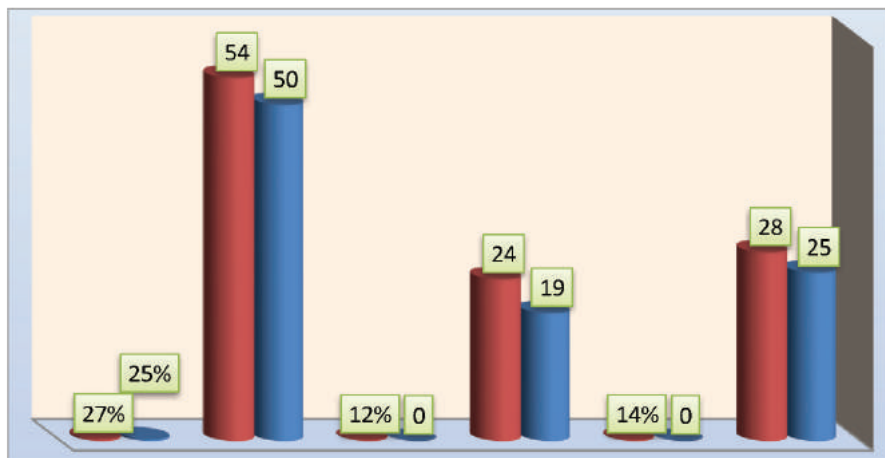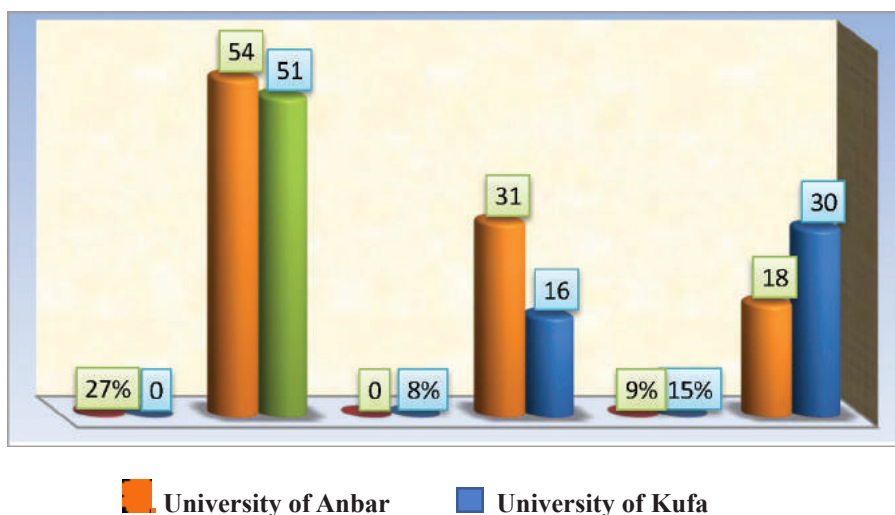
Figure (7) shows the variance between the respondents' specialisms and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism

• **The variance between the universities and the nature of the attitude**: The results of the statistical analysis showed that there are significant variances between the university students and the nature of their attitudes toward extremism. The value Chi-square (X^2) is 88.241 with a probability of 0.001 as shown in the following table:

Table (10) shows the significant variance between university students and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism

Probability	Chi-square (X^2)	Total		Social Extremism		Political Extremism		Religious Extremism		Extremism University
		Percent.	Freq	Percent.	Freq	Percent.	Freq	Percent	Freq	
		49.5%	97	25.5%	51	8%	16	15%	30	Anbar University
0.001	88.241	51.5%	103	27%	54	15.5%	31	9%	18	Kufa University
		100	200	52.5%	105	28.5%	48	24%	48	Total

The data in Table 10 reveals that there is significant variance between university students and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism. It is clear that social extremism in Kufa University is greater than in Anbar University, with 54 and a ratio of 27% in the University of Kufa whilst Anbar recorded 51 with a ratio of 25.5%. By contrast, religious extremism in Anbar University was greater than in Kufa accounting for 30 and a ratio of 15%, while in Kufa University it reached 18 with a ratio of 9%. It was found that political extremism in the University of Kufa was higher than in Anbar University, which recorded 31 with a ratio of 15.5% while Anbar University recorded 16 with a ratio of 8%. This indicates that there is a significant variance between university students and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism; this allows us to accept the alternative hypothesis in the study and to reject the null hypothesis.

University of Anbar   **University of Kufa**

Figure (8) shows the significant variance between university students and the nature of their attitudes towards extremism

Conclusion

By means of a series of questions and answers and the results of the survey we can draw the following set of conclusions:

1- The age distribution of the respondents in the current research was divided into three age groups starting from 18-20 and ending with the age group 21-23. These ages represent the youth category in which the percentage of males within the gender distribution for the total sample units amounted to 51.5%; while the percentage of females was 48.5% of the total sample units. The sample population from the universities (Anbar and Kufa) was chosen in clusters and included all academic levels from the various science and humanities specialisms. The results of the survey revealed that the percentage of those who described their monthly income as inadequate to meet their basic needs (ie, a low standard of living) was 11.5% of the total sample units. The proportion of those who described their income as although adequate to manage family matters but far from being perfect was 67% of the total sample units; while 21.5% described their income as providing a comfortable living (ie, provided a high standard of living).

The disparity in living standards is self-evident which follows on from the type of work and level of income; the accumulation of wealth in individuals or the family; the method of organization, and the management of the family's economic affairs.

2- The results of the survey revealed the intentions of the respondents and the nature of their agreement or otherwise with the phrases that gauged their interaction with religious teachings. It was found that 72.5% believe that their religion is the only one capable of developing the personality of the individual, and 69.5% believe that their doctrine or sect is better than the other sects, and 65.5% seek to change the beliefs of others through strength of faith; and 39% were willing to boycott anyone who abstained from religion, and 29% became annoyed or upset if they witnessed the rites or the practice of rituals belonging to another sect.

3- The respondents' opinions differed as to the nature of the impact of cleric with the results of the survey revealing that about 63.5% of the total sample saw the religious edicts of the clerics as being contradictory, whereas about 36.5% of

the respondents expressed misgivings about their trust of the clerics, as well as believing everything they said.

4- The analysis indicators revealed that young people see religiously orientated political parties, the Internet, the family, and educational curricula as amongst the main sources of information that fuel extremism.

5- The results of the survey revealed that the top spot was taken by respondents who avoided discussing their political views with 68% of the total sample units. Meanwhile, about 17% said they felt repulsed by those who disagreed with them politically, believing that their political views were the more correct. In addition, these people felt that they could only deal with peole who agreed with their political principles, and sought to dismiss political thought altogether.

6- The study revealed the existence of variances between the attitudes of young people and their tendency towards extremism, according to the variables age, sex, academic specialism and university.

7- The results of the study revealed that the highest percentage of social extremism was found in females with a ratio of 27.5% against that of males of 24.5% of the total sample units. This was followed by the highest rate of religious extremism found in males at 17.5%, then females with a ratio of 9% of the total sample units. Elsewhere, the highest percentage for political extremism was found in males at 14.5%, followed by females with 7.5% of the total sample units.

8- Finally, the highest percentage of respondents with social extremism was found at the University of Kufa with 27%, then Anbar University with 25.5% of the total sample units. Followed by the highest percentage with political extremism at the University of Kufa at 15.5%, then Anbar University with 8% of the total sample units. While the highest percentage with religious extremism was found at Anbar University with 15% and then the University of Kufa with 9% of the total sample units.

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