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Since the fall of the Ba'ath Party and Saddam Hussein, I believe that democracy in Iraq is possible under the structural theory. During the reign of Saddam Hussein and the dictators that preceded him, the structure of Iraq prohibited the country from ultimately achieving democracy. However now that the constraints of the dictatorial society have been lifted, Iraq can now begin to form a truly democratic nation, and it appears they have been taking the necessary steps to do so.

The structural theory states that in order to understand how a society operates, we must first consider how the society itself is set up. The structural theory maintains that the organization of society ultimately decides the actions of individuals (Class). Interactions between different classes plays a large role in determining whether or not democracy can prevail. As Barrington Moore famously said, "no bourgeoisie, no democracy." This means that in order for democracy to emerge, there must first be a middle class. In order for a middle class to emerge, the wealthy class must forfeit some of it's wealth and spread it amongst some of the citizens. For this to happen, the wealthy or controlling classes must allow for the society to begin to shift toward a democratic state.

Democracy exists, according to Anthony Giddens, where there is "a competitive multiparty system, free and noncorrupt elections, and an effective legal framework of civil liberties or human rights" (Lim 180). In addition, Timothy Lim suggests a fourth

criteria, which is the universal and equal right of voting within the state. In order for a state to offer these rights, structuralists Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and John Stephens believe that democracy a political struggle must occur, with several groups fighting the wealthy class for political input. Ultimately, structural changes to the society must reorder the balance of power in the different classes and class coalitions (Lim 187).

Historically, the ruling class in Iraq has denied it's citizens these four basic needs for democracy to exist, ultimately stopping it from developing in the nation. However, since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, and the formation of a new Constitution, many of these criteria are beginning to be fulfilled. First, there is a multiparty system set up in the country and such a system is guaranteed within the Constitution. Second, elections are guaranteed, however there is ultimately still question as to whether the elections are corrupt or not. Third, there is a framework for a court, counsel, and guilt is not predetermined. Finally, there is a guarantee - regardless of gender, race, religion, etc. - to the right to vote in the elections (Wikipedia).

Beyond this, the ruling class within Iraq is conceding their power to a middle class, which is extremely vital to the success of democracy in Iraq. The Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Huesseini al-Sistani, an influential Shiite cleric, issued a *fatwa* that stated that "the people," not the ruling political parties or wealthy, shall establish the governing rules of Iraq. An assembly, the Ayatollah wrote, shall consider make changes to basic law, which would then be voted on by a national referendum. One man, one vote (Ayatollah Democracy, 2004). Such changes to the structure of Iraq are unprecedented. The fact

that this fatwa was even written is shocking, considering it mentions no allegiance to anyone but the Iraqi citizens and their mandate.

However, even though the structure of Iraq is beginning to shift in such a way that democracy seems foreseeable, the culture of the region may ultimately stop further progression toward democracy. Religion plays such an important role in the daily lives of the Iraqi people that it may ultimately hinder their ability to develop democracy. The interpretation of Islam by the ruling class in Iraq puts many citizens, especially women, at an enormous disadvantage in their society. In order for a true democracy to exist, it must ultimately allow universal rights to all of its citizens. There is no historical basis, nor recent changes, that ultimately suggest Iraq is moving in such a direction. Because of this, the culture of Iraq may ultimately stop it from developing into a democracy.

In order for democracy to flourish in Iraq, there must be true changes made to its society and its structure. It appears to me that the structure of Iraq is beginning to shift to a point where democracy, comparable to that of the United States, is certainly possible. I would argue it's possible within the next 20 years. Considering the changes already being made, and the recent Arab Spring movement, it appears the Middle East as a whole is becoming more democratic. Though, these nations still have a powerful ruling class which could ultimately slow down progress toward democracy.