



# IRAQ

A COUNTRY REPORT BASED ON DATA  
1920-2012

by Sarah Ing

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**Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)** is a new approach to the conceptualization and measurement of democracy. It is co-hosted by the University of Gothenburg and University of Notre Dame. With a V-Dem Institute at University of Gothenburg that comprises almost ten staff members, and a project team across the world with four Principal Investigators, fifteen Project Managers, 30+ Regional Managers, 170 Country Coordinators, Research Assistants, and 2,500 Country Experts, the V-Dem project is one of the largest-ever social science research-oriented data collection programs.

Please address comments and/or queries for information to:

V-Dem Institute  
Department of Political Science  
University of Gothenburg  
Sprängkullsgatan 19, PO Box 711  
SE 40530 Gothenburg  
Sweden  
E-mail: [contact@v-dem.net](mailto:contact@v-dem.net)

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## Table of contents

About V-Dem .....	2
Introduction.....	3
Country overview.....	3
Principles of democracy.....	6
Electoral democracy index .....	8
Deliberative component index.....	10
Women’s political empowerment index.....	11
Conclusion .....	13
Appendix.....	14
References .....	21

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Development of Democracy indexes for Iraq, 1920-2012 .....	6
Figure 2. Development of the Electoral democracy index for Iraq, 1920-2012. ....	8
Figure 3. Development of the Deliberative component index for Iraq, 1920-2012.....	10
Figure 4. Development of women’s political empowerment index for Iraq, 1920-2012....	11

## About V-Dem

Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) is a new approach to conceptualizing and measuring democracy. V-Dem's multidimensional and disaggregated approach acknowledges the complexity of the concept of democracy. The V-Dem project distinguishes among five high-level principles of democracy: *electoral*, *liberal*, *participatory*, *deliberative*, and *egalitarian*, which are disaggregated into lower-level components and specific indicators.

### Key features of V-Dem:

- Provides reliable data on five high-level principles and 39 mid-level indices and components of democracy such as regular elections, judicial independence, direct democracy, and gender equality, consisting of 350+ distinct and precise indicators;
- Covers all countries and dependent territories from 1900 to the present and provides an estimate of measurement reliability for each rating;
- Makes all ratings public, free of charge, through a user-friendly interface.

With four Principal Investigators, two Project Coordinators, fifteen Project Managers, more than thirty Regional Managers, 170 Country Coordinators, several Assistant Researchers, and approximately 2,500 Country Experts, the V-Dem project is one of the largest-ever social science data collection projects with a database of over 15 million data points. The database makes highly detailed analysis of virtually all aspects of democracy in a country, while also allowing for summary comparisons between countries based on aggregated indices for different dimensions of democracy. Users from anywhere are able to use the V-Dem online analysis tools which can be found at the project's website. Governments, development agencies, and NGOs can benefit from the nuanced comparative and historical data when informing critical decisions such as selecting country program priorities, informing program designs and monitoring impact of their programs.

### Methodology:

Unlike extant data collection projects, which typically use a small group of experts who rate all countries or ask a single expert to code one country, the V-Dem project has recruited over 2,500 local and cross-national experts to provide judgments on various indicators about democracy. The V-Dem dataset is created by combining factual information from existing data sources about constitutional regulations and de jure situation with expert coding for questions that require evaluation. Experts' ratings are aggregated through an advanced statistical model that takes into account the possibilities that experts may make mistakes and have different scales in mind when coding. In addition, bridge-coders - experts who code multiple countries - are recruited to calibrate the scales of estimates cross-nationally<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For further details and information about the V-Dem methodology, see <http://v-dem.net>.

## Introduction

The Iraq report presents the history of democratization from 1920-2012. The report begins by reviewing a brief history of Iraq followed by the analysis of six key components of democratic development based on data that was collected by Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem). The indices used to measure the development are as follows: *electoral democracy index*, *liberal democracy index*, *deliberative component index*, *egalitarian component index*, *participatory component index*, and *women political empowerment index*. The second part of the report contains an explication of the deviations of these components with respect to Iraq's oppressive political history. Lastly, the report summarizes the current state of democratic development.

## Country overview

Iraq has experienced various forms of governance during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Britain created the state of Iraq under the supervision of the League of Nations in the 1920s, maintaining the Middle Eastern state under its imperialist control in the 1930s and 40s. The Hashemite monarchy ruled the Kingdom of Iraq during its quasi-independence under British supervision. On October 3, 1932, the League of Nations officially admitted the Kingdom of Iraq as an independent state (Pederson 2010). Despite gaining independence, Iraq was only beginning its long road to democracy—the country would experience an unstable republic, coups, military overthrows, and an authoritarian dictatorship before arriving upon its first glimpse of hope for democracy in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. King Faisal I maintained power during Iraq's transition to an independent state and into the 1930s, before King Ghazi took over. Then, Faisal's younger brother King Faisal II retook the throne during a coup in 1941. In essence, the years after independence were tumultuous in part due to the imposition of a regime by the British without much public support.

The various uprisings in the first decade led to the 1963 coup that would alter the political, social and economic landscape of Iraq. The Free Officers orchestrated a coup on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Ramadan in 1963 to overthrow Abd al-Karim Qasim. After the bloody coup, the new, more militant Baathist regime began to overtake Iraq. By this point, however, the Baath Party in Iraq had begun to separate itself from the Baath ideology in other Arab states, such as Syria. Between the Free Officers coup and the reconstruction of the Baath Party in Iraq in 1968, Iraq experienced a succession of leaders from Abdul Salam Arif, Abd al-Bazzaz, al-Bakr and,

most notably, Saddam Hussein (Delvin 1991: 1405). After Hussein assumed leadership in 1968, he essentially purged the officers that had been in office and filled the positions with only his supporters. The Baath Party promised a more democratic and secular rule, but in reality transitioned into a religiously and politically oppressive regime. Over time, opposition became obsolete in Iraq. Unlike coups in the past that had resulted in a succession of various leaders, the Baath Party's ability to bureaucratize yielded them the power to maintain leadership for a long time; the structure, political centralization and expansive roots of the party allowed for its success (Sassoon 2001: 35). Furthermore, the party gave the country the stability it had lacked for decades, essentially converting the country to a one-party system from a series of military juntas and a monarchy prior to that. Yet the Baath party's ability to create a dominant image around Hussein provided him with the power and control similar to personalities such as Stalin or Hitler (Sassoon 2001: 163). The power and somewhat invincibility of Hussein led to a cycle of fear and oppression. The suggestion that someone did not support the President carried the possibility of the death penalty (Bush 1991). In addition, the regime essentially devastated Shia Islam within Iraq. Furthermore, Hussein increased his control of the media, particularly during the Iraq-Iran War. During this eight-year span from 1980 to 1988, the regime began to ban various technologies, such as satellite dishes. Press statements during the war became an outmoded symbol of a regime trying to control public opinion during its dying days (Karlekar 2004: 20).

Throughout his regime, Hussein transitioned from his origin as a leader emerging from a coup to a one-party system leader to an extremely repressive dictator by the late 1990s. Despite having held elections in the 1990s, the results only solidified the unfairness and oppression in the state, as he was almost unanimously re-elected. Despite the oppressive rules imposed by Hussein and the Baath party throughout the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some important amendments to the constitution were also added. Most notably, women gained suffrage and the ability to seek public office in 1980. Yet every marginal gain by Hussein was seemingly met with a more detrimental error. His invasion in Iran demonstrated his relentless ambitious for conquest as a leader. It demonstrated his increasingly suppressive reign as his regime began to restrict nearly all media access and coverage of the war to Iraqi citizens. Subsequently, Hussein again made the unilateral decision to invade Kuwait after falsely accusing the Gulf State of producing more than the prescribed oil quota and falsely claiming rights to the land. Hussein's actions throughout the Gulf War demonstrated his increasingly repressive regime and his desire to maintain power at all costs.

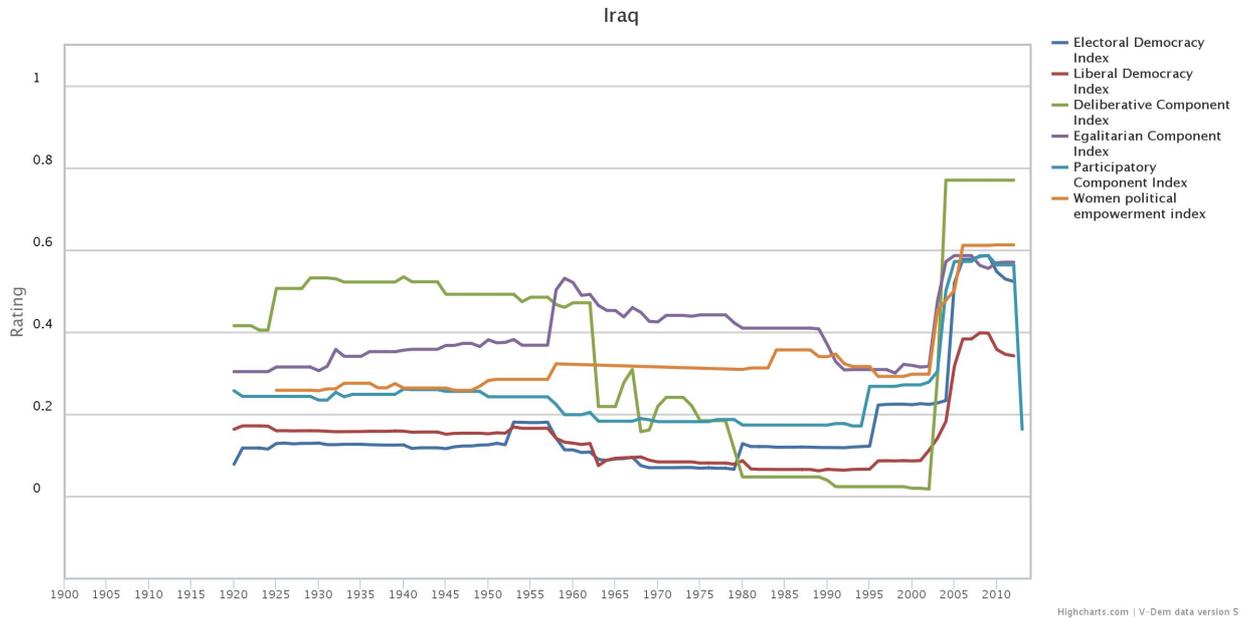
The United States and its allies invaded and occupied Iraq in 2003, insisting that overthrowing Hussein was worth the time and energy. In addition, intelligence at the time

suggested a connection between Osama bin Laden and Hussein and weapons of mass destruction. Thus, particularly following the 9/11 attacks, former U.S. President George W. Bush and his cabinet felt particularly obliged to action. Many justified intervention in Iraq as necessary to upholding the global human rights standards, as well as a establishing a free, stable, democratic sovereign (Baraket 2008). The United States remained in Iraq from 2003 until 2011. Some argue that the U.S. invasion paved way for civil anarchy and instability. The report will illustrate and analyze more in depth that the intervention by the U.S. and its allies dramatically increased many components of freedom and democracy for Iraqi citizens.

During the transitional period following the United States occupation, Iraq held its first elections and implemented a new constitution in 2005. Currently, over thirty major parties are represented in the new government; the predominant parties are the Iraqi National Movement, the State of Law Coalition, the Kurdistan Alliance and the Iraqi National Alliance. Iraq qualifies itself as a parliamentary democracy that uses a federal system of government with an executive, legislative and judicial branch. The current President is Fuad Masum and the Prime Minister is Haider al- Abadi, who has been recently instated. Al-Abadi's proposition to increase the transparency in the budget shows promise for the future of Iraq. After reviewing the public nominations and interviewing potentials, the United Nations authorized nearly 1,800 Iraqis interested in assuming the responsibility of running elections in Iraq (Soudriette 2005: 24). However, the absence of a democratic political history continues to hinder the potential of Iraq to flourish in a fully democratic capacity (Moon 116: 128). Particularly when more than two thirds of Iraqis have only experienced an extremely authoritarian government, the fledgling democracy will have to prove its ability to handle domestic issues, religious tensions, and unforeseen complications such as ISIS in order ensure the long-term transition to a stable, democratic nation the public will trust.

# Principles of democracy

Figure 1. Development of Democracy indexes for Iraq, 1920-2012.



The figure above depicts six different indices analyzing different components of democracy in Iraq, whose scores range from 0 to 1, starting in 1920 through 2014. In general, the progressions and recessions of democratic measurements move in tandem with one another; in essence, the leader in power affects not one, but all aspects of democracy. The state of democracy in Iraq remains fairly consistent without major improvements or degradations throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The *liberal democracy index* and the *electoral democracy index* are consistently the lowest throughout—hovering near a 0.1 throughout most of the time frame. Whilst under the Hashemite monarchy, the series of monarchs serving the Kingdom of Iraq, and increasingly so after the Baath party's rise to power, citizens' rights were not protected and the government did not respect the opinions of Iraqis. The primary exception to the generally unwavering indices throughout the 1900s is the *deliberative component index*; as Hussein's one-party system quickly became a repressive dictatorship, healthy political debate declined and the political elite rarely consented the public for justifications on policy matters. The decline in debate reflects the Baath party's increasing intolerance for political opposition after they obtained power in the early 1960s.

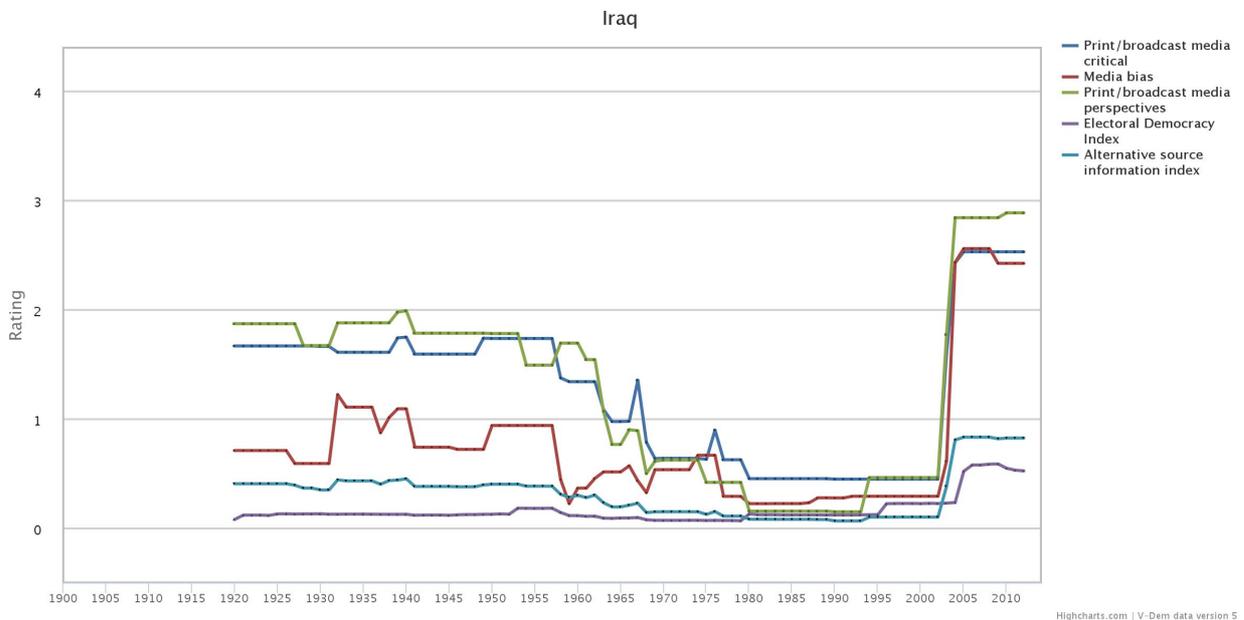
Overall, the greatest positive shifts toward democracy occurred at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century after the intervention by the United States and its allies. The United States ended the

decades long rule of Hussein's terror and attempted to democratize Iraq. Within the span of a year, the level of deliberative democracy, as measured by the *deliberative component index*, soared from nearly a 0 ranking to the highest ranking of .78 in 2001. Nearly every other index increased after U.S. intervention in 2003, as well. For example, the active participation of Iraqis in government increased, as evidenced by the *participatory component index*, due to their ability and desire to be proactive in the transitional government the U.S. helped foster. Although the *egalitarian* and *women empowerment* indices were high relative to the other components, both hovered around a .5 and the participation of women and the distribution of different classes and social groups did not fluctuate as much as a consequence of regime changes.

After an appreciable increase in the early 2000s, the figure reflects a noticeable drop-off soon after 2010. The initial enthusiasm after the fall of the Hussein regime was perhaps premature; although the U.N. spent many resources to transition Iraq to a full-fledged democracy, citizens are discontent with the new government's functionality and practice. In part, the discontent has arisen due to the inability of the government to fulfill promises on transparency and accountability. In addition, the ethnic cleavages that enrich the diverse social matrix in many democracies have instead started to serve as rigid dividing lines among political parties—Shi'a, Sunni, and Kurdish, in particular. Overall, Iraq shows far greater potential for democratization post-2000 than during the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century, although the road ahead is difficult.

## Electoral democracy index

Figure 2. Development of the Electoral democracy index for Iraq, 1920-2012.



The figure above depicting the zero to four rating of the *electoral democracy index* and its components illustrate the immense impact of the Baath Party and Saddam Hussein on the decline of media freedom—a crucial element of democracy. Each of these indices- *print/ broadcast media critical index*, *media bias index*, *print/broadcast media perspectives index*, *electoral democracy index*, *alternative source information index*- show different aspects of freedom of expression that suffered under the authoritarian regime. The collective decline in each of the indices in the early 1960s reflects the decrease in the ability for media sources to criticize the government, share a range of political perspectives, or mention opposition parties.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Saddam Hussein dramatically increased his control of the media, particularly during the Iraq-Iran War. During the war, the regime began to ban various technologies and was one of the last countries to adopt the use of Internet; further illustrating Hussein’s increasingly isolationist policies. By 1992, Hussein’s regime exercised complete control over all television, radio stations, and about a dozen newspapers (Karlekar 2004: 19). Hussein’s authoritarian policies resulted in increased restraint and censorship of the media during his reign, as reflected by the media freedom indices, which hover close to 0 throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Thus, the historic media boom following the collapse of the Baath regime in 2003 is illustrated in the *print/broadcast media critical*, *media bias*, *print/broadcast media perspective* indices.

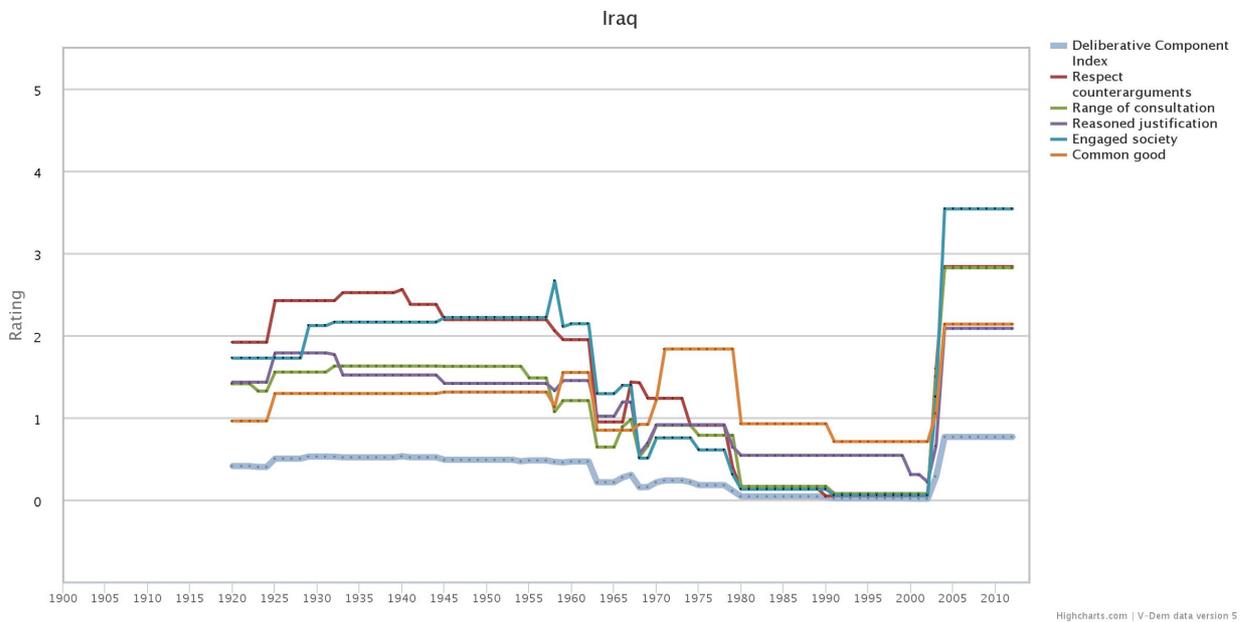
Estimates state that more than 200 newspapers and magazines appeared in Iraq between the fall of the regime and present day Iraq (Karlekar 2004: 20).

Despite the increase of many media freedoms, the creation of salient and impactful political groups and media outlets takes time; furthermore, many Iraqis were hesitant to start or join media groups after the authoritarian regime had spent years violently repressing those who did. The slow and steady rise of Iraqis in media is illustrated via the *alternative source information index* and *electoral democracy* indices. Both indices hovered near a .8 despite the U.S. involvement. Due to the lack of political opposition for decades, foreign countries and supranational groups (the United Nations) conducted the majority of the transitional government operations and decisions were made without the primary consent of Iraqis. Thus, the low indices reflect the slight decline in autonomy for Iraq during the transitional period.

The existence of various media outlets, uncensored media sources, and freedom of the press is crucial to the success of democracy in Iraq. The presence of media outlets has grown in the Arab world, particularly with the success of stations such as Al-Jazeera; however, the validity of the information is questionable as implied by one journalist who argued that Baghdad has become “the city of Rumors”. In essence, the media arising is unreliable, which does not foster the much needed confidence of the Iraqi public in the media. In addition, after days of bombing, many of the telecommunication systems in the city were destroyed in 2003, which serves as yet another setback (Ghosh 2003: 1934). Overall, the positive trends of the *print/broadcast media perspectives*, *media bias*, and *print/broadcast critical* indices show an incredible change in free speech and promise for democracy for the citizens of Iraq. The ability for Iraqis to more openly engage in political debates will not only encourage more political participation, but also yield a wider range of perspectives.

## Deliberative component index

Figure 3. Development of the Deliberative component index for Iraq, 1920-2012.



In addition, to the optimism brought about by media freedoms in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the increase of healthy deliberation in Iraq has increased dramatically. The figure above expounds the various components included in the *deliberative component index*, measuring the degree that decisions are reached in a polity. The ratings range from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 5. While under formal or informal British influence throughout the 1920s to late 1950s, the state of deliberation in Iraq remained fairly consistent; yet because they were largely influenced and controlled by the British, the ratings remained fairly low, ranging from a .5 to a 2.5 during this period. The lack of dialogue between the political elites and the public reflect the series of monarchies throughout this time frame.

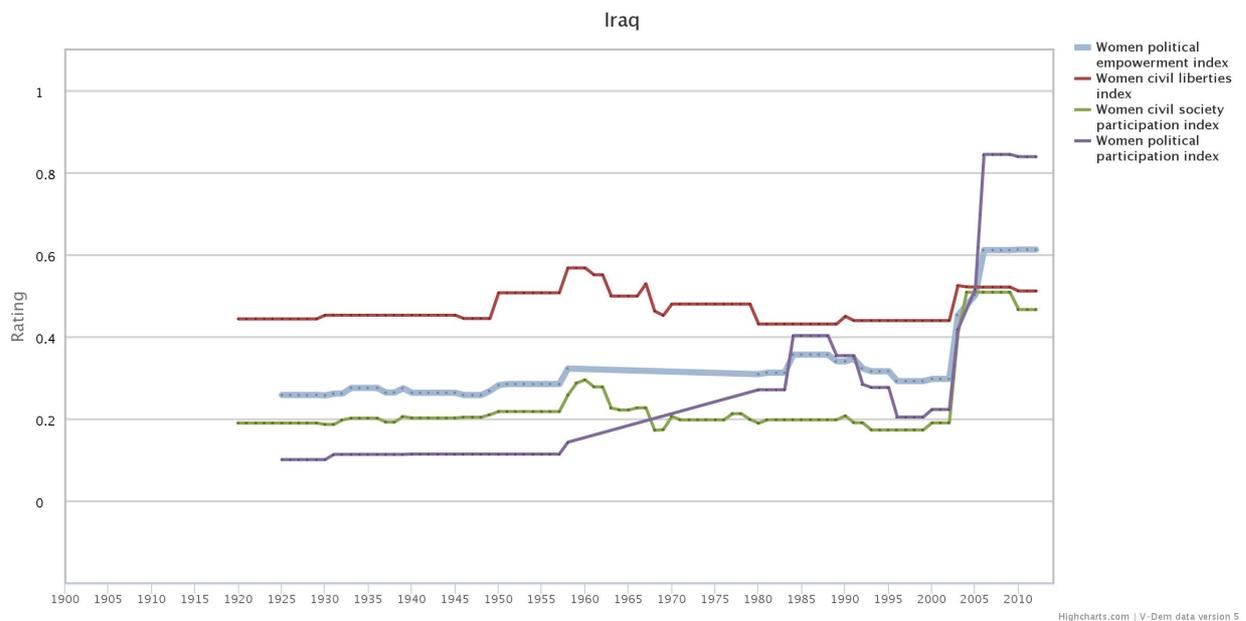
The lack of public participation in political dialogue foreshadowed the eminent declines of other crucial elements of democracy. The minor fluctuations in the 1960s reflect the succession of coups led by Salam Arif, Abd al-Bazzaz, al-Bakr, among others that further destabilized the political system. When Hussein assumed power in 1968, however, political dialogue declined as precipitously as media freedoms, as discussed in *Electoral democracy index*. The one exception is a slight increase in how political elites worked for the benefit of the public good at the beginning of the Baath party's rule—illustrating the false promises and perceived notions that the Baath party would bring stability and hope to Iraqi citizens after years of overthrows and instability. Successful democratic policy outcomes require healthy political debate, and any

attempts from the public or even political elites to contend with Hussein’s opinion was met with harsh repercussions. His willingness to hear other political opinions or for citizens to even express them became obsolete, as shown by the *respect counterarguments*, *range of consultation*, and *engaged society indices* in the late 1980s and 1990s during the height of Saddam Hussein’s power.

In essence, Hussein’s decisions were made unilaterally, fulfilling his power-hungry personality. For example, his decision to invade the neighboring country of Kuwait was a morale booster coming off of what he deemed a victory in Iraq. Furthermore, Hussein was primarily after the oil in Kuwait to augment Iraq’s coffers after the Iran-Iraq War. Yet Hussein had no real justification and the public nearly unanimously agreed retrospectively that their leader was not justified in such actions. The participation of deliberation increased in all areas following the Western incursion in 2003, as illustrated above. The high rating of 3.54 on the *engaged society* index is particularly promising for democracy in Iraq: after decades of no public deliberation, Iraqi citizens were actively partaking in debate and considering the greater good of the country.

## Women’s political empowerment index

**Figure 4. Development of women’s political empowerment index for Iraq, 1920-2012.**



While perhaps the figure above does not appear as dramatically progressive toward democracy as prior figures, the late surge of women’s political empowerment in Iraq could have

an important positive influence in a region notorious for the repression of women. The state of women in politics in Iraq remained fairly constant throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as illustrated by the *women's political empowerment index*. Interestingly, despite many of Saddam Hussein's repressive policies that negatively impacted freedom of expression and deliberation as previously discussed, women's empowerment actually increased during the 1980s and during the Iran-Iraq War. While women had essentially no impact until the 1960s, as illustrated by the 0.1 rating, their representation and voice increased incrementally throughout the 1970s and 1980s, despite a slight decrease in the early 1990s. The surge in the *women civil liberties* and *women civil society participation* indices in the early 2000s following the Iraq War demonstrates both the freedom to participate and the encouragement by the U.S. for Iraqi women to participate in civil society. Foreign forces removed the pre-existing social and political limitations for women. In addition, the new constitution of Iraq included laws and amendments that granted further equality for women, and a legislative quota that required 25% of the lower house chamber seats to be filled with women increased their voice in government.

Starting in the 1960s, the number of women in the lower chamber began to incrementally climb to 10% in 1985 and 25% by 2000. This is due to a variety of factors: For one, in 1970, a new constitution nominally made Iraqi women and men equal under the law. Secondly, women gained the right to vote and run for office in the 1980s. Despite many rights-limiting policies, women's literacy and education improved, the ban on leaving the house was removed, and women could drive and work outside the home (Sjoberg 2006: 113). Many of these improvements were made to improve the economy of Iraq under Hussein's "state-sponsored" industrial, modernization plan. The inclusion of women in politics was also another one of Hussein's political ploys to appear to be more democratic to the international community.

In addition, by 2005, six of the top-ranking bureaucrats were women in Iraq and 89 other women occupied seats in parliament. By 2015, the *women political participation index* had climbed to a remarkable .85 from a mere .10 in the early 1990s. Prior to the 1990s, Saddam Hussein had legalized so-called "honor killings"; honor killings legitimize the murder of a woman who committed an immoral or wrongful act in order to restore honor to her family. Women in Iraq have historically been repressed politically, and wrongful behavior, which could be simply opposing the political status quo, could threaten a woman's life. While these honor killings still occur in more rural regions due the long-standing tradition in Iraq, the international community strongly disapproves and continues to promote eradication of this practice. Women's participation is key for gender equity and the future of democracy in Iraq. However, while Iraq

has made notable increases in gender equality, it will take time to reverse a long history of patriarchal hierarchy in society.

## Conclusion

Iraq has experienced various regimes in the past century; they have transitioned from a monarchy, to quasi-independence under the British, to a series of leaders and coups, to a one-party system, to an oppressive dictatorship during the time period examined in this report. Most regimes stripped Iraqi citizens of basic liberties and freedoms, and many citizens did not experience freedom of press, religion, or assembly for the majority of their lifetimes.

The United States intervened in 2003 and attempted to aid in the transition of democracy. During the transitional period, Iraq held its first, democratic elections—a landmark event for a long-time authoritarian country. Today, Iraq is a parliamentary democracy that uses a federal system with legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Over thirty political parties have competed in the recent elections, demonstrating both engagement and healthy competition among parties.

The general instability of the Middle East has become a breeding ground for the growing terrorist group known as ISIS (The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). The terrorist organization's presence in Iraq and control of many oil fields has become a hindrance on the road to democracy. The nascent government lacks the resources, intelligence, and stability to oust ISIS, thus making it difficult to focus on internal matters to ensure that democracy will become longstanding. Domestically, many Iraqis' lack of confidence in the Iraq government, stems from the lack of transparency particularly with regards to the budget; the millions of dollars lost to so-called "ghost soldiers" and the lack of incentives to the private sector to produce oil and gas demonstrate only two of the major budget issues experts have cited. In essence, while ISIS poses the greatest external threat for Iraq, fixing internal government issues such as the budget will restore Iraqi's confidence in democracy and foster more participation and stability for future political posterity.

# Appendix

## Indicators included in Figures

### Electoral Democracy Index

*Question:* To what extent is the ideal of electoral democracy in its fullest sense achieved?

*Clarifications:* The electoral principle of democracy seeks to embody the core value of making rulers responsive to citizens, achieved through electoral competition for the electorate's approval under circumstances when suffrage is extensive; political and civil society organizations can operate freely; elections are clean and not marred by fraud or systematic irregularities; and elections affect the composition of the chief executive of the country. In between elections, there is freedom of expression and an independent media capable of presenting alternative views on matters of political relevance. In the V-Dem conceptual scheme, electoral democracy is understood as an essential element of any other conception of (representative) democracy – liberal, participatory, deliberative, egalitarian, or some other. *Aggregation:* The index is formed by taking the average of, on the one hand, the weighted average of the indices measuring freedom of association (thick) (v2x\_frassoc\_thick), suffrage (v2x\_suffr), clean elections (v2xel\_frefair), elected executive (v2x\_accex) and freedom of expression (v2x\_freexp\_thick); and, on the other, the five-way multiplicative interaction between those indices. This is half way between a straight average and strict multiplication, meaning the average of the two. It is thus a compromise between the two most well known aggregation formulas in the literature, both allowing (partial) "compensation" in one sub-component for lack of polyarchy in the others, but also punishing countries not strong in one sub-component according to the "weakest link" argument.

*Aggregation* is done at the level of Dahls sub-components (with the one exception of the non-electoral component). Note that data release 6 suggests an updated formula to create this index (release 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 used a different, preliminary aggregation formula).

### Liberal Democracy Index

*Question:* To what extent is the ideal of liberal democracy achieved?

*Clarifications:* The liberal principle of democracy emphasizes the importance of protecting individual and minority rights against the tyranny of the state and the tyranny of the majority. The liberal model takes a "negative" view of political power insofar as it judges the quality of democracy by the limits placed on government. This is achieved by constitutionally protected

civil liberties, strong rule of law, an independent judiciary, and effective checks and balances that, together, limit the exercise of executive power.

*Aggregation:* To make this a measure of liberal democracy, the index also takes the level of electoral democracy into account.

### **Deliberative Component Index**

*Question:* To what extent is the deliberative principle of democracy achieved?

*Clarification:* The deliberative principle of democracy focuses on the process by which decisions are reached in a polity. A deliberative process is one in which public reasoning focused on the common good motivates political decisions as contrasted with emotional appeals, solidary attachments, parochial interests, or coercion. According to this principle, democracy requires more than an aggregation of existing preferences. There should also be respectful dialogue at all levels from preference formation to final decision among informed and competent participants who are open to persuasion.

*Aggregation:* To measure these features of a polity we try to determine the extent to which political elites give public justifications for their positions on matters of public policy, justify their positions in terms of the public good, acknowledge and respect counter-arguments; and how wide the range of consultation is at elite levels.

### **Egalitarian Component Index**

*Question:* To what extent is the egalitarian principle achieved?

*Clarifications:* The egalitarian principle of democracy addresses the distribution of political power across social groups, i.e., groups defined by class, sex, religion, and ethnicity. This perspective on democracy emphasizes that a formal guarantee of political rights and civil liberties are not always sufficient for political equality. Ideally, all social groups should have approximately equal participation, representation, agenda-setting power, protection under the law, and influence over policymaking and policy implementation. If such equality does not exist, the state ought to seek to redistribute socio-economic resources, education, and health so as to enhance political equality.

### **Participatory Component Index**

*Question:* To what extent is the participatory principle achieved?

*Clarification:* The participatory principle of democracy emphasizes active participation by citizens in all political processes, electoral and non-electoral. It is motivated by uneasiness about a

bedrock practice of electoral democracy: delegating authority to representatives. Thus, direct rule by citizens is preferred, wherever practicable.

*Aggregation:* This model of democracy thus takes suffrage for granted, emphasizing engagement in civil society organizations, direct democracy, and subnational elected bodies.

### **Women Political Empowerment Index**

*Question:* How politically empowered are women?

*Clarifications:* Women's political empowerment is defined as a process of increasing capacity for women, leading to greater choice, agency, and participation in societal decision-making. It is understood to incorporate three equally-weighted dimensions: fundamental civil liberties, women's open discussion of political issues and participation in civil society organizations, and the descriptive representation of women in formal political positions.

### **Women civil liberties index**

*Question:* Do women have the ability to make meaningful decisions in key areas of their lives?

*Clarifications:* Women's civil liberties are understood to include freedom of domestic movement, the right to private property, freedom from forced labor, and access to justice.

### **Women civil society participation index**

*Question:* Do women have the ability to express themselves and to form and participate in groups? *Clarifications:* Women's civil society participation is understood to include open discussion of political issues, participation in civil society organizations, and representation in the ranks of journalists.

### **Women political participation index**

*Question:* Are women descriptively represented in formal political positions?

*Clarifications:* Women's political participation is understood to include women's descriptive representation in the legislature and an equal share in the overall distribution of power.

### **Print/broadcast Media Critical**

*Question:* Of the major print and broadcast outlets, how many routinely criticize the government?

*Choices:*

0 : None.

1 : Only a few marginal outlets.

2 : Some important outlets routinely criticize the government but there are other important outlets that never do.

3 : All major media outlets criticize the government at least occasionally.

### **Media Bias**

*Question:* Is there media bias against opposition parties or candidates?

*Choices:*

0 : The print and broadcast media cover only the official party or candidates, or have no political coverage, or there are no opposition parties or candidates to cover.

1 : The print and broadcast media cover more than just the official party or candidates but all the opposition parties or candidates receive only negative coverage.

2 : The print and broadcast media cover some opposition parties or candidates more or less impartially, but they give only negative or no coverage to at least one newsworthy party or candidate.

3 : The print and broadcast media cover opposition parties or candidates more or less impartially, but they give an exaggerated amount of coverage to the governing party or candidates.

4 : The print and broadcast media cover all newsworthy parties and candidates more or less impartially and in proportion to their newsworthiness.

### **Print/broadcast media perspectives**

*Question:* Do the major print and broadcast media represent a wide range of political perspectives?

*Choices:*

0 : The major media represent only the government's perspective.

1 : The major media represent only the perspectives of the government and a government-approved, semi-official opposition party.

2 : The major media represent a variety of political perspectives but they systematically ignore at least one political perspective that is important in this society.

3 : All perspectives that are important in this society are represented in at least one of the major media.

### **Alternative source information index**

*Question:* To what extent is the media (a) un-biased in their coverage (or lack of coverage) of the opposition, (b) allowed to be critical of the regime, and (c) representative of a wide array of political perspectives?

### **Respect counterarguments**

*Question:* When important policy changes are being considered, to what extent do political elites acknowledge and respect counterarguments?

*Choices:*

- 0 : Counterarguments are not allowed or if articulated, punished.
- 1 : Counterarguments are allowed at least from some parties, but almost always are ignored.
- 2 : Elites tend to acknowledge counterarguments but then explicitly degrade them by making a negative statement about them or the individuals and groups that propose them.
- 3 : Elites tend to acknowledge counterarguments without making explicit negative or positive statements about them.
- 4 : Elites almost always acknowledge counterarguments and explicitly value them, even if they ultimately reject them for the most part.
- 5 : Elites almost always acknowledge counterarguments and explicitly value them, and frequently also even accept them and change their position.

### **Range of consultation**

*Question:* When important policy changes are being considered, how wide is the range of consultation at elite levels?

*Choices:*

- 0 : No consultation. The leader or a very small group (e.g. military council) makes authoritative decisions on their own.
- 1 : Very little and narrow. Consultation with only a narrow circle of loyal party/ruling elites.
- 2 : Consultation includes the former plus a larger group that is loyal to the government, such as the ruling party's or parties' local executives and/or women, youth and other branches.
- 3 : Consultation includes the former plus leaders of other parties.
- 4 : Consultation includes the former plus a select range of society/labor/business representatives.
- 5 : Consultation engages elites from essentially all parts of the political spectrum and all politically relevant sectors of society and business.

## **Reasoned justification**

*Question:* When important policy changes are being considered, i.e. before a decision has been made, to what extent do political elites give public and reasoned justifications for their positions?

*Choices:*

0 : No justification. Elites almost always only dictate that something should or should not be done, but no reasoning about justification is given. For example, “We must cut spending.”

1 : Inferior justification. Elites tend to give reasons why someone should or should not be for doing or not doing something, but the reasons tend to be illogical or false, although they may appeal to many voters. For example, “We must cut spending. The state is inefficient.” (The inference is incomplete because addressing inefficiencies would not necessarily reduce spending and it might undermine essential services.)

2 : Qualified justification. Elites tend to offer a single simple reason justifying why the proposed policies contribute to or detract from an outcome. For example, “We must cut spending because taxpayers cannot afford to pay for current programs.”

3 : Sophisticated justification. Elites tend to offer more than one or more complex, nuanced and complete justification. For example, “We must cut spending because taxpayers cannot afford to pay for current government programs. Raising taxes would hurt economic growth, and deficit spending would lead to inflation.”

## **Engaged society**

*Question:*

When important policy changes are being considered, how wide and how independent are public deliberations?

*Choices:*

0 : Public deliberation is never, or almost never allowed.

1 : Some limited public deliberations are allowed but the public below the elite levels is almost always either unaware of major policy debates or unable to take part in them.

2 : Public deliberation is not repressed but nevertheless infrequent and non-elite actors are typically controlled and/or constrained by the elites.

3 : Public deliberation is actively encouraged and some autonomous non-elite groups participate, but it is confined to a small slice of specialized groups that tends to be the same across issue-areas.

4 : Public deliberation is actively encouraged and a relatively broad segment of non-elite groups often participate and vary with different issue-areas.

5 : Large numbers of non-elite groups as well as ordinary people tend to discuss major policies among themselves, in the media, in associations or neighborhoods, or in the streets. Grass-roots deliberation is common and unconstrained.

### **Common good**

*Question:*When important policy changes are being considered, to what extent do political elites justify their positions in terms of the common good?

*Choices:*

0 : Little or no justification in terms of the common good is usually offered.

1 : Specific business, geographic, group, party, or constituency interests are for the most part offered as justifications.

2 : Justifications are for the most part a mix of specific interests and the common good and it is impossible to say which justification is more common than the other.

3 : Justifications are based on a mixture of references to constituency/party/group interests and on appeals to the common good.

4 : Justifications are for the most part almost always based on explicit statements of the common good for society, understood either as the greatest good for the greatest number or as helping the least advantaged in a society.

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