

**IRAQI VOICES**  
**Religion, Rights and Responsibility in Transition**

Findings from Focus Groups with Iraqi Men and Women  
(Conducted June 21 and July 9, 2005)

Prepared for the  
National Democratic Institute for International Affairs  
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## Preface

**Purpose.** As part of its continuing effort to help build and strengthen the institutions of democracy in Iraq, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) commissioned a series of focus groups to explore the views of a broad cross-section of Iraqis. The latest round of focus group discussions provides insight into the perspectives of ordinary Iraqi men and women on the current state of affairs in their country. Specifically, the focus groups concerned political development and the Iraqi constitution, which was being drafted as these discussions were being conducted. Special attention was paid to religious influences, the rights of women and minorities and the role and performance of political parties in Iraqi life.

This research is designed to assist the efforts of Iraqi political parties, government officials and civil society organizations, by providing information on attitudes of average Iraqis, unfiltered by elites or media. This report is only one product – the final one -- of this project. Its purpose is to summarize and convey the main findings of the focus groups in an objective and organized way and to maximize the impact of ordinary Iraqi voices in the dialogue and debates that, hopefully, will decide their country's future.

**Sample.** Thirty-six focus groups were conducted between June 21 and July 9, 2005 with a representative selection of citizens in 12 provinces of Iraq (Basra, Baghdad, Erbil, Fallujah, Babylon, Kirkuk, Mosul, Najaf, Nassariya, Suleymania, Tikrit and Ramadi). In total, 24 sessions were conducted in urban settings and 12 sessions in rural areas. NDI contracted KA Research Ltd., an Iraqi public opinion research firm in Baghdad, to recruit participants and moderate the sessions with NDI oversight.

**Method.** Focus groups are semi-structured group interviews that proceed according to a research design that includes careful recruitment of participants. Groups are usually recruited to be homogeneous (according to gender, age, education, ethnicity and/or religious affiliation) for two reasons: in order to clarify the views held by a particular sub-group of the population and to enhance the comfort level of participants, so they feel they are among peers and that everyone can express an opinion. Unlike polling, which is a quantitative research method in which a representative sample of an entire population enables data to be projected to the general population, focus group participants cannot be expected to be statistically representative of the larger population. Focus groups offer insight into ideas and attitudes, and help us to understand language, motivation and values. While polling is able to tell us what certain percentages of the population think or believe, focus groups help us understand why certain segments of the population think or believe what they do.

**About the Research.** Due to the restrictive security conditions, it is challenging to conduct opinion research of any type under the current circumstances in Iraq. The situation in July 2005 did not allow for on-site management and observation of focus group sessions throughout the country by NDI staff and consultants. Our distance from the actual discussions has inevitable implications for the final product. Where we did not feel that we could clearly understand or faithfully interpret certain findings, we either make clear in the text that this is our best effort, or resist the temptation to utilize every bit of data rather than over read or misrepresent any of it.

For our on-the-ground needs, NDI relied on KA Research Ltd. In the relatively calm days between the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003 and the intensification of the insurgency in 2004, KA developed methods, established local facilities and cultivated indigenous moderators and interviewers, usually professionals in academia and psychology, all of which were integral to making this project possible. After the research, KA also arranged for the full transcription and translation of the focus groups.

NDI's Iraq Team in Baghdad and in Washington conceived of and took the lead in implementing this research plan. Their commitment to listening to Iraqis rather than just talking to them kept the project moving forward and ensured that its results were brought to bear quickly and effectively where they matter most – on the ground in Iraq.

As in the first stage of our opinion research, NDI's Megan Doherty was integral to making sense of it all. Her focus in sifting through the transcripts and organizing the vast amount of material they contained was critical to the success of the project; her strong writing skills and assistance in the analysis are largely responsible for whatever insight and clarity it possesses.

*David M. Dougherty*  
*August 2005*

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## Executive Summary

Some five months after national elections, and in the midst of the constitutional drafting process, a series of 36 focus groups helps us better understand the attitudes and aspirations of the Iraqi public in this time of transition and uncertainty. The main findings of the research include the following:

### I. Life in Iraq

- **Many Iraqis believe their country is moving in the wrong direction.** Most Iraqis decry their current conditions. Specifically, they express frustration over the prolonged violent conflict, lack of basic services, escalating sectarian acrimony, economic hardship, government ineffectiveness and administrative corruption.
  - The frustration and pessimism of many Iraqi people is offset somewhat by efforts toward democratization and the advent of political and personal freedoms—clear improvements that offer hope for the future.
  - Drawing careful distinctions between the state of affairs in Kurdistan and conditions in the rest of Iraq, many Kurds referred to their security and economic life as improving. Kurds were also more likely than their Sunni and Shia counterparts to favorably review the performances of their political parties.
- **Fear of sectarianism is both pronounced and widespread.** In nearly all focus group discussions, particularly those in traditionally Sunni areas, Iraqis convey concern over the tense and increasingly violent relations between sects and express fear that the situation will degenerate further, allowing denominational divisions to preclude political cooperation and stability.
- **Concern persists regarding the presence of foreign forces.** Respondents with the most negative views of Iraq's current direction tend to identify the American military presence as responsible. Some Iraqis believe the US is manipulating the political processes to its advantage.
- **The credibility of Iraqi institutions is tenuous.** Iraq's fledgling political institutions are being judged by standards that, given their current capacities and conditions on the ground, are impossible to reach. There is little patience, and many perceive the inability of government entities and political parties to address pressing problems as evidence of institutional corruption and inefficiency.
  - Iraqis are evaluating the performance and integrity of their government in terms of its ability to meet the basic needs of the people, and the government is coming up short.
  - The multiplicity of political parties and the widespread view that they are dishonest and ill-motivated lead some Iraqis to hold the parties and the disjointed multi-party system responsible for the current state of affairs.

## II. Iraqi Priorities

- **There is widespread desire for the successful implementation of an effective constitution.** When asked to prioritize four issues: democracy, constitution, services and corruption, most participants stated that while they felt all four were important, the constitution is currently the most imperative issue.
  - There was a broad consensus that achieving democracy, providing services and ending corruption would not be possible without first implementing a constitution.
- **The significance and potential that Iraqis, including Sunnis, assign to the constitution is quite dramatic, and perhaps unrealistic.** Many Iraqis expressed enthusiasm for the constitution, claiming the document would lead to security and basic services.

## III. Religion and Constitution

- **There is virtually universal agreement that there is a role for religion in the constitution, although opinions vary regarding the appropriate extent and nature of that role.** While there is some support for an entirely religious charter, most Iraqis believe Islam should play a role in the new constitution, but not be its only source.
  - The prospect of incorporating Sharia into the constitution provokes debate about women's rights and special concern for minorities. Concern for religious tolerance and freedom, while expressed most emphatically in Kurdish and Sunni groups, is voiced throughout the country.
  - Many participants state that the repercussions of Sharia depend upon the way in which it is interpreted and applied. A limited or "liberal" application of Sharia seems to represent a potential middle ground.

## IV. Religion and Politics

- **General support for a religious basis for the constitution does not necessarily equate to a desire for religion-based politics.** It was not rare for the same participant to say that religion should play a role in the constitution, but not in politics, underscoring the distinction between the essential document and the day-to-day practice.
  - Although the notion of completely divorcing religion from politics is not seen as a practical likelihood, it does enjoy a fair degree of support. A frequently raised perspective is that politics and religion are fundamentally incompatible and best left to perform their separate roles without interacting.
  - Many participants believe that religion and politics should be linked, asserting that religion infuses politics with morality, protects rights and provides common ground for a fragmented people wrestling with sectarian conflict.

## V. Religion and Political Parties

- **The relationship between political parties and religion is viewed with suspicion and hostility.** Many Iraqis criticize political parties for manipulating religion for their own ends, with no real commitment to religious precepts.

## VI. Women and Politics

**Support for women's involvement in the political sector, while strong on the surface, is frequently tempered by traditional views of women's roles.** Most Iraqis—both male and female—agree that women have a place in politics, but opinions over the extent & nature of that participation vary widely.

- Many said restrictions were necessary because women are ill-suited for leadership, women have a defined and important role to play in society and in the family or that women's political efforts should be directed at ministries such as Education and Culture instead of the traditionally male-dominated areas such as Defense, Interior and Foreign Affairs.

## VII. Women and the Constitution

- **There is broad support among Iraqis for constitutional protections for women.** However, there is a divergence between those who think specific provisions for women are needed, and those who believe women would enjoy a full range of constitutional protection by virtue of being human beings and Iraqis.
  - Many who express support for women's rights speak in vague terms, while others point to specific rights involving marriage, travel, property ownership, political participation and access to education.

## VIII. Minority Rights and the Constitution

- **Iraqis of all backgrounds seem genuinely committed to the protection of minority rights.** Particular rights delineated by participants included religious traditions and ceremonies, political participation, language, education, access to services and freedom of thought.
- **Iraqis do not want a divided country.** There is a strong belief that no one group should take priority over the welfare of the entire country, and that constitutional protections for minorities should be consistent with the rights of all Iraqi citizens.
  - While nearly all participants agree that the rights of minorities must be protected in the new Iraq, some individuals, usually Shia, question the possible implications of specific constitutional provisions, citing the potential aggravation of existing ethnic and sectarian divisions.



## IX. Political Parties

- **Iraqis seem to understand the role parties are *supposed* to play in a democracy.** Roles delineated by discussants included serving as a bridge to government, helping Iraqis procure their rights, educating citizens, using politics to better the nation and keeping the government accountable to its people.
- **Political parties in Iraq, individually and collectively, have significant image problems.** Parties are widely viewed as insincere, manipulative and opportunistic.
  - Many Iraqis reprove parties, alleging that they cater exclusively to their membership, promote sectarian conflict and fail to follow through on their promises.
- **Many Iraqis believe the appearance of differences among parties on the surface is deceptive and that all political parties are the same.** While some respondents draw distinctions among parties on the basis of religious affiliation, activities and objectives, most participants claim there are no substantive differences between parties.
  - The absence of major perceivable differences among parties forced many voters in the January 2005 election to translate their impressions and limited information into a voting decision.

## X. Hopes and Expectations

- **Regardless of region, gender, ethnicity or religion, there is a consistency in the responses that suggests clear, if very challenging goals.** Iraqis want better services, security, employment, a stable, normal life, and a government that relates and responds to these needs.

## Principal Findings

### I. Life in Iraq

Iraqi focus group findings reveal a restive and unassuaged public facing daunting conditions. Rampant violence, economic frustrations, sectarian conflict, a lack of basic services and perceptions of government ineffectiveness and administrative corruption lead many to believe Iraq is currently on a negative path. While none of these concerns is new, several have asserted themselves more forcefully in recent months. Even within groups, such as Kurds and female Shi'a, who tend to be among the more optimistic, there is a sharper edge and a dimension of despondency to some of the comments regarding the direction of their country.

*“Mostly things are going the wrong direction. Iraq is a great mess now. It is collapsing continuously.”* (Female, 26, Teacher, Babylon, Shia)

*“I see that Iraq today because of the terrorism and lack of security is in bad situation, we can not travel from a town to another.”* (Male, 27, Merchant, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“Iraq is now in chaos and most matters are plunging in the wrong direction in all fields. Nothing positive is seen.”* (Female, 40, Teacher, Kirkuk, Sunni, Turkmen)

*“The situation is going to worst. For example there is no water supply and electricity, explosions and the government can not control the situation.”* (Female, 28, Housewife, Baghdad, Shia)

*“Iraq now is going to the worst in all fields like bribes and administrative corruption.”* (Male, 59, Retired, Ramadi, Sunni)

*“Security is absent and there is no stability, even the government is not good.”* (Female, 25, Housewife, Baghdad, Sabetha)

*“Even if I want to take my son to the hospital at night I can't take him for it would be too dangerous. If I succeed taking him at daytime still I have to face many check points to reach the hospital.”* (Male, 52, Professor, Ramadi, Sunni)

Regions in which all participants expressed negative views include Sunni-heavy Falluja, Ramadi and Saddam Hussein's former stronghold, Tikrit. Male participants from Najaf, a predominantly Shia city, were also largely critical of the current conditions in Iraq and offered dire prognoses for the future of their country.

*“Things are going in the wrong direction because of the absence of water and electricity. In addition, spread of corruption.”* (Male, 28, Gainer, Najaf, Shia)

*“There isn't anything going in the right direction. There was deprivation in life before but now we lack security.”* (Male, 34, Employee, Tikrit, Sunni)

*“Things are going to wrong direction, we ask for security, and there is unemployment and the terrorism.”* (Female, 25, Housewife, Tikrit, Sunni, Kurdish)

The fear of sectarianism is both pronounced and widespread. In nearly all focus group discussions, particularly those in traditionally Sunni areas, Iraqis convey concern over the tense and sometimes violent relations between sects, apprehensive that the situation will degenerate further, allowing denominational divisions to preclude political cooperation and stability.

*“[There is] great security deterioration and spreading differentiation between the Iraqi people sects and religions like Shiite, Sunni, Arab, Kurdish and other nationalities and sects.”* (Female, 28, Association Member, Mosul, Sunni)

*“I believe that Iraq is moving to worse; there is separation between religions and between different minorities.”* (Male, 26, Employee, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“All things are going in the wrong direction... there are Sunnites' and Shiites' blocs and Shia are divided... it is no good thing”* (Female, 27, Housewife, Nassariya, Shia)

*“Denominationalism is detestable. I respect any patriot even if he is Shia. I don't mind if my president is a patriotic Shia and I am a Sunni.”* (Male, 60, Manager, Ramadi, Sunni)

Many participants refer to administrative corruption as a regrettable, yet inevitable element of government; regardless, it is clearly viewed as a significant problem and is taking a toll on institutional credibility.

*“Corruption is built up in all the government establishments.”* (Male, 23, Student, Basrah, Shia)

*“Corruption is everywhere as the responsible is the Government and by default difficulty is in the services like water, electricity and food portion and the only responsible for that is the Government.”* (Female, 40, Housewife, Mosul, Sunni)

*“Mostly things are going the wrong way; the administrative corruption is spreading and increasing”* (Female, 23, Student, Babylon, Shia)

In discussing the direction of the country, it is difficult to find positive comments concerning the central issues. The Shia woman from Basra who says, “the safety state is better than the past because of establishing the police and army,...the terrorism is less than the past period,” has virtually no company. In other Shia groups, participants cite progress in economic development, but these are the exception, not the rule.

*“Things are going in the right direction... We see there is an improvement of salaries and the direction of the economy is going to the best for employees.”* (Male, 28, Unemployed, Nassariya, Shia)

*“There are many things which are going in the right direction like the economical development which is happening nowadays and the preservation of the value of the currency and the improvement of salaries and the rising of living standard.”* (Male, 28, Employee, Basra, Shia)

Kurdish respondents were far more inclined to view their situation positively, and to draw clear distinctions between the state of affairs in Kurdistan from that of the rest of Iraq.

*“Corruption is present in a low percentage, and services in Kurdistan are very good”* (Male, 25, Student, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“The right direction is only in Kurdistan but in the rest of Iraq things are going generally in the wrong direction and the responsibility relate to the previous regime.”* (Male, 35, Teacher, Kirkuk, Sunni, Turcoman)

*“The economical condition of the people is better compared to the pervious years, such as the raise in wages and the construction in Iraq”* (Male, 25, Student, Erbil, Kurdish)

*“Corruption is present in the northern parts of Iraq but low compared to other parts of Iraq and to other countries... Electricity and fuel is fairly available in the province”* (Male, Teacher, 40, Mosul, Sunni, Kurdish)

Outside of these rather isolated examples, the only discernable source of optimism and satisfaction concerns recent political developments, efforts toward democratization and the advent of political and personal freedom—clear improvements that offer some hope for the future. Iraqis specifically cite the right to exercise choice in elections, the opening up of the political process after decades of exclusion and intimidation and the access of minorities to representation in government. A sentiment voiced by many participants is that despite the problems facing their country, Iraqis are currently laying the foundations for legitimate democratic governance.

Many Iraqis see the January 2005 elections, the formation of a government and the constitutional drafting process as critical first steps in bringing to fruition the objective of a stable, democratic Iraq.

*“Our lives are not empty of problems but what is important we get freedom and that what we lacked before.”* (Male, 49, Teacher, Suleymania, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“Of course in the right direction, as we are applying democracy in Iraq... now there are minorities and many parties.”* (Male, 36, Employee, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“The improving situation is represented in the political process in the national assembly which is meeting to discuss several subjects concerning the interior matters.”* (Female, 38, Lawyer, Basra, Shia)

*“The condition in Iraq is going in the right direction looking at democracy and freedom, which can be seen in participation of the nationalities, the minorities, and all the religious groups in the political process.”* (Male, 23, Gainer, Suleymania, Sunni, Kurdish)

Despite these laudable political achievements, challenges to Iraqi democratization persist. Political development can take people only so far in the context of an ever-present threat to their lives and livelihood. Moreover, many Iraqis, particularly urban Sunni males, perceive the presence of foreign military forces as evidence that external powers are the ultimate authority in Iraq, thus invalidating any government attempt to democratize.

*“What is the benefit of the constitution if we are under occupation? It will not eradicate some issues like administrative and moral corruption.”* (Male, 70, Employee, Ramadi, Sunni)

## Who is Responsible?

In ascribing responsibility for conditions in Iraq, the list of entities in line for blame or credit is short. Participants from all backgrounds refer to political institutions that have performed poorly; compliments and praise are rare. The majority of Iraqis who claim that the country is heading in the wrong direction point to the government as responsible for the negative conditions, with some mention of political parties, foreign powers and occasionally the Iraqi people themselves.

Iraqis are essentially evaluating the performance and credibility of their government in terms of its ability to meet the basic needs of its people, and the government is coming up short. Iraq's nascent political institutions are being judged by standards that, given current capacities and conditions on the ground, are impossible to reach. There is little patience, and many people view those institutions as both corrupt and inefficient.

*“Services are not good and the responsible is the government and the governorate councils.”* (Male, 26, Unemployed, Nassariya, Shia)

*“The corruption existed in the last regime, but now is increased because don't take the democracy by the right way, the services being worse than before, medical services are so bad and we hope to live in Iraq in real democracy and solve all these problems, I think the responsible of these is the government.”* (Female, 36, Assistant, Basra, Shia)

*“The side responsible for these conditions is the existing Government. They have done nothing since they formed the Government. . . The existing Government does not take any action to stop this bad situation.”* (Female, 28, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*“I think that the government is the main responsible on these negative things. They have to repair the security state and also the economical state for the community.”* (Male, 46, Retired, Najaf, Shia)

*“The new Government representatives are neither faithful nor serious.”* (Male, 52, Professor, Ramadi, Sunni)

Accolades, however rare, tend to laud the current administration for recent positive political developments.

*“I think things are going in the right direction from the security, economical and political sides. . . Those responsible for that are the Iraqi officials.”* (Female, 27, Employee, Baghdad, Shia)

The multiplicity of political parties and the widespread view that they are dishonest and ill-motivated lead some Iraqis to hold parties and the disjointed multi-party system as responsible for the current state of affairs. Specifically, participants refer to constant conflict among parties over positions of authority and uncompromising sectarian agendas.

*“I think the responsible for that are the many parties, the multiple points of views and that there isn’t centrality in Iraq.”* (Female, 38, Housewife, Baghdad, Christian)

*“I believe that those parties are responsible for mistakes that are made ”* (Male, 32, Employee, Kirkuk, Sunni)

*“Things are getting bad day by day and the reason is us, the Government and the parties fighting to get positions in the Ministries.”* (Male, 25, Teacher, Baghdad, Shia)

Certain respondents clearly look outward when the discussion turns to responsibility for the current conditions in Iraq. The American military, widely referred to as “the invasion” or “the occupation,” is identified by many of these participants as responsible for the poor economic and security conditions. Some Iraqis believe that the United States is an obstacle to security, while others, especially Sunnis, question American motives and assert that the US is manipulating the political processes to its advantage.

*“Since Americans came and till now, they don’t do anything for Iraqis. They talk about Saddam’s negatives but their negative things are more than him.”* (Female, 30, Housewife, Najaf, Shia)

*“Democracy and freedom can not be achieved with the presence of occupation and the application of a constitution with the presence of the occupation is not legal.”* (Male, 51, Freelance, Ramadi, Sunni)

*“There is no security in Iraq during this period, this might be a temporally situation and could improve after a period of time or when the foreign forces leave the country.”* (Male, 24, Clerk, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“The American forces did not arrange sufficient protection for the country.”*(Female, 26, Student, Babylon, Shia)

*“America did not come to protect the Iraqis, they came to steal the Iraqi fortune and oil.”* (Male, 44, Teacher, Ramadi, Sunni)

*“The democracy is planned by America. In my opinion their aim is to create a torn Iraqi society with denominationalism.”* (Male, 20, Student, Ramadi, Sunni)

Finally, the suggestion that the Iraqi people themselves have some responsibility for the negative direction of the country, could either be evidence of an emerging civic consciousness, or as it is more common in Sunni groups, merely another manifestation of blame.

*“The first responsible for that is the invasion and secondly the Iraqi people.”* (Male, 34, Employee, Tikrit, Sunni)

*“Not only the government is responsible for the negative things, but people and government are responsible ”* (Female, 24, Employee, Baghdad, Shia)

Anxiety and frustration seem most acute at the macro level; when groups are asked about how things are going in their families, as opposed to in their country, participants are considerably more likely to be positive. To be sure, certain individuals and groups are consistently dour, and even those who say that things at the household level are copasetic tend to qualify their response with mention of the bad economy and lack of security. Still, there is a pronounced difference between assessments of conditions within the family, tending to be based on personal criteria over which respondents have some control and of the national direction, driven more by circumstances and events beyond the reach of the average Iraqi.

Consider these individual examples:

*“I think it is going in the wrong direction because security and stability are not present and also the economical state considered as a negative thing”*

*“For me and my family the things are good and there is nothing we suffer from.”*  
(Female, 30, Teacher, Najaf, Shia)

*“Things are going on the wrong direction. The side responsible is the government.”*

*“Things are going on properly, the financial condition is good. I don't have bad things affecting my family.”* (Male, 24, Private Business, Babylon, Shia)

*“I see that things in Iraq going in the wrong direction that we see the explosions continue every where and security is absent and services are bad especially water supply & electricity.”*

*“I am housekeeping and things going well and my husband civil-servant and have good salary.”*  
(Female, 37, Housewife, Basra, Sunni)

*“Iraq is moving to the wrong direction, because there are no human rights such as security...which means there is no order.”*

*“My family is an educated family, and we live in a good economical condition.”* (Female, 45, Employee, Kirkuk, Shia)

*“Things are going in the negative direction that there are many negative issues such as increase of terrorism and bad security situation and I think the responsible for that is the state.”*

*“About my family condition, it is good.”* (Female, 34, Civil Servant, Najaf, Shia)

## II. Iraqi Priorities

To bring a greater degree of specificity to the discussion of the overall situation in Iraq, participants were asked to choose among four issues or themes that previous public opinion research established as consistent concerns for the Iraqi people: democracy, constitution, corruption and services. Focus groups conducted earlier this year clearly demonstrated that Iraqis view a constitution as both a democratic foundation and a fundamental step toward progress and stability. The focus group discussions examined in this report confirmed and further illuminated that finding. Iraqis seem to equate the term “democracy” more with notions of personal freedoms and political liberties than with a way of governing themselves. There is little evidence of an appetite for the realities of democratic decision making, the attendant compromises on policy and principle and the blurry line between the two.

While democracy remains an overarching theme, and there is no doubt that corruption and services are top of mind issues, most participants see the constitution as a necessary precondition for the other three. The significance and potential that Iraqis, including Sunnis, assign to the constitution is quite dramatic, and perhaps unrealistic.

*“I think constitution is the most important issue. It is the basic and foundations of all matters. You can’t build a house without foundations.”* (Female, 28, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*“The constitution is the base that the country is built on and when this happens and the services are present there wouldn’t be corruption and we would be able to apply the democracy.”* (Female, 28, Housewife, Baghdad, Sabetha)

*“The constitution is the most important thing because it can pave the way for the achievement of other things.”* (Male, 20, Student, Ramadi, Sunni)

*“The constitution is the most important thing and it is the first stage as all the other issues build on it.”* (Female, 39, Professor, Mosul, Sunni)

*“Constitution is the most important factor than the others, simply because it includes all the other three factors, and deals with them in its terms.”* (Female, 20, Housewife, Babylon, Shia)

*“The constitution is the most important to Iraq if it is written in right way, all other things goes in right way.”* (Female, 37, Housewife, Basra, Sunni)

*“I believe if constitution will be written, everything will be available; security, administrations, and employments.”* (Male, 30, Private Business, Babylon, Shia)

Although many Iraqis believe that a constitution is imperative, others express concern regarding the ability of the government to draft an effective charter while also grappling with other pressing issues.

*“I think the country which is not capable of providing electricity and water for its people is not capable to provide a permanent constitution. . . but we hope the best.”* (Male, 33, Engineer, Basra, Shia)



What becomes clear in the discussions is that despite the importance placed upon the constitution by many participants, they are poorly-informed about the constitutional processes currently underway and blame the government for this vagueness.

*“According to constitution we don’t know anything about it ... we don’t understand anything and now the government does not tell us what we need to know.”* (Male, 22, Employee, Baghdad, Shia)

*“The default is in the constitution because it is not written yet and we don’t know when would they write it and they didn’t declare any outline for it.”* (Female, 40, Housewife, Mosul, Sunni)

*“There is not enough information covering this subject for the people”* (Female, 17, Unemployed, Babylon, Shia)

### III. Religion and the Constitution

There is virtually universal agreement, and no small sense of inevitability, that there is a role for religion in the Iraqi constitution, although views vary considerably over the contours of religious influence and specifically the application of Sharia. While the compatibility of Islam and democracy can be debated, on the ground in Iraq, the question is not so much “whether” religion should influence the constitution, but “to what degree.”

Previous research indicated broad acceptance of and support for Islamic values in Iraqi public life. While many think religion can and should play a positive role in the new constitution, this support has limits: most Iraqis think religion should influence the charter significantly, but not constitute its only source.

There are many Iraqis who clearly feel that the constitution should be entirely religious.

*“Certainly, constitution should be based on Islamic Sharia and depend on the Holy Quran because we are Muslims community and we have religious values. It is impossible to write constitution without the role of the Islamic Sharia.”* (Female, 28, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*“Islam will guarantee all the human rights not only the Moslems and I think that other minorities will understand that.”* (Female, 29, Teacher, Basra, Shia)

*“I am with the incorporation of Sharia in Islam. Our constitution should base on Islamic Sharia because we are Muslims.”* (Male, 50, Teacher, Suleymania, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“I think making Islamic law as the base of the constitution is a necessary thing because religion is the base of the constitution, and I think this will ensure women's rights and will ensure other minorities' rights.”* (Male, 29, Worker, Falluja, Sunni)

Supporters for an entirely religious constitution are outnumbered by a majority of focus group participants who say that religion, specifically Sharia, should be an important influence, but not the only one.

*“Religion should have a role in constitution as one of the sources and not as an essential source; its role should be through instructing people correctly.”* (Female, 27, Employee, Baghdad, Shia)

*“As an Islamic country our constitution should based on Islam, with all respect for other religions. Constitution should not deny other religions.”* (Male, 57, Lawyer, Ramadi, Sunni)

Concern for religious tolerance and freedom, while expressed most emphatically in Kurdish and Sunni groups, is voiced throughout the country.

*“The incorporation of Sharia doesn't fit with new Iraq seeks for freedom and democracy and Sharia should not be applied to Iraqi non-Muslims in our country.”* (Male, 34, Unemployed, Suleymania, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“I think there should there be specific provisions in the Constitution to protect the rights of minority groups in Iraq but it should not contradict with the general interest or with Islamic Sharia.”* (Female, 25, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*“If we put the Islamic religion as a base of the constitution, other religions' rights would be lost.”* (Female, 32, Employee, Suleymaniya, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“The provisions of Sharia shouldn't apply to the non-Muslims in Iraq. In spite of the fact that Muslims are the majority, they don't have the right to impose Sharia on non-Muslims.”* (Female, 20, Student, Najaf, Shia)

*“Iraq is a multi-religious country. I prefer taking essential things from the religion to be applied in the constitution in order not to deprive any one from its rights.”* (Male, 53, Teacher, Ramadi, Sunni)

*“There are many wishing that Iraq will be Islamic state but because there different religions and sects in the country so Iraq should not be Islamic because it should respect other religions.”* (Female, 34, Housewife, Najaf, Shia)

The prospect of incorporating Sharia into the constitution provokes debate about women's rights and special concern for minorities.

*“Intruding religion in the constitution will restrict women's rights, women now are improved and developed.”* (Male, 46, Retired, Ramadi, Sunni)

*“This will not ensure women rights in everything this may ensure women rights in divorce but there are other things that it will not ensure them for women.”* (Female, 50, Housewife, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“Incorporating Sharia would guarantee woman's rights in personal issues but it would restrict her rights in the political process.”* (Male, 25, Lawyer, Tikrit, Sunni)

*“If it is the source for the constitution this will restrict women to participate in politics and they won't take all their rights, because religion forbids women from participating in politics, so do our traditions.”* (Female, 40, Housewife, Tikrit, Sunni)

There is more of an agreement regarding the potential infringement of Sharia upon minority rights than there is concerning Sharia as a threat to women's rights. In fact, many Iraqis, both men and women, believe Sharia provides rights for women.

*“Rights of women must not exceed that in the Sharia, we do not want anything against that.”* (Female, 30, Housewife, Mosul, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“If the real Sharia applied, it would give more rights to woman.”* (Male, 36, Employee, Babylon, Shia)

*“Sharia should incorporate into constitution, because it is our base is the Quran. This would not restrict woman in the field of work or politics.”* (Male, 34, Employee, Tikrit, Sunni)

*“If the Islamic Sharia is included in the constitution, our rights can't be lost.”* (Female, 32, Employee, Suleymaniya, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“I prefer the Islamic Sharia to be the base of constitution because as we mentioned before, religion guaranties all rights especially woman rights, justice, equalization and religion gives woman her right completely.”* (Female, 43, Teacher, Mosul, Sunni)

*“I prefer the incorporation of Sharia in constitution because it will give woman her freedom even if there were some difficult obligations this will not limit woman in her job.”* (Male, 24, Employee, Mosul, Sunni)

Many participants state that the repercussions of Sharia depend entirely upon the way in which it is interpreted and applied. A limited or “liberal” application of Sharia seems to represent a potential middle ground.

*“Depending on people drafting the constitution, if they are extremists then they will affect women like enforcing them to wear scarves.”* (Female, 40, Employee, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“Woman's rights are not coming from Sharia or constitution but through the society, development level, education and culture will guarantee the woman's rights and if you want to get higher in the society, we would get higher through the society itself as we are looking for the woman's rights as we don't own education and culture”* (Male, 30, Employee, Baghdad, Christian)

## IV. Religion and Politics

General support for a religious basis for the constitution does not necessarily equate to a desire for religion-based politics. Indeed, it is not rare for the same participant to say that religion should play a role in the constitution, but not in politics, underscoring the distinction between the essential document and the day-to-day practice. Although the notion of completely divorcing religion from politics is not seen as a practical likelihood, it does enjoy a fair degree of support. Moreover, with regard to the parties, the political-religious relationship debate seems to come full circle: focus group participants seem inclined to protect religion from the taint of politics, and perhaps more specifically, politicians.

Certainly, many participants express beliefs that religion and politics should be linked because religion infuses politics with morality, protects rights and provides common ground for a fragmented people wrestling with sectarian conflict.

*“It is necessary for politics to use religion because religion is a system and a rule so if politics follow this system, all issues will be followed correctly and all political rights will be guaranteed.”* (Female, 28, Civil Servant, Nassariya, Shia)

*“There should be a relation between religion and politics. . . I don’t think that politicians will go in the right direction if they ignore the Islamic principles.”* (Female, 31, Housewife, Babylon, Shia)

*“Religion is the base of justice therefore politics should follow it. Without religion no politics exists, so religion is the base and must be in politics.”* (Male, 52, Employee, Babylon, Shia)

*“I think religion is important in politics, because by carrying out religion in politics we will succeed to overcome the denominational riot, limiting crimes, defeating administration corruption and bribing because religion gives politics a moral feature and gives the country its political identity.”* (Female 31, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*“Islam should be incorporated in politics because this will finish the sectarian disputes and unify all parties.”* (Male, 46, Retired, Ramadi, Sunni)

Equally common in focus group discussions is the perspective that politics and religion are fundamentally incompatible and best left to perform their separate roles without interacting.

*“Religion is not important in politics. We cannot use religion in politics, because some individuals don’t separate between them. Therefore, we cannot apply religion with politics.”* (Female, 24, Student, Kirkuk, Sunni, Turkmen)

*“Religion is not important in politics because as long as we talk about democracy, I find that each human being is free in choosing his religion and practice his ceremonies within his religion and it is no need to mix religion in politics.”* (Male, 27, Student, Suleymania, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“Religion is not compatible with politics because the religious man will apply the religion while politics needs a politician.”* (Female, 25, Housewife, Baghdad, Sabetha)

*“The religion should be completely separated from politics because the right place for the religious man is the mosque and its duty is to teach religion, while the politician’s job is to steer the country, so we should not be ruled by a religious man.”* (Female, 24, Employee, Baghdad, Shia)

*“Religion should be separated from politics to let politicians to do their work because they have good experience.”* (Male, 59, Retired, Ramadi, Sunni)

*“Religion vision does not always agree with politics and politicians, since politicians have different goals, which do not always agree with Islam.”* (Male, 40, Teacher, Mosul, Sunni, Kurdish)

The desire to separate religion from politics by no means constitutes a rejection of religion, or a denial of its importance in society, but more likely stems from an abiding fear of and resistance to sectarianism.

*“We want to separate religion from politics not separate religion from the community because we want a religious community.”* (Male, 51, Freelance, Ramadi, Sunni)

*“Politics should be separated from religion because politics is for the state but religion is for us and as our country consists of various sects and religious groups so it should not include the religion in politics and impose it up on other religions.”* (Female, 34, Housewife, Najaf, Shia)

## V. Religion and Political Parties

Many focus group discussants see a link between parties and religion, but more often than not, that connection is viewed with suspicion, if not outright hostility. Political parties in Iraq, individually and collectively, suffer from significant image problems—a phenomenon immediately evident when the discussion of religion in public life turns to parties. Parties are seen as insincere, manipulative and opportunistic, using religion for their own ends, and in the process, defaming religion as they reveal their true colors.

*“The relation between religion and politics is simple and superficial.”* (Female, 20, Student, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“Religious political parties corrupt the reputation of the religion.”* (Male, 30, Unemployed, Nassariya, Shia)

*“They are trying acquire people’s sympathy by their religious slogans.”* (Male, 25, Driver, Basra, Shia)

*“There is no party carrying out religion. They use the name of religion only. Where are the principles of forgiveness, honesty, and altruism by these parties?”* (Female 31, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*“Many of those parties used religion as a means to reach specific goals and those parties created differentiation between the Iraqi sects.”* (Female, 40, Housewife, Mosul, Sunni)

*“They used religion for reaching to the interests of the community and Muslims.”* (Male, 71, Unemployed, Ramadi, Sunni)

*“There are many Islamic parties but we do not know who they are, and if they are really Islamic party or using religion as a cover. I think religion must be away from parties.”* (Female, 24, Student, Kirkuk, Sunni, Turkmen)

*“There are some political parties who are taking religion as a mask.”* (Female, 27, Teacher, Babylon, Shia)

*“It is so important for Islam and politics to meet, but this linkage between Islam and politics must not lead to the abuse of Islam by some who work in politics for their own benefit”* (Male, 32, Freelance, Mosul, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“Yes religion must be separated from political parties, why deform the reputation of Islam?”* (Male, 24, Clerk, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“The Islamic parties are merchants, they are making trade of the Islamic religion and religion is free for them.”* (Male, 40, Party Member, Tikrit, Sunni, Kurdish)

Perhaps this Kurdish gentleman speaks for the majority of Iraqis when he says “when religion is used in politics it should be used in the manner that serves the benefit of people, and it is not acceptable for religion to be used for personal benefits.”

## VI. Women and Politics

Support for women’s involvement in the political sector, while strong on the surface, is frequently tempered by traditional views of women’s roles. Focus group participants of various backgrounds volunteer the view that there should be no limits on women’s political involvement, that women should participate and serve to the greatest extent of their talent and potential and even, as one Sunni man in Erbil says, that “there is no difference between a man and a woman.”

*“A rational, open-minded, and well-educated woman can take charge of all positions, because she has the same mind like the man.”* (Male, 32, Gainer, Kirkuk, Shia)

*“Woman is a half of the society and she has abilities which are not less than man, so she should be equal to man in working in all the fields and in all the positions.”* (Female, 39, University Professor, Mosul, Sunni)

*“Politics needs an educated...and intelligent person, no matter if that person is man or woman. There is no position that woman mustn’t take charge of.”* (Female, 26, Student, Kirkuk, Sunni, Turkmen)

*“It is her right to practice her role in the governorate council as well as in the ministry.”* (Male, 50, Employee, Kirkuk, Sunni)

*“I think woman’s role in the National Assembly does not vary than man’s role. Her performance relies on her efficiency.”* (Female, 30, Teacher, Babylon, Shia)

The prevailing opinion gives way to views concerning the extent and nature of women's political participation that vary widely. When probed as to whether there are political offices that women should not be allowed to hold, limits became clear: Positions perceived to require skills or personality traits associated with men led many respondents to exclude women from consideration. These offices generally included the highest ranking positions in the executive and the judiciary, including the Ministries of Defense, Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs and the presidency. Some participants claim that women can be successful politically as long as they are participating in issues related to women and social or cultural affairs, but not for traditionally "male" issues such as military policy or economics.

*"There are some political offices the women can't hold like the judge, Minister of Internal Affairs or the Presidency because these offices need hard decisions and I think men only can holds these offices."* (Female, 36, Assistant, Basra, Shia)

*"Woman represents half of the society, and I am with her participation in politics. But I object on her taking charge of some ministries like Ministry of Defense; because her mind is less than man in such fields. But she can take charge of ministries of education or health, but not Ministry of Interior; because man has more experience in this field."* (Male, 25, Gainer, Kirkuk, Sunni)

*"Iraqi woman could participate in politics and I think that there are some posts should not be assumed by woman like Ministry of Defense and Interior because of the nature and personality of woman."* (Male, 26, Unemployed, Nassariya, Shia)

*"She could participate in politics but not in all fields because the woman has different obligations than the man has in the family and this obstade her and we are an Arabic country and not western country so we have habits and traditions."* (Female, 23, Employee, Nassariya, Sunni)

There were several related reasons mentioned for limiting the extent of women's participation; the majority of these reasons were drawn from conservative notions of female nature. For example, many participants claimed that women in positions of power would not be respected or that the relative political inexperience of women makes them ill-suited for leadership. Another conservative viewpoint expressed by numerous participants, both male and female, was the belief that women should not participate in politics because they already have a defined and very important role to play in society and in the family.

*"It is difficult for a man to be ordered by a woman."* (Female, 25, Housewife, Baghdad, Sabetha)

*"Women have their position in the society but should not take high positions like minister or prime minister but she can be manager, teacher, hospital manager or engineer; if she is a minister then she will be rejected by men."* (Female, 45, Teacher, Baghdad, Shia)

*"I certainly confirm that the best role for woman is her duties in her home and growing up her children."* (Female, 23, Student, Babylon, Shia)

*“I don’t think Iraqi woman fit for the political field. I recommend she should stick to other fields such as education. I believe she is not suitable for many leading positions because men will not accept her leadership for she is a weak creature.”* (Female, 25, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*“I think women’s participation in such fields is an insult to her dignity, but women can participate in other fields like social works.”* (Male, 20, Student, Ramadi, Sunni)

*“The women are not proper to be in the National Assembly or the National Community. She has her work at home and education. She is a leader in society from there”* (Male, 35, Clerk, Mosul, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“Women hold the responsibility of family, husband and children and this is enough for her because she bears big responsibility more than man in bringing up and education of children.”* (Male, 45, Employee, Nassariya, Shia)

These findings, combined with the likelihood that some of the more egalitarian responses may have been driven by social expectations, especially in mixed gender groups, suggest that the road to full political recognition and participation for women will be quite bumpy indeed.

## VII. Women and the Constitution

Focus group participants of all backgrounds tend to favor constitutional protections for women, but there is a divergence between those who think specific provisions for women are needed, and those who believe women would enjoy a full range of constitutional protection by virtue of being human beings and Iraqis.

One often repeated view is that special provisions are necessary because women constitute half of the Iraqi population. Many who expressed this view spoke in broad, conceptual terms and did not elaborate on the specific women’s rights they wanted the constitution to protect.

*“Women rights should be ensured by the constitution because women are half of the community and they are the raiser of the generations and their rights in women’s unions and organizations should be ensured.”* (Female, 20, Housewife, Kirkuk, Sunni)

*“A new item should be added to the coming constitution in order to guarantee woman rights.”* (Male, 32, Gainer, Kirkuk, Shia)

*“There should be some articles to protect women’s rights because they half of the community like providing works opportunities for graduated women as well as providing residence for them”* (Female, 50, Teacher, Baghdad, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“Yes, there should be such articles that preserve women’s rights in the constitution because women occupy half of the community so they should participate actively in social, economical and political life”* (Male, 25, Driver, Basra, Shia)

Other participants point to clauses or ideas such as the right to travel freely, own property, exercise rights in marriage, participate in politics and have access to education.



*“Yes the constitution must contain items that preserve women rights in working and women should be accepted in jobs in equal percentages as the men, and other rights equal to men.”* (Female, 35, Teacher, Tikrit, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“It is necessary to have specific provisions in the Constitution to protect women’s rights including her right to choose her husband. There should be provision ensuring her right in divorce and her right in the house and alimony ensuring a decent life for her, and allocating a monthly salary for her. She may have the right of owning an estate or a car or any other properties.”* (Female 31, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*“There should be such provisions, for example her right in expressing opinion, her right in education, her right in participating in political issues, and her right in transporting freely.”* (Female, 25, Housewife, Babylon, Shia)

Many discussants said that the constitution should protect women, but specific provisions are not necessary. The two primary reasons offered for this view are that Islam and the Quran provide for women’s rights, so if the Constitution has a religious influence, “special” rights are not needed, and that men and women are equal so there is no need to single out women.

*“Woman will not be oppressed by Islamic religion and if constitution build on the base of Islamic religion woman will not be oppressed by the constitution.”* (Female, 37, Teacher, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“All the provisions which we want are there in the holy Koran, so if the constitution relies on the holy Koran, we would find many provisions which protect the Muslim woman's rights and the non-Muslim because Islamic religion didn't differentiate between them.”* (Female, 24, Housewife, Mosul, Sunni)

*“Constitution contains directions from Islamic religion so it will guarantee woman rights.”* (Male, 25, Gainer, Kirkuk, Sunni)

*“The law that protects man's rights is the same that protects woman's rights.”* (Male, 36, Employee, Babylon, Shia)

*“They should protect human rights in general and there wouldn't be a differentiation between woman and man.”* (Male, 52, Employee, Baghdad, Christian)

## VIII. Minority Rights and the Constitution

In some contrast to the earlier discussions of women's rights and roles, support for the protection of minorities is stated in terms that are both clear and forthright. Again there is some debate as to the need for, and the potential negative aspects of, specific constitutional protections, but agreement with the general concept of religious freedom and minority rights seems both broad and deep. Particular rights delineated by participants included religious traditions and ceremonies, political participation, language, education, access to services and freedom of thought.

*"I think it is necessary to protect the minority groups in the constitution. This will make the country united, and make others feel as good citizens respecting the rights of others. It will strengthen the country. Iraqi rights should be away from religious conflict and ethnic."* (Female, 25, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*"There should be some provisions that protect the minority rights like doing their religious belief freely."* (Male, 42, Writer, Nassariya, Shia)

*"All nationals' majority or minorities should have their rights, regardless of their number; everybody should be able to practice their religion."* (Male, 40, Teacher, Mosul, Sunni, Kurdish)

*"Iraqi minorities should be respected by all and their rights should be kept by law because these minorities are within Iraqi map."* (Female, 23, Housewife, Nassariya, Shia)

Kurdish respondents were most declarative on the issue of minority rights. Having suffered through a harsh, repressive regime that discriminated against them with impunity, many Kurds are acutely sensitive to the plight of minority groups and recognize the importance of entrenching rights for minorities within the constitution. While Kurds, with Sunni Arabs not far behind, were the most vocal concerning the need for constitutional safeguards, Iraqis of all backgrounds seem genuinely committed to the promotion and protection of minority rights.

*"We were from minorities at times of Saddam Hussein and we didn't have any rights, we want other minorities to be equalized with other people and giving them all of their rights without differentiation according to sect or religion."* (Female, 22, Student, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*"We Kurds, had our share of bitterness and killing and discrimination and were not able to take our share in life because we are Kurds. So the constitution must preserve our rights."* (Female, 34, Teacher, Mosul, Sunni, Kurdish)

*"They must have rights as all other Iraqi not like it was during the last regime when Kurds had no rights."* (Male, 25, Student, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

While nearly all participants agree that the rights of minorities must be protected in the new Iraq, some individuals, usually Shia, question the possible implications of specific constitutional provisions, citing the potential aggravation of existing ethnic and sectarian divisions.

*“There should be some terms in the constitution protecting the rights of minority groups on condition that these terms will not contradict the interests of the Iraqi community.”* (Female, 31, Housewife, Babylon, Shia)

*“We must not concentrate on minority or woman rights, the issue are the rights of all community ... the experts whom will write the constitution must take the rights of all in attention as whole, not in distinction.”* (Male, 33, Employee, Basra, Shia)

*“I agree about their religious rights and nationality, but on condition that practicing to their rights would not effect or split Iraq into religious or nationalities entities.”* (Female, 20, Housewife, Babylon, Shia)

What is clear is that the Iraqi people do not want divisions. Alongside the common commitment to the rights of women and minorities lies a strong belief that no one group should take priority over the welfare of the entire country, and that constitutional protections for minorities should be consistent with the rights of all Iraqi citizens. What is not clear, and what focus group transcripts cannot measure, is the depth of commitment to these rights, and the sacrifice and compromise that may be needed to codify them in the constitution and honor them over time.

## IX. Political Parties

Iraqis accord political parties a high degree of importance in their political system, but do not always distinguish between what they want and expect from parties as opposed to government, specific ministries or other institutions. What may seem to be an uneven understanding of institutional roles may in fact be another testament to the widespread, underlying desire for stability and basic services. The focus group discussions indicate that political parties are currently trapped between the challenges of unrealistic demands and formidable circumstances on the one hand and the reality of their own limited capacity on the other. The result is that party performance is judged harshly and party credibility is tenuous.

As the following quotes demonstrate, there exists among many focus group participants a threshold level of clarity with respect to the role parties are *supposed* to play in a democracy. Roles delineated by discussants included serving as a bridge to government, helping Iraqis procure their rights, educating citizens, using politics to better the nation and keeping the government accountable to its people.

*“The role of party should be active because political party is the face of society and it should be active as a part of the society, but political parties don’t do well.”* (Male, 34, Engineer, Nassariya, Shia)

*“Political parties should be as a mediator between government and people, and they should represent Iraqi people.”* (Male, 42, Gainer, Suleymaniya, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“Political parties should be the connecting link between the citizens and the state.”* (Male, 30, Unemployed, Nassariya, Shia)

*“The political party should guide the people to ask for their rights... The present parties do not do their role in a good manner.”* (Male, 26, Unemployed, Nassariya, Shia)

*“I find some parties have a great role in educating people and spreading democratic culture among people.”* (Female, 27, Teacher, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“The role of these parties is basically to support political process and rebuilding Iraq because they know our needs and they are capable to manage government.”* (Male, 42, Employee, Suleymania, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“According to what we hear or see in TV or press about the role of parties, they must be the observer on government and they should support government in state issues.”* (Male, 32, Gainer, Kirkuk, Shia)

However, laced throughout the discussion of the role of political parties are indications of expectations that are lofty under most circumstances and especially unreasonable given the current situation on the ground in Iraq.

*“I think these parties should provide welfare for all the community and also provide security and opinion freedom and justice.”* (Male, 38, Engineer, Najaf, Shia)

*“The main goal of a party is raising the living standards and put a good effort in creating job opportunities for all.”* (Female, 30, Housewife, Mosul, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“To provide security and settlement of country, provide jobs and necessary services for people.”* (Male, 30, Unemployed, Nassariya, Shia)

## Political Party Performance

*“Frankly talking we have not seen anything from the political parties.”* (Female, 42, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

*“They have an essential role in treating these negative things, but they are not performing their duty now.”* (Male 30, Teacher, Babylon, Shia)

Anyone who thinks there is nothing a middle-aged Sunni housewife from Falluja and a young Shia man from Babylon can agree on should ask them how well they think the political parties are fulfilling their duties. While unrealistic expectations are certainly a factor in the public's dissatisfaction, it is clear that parties have a lot of work to do if they desire to become a credible institution in an emerging democracy.

Criticism of political parties is widespread and mostly revolves around a handful of themes, recurrent throughout the discussion of parties, their performance, inter-party differences and what changes Iraqis want to see in order to increase public satisfaction. The core perceptions that emerged in discussion included:

- Political parties only serve their members;
- Candidates and parties do not deliver on the promises they make;

- Politicians are self-serving and corrupt; and
- Political parties promote sectarianism.

What becomes clear is that parties are not being judged sympathetically because of the adverse conditions on the ground. On the contrary, political parties are equally as likely to be seen as part of the problem as they are part of the solution.

*“Raising slogans is a thing and applying is another. We see their actions are different from their slogans. We haven’t seen yet any godness from them. The condition is going from bad to worse, so when a party presents its political program it must apply it.”* (Male, 50, Employee, Kirkuk, Sunni)

*“The role of the party is to transfer people’s sufferings and convey their voices to the authority but these things are not achieved because parties care only about political offices.”* (Female, 25, Housewife, Najaf, Shia)

*“Each candidate was thinking in himself not in his country.”* (Female, 40, Teacher, Baghdad, Sunni)

*“The existing parties don’t offer any service to people but just to their members.”* (Female, 24, Student, Kirkuk, Sunni, Turkmen)

Another view, frequently expressed in Sunni groups, is the belief that current Iraqi political parties tend to heighten the denominational conflict rather than moving beyond sectarian acrimony and working towards national unity.

*“...sufferings and pain is because the parties which divided the Iraqi people and made them torn.”* (Female, 24, Housewife, Mosul, Sunni)

*“Parties didn’t do their duties because they were sectarian.”* (Female, 45, Teacher, Kirkuk, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“In general the political parties have not submitted anything because of the conflict they have with each other in point of views and various goals, and inciting denominational riots.”* (Female, 38, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

Because political parties are the only institution discussed in depth in these focus groups, it is possible that the views of our respondents are somewhat distorted. Perhaps if we had engaged in a discussion of the government or the Iraqi National Assembly, other targets for public frustration would have emerged. Regardless of the variables in play, the widespread negative views of the political parties in Iraq contain enough substance and consistency to help define the challenges they face going forward.

The only significant pocket of satisfaction with the political parties is found among Kurdish focus groups, whose overall sentiment differs from that of the rest of the country. Kurdish parties have been active for longer than many other parties operating inside the country, and they did very well in the January elections. Kurdish participants take pride in their history and the fact that today the leaders of the two principal Kurdish political parties are president of Iraq

and president of Kurdistan. Their different baseline and comparatively meteoric rise leads Kurds to a more sanguine view of current party performance and future prospects than we observe in other parts of Iraq.

*“Parties should satisfy people's needs, all parties we mentioned have glorious history especially Kurdish parties, like Kurdish national union which established since 1976 and its struggle continued in Kurdistan and its president is the president of Iraq while the Kurdish Democratic Party has a history since 1946 and now its president is the president of Kurdistan.”* (Male, 26, Employee, Kirkuk, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“The two big Kurdish parties are doing well in Kurdistan.”* (Male, 45, Engineer, Kirkuk, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“Political parties have a big role as they are close to people and we think that they do their role and job in a good manner, so that we participated in the elections as we believe that these parties will represent Iraqis correctly in all arenas.”* (Female, 22, Student, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

This does not mean, however, that the hopes and concerns of Kurds differ significantly from those of other groups.

*“I gave my vote freely to Kurdish parties without fearing anything and the party should fulfill the people's needs like security and improving the economical condition to people.”* (Female, 32, Employee, Suleymania, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“Any political party that provides services to people and give them what they want, such a party will have a future such as our Kurdistan parties.”* (Male, 24, Clerk, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

Focus group participants who perceive differences between the parties usually pointed to the most obvious and basic difference: whether a party is religious or secular. Other factors ranged from relative specifics, such as party history to more diffuse characteristics regarding party intentions and underlying principles.

*“Yes there is a difference between political parties because there are religious parties and others secular.”* (Female, 34, Teacher, Nassariya, Shia)

*“Each party has its own principle and there are Islamic parties and the same time there are secular parties and independent parties and each one of them have a political program that serve people...”* (Male, 21, Student, Najaf, Shia)

*“Yes, of course there are differences between them, as some of them were formed after the uprising the other are very old and have their history and great experience struggling against old regime, so I elected my party according to its long history, sacrifices and martyrs.”* (Male, 28, Teacher, Suleymania, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“They are different in their principles, system, political and historical thoughts, their directions and views for Iraq, their effort to solve problems, build Iraq and work to develop it.”* (Male, 34, Employee, Suleymania, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“I think that parties are different as some of them serve their benefits and the others serve people.”*  
(Male, 24, Student, Baghdad, Shia)

Sunnis were particularly likely to express a belief that while some political parties have local affiliations and are ‘Iraqi’ based, other parties have connections to foreign powers or the US forces.

*“I think there are differences among the parties in their targets and the way adopted to achieve them. Some of them try to gain Iraqis’ sympathy and use it to implement these targets, and some depend on the foreign countries, or being faithful for occupation countries.”* (Female, 25, Housewife, Falluja, Sunni)

In the end, most participants, and certainly the bulk of the substantive responses, pointed out that despite the appearance of differences among parties on the surface, in essence they are all the same—self-serving and craving power.

*“The political parties follow the same working method, and I see no difference between them. I didn’t see any good thing from the party which I elected, but I wish it will serve me and all Iraqi people in the future.”* (Female, 24, Student, Kirkuk, Sunni, Turkmen)

*“There is a difference in the points of views and slogans but from the practical side, all of them seek their personal goals.”* (Male, 25, Lawyer, Tikrit, Sunni)

*“At this time, there is no difference between political parties and their aim is to seek for the authority.”* (Male, 24, Student, Nassariya, Shia)

*“All of them are seeking for authority and power.”* (Female, 28, Association Member, Mosul, Sunni)

*“They are the same in their goal which is reaching the authority.”* (Male, 30, Employee, Baghdad, Christian)

Despite the tendency for Iraqis to say that there are very few substantive differences among parties, it appears as though the January 2005 elections forced many of the persuadable voters within the Iraqi electorate, however small that group may have been, to make distinctions among parties in the absence of major perceivable differences and to translate their impressions into a voting decision.

Many Iraqi voters seem to have honed in on factors such as party history, candidate reputation or campaign slogans that, given the limited information available to them, best represented the traits and characteristics for which they were looking. Other, more substantive factors that influenced participant’s votes in the January elections included experience, religious affiliation and party objectives and agenda.

*“There is no difference between political parties now and the only thing encourages me to vote for them is the religion.”* (Male, 27, Unemployed, Nassariya, Shia)

*“I voted according to the deep-rooted history of the party.”* (Female, 22, Student, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“If I want to vote for a party, I should vote for a party which struggled for democracy and this is something important for a party.”* (Male, 40, Employee, Tikrit, Sunni)

*“[I voted for this party because] it had worked for our cause. I believe in its agenda and that is why I voted for it.”* (Female, 24, Housewife, Nassariya, Shia)

*“The work of the parties and their struggle history are the most important properties.”* (Male, 62, Teacher, Nassariya, Shia)

*“What encourage me to vote for them are their mottos which call for democracy and freedom but they seem that these mottos are incorrect when they hold the authority.”* (Male, 24, Student, Nassariya, Shia)

*“I voted for the party that confirmed the unity of Iraq and its goal is to achieve the benefits of Iraq only, and I voted for the sake of Iraq unity.”* (Female, 40, Teacher, Kirkuk, Sunni, Turkmen)

*“Struggle, merits and religion of the candidates are the most important characteristic and the best one is the religion.”* (Male, 30, Unemployed, Nassariya, Shia)

*“The first important thing is that the candidate should be Iraqi, from inside Iraq and not from outside Iraq, he should not be one of the characters that America imposed on Iraqi people.”* (Female, 40, Housewife, Mosul, Sunni)

Kurdish participants were significantly more likely than others to refer directly to ethnicity as a factor in their voting decision.

*“I voted for [CANDIDATE] for he is Kurdish like me, also a struggler, and I am a member of his party.”* (Female, 25, Student, Mosul, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“Because I am a member of this party and I am a Kurd and the party got a good leadership.”* (Male, 24, Merchant, Erbil, Sunni, Kurdish)

While many Shiites and Kurds maintain that they made the correct choice in January, their confidence is far from unanimous. The comments of those who say that they made the wrong choice in the election express frustration, skepticism and uncertainty, comports closely with public attitudes toward parties and the general mood in Iraq.

*“My choice was right at that time but they did not do anything”* (Female, 25, Housewife, Baghdad, Sabetha)

*“I elected the party because of its promises before elections...but I was wrong in my choice.”* (Female, 27, Housewife, Kirkuk, Sunni)

*“I am comfortable for my choice but not satisfied about the performance”* (Male, 45, Engineer, Kirkuk, Sunni, Kurdish)



*“Yes the right choice, but I'm may be regretted as they didn't present any service”* (Male, 25, Employee, Baghdad, Shia)

## X. Hopes and Expectations

Regardless of region, gender, ethnicity or religion, there is a consistency in the responses that suggests clear, if very challenging goals. To be sure, the Iraqi people want better services, security, employment, a stable, normal life, and a government that relates and responds to these everyday needs. More broadly, they call upon their political institutions to put the national interest above the interests of self and sect, to fulfill their promises, to both listen and speak to citizens and to provide leadership in these difficult and confusing times.

In articulating their priorities for the present, hopes for the future and expectations of their leaders and representatives, Iraqi voices are clear and compelling:

*“I wish they do what they promise... to rebuild the trust between us.”* (Female, 36, Assistant, Basra, Shia)

*“All the parties should give up their personal interests and ask for uniting the Iraqis with different nationalities and sects in order to make Iraq stand on its feet and be one hand.”* (Male, 34, Employee, Tikrit, Sunni)

*“The most important thing is to work on providing security and stability to people; they should be always in touch with people to achieve all the people's desires and ambitions.”* (Male, 24, Student, Suleymania, Sunni, Kurdish)

*“...being in touch with the people hearing and doing the people's opinions as this is the most important point.”* (Male, 23, Employee, Baghdad, Sabetha)

*“... maintaining the rights of individuals.”* (Female, 26, Teacher, Babylon, Shia)

*“We need to be one hand and we don't need parties which promise without carrying out their promises, we need a united leadership without preference for a specific sect or nationality.”* (Female, 43, Teacher, Mosul, Sunni)

*“I ask them to encourage unity and brotherhood among Iraqi people.”* (Female, 40, Housewife, Basra, Shia)

*“I wish the political parties to be trustable not using their campaign for reaching the authority. Iraq needs honest persons.”* (Male, 23, Student, Basra, Shia)

## Conclusion

Focus group research conducted by NDI in April 2005 explored the potential as well as the many serious challenges characterizing the situation in Iraq, particularly as they related to the drafting of a constitution and the public's hopes and expectations for both the document and the developing political processes. The focus groups discussed in this report bring more specificity to Iraqi aspirations and attitudes regarding the constitution while revealing a frightened and frustrated populace whose needs, both day-to-day and political, are not being met.

Iraqis crave services and stability, basic elements of a functioning society, and legitimate representation, a fundamental component of a functioning democracy. These interviews with ordinary Iraqis strongly suggest that the ongoing insurgency, conflicts over religion and federalism and the limitations and inclinations of their parties and leaders are conspiring to thwart positive movement. The dire nature of current conditions in Iraq simultaneously puts pressure on the political institutions to deliver, and makes it impossible for them to do so.

Consistent with earlier findings, the constitution is viewed as a top priority because it is seen as a precondition for stability and integral to solving other problems. It may be that Iraqis are expecting too much of a constitution given the immense challenges their society faces; or, perhaps in the absence of other organizing principles, a constitution represents the one meaningful step that can be taken in the short term to bring some clarity to their situation and further the process towards self-governance and peace.

Central to NDI's efforts in Iraq is assisting the development of political parties as both vehicles for popular expression and entities for organizing political life. In this light, the centrality with which political parties are viewed by the public is both a blessing and a curse. Clearly, there is not a lot parties can do to provide a weary and wary public with tangible results. However, the negative reviews of the performance of political parties go far beyond allegations of incompetence to claims that they are self-serving, cynical and sectarian. A reasonable question is whether, in the absence of effective official and political structures, Iraq's constituent groups will look increasingly toward sectarian and ethnic militias for protection and results.

The troublingly low esteem in which parties are held illuminates the need for them to modify their behavior and employ more effective strategies. People need parties to connect them to the processes and events taking place around them. Parties and their leaders must both manage expectations and demonstrate meaningful efforts toward stated goals if they are to maintain relevance and build credibility. In a competitive atmosphere, parties that prove most adept in this regard will have the greatest chance of success; an emerging Iraqi democracy without credible parties as a central element will have little such chance.

Iraqi society is both complex and traumatized, making it easy to doubt the sincerity and difficult to pinpoint the limits of the many expressions of conciliation and tolerance with respect to gender, religion and ethnicity. Most focus group respondents say that the constitution should protect women and minorities, that constitutional language and political life should include and reflect, but not be dominated by, religion and that women should have a meaningful, if not limitless, role in politics and public life. However, inside and underneath these responses are often qualifiers that speak to the difficulties of launching a constitutional democracy and pluralistic civil society in a land scarred by the despotism and war of the recent past, and wracked by internal strife and violence in the present.

**Appendix 1****Iraq: Round 2  
Focus Group Discussion Participants****Group 1: 18+ Secular Mixed in Baghdad – Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin  | Sect      | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|---------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 38  | Housewife  | Baghdad | Christian | Arab      | Medium |
| 2  | Male   | 22  | Student    | Baghdad | Shi'a     | Arab      | Medium |
| 3  | Male   | 25  | Teacher    | Baghdad | Shi'a     | Arab      | Medium |
| 4  | Female | 23  | Employee   | Baghdad | Sunni     | Arab      | Medium |
| 5  | Male   | 30  | Employee   | Baghdad | Christian | Arab      | High   |
| 6  | Female | 27  | Employee   | Baghdad | Shi'a     | Arab      | Low    |
| 7  | Male   | 25  | Unemployed | Baghdad | Sunni     | Arab      | High   |
| 8  | Female | 28  | Housewife  | Baghdad | Sabetha   | Arab      | Low    |

**Group 2: 18+ conservative Males in Baghdad – Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin  | Sect    | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|---------|---------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 25  | Employee   | Baghdad | Shi'a   | Arab      | High   |
| 2  | Male   | 22  | Employee   | Baghdad | Shi'a   | Arab      | Low    |
| 3  | Male   | 24  | Teacher    | Baghdad | Shi'a   | Arab      | Medium |
| 4  | Male   | 30  | Teacher    | Baghdad | Sunni   | Arab      | High   |
| 5  | Male   | 36  | Employee   | Baghdad | Sunni   | Arab      | Medium |
| 6  | Male   | 23  | Unemployed | Baghdad | Sunni   | Arab      | Medium |
| 7  | Male   | 23  | Employee   | Baghdad | Sabetha | Arab      | Medium |
| 8  | Male   | 24  | Unemployed | Baghdad | Shi'a   | Kurdish   | Low    |

**Group 3: 18 Secular Mixed in Basra – Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 28  | Employee   | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 2  | Male   | 33  | Employee   | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 3  | Female | 36  | Assistant  | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 4  | Female | 29  | Teacher    | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 5  | Male   | 23  | Student    | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 6  | Female | 53  | Housewife  | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 7  | Female | 37  | Housewife  | Basra  | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 8  | Male   | 38  | Employee   | Basra  | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |

**Group 4: 18+ conservative Males in Basra – Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 28  | Employee   | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 2  | Male   | 33  | Engineer   | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 3  | Male   | 31  | Lawyer     | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 4  | Male   | 25  | Engineer   | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 5  | Male   | 29  | Worker     | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 6  | Male   | 36  | Carpenter  | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 7  | Male   | 27  | Worker     | Basra  | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 8  | Male   | 25  | Driver     | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |

**Group 5: 18+ Secular Mixed in Mosul - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 32  | Freelance  | Mosul  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 2  | Male   | 35  | Clerk      | Mosul  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 3  | Male   | 40  | Teacher    | Mosul  | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 4  | Male   | 30  | Freelance  | Mosul  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 5  | Female | 34  | Teacher    | Mosul  | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 6  | Female | 25  | Teacher    | Mosul  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 7  | Female | 29  | Clerk      | Mosul  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 8  | Female | 30  | Housewife  | Mosul  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |

**Group 6: 18+ Conservative Females in Mosul - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation       | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 43  | Teacher          | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 2  | Female | 24  | Housewife        | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 3  | Female | 24  | Housewife        | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 4  | Female | 40  | Housewife        | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 5  | Female | 28  | Association      | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 6  | Female | 39  | University Prof. | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 7  | Female | 35  | Housewife        | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 8  | Female | 31  | Teacher          | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |

**Group 7: 18+ Secular Mixed in Suleymaniya - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin      | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|-------------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 38  | Employee   | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 2  | Female | 39  | Teacher    | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 3  | Female | 24  | Student    | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 4  | Male   | 23  | Worker     | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 5  | Female | 32  | Employee   | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 6  | Female | 23  | Student    | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 7  | Male   | 42  | Employee   | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 8  | Male   | 42  | worker     | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |

**Group 8: 18+ Conservative Males in Suleymaniya - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin      | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|-------------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 49  | Teacher    | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 2  | Male   | 48  | Employee   | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 3  | Male   | 50  | Teacher    | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 4  | Male   | 19  | Student    | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 5  | Male   | 19  | Student    | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 6  | Male   | 34  | Employee   | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 7  | Male   | 34  | Unemployed | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 8  | Male   | 27  | Student    | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |

**Group 9: 18+ Secular Mixed in Erbil - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 45  | Teacher    | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 2  | Male   | 29  | Employee   | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 3  | Female | 22  | Student    | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 4  | Female | 27  | Teacher    | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 5  | Female | 24  | Student    | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 6  | Female | 22  | Student    | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 7  | Female | 20  | Housewife  | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 8  | Male   | 39  | Worker     | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |

**Group 10: 18+ Conservative Females in Erbil - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 20  | Student    | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 2  | Female | 21  | Housewife  | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 3  | Female | 37  | Teacher    | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 4  | Female | 35  | Teacher    | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 5  | Female | 35  | Teacher    | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 6  | Female | 25  | Housewife  | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 7  | Female | 20  | Student    | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 8  | Female | 40  | Teacher    | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |

**Group 11: 18+ Secular Mixed in Kirkuk - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 32  | Employee   | Kirkuk | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 2  | Male   | 32  | Worker     | Kirkuk | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 3  | Female | 26  | Student    | Kirkuk | Sunni | Turkmen   | Medium |
| 4  | Female | 24  | Student    | Kirkuk | Sunni | Turkmen   | Low    |
| 5  | Male   | 50  | Employee   | Kirkuk | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 6  | Female | 19  | Housewife  | Kirkuk | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 7  | Male   | 25  | Worker     | Kirkuk | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 8  | Female | 27  | Housewife  | Kirkuk | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |

**Group 12: 18+ Conservative Males in Kirkuk - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 29  | Employee   | Kirkuk | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 2  | Male   | 25  | Student    | Kirkuk | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 3  | Male   | 26  | Employee   | Kirkuk | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 4  | Male   | 27  | Freelance  | Kirkuk | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 5  | Male   | 23  | Student    | Kirkuk | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 6  | Male   | 28  | Lawyer     | Kirkuk | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 7  | Male   | 35  | Teacher    | Kirkuk | Sunni | Turkmen   | Medium |
| 8  | Male   | 45  | Engineer   | Kirkuk | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |

**Group 13: 18+ Secular Females in Tikrit - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 30  | Housewife  | Tikrit | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 2  | Female | 40  | Housewife  | Tikrit | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 3  | Female | 31  | Housewife  | Tikrit | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 4  | Female | 29  | Housewife  | Tikrit | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 5  | Female | 33  | Housewife  | Tikrit | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 6  | Female | 35  | Teacher    | Tikrit | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 7  | Female | 25  | Housewife  | Tikrit | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 8  | Female | 30  | Housewife  | Tikrit | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |

**Group 14: 18+ Conservative Females in Tikrit - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 26  | Housewife  | Tikrit | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 2  | Female | 40  | Teacher    | Tikrit | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 3  | Female | 27  | Housewife  | Tikrit | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 4  | Female | 23  | Housewife  | Tikrit | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 5  | Female | 24  | Housewife  | Tikrit | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 6  | Female | 27  | Teacher    | Tikrit | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 7  | Female | 40  | Employee   | Tikrit | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 8  | Female | 28  | Housewife  | Tikrit | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |

**Group 15: 18+ Secular Mixed in Nassariya - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin    | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|-----------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 55  | Teacher    | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 2  | Male   | 26  | Unemployed | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 3  | Female | 34  | Teacher    | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 4  | Male   | 42  | Writer     | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 5  | Female | 23  | Employee   | Nassariya | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 6  | Female | 24  | Housewife  | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 7  | Male   | 62  | teacher    | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |

**Group 16: 18+ Conservative Females in Nassariya - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation    | Origin    | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|---------------|-----------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 35  | Teacher       | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 2  | Female | 28  | Civil servant | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 3  | Female | 23  | Housewife     | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 4  | Female | 27  | Housewife     | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 5  | Female | 21  | Student       | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 6  | Female | 40  | Housewife     | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 7  | Female | 23  | Housewife     | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 8  | Female | 32  | Housewife     | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |

**Group 17: 18+ Secular Males in Ramadi - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 20  | Student    | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 2  | Male   | 45  | Freelance  | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 3  | Male   | 70  | Employee   | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 4  | Male   | 46  | Retired    | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 5  | Male   | 59  | Retired    | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 6  | Male   | 51  | Freelance  | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 7  | Male   | 53  | Teacher    | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 8  | Male   | 71  | Unemployed | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |

**Group 18: 18+ Conservative Females in Ramadi - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 40  | Housewife  | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 2  | Female | 35  | Housewife  | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 3  | Female | 50  | Housewife  | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 4  | Female | 19  | Housewife  | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 5  | Female | 30  | Housewife  | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 6  | Female | 19  | Student    | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 7  | Female | 28  | Housewife  | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 8  | Female | 40  | Housewife  | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | High   |

**Group 19: 18+ Secular Females in Falluja - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin  | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 25  | Housewife  | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 2  | Female | 40  | Housewife  | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 3  | Female | 24  | Official   | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 4  | Female | 30  | Housewife  | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 5  | Female | 22  | Housewife  | Falluja | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 6  | Female | 45  | Housewife  | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 7  | Female | 42  | Housewife  | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 8  | Female | 38  | Housewife  | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |

**Group 20: 18+ Conservative Males in Falluja - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin  | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 40  | Lawyer     | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 2  | Male   | 35  | Employee   | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 3  | Male   | 38  | Employee   | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 4  | Male   | 35  | Worker     | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 5  | Male   | 41  | Employee   | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 6  | Male   | 29  | Worker     | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 7  | Male   | 67  | Engineer   | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 8  | Male   | 50  | Lawyer     | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | High   |

**Group 21: 18+ Secular Mixed in Najaf - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 38  | Engineer   | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 2  | Male   | 21  | Student    | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 3  | Female | 36  | Employee   | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 4  | Male   | 46  | Retired    | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 5  | Female | 30  | Teacher    | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 6  | Female | 29  | Employee   | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 7  | Female | 35  | Housewife  | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 8  | Male   | 45  | Worker     | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |

**Group 22: 18+ Conservative Females in Najaf - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation    | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|---------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 26  | Activist      | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 2  | Female | 34  | Civil Servant | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 3  | Female | 34  | Housewife     | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 4  | Female | 21  | Student       | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 5  | Female | 27  | Civil Servant | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 6  | Female | 30  | Housewife     | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 7  | Female | 21  | Housewife     | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 8  | Female | 25  | Housewife     | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |

**Group 23: 18+ Secular Mixed in Babylon - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation    | Origin  | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|---------------|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 39  | Employee      | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 2  | Female | 25  | Employee      | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 3  | Female | 27  | Teacher       | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 4  | Female | 17  | Unemployed    | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 5  | Female | 30  | Teacher       | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 6  | Male   | 24  | Private Buss. | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 7  | Male   | 30  | Private Buss. | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 8  | Male   | 52  | Employee      | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |

**Group 24: 18+ Conservative Males in Babylon - Urban**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin  | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 40  | Worker     | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 2  | Male   | 43  | Retired    | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 3  | Male   | 36  | Employee   | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 4  | Male   | 28  | Student    | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 5  | Male   | 30  | Teacher    | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 6  | Male   | 29  | Worker     | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 7  | Male   | 67  | Professor  | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 8  | Male   | 44  | Employee   | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |

**Group 25: 18+ Conservative and Moderate Females in Baghdad - Rural**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin  | Sect    | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|---------|---------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 50  | Teacher    | Baghdad | Sunni   | Kurdish   | High   |
| 2  | Female | 28  | Housewife  | Baghdad | Shi'a   | Arab      | Medium |
| 3  | Female | 45  | Teacher    | Baghdad | Shi'a   | Arab      | Medium |
| 4  | Female | 50  | Housewife  | Baghdad | Sunni   | Arab      | Low    |
| 5  | Female | 24  | Employee   | Baghdad | Shi'a   | Arab      | Medium |
| 6  | Female | 35  | Housewife  | Baghdad | Shi'a   | Arab      | Low    |
| 7  | Female | 25  | Housewife  | Baghdad | Sabetha | Arab      | High   |
| 8  | Female | 40  | Teacher    | Baghdad | Sunni   | Arab      | Medium |

**Group 26: 18+ Conservative and Moderate Females in Basra - Rural**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 35  | Lawyer     | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 2  | Female | 39  | Teacher    | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 3  | Female | 40  | Housewife  | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 4  | Female | 37  | Housewife  | Basra  | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 5  | Female | 41  | Housewife  | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 6  | Female | 35  | Teacher    | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 7  | Female | 38  | Lawyer     | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 8  | Female | 40  | Student    | Basra  | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |

**Group 27: 18+ Conservative and Moderate Males in Mosul - Rural**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 30  | Employee   | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 2  | Male   | 24  | Unemployed | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 3  | Male   | 23  | Student    | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 4  | Male   | 23  | Student    | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 5  | Male   | 47  | Worker     | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 6  | Male   | 21  | Student    | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 7  | Male   | 20  | Student    | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 8  | Male   | 20  | Student    | Mosul  | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |

**Group 28: 18+ Conservative and Moderate Females in Suleymaniya - Rural**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin      | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|-------------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 25  | Teacher    | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 2  | Female | 28  | Teacher    | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 3  | Female | 28  | Teacher    | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 4  | Female | 24  | Student    | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 5  | Female | 35  | Teacher    | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 6  | Female | 24  | Student    | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 7  | Female | 19  | Student    | Suleymaniya | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |

**Group 29: 18+ Conservative and Moderate Males in Erbil - Rural**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation      | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|-----------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 27  | Student         | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 2  | Male   | 25  | Student         | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 3  | Male   | 32  | Assistant Prof. | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 4  | Male   | 24  | Clerk           | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 5  | Male   | 35  | Employee        | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 6  | Male   | 23  | Employee        | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Low    |
| 7  | Male   | 27  | Merchant        | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |
| 8  | Male   | 26  | Employee        | Erbil  | Sunni | Kurdish   | Medium |



**Group 30: 18+ Conservative and Moderate Females in Kirkuk - Rural**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 18  | Student    | Kirkuk | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 2  | Female | 18  | Student    | Kirkuk | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 3  | Female | 20  | Housewife  | Kirkuk | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 4  | Female | 26  | Teacher    | Kirkuk | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 5  | Female | 37  | Teacher    | Kirkuk | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 6  | Female | 40  | Teacher    | Kirkuk | Sunni | Turkmen   | Medium |
| 7  | Female | 45  | Teacher    | Kirkuk | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |
| 8  | Female | 45  | Employee   | Kirkuk | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |

**Group 31: 18+ Conservative and Moderate Males in Tikrit - Rural**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation   | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|--------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 25  | Lawyer       | Tikrit | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 2  | Male   | 27  | Lawyer       | Tikrit | Sunni | Turkmen   | High   |
| 3  | Male   | 30  | Employee     | Tikrit | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 4  | Male   | 24  | Student      | Tikrit | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 5  | Male   | 34  | Employee     | Tikrit | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 6  | Male   | 45  | Employee     | Tikrit | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 7  | Male   | 45  | Employee     | Tikrit | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 8  | Male   | 40  | Party Member | Tikrit | Sunni | Kurdish   | High   |

**Group 32: 18+ Conservative and Moderate Males in Nassariya - Rural**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin    | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|-----------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 27  | Unemployed | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 2  | Male   | 24  | Student    | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 3  | Male   | 31  | Teacher    | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 4  | Male   | 34  | Engineer   | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 5  | Male   | 28  | Unemployed | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 6  | Male   | 45  | Employee   | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 7  | Male   | 30  | Unemployed | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 8  | Male   | 24  | Unemployed | Nassariya | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |

**Group 33: 18+ Conservative and Moderate Males in Ramadi - Rural**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 20  | Student    | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 2  | Male   | 44  | Teacher    | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 3  | Male   | 45  | Official   | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 4  | Male   | 45  | Official   | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 5  | Male   | 55  | Retired    | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 6  | Male   | 60  | Manager    | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 7  | Male   | 57  | Lawyer     | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 8  | Male   | 52  | Professor  | Ramadi | Sunni | Arab      | High   |

**Group 34: 18+ Conservative and Moderate Females in Falluja - Rural**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin  | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 28  | Housewife  | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 2  | Female | 25  | Housewife  | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 3  | Female | 40  | Housewife  | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 4  | Female | 22  | Employee   | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 5  | Female | 20  | Housewife  | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Low    |
| 6  | Female | 31  | Housewife  | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 7  | Female | 28  | Housewife  | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |
| 8  | Female | 25  | Housewife  | Falluja | Sunni | Arab      | Medium |

**Group 35: 18+ Conservative and Moderate Males in Najaf - Rural**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|--------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Male   | 35  | Worker     | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 2  | Male   | 44  | Teacher    | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 3  | Male   | 55  | Retired    | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 4  | Male   | 28  | Worker     | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 5  | Male   | 23  | Student    | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 6  | Male   | 28  | Worker     | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 7  | Male   | 25  | Worker     | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 8  | Male   | 40  | Student    | Najaf  | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |

**Group 36: 18+ Conservative and Moderate Females in Babylon - Rural**

| ID | Gender | Age | Occupation | Origin  | Sect  | Ethnicity | SES    |
|----|--------|-----|------------|---------|-------|-----------|--------|
| 1  | Female | 25  | Employee   | Babylon | Sunni | Arab      | High   |
| 2  | Female | 30  | Housewife  | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 3  | Female | 20  | Housewife  | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 4  | Female | 30  | Teacher    | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | High   |
| 5  | Female | 23  | Student    | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Low    |
| 6  | Female | 31  | Housewife  | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 7  | Female | 26  | Teacher    | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |
| 8  | Female | 40  | Employee   | Babylon | Shi'a | Arab      | Medium |

## **Appendix 2**

### **KA Iraq Focus Groups – Round 2 June/July 2005**

#### **Discussion Guide**

##### **I. Introduction and General Situation in Iraq**

|   |
|---|
| <b>AIM:</b> To familiarize respondents to the focus groups studies, to ensure confidentiality, to warm up respondents before asking main questions. |
|---|

**Welcoming remarks; introduction of moderator and participants**

**Explanation of the Focus Group Method**

**General overview of topic & purpose of study**

**Complete the short demographic questionnaire now or at end of interview**

At the beginning of our discussion, I want to know your opinion about the general situation in Iraq.

- 1. How do you see Iraq today? Are the things going mostly in the right direction or mostly in the wrong direction? [*Moderator: Try to encourage participants to talk about both negative and positive sides*]**

Probe: What are the things going in the right direction?

Probe: Why? Who is responsible?

Probe: What are the things going in the wrong direction?

Probe: Why? Who is responsible?

- 2. Tell me about yourself and how things are going in your family?**

Probe: Good things about your family?

Probe: Bad things about your family?

## II. Issues and Actors

**AIM:** to learn the important issues in Iraq, in the families, relations between religion and constitution, religion and women, religion and politics.

3. **I would now like to discuss some important issues facing Iraq at this time. Please let me know which of these issues you think are the most important. Keep in mind your opinions about how things are going in Iraq and in your families.**

**Please tell me how important are these issues for you [*Moderator*., Use flip chart during the session, write down and read the 4 issues; so that participants can visualize what are the 4 issues– and discuss each issue in detail. ]**

- Democracy
- Constitution
- Corruption
- Services

**Probe for each :** Why this issue is important and why do think that way ?

**Probe for each :** Who do you think is responsible for this issue in our country? And who is behind of problems about this issue, if any?

### POLITICS AND RELIGION

Now I'd like to talk about some related topics.

4. **In your opinion, do you think there is a role for Religion in the Iraqi Constitution?**

Probe: What kind of role?

Probe: Explain to me please **how** and **why** do you see the relationship between religion and the Constitution?

5. **In your opinion, is there a link between Political Parties and Religion?**

Probe: What link?

Probe: Explain to me please **how** you see the relationship between Religion and Political parties.

6. **Do you personally see Religion as important in politics?**

Probe: What do you think about the use of religion in politics?

Probe: Why do you think that way?

7. **What do you think about the involvement of the Iraqi woman in the political sector?**

Probe: Are there any political offices that you believe women should not be allowed to hold? What are they?

Probe: Why and Why not?

**8. In your opinion, is there a link between the Iraqi women's rights and Religion?**

Probe: What link?

Probe: Describe to me what you think is the relationship between Religion and the Iraqi women's rights?

Probe: Why do you think that way?

**9. Have you heard anything about the proposal to incorporate Shari'a into the Iraqi Constitution?**

Probe: What have you heard and from who?

Probe: What is your opinion about basing constitutional language on Shari'a? Why?

Probe: Do you think the incorporation of Shari'a will guarantee women more rights, or will it restrict their rights and freedoms? Why?

Probe: Do you think these provisions should apply to non-Muslim in Iraq? Why?

**10. In your opinion, should there be specific provisions in the Constitution to protect women's rights?**

Probe: **What** should those provisions say and **how** would they protect women's rights?

Probe: Describe to me what you think is the relationship between Religion and the Iraqi women's rights? Why?

**11. In your opinion, should there be specific provisions in the Constitution to protect the rights of minority groups in Iraq?**

Probe: **What** should those provisions say and **how** would they protect the rights of minorities?

### III. Women in Politics

|  |
|--|
| <b>AIM:</b> To explore the place of the women in the politics. |
|--|

**12. What do you think about the women elected as a member of the National Assembly?**

Probe: Do you think a woman would do a better or worse job as a member of the National Assembly than a man? Why?

**13. What do you think about women being elected as members of the Governorate Councils?**

Probe: Do you think a woman would do a better or worse job as a member of the Governorate Council than a man? Why?

**IV. Political Parties and Campaigns**

**AIM:** To explore the familiarity of the respondents with the political parties, to explore the influential criteria's, to learn the perceptions of the differences of the political parties, To explore the duties of the political parties.

**14. There are many political parties in Iraq. Which parties did you hear about during the recent election campaign? Take a pen and piece of paper and take one minute to write names of the political parties that come to your mind. [Moderator: Deliver the pen and papers prepared before; then collect the papers after completion- take a look at repertoire of party of knowledge for each participant]**

**15. What is the role of a political party? What is its duty and responsibility in the management and development of the country?**

Probe: How well do the political parties fulfill their duties?

**16. Do you see any differences between the political parties? What do you think different political parties stand for?**

Probe: Do you remember about what reasons the political parties did give to encourage you to vote for them?

**17. What would be the things that the political parties should do or change in order for you to be more satisfied?**

**18. What were essential criteria that influenced your choices of a candidate during the last elections?**

Probe: Which criterion was most important to you?

Probe: Did you consider **Age** or **Gender** or **Experience** of a candidate?

Probe: Are these criteria important?

Probe: Do you think you made the right choice in the election?

## V. Conclusion

**AIM:** To explore the expectations on candidates and political parties.

To conclude keeping in mind all the issue's we've discussed through this seating and the importance you give to each one of them, lets do the final exercise;

**19. What are you expecting from the parties and the candidates you have chosen and voted for?**

Probe: If you have the opportunity to meet them and tell them your one wish for the Constitution, What would your wish be?

Probe: What else and Why? *[Moderator: try to get details]*

Read Concluding Statement

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