

Transition in Crisis: Stalled Democratization in post-2003 Iraq

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*This paper argues that democratization in post-2003 Iraq, initiated as a result of regime change, has effectively stalled and is dangerously close to reversing itself. The theoretical explanation offered in this case study combines elements of structuralism with instrumentalism. The paper's hypothesis is that the absence of a consensually unified national elite—as defined by John Higley and Michael Burton—makes it impractical for the government of Iraq to address critical issues regarding the integration of trust networks, the reduction of categorical inequalities, and the minimization of autonomous power centers—processes essential to democratization as articulated by Charles Tilly in his book, *Democracy*. The case study evaluates data collected from a variety of sources including scholarly articles, newspaper reports and editorials, informal conversations with indigenous Iraqis, informal conversations with friends and colleagues in the U.S. Department of Defense and Department of State with extensive experience and fieldwork in Iraq since 2003, and the author's personal observations while serving in Iraq in 2005.*

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“It is precisely this debate, about the relative importance of elite choices and institutions, of structure versus contingency, of the importance of structural factors, of the role and character of civil society that now needs to be directed more fully to the study of post-conflict state-building” (Manning 2006, 735).

Any discussion surrounding the current experiment in democratization occurring in Iraq since the fall of the Ba’athist Regime in 2003 is difficult at best because of the contemporary and ongoing nature of the transition. However, that does not preclude both scholars and practitioners from conducting practical and necessary assessments of Iraq’s progress toward further democratization to identify any viable achievements up to this point and to determine the best course for future action. The purpose of this paper is to answer the following research question: ***why has democratization stalled in post-2003 Iraq in spite of regime change?*** By *stalled*, this analysis implies that the net movement toward greater levels of democracy in Iraq has reached a point of standstill and is capable of reversing itself, thereby, leading to de-democratization. The answer to the abovementioned question rests on two fundamental assumptions: regime change initiated a movement toward democracy in Iraq, and democracy is capable of existing in Iraq.

Conceding to the fact that democratization is a long and difficult process, the first assumption does not claim that the United States and its Coalition Allies magically bequeathed democracy upon Iraq immediately following the toppling of Saddam Hussein and his authoritarian stranglehold on the country. On the contrary, the foundation of this assumption rests on a handful of recent historical events that clearly identify an initial movement toward democratization in Iraq: violent overthrow and subsequent regime change, popular elections at the national and state (referred to as governorates or provinces) levels, and a constitutional referendum that was significantly challenged by the Sunni Arab majority and other ethno-religious minorities in 3 of the 18 governorates. All of these events point toward an erratic yet continuous transition from a unitary to a federal system of government, a first in the history of modern Iraq. Although this is not expansive by any standards, it is at least an initial movement away from the unitary authoritarianism prevalent in 20th century Iraqi history and toward a rudimentary version of democracy.

It would be wise to note at this point that any transition to democracy resulting from what Elizabeth Jean Wood refers to as “defeat in war followed by the imposition of democracy by occupying forces” is already tenuous at best because of democratization’s dependence on the foreign, and often naïve, influence of the occupying power (Wood 2005, 10). Karin von Hippel warns that any “...*democratic reforms* [in post-intervention scenarios] *need a solid and lengthy commitment before they take root*” (von Hippel 2000, 186). She offers the following recipe based on her examination of U.S. post-intervention democratization efforts in Panama, Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia. “A strategy for rebuilding and democratising states *after* intervention needs to consider three fundamental elements: re-establishing security, empowering civil society and strengthening democratic institutions, and co-ordinating international efforts. The three are necessarily linked and cannot be fully implemented without the others” (193).

With regard to the second assumption, the current insurgency and sectarian violence in Iraq have left many arguing whether democracy is even viable, let alone sustainable, in such an ethnically and religiously divided country as Iraq. Encountering natural resistance in the form of an active insurgency is no reason to give up the democratization effort altogether. If the voices of the intransigent few always overshadowed the will of the many, it is arguable that democracy would have never emerged in the history of humanity. Having ruled out the voices of the few as a reason to capitulate, what then of the will of the many? Is a plural society like the one in Iraq—exhibiting segmental cleavages² along ethnic, religious, regional, cultural and linguistic lines—capable of democratizing? In his seminal work entitled *Democracy in Plural Societies*, Arend Lijphart would argue that it is; regardless of its third world status and its numerous segmental cleavages, Iraq is capable of democratizing through consociational means. “In a consociational democracy, the centrifugal tendencies inherent in a plural society are counteracted by the cooperative attitudes and behavior of the leaders of the different segments of the population. Elite cooperation is the primary distinguishing feature of consociational democracy...” (Lijphart 1977, 1). Based on Lijphart’s reasoning, a plural society like Iraq is capable of democratizing despite its many societal cleavages if this process is facilitated by elite cooperation.

DEFINING DEMOCRATIZATION

With these assumptions in mind, the attention now turns to accurately defining the process of democratization. The theory applied in this case study rests on a combination of both structuralism and instrumentalism. First, Iraq’s predominantly unitary and authoritarian systems of government, dating back well into antiquity, leave few institutional blueprints from which to erect a federal, and possibly consociational, system capable of peacefully binding together the various ethno-religious groups that are currently tearing apart the very fabric of Iraqi nationalism (in Arabic: *wataniya*). However, that does not imply that the structures are not necessary; rather, the foundation of these new federal systems and institutions are crucial to the future survival of Iraq and its experiment with democratization. Second, located at the literal crossroads of Middle Eastern, Arab, and Islamic civilizations and traditions, all of which greatly emphasize the influence of leadership in both society and politics, the current and historical influence of Iraqi elites—whether they be national or local, religious or secular, governmental or tribal/familial—in Iraq’s domestic politics speaks for itself. Finally, Iraq’s lack of any historical experimentation with democracy leaves little room for the idealist approach as a practical theory for analysis. The democratization of Iraq since 2003 is purely the result of foreign influence, and not internal evolution and development.

So what is democratization? A constitutional approach would argue that a country’s level of democracy is a direct reflection of what is written and embodied in its constitution; but this

² Initially coined by Harry Eckstein and quoted by Arend Lijphart, he says that “segmental cleavages may be [differences and divisions] of a religious, ideological, linguistic, regional, cultural, racial, or ethnic nature” (Lijphart 1977, 3-4).

approach fails to explain why Iraq, which arguably has the most democratic constitution in all of the Middle East, is displaying equal if not greater levels of violence and segmental cleavage today than at any point prior to the ratification of its constitution during the October 2005 constitutional referendum. A substantive approach would argue that a country's level of democracy is a direct reflection of what its government promotes; but, once again, this approach also fails to explain why the Iraqi government, which has at least nominally embraced and overtly promoted democratization, has been incapable of significantly reducing the levels of violence directly attributable to sectarianism, and not necessarily to insurgent activity. A procedural approach would argue that a country's level of democracy is a direct reflection of what its government actually does; but, yet again, this approach fails to explain why the Iraqi government—the first officially elected government in Iraqi history, in place since the December 2005 national elections—has been unsuccessful at accomplishing anything of significance with respect to national security, ethno-religious reconciliation, power-sharing, wealth redistribution, or anything remotely related to anyone's definition of democracy or democratization.

The theory postulated by Charles Tilly in *Democracy*—which is a modified and enhanced version of the process-oriented approach—constitutes the primary framework applied in this case study's analysis of stalled democratization in post-2003 Iraq. Tilly argues that “the fundamental processes promoting democratization in all times and places...consist of increasing integration of trust networks into public politics, increasing insulation of public politics from categorical inequality, and decreasing autonomy of major power centers from public politics” (Tilly 2007, 23). Tilly argues that movement in the positive direction of all three of these variables constitutes democratization because these variables increase the levels of breadth, equality, protection, and mutually binding consultation between a regime and its citizens; similarly, movement in the negative direction constitutes de-democratization (13–15). **Trust networks** are formal and informal groups of closely associated individuals who share a common interest and who trust the other members with the safety and livelihood of their respective group. **Categorical inequalities** are discriminatory methods based on social categories such as ethnicity or religious preference that negatively affect the political rights of an entire group of individuals. **Autonomous power centers** are groups that maintain political power and influence but exist outside of the realm of public politics.³

This section opened with the premise that the theory applied in this case study rests on a combination of both structuralism and instrumentalism. The process-oriented approach presented by Tilly focuses heavily on structural transitions and transformations. Interestingly, although not mentioned outright in his work, his theory seems to also assume that a regime must exist to serve, at least partially, as an agency for that structural change. At a minimum, one could argue that the total absence of a regime would not serve Tilly's theory very well; rather, this scenario exhibits greater resemblance to *nation formation* than to the *political transitions* indicative in

³ For an in depth description and analysis of trust networks, categorical inequalities, and autonomous power centers, please see pages 72-79 and chapters 4–6 in the Charles Tilly text.

Tilly's theory of democratization and de-democratization. With this in mind, the remainder of this section will examine the role of instrumentalism in democratization/de-democratization.

Some scholars, like Dankwart Rustow, argue that democratization is based on a sense of national unity; without national unity, democratization is essentially extinguished at creation. By national unity, Rustow implies "...that the vast majority of citizens in a democracy-to-be must have no doubt or mental reservations as to which political community they belong to" (Rustow 1970, 350). Rustow's *dynamic model* suggests a "sequence from national unity as background, through struggle, compromise, and habituation, to democracy" (362). He offers the following summary of his model:

The basis of democracy is not maximum consensus. It is the tenuous middle ground between imposed uniformity (such as would lead to some sort of tyranny) and implacable hostility (of a kind that would disrupt the community in civil war or secession). In the process of genesis of democracy, an element of what might be termed consensus enters at three points at least. There must be a prior sense of community, preferably a sense of community quietly taken for granted that is above mere opinion and mere agreement. There must be a conscious adoption of democratic rules, but they must not be so much believed in as applied, first perhaps from necessity and gradually from habit. The very operation of these rules will enlarge the area of consensus step-by-step as democracy moves down its crowded agenda (363).

Although Rustow's model has stood the practical test of time, the drawback to his argument is in its application to Middle Eastern contexts. The *jury is still out* as to whether the contemporary state-system founded at the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 is even effectively applicable in the Middle East, whose members often identify themselves along several conflicting and/or overlapping lines. For example, is a Sunni Arab living in the Al-Anbar Governorate of Iraq a member of the al-Dulaym tribe, a citizen of the state of Iraq, a member of the greater Arab nation, or a member of the even greater nation of Islam? At different moments in time, it could be any, if not all, of them. Given this constant fluidity with respect to identity and community, what does national unity—Rustow's solitary precondition—actually mean in the Middle East? Given the second of our two initial assumptions—that democracy is capable of existing in Iraq—clear national unity, then, is not a necessary condition, at least for the immediate future, in the Middle East.

Coupling the influential role of leadership in the Middle East with Rustow's requirement for unity, theories dealing with unified elites—such as those offered by Arend Lijphart, John Higley, and Michael Burton—would have more relevance in the Middle East. Mentioned earlier, Lijphart argues that "the centrifugal tendencies inherent in a plural society are counteracted by the cooperative attitudes and behavior of the leaders of the different segments of the population. Elite cooperation is the primary distinguishing feature of consociational democracy..." (Lijphart 1977, 1). Higley and Burton also identify the inherent difficulties associated with plural societies undergoing political transitions and "recognize that subnational, regionally-based ethnic, religious, linguistic, and other cultural conflicts sometimes override elite-regime relationships and require different but not necessarily contradictory concepts and models" (Higley and Burton 1989, 18). Consequently, they argue that democratization is more likely to occur in a plural

society if its emerging national elite⁴ opts to resolve its disputes through consensual unification rather than overt coercion or conflict.

A national elite is *consensually unified* when its members (1) share a largely tacit consensus about rules and codes of political conduct amounting to a “restrained partisanship,” and (2) participate in a more or less comprehensively integrated structure of interaction that provides them with relatively reliable and effective access to each other and to the most central decision-makers. This combination of tacit consensus on rules of the game and comprehensive integration disposes elite members to view decisional outcomes as a positive-sum or “politics-as-bargaining” game, rather than a zero-sum or “politics-as-war” game. With agreement on the rules of the political game and with decision-making access assured, the diverse and heterogeneous members accept various decisions they do not especially like because they expect to get their way on other issues they consider vital. Over time, most elites achieve their most basic aims and are therefore inclined to view the totality of decisional outcomes as positive-sum (19).

Therefore, a *consensually unified national elite* represents a group of influential individuals who (1) are capable of representing the different aspects of the plural society from which they originate and (2) are more inclined to favor negotiation and compromise over coercion and conflict. The importance of Higley and Burton’s instrumental theory regarding consensually unified national elites on the democratization of a transitioning state is best summed up by Jeroen de Zeeuw and Krishna Kumar in their extensive examination of postconflict societies. They argue that “it is up to the political and intellectual leadership of postconflict societies themselves to take the necessary initiative and push for democratization of their polity. Absent such visionary leadership, no amount of international assistance or diplomatic pressure can foster democracy” (de Zeeuw and Kumar 2006, 7).

Drawing from both the structural and instrumental arguments presented in this section, this analysis *defines democratization in a plural society as the process by which a consensually unified national elite increase the levels of breadth, equality, protection, and mutually binding consultation present between a regime and its citizens by increasing the integration of trust networks into, insulating the influence of categorical inequalities on, and decreasing the autonomy of independent power centers from the realm public politics*. Correspondingly, any one of the following four circumstances would constitute de-democratization: (1) the absence of a consensually unified national elite; or the failure of that elite to (2) increase the integration of trust networks into public politics, (3) insulate the influence of categorical inequalities on public politics, or (4) decrease the autonomy of independent power centers from public politics.

STALLED DEMOCRATIZATION IN POST-2003 IRAQ

Coupling these four variables with the aforementioned concept of stalled democratization, this case study posits that *democratization in Iraq is stalled because the absence of a consensually unified national elite makes it impractical for the government of*

⁴ John Higley and Michael Burton define national elites as “persons who are able, by virtue of their authoritative positions in powerful organizations and movements of whatever kind, to affect national political outcomes regularly and substantially” (Higley and Burton 1989, 18).

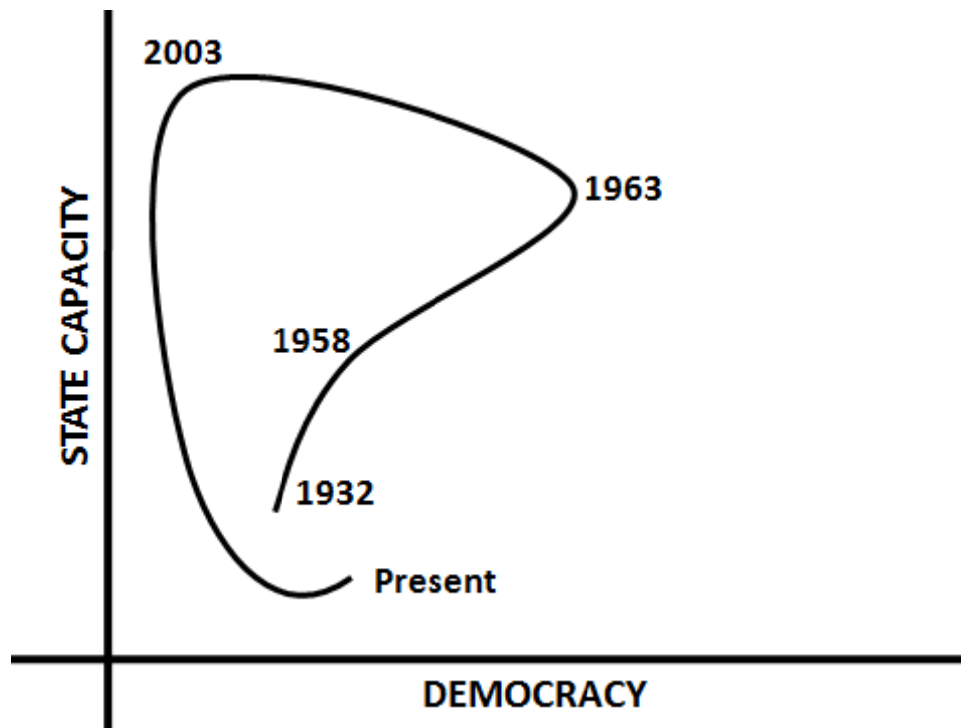
Iraq to increase the integration of trust networks into, insulate the influence of categorical inequalities on, and decrease the autonomy of independent power centers from the realm public politics. Much of the scholarly research surrounding Iraq's current experiment with democratization is either ongoing or incomplete because of the real-time nature of the transition. Similarly, because of the hazardous security conditions prevalent throughout many parts of the country, independent scholarly research is often impractical. The research presented thus far has been an analytical collection of scholarly works addressing the various perspectives and arguments regarding democratization theory. The remainder of this case study utilizes research and data specifically focusing on the current transition in Iraq and collected from the following list of sources: scholarly journal articles; newspaper reports and editorials; informal conversations with friends and colleagues in the U.S. Department of Defense and the U.S. Department of State with firsthand field experience in Iraq since 2003; informal conversations with local indigenous Iraq civilians, to include colleagues, friends, and family; and most importantly, the knowledge, experience, and insight inherent to an Iraqi-American who was born in Iraq and subsequently returned to serve there for one year as an Officer in the U.S. Army.

The history of modern Iraq as a sovereign nation began in 1932 when it gained independence from the United Kingdom. The Hashemite monarchy of King Faisal and his successors, installed in the aftermath of World War I, governed Iraq during this initial period until it was overthrown by coup d'état in 1958. During this period, and despite a brief reinvasion by the United Kingdom during World War II in response to the troubling growth of Nazi ideology in the region, the capacity of the Iraqi state increased at a gradual yet measurable pace, particularly with respect to the national military and other government institutions. The coup d'état by Iraqi Army forces loyal to Brigadier General Abdul Karim Qassim on July 14, 1958 set Iraq on its first experimental path toward democratization.

From 1958 until his assassination in 1963, then Prime Minister Qassim instituted a series of revolutionary changes that helped to democratize various aspects of Iraqi political, economic, and social life while further increasing Iraq's state capacity. The most important of these changes were the nationalization of oil, the introduction of woman's suffrage, the Agrarian Reform Law that effectively ended Iraqi feudalism, and a massive expansion of education programs from the primary through the post-graduate level made available to all Iraqi citizens. Also, this period served as the high-water mark for the growth and development of national identity and state loyalty rooted in the concept of Iraqi nationalism (in Arabic: *wataniya*).

Following Qassim's assassination on February 9, 1963, Iraq shifted course and slowly began to de-democratize. The rise of the Ba'ath Party in 1968 and the ascendance of Saddam Hussein to the position of President in 1979 only served to further accelerate the de-democratization process as the state's security/intelligence apparatus dramatically increased its capabilities and unleashed its brutality on the Iraqi people. The invasion by the United States and its coalition allies in March 2003 coupled with the extensive deterioration of the Iraq's infrastructure resulting from a prolonged and costly war with Iran and 13 years of harsh sanctions by the United Nations, virtually decimated Iraq's state capacity. The following chart

graphically depicts Iraq's progress from independence to the present-day along the axes of state capacity and democracy.



Any discussion about the current condition of national elites in Iraq would be incomplete without mentioning the critical and insightful comparative analysis conducted by Carrie Manning in her article “Political Elites and Democratic State-building Efforts in Bosnia and Iraq.” Her analysis of Iraq, which begins during the pre-invasion period and runs through the January 30, 2005 election, reveals the importance of national elites in the reconstruction and democratization process, at least from the perspective of the United States and its coalition allies. She argues that “while authorities overseeing state-building in Iraq adopted a different approach toward elections to their counterparts in Bosnia, one bright thread runs through both efforts: the primacy given to getting the ‘right’ elites into power. In both cases, authorities believed that external actors could and should help to select and to install political leaders who would further the effort to build democracy. And authorities acted as if they believed that doing so constituted the critical step toward establishing stable democratic regimes in these two countries” (Manning 2006, 724-725).

As her findings indicate, there is little doubt that the influence of the United States on the selection of Iraq's national elites, particularly during the period covered in her analysis, sowed the seeds of sectarianism in the halls of Iraq's government. The favoritism overtly displayed toward both the Shia Arab and Kurdish government officials and their respective communities at the expense of their Sunni Arab counterparts, coupled with the specific targeting of the broader Sunni Arab community through the implementation of categorical catch phrases like the *Sunni*

Triangle and the *Sunni Insurgency*, effectively ostracized a substantial portion of the Iraqi population and set the stage for what Higley and Burton referred to as a *zero-sum* or *politics-as-war game* rather than the *positive-sum* or *politics-as-bargaining game* indicative of a consensually unified national elite. On September 22, 2005 and just a few weeks before the Iraqi Constitutional Referendum was to take place, in a television interview on Al-Sharqiyah Television, the former Prime Minister of the Iraqi Interim National Government, Ayad Allawi made the following statement that clearly indicated how prevalent sectarianism have become in Iraqi public politics since the 2003 invasion.

The Iraqi society is made up of many sectors. These include Muslims, Christians, Kurds, Arabs, Turkomans, Sunnis, and Shiites. But this issue was certainly not in the Iraqi political mind. Proposals that serve the interests of sides and sects have become almost central issues on a daily basis. In our opinion, this threatens the Iraqi social fabric and the Iraqi society's fabric. Therefore, the issue of believing in the unity of the society and belonging to the Iraqi national identity is perhaps half of the solution for our situation in Iraq. Based on this, we always focus on the issue of national unity and the Iraqi national project. This, in fact, is the greatest missing [factor]. This is what we must remedy as Iraqis and pay great attention to (Allawi 2005).

Ofra Bengio offers the following explanation to account for the disunity displayed by the national elite of the three major ethno-religious groups in Iraqi society.

Now factor in the heterogeneity of Iraqi society. By itself, this should not have been an obstacle to democratic development. But Iraq's historical, political, and ideological complexities produced in post-Saddam Iraq three competing visions or models of democracy that could not coexist with each other: (1) Shia religious groups wanted democracy for the majority, without separation of religion and state; (2) the Kurds sought federative democracy and the separation of religion and state; and (3) Sunnis came out vehemently against 'dictatorship of the majority' and the 'Shia agenda' for democracy because the two deprived the Sunnis of their past monopoly of power. These three visions clashed with each other and with a messianic American vision of democracy. As a result, democracy in Iraq came to be identified with anarchy, rather than triggering a democratic domino effect throughout the region (Exporting Democracy 2007, 43).

Erich Weede echoes Bengio's assessment by suggesting that the national elite representing the three major ethno-religious groups must first put aside their self-centeredness and fears and learn to compromise with and trust one another other before democratization has any chance of progressing.

The project of democratisation in Iraq runs into further complications because of the communal tensions across ethnic and sectarian divides, between Arabs and Kurds, and between Sunnis and Shias. Straightforward application of the majority principle promises Shia rule for ever. Some devolution of power to the regional level may pacify the Kurds, but does not look very appealing to the Sunnis whose area does not include a significant number of oil wells and who look back to a long period when they ruled Iraq. Since Kurds, Sunni Arabs, and Shia Arabs feel threatened by each other, one may argue that democratisation presupposes the solution of another difficult problem (Weede 2007, 222).

In a recent editorial published in the New York Times, Allawi reflected on the impact of electoral system in Iraq in bringing about a Parliament divided heavily along sectarian lines. He argued that:

...the vast majority of the electorate based their choices on sectarian and ethnic affiliations, not on genuine political platforms. Because many electoral lists weren't made public until just before the voting, the competing candidates were simply unknown to ordinary Iraqis. This gave rise to our sectarian Parliament, controlled by party leaders rather than by the genuine representatives of the people. They have assembled a government unaccountable and unanswerable to its people (Allawi 2007).

Daniele Archibugi echoes Allawi's sentiments by arguing that the general distrust and self-interest that has manifested themselves in recent years between the various ethno-religious groups have essentially carried over into the electoral process. She argues that "the situation in Iraq is made much worse because the different religious communities do not trust each other—so that fair and free elections simply replicate the statistics of religious and ethnic division" (Exporting Democracy 2007, 41).

FINDINGS

Based on the evidence provided above, there is no doubt today that the current Iraqi government, and particularly the national elite representing the three major ethno-religious groups, bears no resemblance to the consensually unified national elite that Higley and Burton argued is critical to the continued sustainment and eventual success of democratization in any plural society. Consequently, the absence of a consensually unified national elite has hindered the Iraqi government's ability to increase the integration of trust networks into, insulate the influence of categorical inequalities on, and decrease the autonomy of independent power centers from the realm public politics. Let us examine a few significant examples that have had substantial negative impact on the democratization in Iraq.

With respect to trust networks, the Iraqi government has been very weary of and overtly resistant to welcoming tribal sheikhs and other power brokers from the Sunni Arab community into the realm of public politics, whether it be in an official or unofficial capacity, and despite the fact that the members of this community recently turned against the active insurgency in favor of political reconciliation. Tribal kinship of this sort constitutes a vibrant and persevering trust network that is fully capable of mobilizing thousands of individuals in support of its agenda. Yet despite the attempts to reconcile with the central government, they have faced stiff opposition from the Shia and Kurdish blocs. Even their attempt to fill the ranks of the police forces in their local communities has been met with much skepticism and trepidation from the Iraqi government (Gordon 2007). Without the integration of these critical trust networks into the realm of public politics, democratization stands no chance.

The issue of categorical inequalities practically speaks for itself. The sheer fact that political issues, ideologies, and institutions have taken on a completely ethno-religious and

sectarian dimension is a clear indicator that democratization has essentially stalled. Categorically prohibiting members of certain ethno-religious groups from securing senior-level military positions, categorically prohibiting members of minority groups from gaining local employment—as is the case in the Kurdistan region of northern Iraq—if they refuse to become members of the dominant political party in the region, or categorically attacking members of different groups—by government sanctioned militias—based on ethno-religious differences is more indicative of Saddam Hussein’s regime but is prevalent in Iraq today.

Finally, the most significant example of the failure of the Iraq government to decrease the autonomy of independent power centers has been its inability to absorb the Kurdish peshmerga militia forces, arguably the most cohesive and most experienced indigenous military element in the country, along with other militia elements into the fledgling Iraq Security Forces (Badkhen 2005; Cockburn 2005). With the exception of some incidents where the United States placed pressure on the Kurdish Regional Government to temporarily relocate peshmerga units to areas with high levels of violence, the peshmerga forces have remained inside Iraqi Kurdistan under the direct jurisdiction of the regional regime. A sovereign state cannot have two national armies with two different allegiances.

Based on the evidence provided, this analysis concludes that *democratization in Iraq is effectively stalled because the absence of a consensually unified national elite has made it impractical for the government of Iraq to increase the integration of trust networks into, insulate the influence of categorical inequalities on, and decrease the autonomy of independent power centers from the realm public politics*. Perhaps the best phrase that captures the current predicament in Iraq is the following. “Stable democracies do not emerge simply by writing constitutions, holding elections, expanding human rights, accelerating economic growth, or exterminating leftist insurgencies. The vital step is the consensual unification of previously disunified elites” (Higley and Burton 1988, 29). If Iraq’s elites do not set aside their differences and distrust for the greater good of the entire national community, then the social fabric that was torn during the many decades of authoritarian brutality will never mend.

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