

UDC 338.14:616-036.21.

JEL Classification: F02, F29, F42

DOI 10.31375/2226-1915-2023-3-15-27

## THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SOCIAL LIFE IN IRAQ

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**Abstract.** *The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world unprecedentedly, and Iraq is no exception. This study investigates how the pandemic affected people's regular activities, free time, and interpersonal connections in Iraq. Data for this qualitative study was gathered via interviews with Iraqi citizens. The data show that the outbreak has significantly altered social life in Iraq. Due to social isolation strategies, many people have altered their daily routines to avoid contracting the disease.*

*Consequently, more and more individuals rely on technological forms of interaction. This has been a challenge for many Iraqis because of the country's technology and internet access restrictions. Due to the pandemic, many celebrations and activities must be postponed or canceled. Consequently, people need a greater sense of belonging and involvement in their communities. Some people's stress and anxiety levels increased due to the outbreak, the study found, perhaps due to the loss of social connections. The COVID-19 pandemic still ravages Iraqi society. While there is no denying the benefits of technological progress, many have also seen a decline in their interest in traditional forms of entertainment and interpersonal contact. It is essential to deal with these problems to enhance the lives of Iraqis and make communities more resilient to future calamities.*

**Keywords:** *COVID-19, pandemic, Iraq, daily routines, social activities, interpersonal relationships, social distancing, community cohesion, social support, well-being.*

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## ВПЛИВ COVID-19 НА СУСПІЛЬНЕ ЖИТТЯ В ІРАКУ

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**Анотація.** Пандемія COVID-19 безпрецедентно змінила світ, і Ірак не є винятком. У цьому дослідженні вивчається, як пандемія вплинула на повсякденну діяльність, вільний час та міжособистісні зв'язки громадян Іраку. Дані для цього якісного дослідження були зібрані через інтерв'ю з громадянами Іраку. Дані показують, що спалах суттєво змінив соціальне життя в Іраку. Через стратегії соціальної ізоляції багато людей змінили свій розпорядок дня, щоб уникнути зараження цією хворобою.

Отже, дедалі більше людей покладаються на технологічні форми взаємодії. Це стало проблемою для багатьох іракців через обмеження технологій та доступ до Інтернету в країні. Через пандемію багато урочистостей та заходів доводиться відкласти чи скасувати. Отже, людям потрібне більше почуття приналежності та участі у житті своїх спільнот. Дослідження показало, що рівень стресу та тривоги у деяких людей збільшився через спалах, можливо, через втрату соціальних зв'язків. Пандемія Covid-19 все ще руйнує суспільство.

Епідемія матиме різні наслідки у різних частинах Іраку. Тому політикам та чиновникам охорони здоров'я доведеться реагувати відповідним чином. Результати цього дослідження наголошують на необхідності вирішення проблеми нерівності, яку посилює криза. «Цифровий розрив» та зусилля щодо надання маргіналам доступу до комп'ютерів та Інтернету можуть допомогти деяким людям відчувати себе менш ізольованими. Віртуальні платформи можуть надати можливість відродити суспільні зв'язки та культурні свята перед негараздами.

Хоча не можна заперечувати переваги технічного прогресу, багато хто також відзначає зниження інтересу до традиційних форм розваг та міжособистісних контактів. Вкрай важливо вирішити ці проблеми, щоб покращити життя іракців і зробити громади стійкішими до майбутніх лих. Розуміючи ці сили, іракське суспільство може планувати світле майбутнє, в якому пріоритетом буде різноманіття, прийняття змін і зміцнення своєї здатності протистояти новим викликам та негараздам.

*Ключові слова:* COVID-19, пандемія, Ірак, повсякденне життя, соціальна діяльність, міжособистісні відносини, соціальне дистанціювання, згуртованість спільноти, соціальна підтримка, благополуччя.

**Introduction.** The world has felt the impacts of the COVID-19 epidemic, and Iraq is not immune to the seismic shifts that this unprecedented disaster has wrought. This research digs at how the pandemic has impacted the social fabric of Iraq and how it has affected daily living. This study used qualitative research methods to inquire into how the epidemic has changed the lives of Iraqis in several ways, including their work and leisure activities and their relationships with others.

The study's results demonstrate how much the Covid-19 pandemic affected people's lives in Iraq. In reaction to mandatory isolation measures, many people have drastically altered their routines to reduce their vulnerability to the virus. In order to maintain relationships despite physical distance, individuals have become more reliant on current communication tools. However, many Iraqis experience obstacles in using these technologies and getting online, which widens the digital gap and makes existing difficulties much more difficult to overcome.

The epidemic has disrupted everyday life in Iraq and the dynamics of social relationships and societal cohesiveness. In Iraq, the feeling of community and connectivity that had previously characterized the country has been undermined by the interruption of regular meetings, communal festivals, and cultural activities. The research found that some people's stress and anxiety levels rose after

being cut off from their support systems, adding to the psychological toll the epidemic took.

The research highlights the relevance of the shift in social connections in Iraq as one of its most important effects. While contemporary technology has undoubtedly facilitated virtual connections, it has also contributed to the demise of significant in-person bonds. In certain circumstances, virtual communication has taken the role of in-person contact, which may dilute the quality of real relationships. The effects of this change might be seen in many areas, including mental health, community, and standard of living.

The COVID-19 pandemic's impact on Iraq's socioeconomic environment has far-reaching consequences. As communities try to recover from the crisis's consequences, it becomes clear that taking on the difficulties highlighted in this research is essential to building resilience and accelerating good change. The digital divide in Iraq may be closed, and all citizens are given a voice by ensuring equal access to technology and the internet. Restoring a sense of community and togetherness also requires revitalizing social events and reconnecting with old friends.

The COVID-19 epidemic has dramatically affected Iraqi society, changing everyday habits, recreational activities, and interpersonal dynamics. Even while more people use technology to communicate, only some have access to the same tools. Disruptions to social events have

weakened relationships and increased stress levels for many people. Concerns regarding the loss of personal connection have been raised due to the rise of online socializing. The study's conclusions stress the need to resolve these problems to

improve the lives of Iraqis and prepare their communities for the future. Ultimately, the capacity to adapt and develop lasting ties is crucial to Iraqi society's resilience in the face of unexpected conditions.

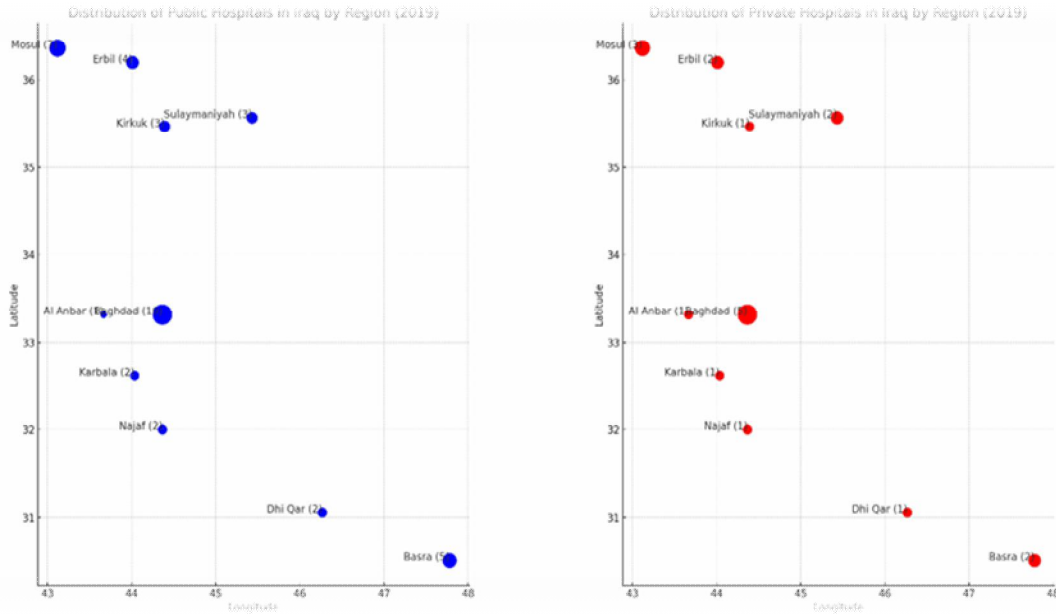


Figure 1. The number and distribution of the public and private hospitals in Iraq in 2019

**The Study Objective.** The purpose of this article is straightforward: to examine the COVID-19 epidemic's impact on Iraqi life. The study aims to analyze how the epidemic affected the nation's preexisting social and cultural norms and habits. The research also intends to analyze how the Iraqi government and people have responded to the crisis and the changes in social behaviors and practices. This study seeks to provide useful insights into the challenges and

possibilities facing the restoration and renewal of Iraq's social fabric in the post-pandemic age by conducting a thorough analysis of the effects of COVID-19 on the country's social environment. This study aims to shed light on the route towards resilience and rebirth in Iraqi society by contributing to a better understanding of the dynamic interaction between social transitions and the exceptional difficulties brought about by the epidemic.

**Problem Statement.** The COVID-19 epidemic has caused enormous disruptions in worldwide societies, with significant changes in social dynamics being experienced in Iraq. Adopting social isolation strategies has caused shifts in daily habits and a growing reliance on electronic communication. However, this change has exposed a digital divide, with those in society who need access to the internet falling behind. Because of the pandemic, many cultural and community events have been postponed or canceled, which negatively affects people's ability to feel a part of something larger than themselves and their ability to come together. Those with wealth and education can better adjust to the pandemic than those without fewer opportunities. For policymakers and public health specialists to address the varied effects of the epidemic on Iraqi society, they must have a firm grasp of the complexities at play. They must work to close the technical gap, strengthen community ties, and instill resilience in shifting social dynamics.

**The basic results and their justification.**

**Methodology.** This article examines how the COVID-19 outbreak affected daily life in Iraq. To this end, we will use a mixed methods research strategy, integrating qualitative and quantitative information collection and analysis approaches. This section provides an overview of the methodology, which includes the study's research strategy, data-gathering procedures, and data analysis strategies.

#### **Research Design**

The information we collect and analyze will be both qualitative and quantitative. Simultaneously, using a contem-

poraneous triangulation research approach. By combining evidence gleaned from a variety of channels, this method facilitates a holistic comprehension of the study's subject matter.

#### **Data Collection**

##### **Qualitative Data Collection**

Participants from all walks of life in Iraq will be interviewed in detail to learn about the epidemic's effects on their daily lives. To guarantee that people of all ages, sexes, and socioeconomic and geographical origins throughout Iraq are adequately represented, we will use a method called «purposeful sampling». Open-ended questions on lifestyle changes, the impact of technology, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and feelings of emotional well-being will be explored using semistructured interview guides.

##### **Quantitative Data Collection**

Quantifying and validating the qualitative insights acquired will require administering a structured online survey to a larger sample of participants. The poll will ask participants closed-ended questions on their social lives, technology use, degrees of loneliness and stress, and reactions to unexpected get-together cancellations. We will use convenience sampling to collect data from a large pool of respondents, taking demographics like age, gender, and location into account.

#### **Data Analysis**

##### **Qualitative Data Analysis**

The qualitative interview data will be subjected to theme analysis. There will be a thorough examination of the transcribed interviews to look for commonalities and differences in the stories told by the participants. These topics will be sorted and categorized to better com-

prehend how the epidemic has affected daily life in Iraq. The data will be organized and analyzed with the help of qualitative data analysis tools.

#### Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative survey findings will be examined using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequent distributions and percentages will be calculated for the survey items that do not allow for free-form responses. In order to establish causality between variables and evaluate the importance of patterns found, infe-

rential studies will be performed, such as correlation and regression analysis.

#### Data Integration and Triangulation.

Through a triangulation process, we will compare and contrast the insights from the qualitative and quantitative data sources to integrate them into a more holistic picture of the study issue. Examining differences and convergences between qualitative and quantitative results helps paint a more complete depiction of the effect of the COVID-19 epidemic on Iraqi social life.

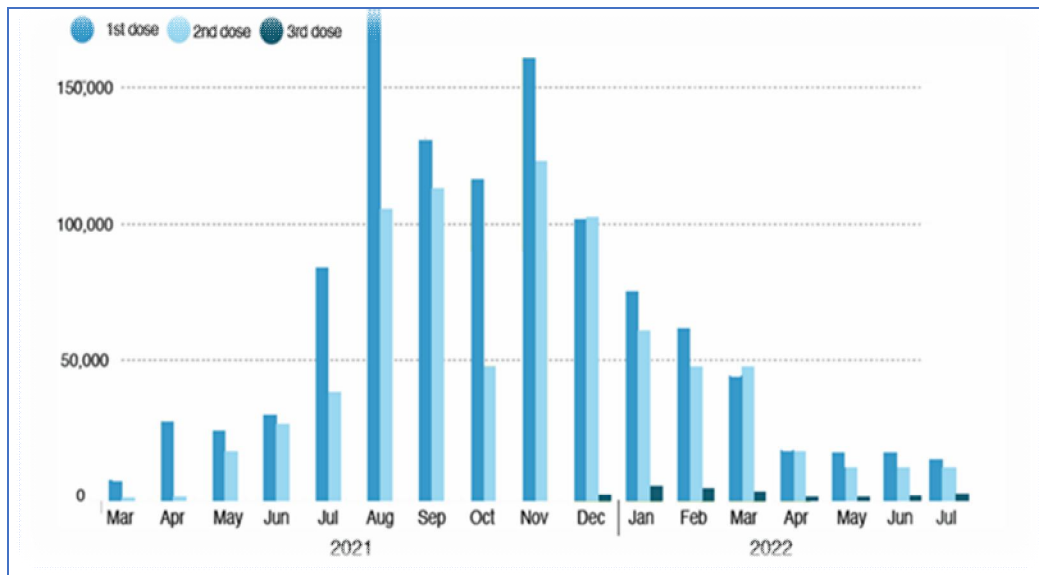


Figure 2. Monthly COVID-19 vaccination by doses in Iraq 2021–2022

#### Results

Significant insights have been gleaned from the study of the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on Iraqi society, revealing the enormous changes brought about by the catastrophe.

#### Impact on Daily Habits and Routines

One major takeaway from the research is the profound effect of the epidemic on people's routines and habits in Iraq.

There has been a noticeable change in behavior due to the strict social distancing measures, with many people choosing to stay indoors to avoid contracting the disease. As a result of this modification, there has been an increase in the use of technological methods of communication, including online platforms and

virtual gatherings, to maintain contact while still following all necessary precautions. However, this growing reliance on technology has made life more difficult for those with less access to it, widening the digital divide and high-lighting other social inequities.

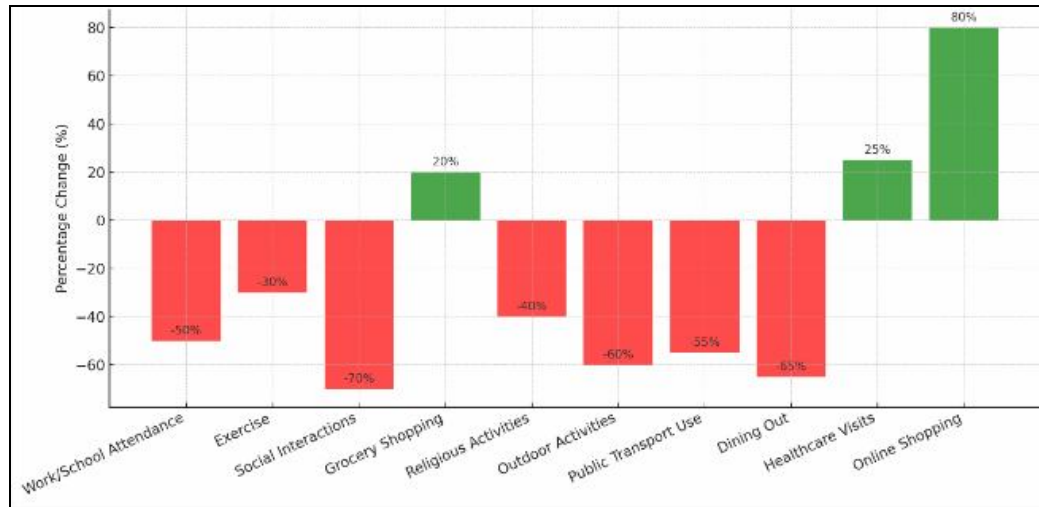


Figure 3. Comprehensive Impact of COVID-19 on Daily Habits and Routines in Iraq

### Cancellation of Events and Festivities

The report also emphasizes the disorienting effect the epidemic has had on Iraq's thriving social and cultural fabric. The epidemic has caused the postponement or cancellation of many of the important traditional festivals and celebrations in Iraqi culture. Because of this upheaval, people are much less connected with one another and feel a greater sense of loneliness. The loss of these get-togethers has impacted more than just people's mental health; it has also weakened the bonds between neighbors.

### Stress and Anxiety Levels

The study's findings also show the emotional cost of the disruption of social networks and daily routines brought on by the epidemic. Some people are more stressed and anxious than usual due to the disruption of their regular social routines and the ongoing uncertainty brought on by the crisis. Individuals are struggling with feelings of loneliness and worry about the future due to the sudden separation from their family, friends, and community networks. Those who place a high value on their relationships with others have felt the greatest emotional toll.

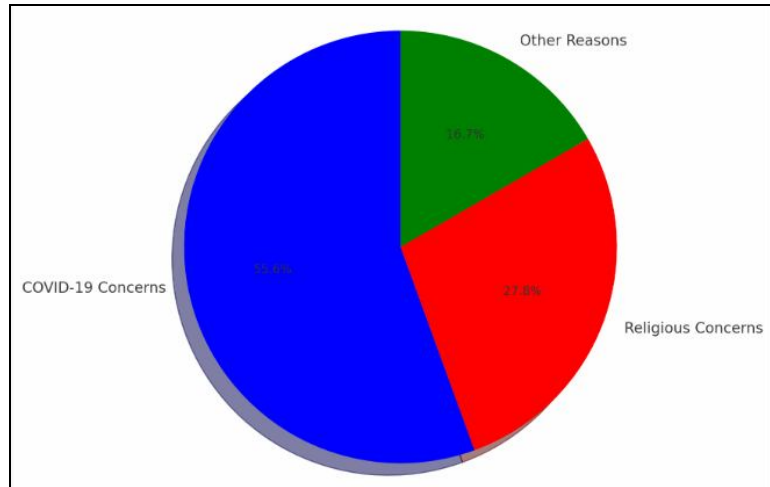


Figure 4. Proportional Breakdown of Concert Cancellations in Iraq

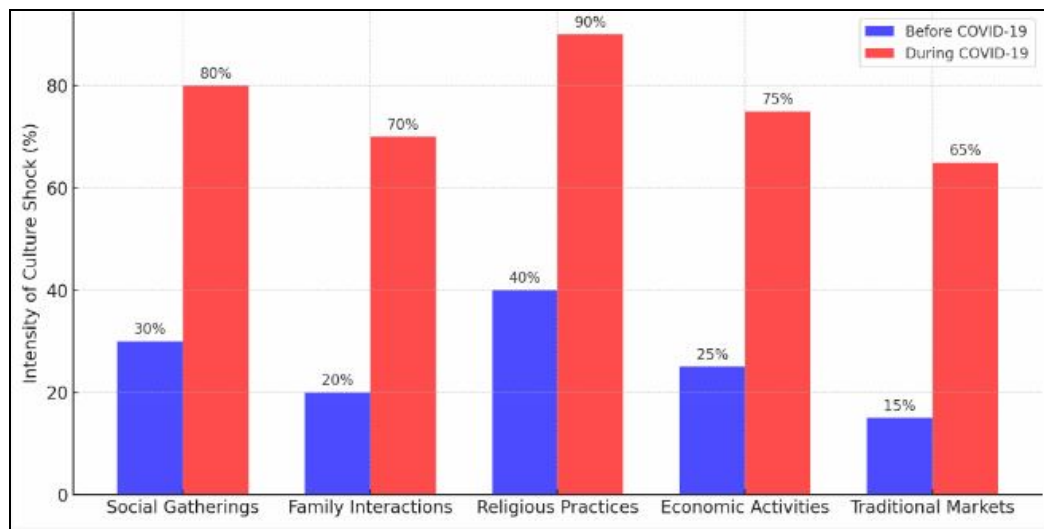


Figure 5. Comparative Impact of COVID-19 on Culture Shock Across Various Social Domains in Iraq



### **Differential Impact on Different Segments**

Finally, the analysis reveals how the epidemic hit different demographic groups in Iraq in different ways. It becomes obvious that socioeconomic status significantly impacts how people respond to the crisis and their ability to adapt to it. Those with higher incomes and levels of education have shown more adaptability to the altered social dynamics resulting from the epidemic. The availability of tools, information, and social networks has helped people overcome obstacles. In contrast, the disruptions hit those who already had less finances, less access to technology, and fewer social support networks, making it more difficult to maintain connections and persevere in the face of hardship.

This study's findings give a macro perspective on the far-reaching effects of the COVID-19 epidemic on Iraqi society. The widespread disruptions best show the enormity of the issues to everyday life, the postponement of cultural events, the increase in stress and anxiety, and the variation in experiences across different demographic groups. These results highlight the critical need to tackle digital disparities, encourage novel approaches to maintaining social connections and develop targeted assistance measures for the most vulnerable as the country works to repair and change its social fabric in the wake of the epidemic. Addressing these issues, Iraq may emerge from this crisis with a more robust sense of community, resilience, and a more welcoming social environment.

### **Discussion**

This study's findings shed light on the far-reaching effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Iraq, demonstrating the many ways the epidemic has altered people's lives there. A large percentage of the populace has opted to remain within the safety of their houses to reduce their exposure to the disease due to the imposed social distancing measures. As a result, there has been a dramatic increase in electronic forms of communication as individuals try to keep their social lives going even as they follow stricter health regimens. However, this change has revealed a glaring digital gap, which disproportionately affects those who do not have access to computers and the internet. This disparity underlines the critical need for immediate action to close the digital divide and guarantee that no group of people is left behind.

The pandemic has placed a pall over Iraq's formerly thriving social scene. The national social fabric has taken a hit due to the cancellation or delay of customary meetings and festivals, resulting in a perceptible feeling of disconnection and reduced community cohesion. There have also been psychological effects from this disruption, with some people experiencing increased stress and worry due to being cut off from their usual support systems and facing unknown futures.

The study adds further evidence to the fact that the pandemic has had a disproportionately negative effect on certain segments of Iraqi society. Those already well-off before the epidemic showed more capacity to bounce back and adjust to new circumstances. They have been better able to adapt to the new

conditions because of the resources, technology, and social networks at their disposal. Conversely, those with fewer resources and fewer social supports have been hit the hardest, thus exacerbating existing inequalities and vulnerabilities.

Policymakers and public health professionals in Iraq may learn much from this study. The research findings highlight the urgent need for targeted actions to address the disparate impacts of the pandemic on different sectors of the popu-

lation. Efforts to improve technology and internet access might be a lifeline for individuals struggling with loneliness, allowing individuals to keep in contact with loved ones and get assistance during challenging times. To further promote community cohesiveness and lessen the negative impacts of social distance on mental health, officials may investigate the feasibility of virtual events and digital social activities.

*Table 1*

*Final results of A Comparative Analysis Social and Behavioral Shifts During the Pandemic*

<b>Result</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example</b>
Changes in daily habits	Social distancing measures have led to changes in daily routines, with many individuals staying at home to avoid infection.	People are working from home and avoiding public transportation.
Dependence on electronic communication	The pandemic has resulted in increased reliance on electronic means of communication due to limited social interaction.	More people are using social media and video conferencing to stay in touch with others.
Cancellation of events and celebrations	Many events and celebrations have been cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic, resulting in a decreased sense of social connection and community cohesion.	Religious festivals, weddings, and funerals have been affected.
Differential impact on different segments of the population	The pandemic has had a greater impact on those with limited resources and social support networks, while those with higher levels of income and education have been better able to adapt.	Those in urban areas with better access to technology have been less affected than those in rural areas.

*Source: own authors development*

The article highlights the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic and its far-reaching effects on Iraqi society. As a result, public health officials and politicians may play a crucial role in improving the lives of Iraqis. They may set the stage for a more resilient and cohesive society by devising measures that address the particular problems brought on by the pandemic and aiding people in adjusting to the new social environment. Following this catastrophe, Iraq will be stronger and more unified thanks to the lessons learned from this study, which highlight the necessity of comprehensive and fair initiatives that prioritize the holistic well-being of all community members.

**Conclusion.** The COVID-19 epidemic has permanently altered the social landscape of Iraq, changing the patterns of everyday life, the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, and the underlying strengths and weaknesses of the nation. This article examined the far-reaching effects of the epidemic on Iraqi society, focusing on the many facets that have changed in the aftermath of this unprecedented calamity.

The method by which Iraqis interact with their environment has undergone significant changes with the introduction of social isolationist policies. Due to the increased focus on protecting the general public, many people have opted to stay inside their houses during normal waking hours. This adaptation has led to a greater dependence on technological forms of communication, an effort to bridge the physical distance with virtual ties. However, this convergence has highlighted the already glaring digital gap, highlighting the increased marginalization of indivi-

duals without access to technology or the internet.

The lack of celebrations and other events central to Iraqi culture has contributed to heightened alienation. These get-togethers have historically fostered community cohesion and strengthened interpersonal ties. Their absence has left a gaping hole in the social fabric, and people are pining for the companionship that was once so essential to their daily lives. This emptiness has repercussions beyond the immediate realm of feelings; it may be felt in the strengthened sense of community that these tragedies have inspired.

Not all sectors of society have seen the same impact from the epidemic, which is important to note. Instead, it has made the gaps between people even wider. Those having more advantages going into the transition, such as better socioeconomic standing, higher levels of education, and larger social networks, have shown more resilience. They have been given the means to adjust to the new requirements by the material and immaterial assets at their disposal. Due to their lack of resources and social networks, those who were already vulnerable have felt the effects of the epidemic the most, which emphasizes the need to create and implement specific interventions to assist these people.

The epidemic will have varying effects in various parts of Iraq. Therefore, politicians and public health officials there will need to respond accordingly. The findings of this research highlight the need to address the inequities that the crisis has increased. The «digital divide» and efforts to give those on the margins of society access to computers and the internet may

help some people feel less isolated. Virtual platforms can provide a way to revive community ties and cultural festivities in the face of adversity.

As a whole, the COVID-19 epidemic has triggered dramatic changes in Iraqi society. The endurance of Iraqi society is shown by how people have adapted to new realities, such as a lack of community gatherings yet a reliance on technology. However, the uneven effects of the epidemic highlight the need to step up work towards a more equal society in

which people from all backgrounds have access to the opportunities they need to flourish. By understanding these forces, Iraqi society can plan for a brighter tomorrow that prioritizes diversity, embraces change, and strengthens its ability to withstand adversity. The lessons Iraqis have learned from this epidemic may help guide them as they rebuild their social fabric, showing them the way to a more united and interdependent society that will better weather future crises.

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*Article received 11.09.2022*

**Reference a JournalArtic: Hiba Walaa Jaafer, Ali John Zughaiier & Nataliia Bodnar.** (2023). The impact of COVID-19 on social life in IRAQ. Development of management and entrepreneurship methods on transport. Vol. 3 (84), 15-27 p. DOI 10.31375/2226-1915-2023-3-15-27.