

**What Future for Kirkuk? Evidence from a
Deliberative Mini-Public***

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Abstract

The “youth bulge” in developing countries means that we need to pay close attention to how young people engage with politics, and whether new democratic institutions can afford them a greater sense of political empowerment. The need for answers to such questions is particularly great in developing places that are also deeply divided. To shed light on these issues, we conducted a survey and an intensive deliberative field experiment in one such society—Kirkuk. Data suggest that young, educated Kirkukis—Arabs, Kurds, and Turkomans—have some faith in their capacity to deliberate about political issues. Deliberation does not diminish that support but nor does it increase it. What does increase is their support for Kirkuk’s becoming an autonomous region—in the case of Arabs and Turkmen, significantly so. Support for that idea puts them at odds with how Kirkuk’s political leaders see its future, though it should also be said that young, educated Kirkukis are not particularly trust in of those who claim to represent them.

Kirkuk is the most disputed of Iraq's "disputed territories." It endured decades of forced expulsions, resettlements and gerrymandering under Saddam, and is today the epicenter of a bitter struggle for political control between the Shi'a-dominated federal government and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Since Kirkuk is also a focus of geopolitical maneuverings by Turkey and Iran, ethnic cleavages run deep (Wolff 2010, pp. 1369-1372). Kirkuk also suffers from severe underdevelopment and neglect. Some areas are without power for more than 11 hours a day (NCCI 2017, p. 5). And violence is a fact of life. According to the United Nations, 45 civilians were killed, and another 67 were injured in the last three months of 2017 alone.¹

There is, however, a more optimistic story to be told. Kirkuk is an old city with a long history of peaceful, inter-ethnic accommodation (Anderson and Stansfield 2009, p. 85). In the past, multilingualism and intermarriage made it difficult to distinguish one Kirkuki from another (Bet-Shlimon 2012, p. 918). Kirkuk also has considerable oil fields, estimated to contain about 9 billion barrels of oil (Anderson and Stansfield 2009, p. 46; Reuters 2018).

Like much of the third-world, Kirkukis are mainly young, born in the age of the internet and globalization.² Compared to young people elsewhere in Iraq, Kirkukis also have relatively good access to education (Knights and Ali 2010, p. 23).

As an Iraqi governorate, Kirkuk also has its own legislative body or "provincial council." Within its sphere of competence, the council has the power to, among other things, pass laws and develop policies, prepare its budget, change administrative boundaries, select the symbols for the

¹ Figures from the United Nations Mission in Iraq (UNAMI). Available from http://www.uniraq.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=itemlist&layout=category&task=category&id=159&Itemid=633&lang=en. Accessed 9 February 2018.

² The UNDP (2016) estimates that around half of all Iraqis are under the age of 19.

governorate and collect taxes (Wolff 2010, p. 1373).³ In short, Kirkuk has severe problems, but it also has real potential.

But how do we realize that potential? Crucial to any solution is building political institutions that allow people to overcome mistrust and cynicism. That entails creating conditions that enable them to frame political life not as a zero-sum competition between different ethnic groups but as an inclusive discussion about common interests. And that is precisely why, in recent years, scholars interested in deeply divided societies have begun to consider deliberative democracy.⁴

Deliberative democracy conceives of democratic decision making not as a competitive “winner-takes-all” game, but as a cooperative process of discussion and debate. It defines the political legitimacy of a decision as the extent to which a decision has been arrived at through a free and open exchange of reasons and the extent to which people have seriously considered the information they have read or heard.⁵ This conception of political legitimacy is especially compelling in deeply divided societies, where minorities fear—all too often with good reason—that majorities will run roughshod over them.

Besides an appealing reconceptualization of politics and political legitimacy, deliberative democracy also proffers to deliver important social and political benefits. Deliberative scholars claim that deliberative democracy can, among other things, promote mutual understanding,

³The Provincial Powers Law (Law 21/ 2008) deals with powers transferred to the governorates as part of a broader decentralization policy. For a critical appraisal, see Ottaway and Kaysi (2012, p. 12).

⁴ For an overview, see O’Flynn and Caluwaerts (2018, forthcoming). See also Addis 2009; Caluwaerts and Deschouwer 2014; Caluwaerts and Reuchamps 2014; Drake and McCulloch 2011; Dryzek 2005; James 2004; O’Flynn 2006, 2007, 2017; O’Neill 2003; Steiner et al. 2017; Pedrini et al. 2013; Ugarriza and Nussio 2014; Vasilev 2015.

⁵ Today, most deliberative democrats take a broad view of what counts as an admissible reason (for a discussion, see Bächtiger et al. 2010).

encourage civic mindedness, encourage learning of policy-relevant facts, and foster faith in the democratic process (Delli Carpini et al. 2004; Fishkin 2009; Gastil et al. 2010; Mendelberg 2002; Searing et al. 2007).

Institutions are one thing, but do conditions on the ground give reason for hope? On the face of it, they do. Ordinary Kirkukis care as much, if not more, about their quality of life as they do about who ultimately controls Kirkuk (Natali 2008, pp. 439, 441; Wolff 2010, p. 1371). Evidence also suggests that within each group there are diverse views on Kirkuk's political future (Anderson and Stansfield 2009, pp. 192-203). This diversity of views and pragmatic attitudes suggest that factionalization need not be taken as a given—that a more inclusive and cooperative form of politics might be possible in Kirkuk.

In this paper, we study whether such optimism is justified. To shed light on the status quo and the potential of deliberative democracy, we asked educated youth about their views on Kirkuk's political leaders and extant institutions, and on its future political status. As expected, we found mistrust and polarization. To explore whether there is potential for a more deliberative alternative, we followed our survey with an experiment. We assigned participants to either small group deliberation or to a treatment in which a balanced briefing document was provided in advance of small group deliberation. There was no increase in trust in political leaders or institutions. But, when given the opportunity to deliberate about Kirkuk's future, participants became more supportive of Kirkuk's becoming an autonomous federal region—a region in which they might have more control, possibly joint control, over their political future.

Kirkuk

While no reliable census has been held since 1957, a 2011 UN estimate puts the total population of Kirkuk at just over 900,000 people. Kurds constitute just over half the population,

Arabs about a third and Turkomans about a fifth.⁶ Christians and other minorities are usually put at between one and two per cent (cf. Anderson and Stanfield 2009, pp. 42-44; Rydgren and Sofi 2011, p. 29; Wolff 2010, p. 1369).

While tensions across groups run deep, the members of each ethnic group are not consentient. Kirkuk's Kurds are mainly represented by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) or the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). And the rivalry between the two parties is intense—so much so that their behaviour is sometimes inimical to the larger Kurdish cause.⁷ But while the rivalries between the Kurdish parties are intense, all Kurdish parties (KDP, PDK, Goran, Kurdistan Islamic Group, etc.) regard Kirkuk as a Kurdistan city, and all want Kirkuk to join the Kurdistan region.

Kirkuk's Turkomans are mainly Sunni. The Sunni Turkomans are represented by the Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF), a coalition of local Turkoman parties. The ITF has looked to the Turkish government to avoid being marginalized by Kurds and Arabs. In turn, the Turkish government presents itself as the guardian of the Turkmen community.⁸ Kirkuk's Shi'a

⁶ Again, these are estimates. One could cite numbers from the 2005 provincial elections (the last such elections held in Kirkuk) in which Kurdish parties won 26 out of 41 seats (about 63 per cent of the seats), Turkmen won 9 (about 22 per cent), and Arabs won 6 (about 15 per cent). While voters in deeply divided societies usually vote for their own ethnic parties (Horowitz 2014, p. 5), the low turnout of Sunni Arabs in that election means that these results are only an imperfect guide to Kirkuk's ethnic composition.

⁷ For example, the decision to allow federal government forces to retake the city unopposed in October 2017 seems to have been taken by the Talabani faction of the PUK. At least part of its aim seems to have been to undercut the KDP with an eye to the upcoming general election (scheduled for May 2018) (see, e.g., ICG 2017, p. 1). For an equally telling example, see Anderson and Stansfield 2009, pp. 173-174.

⁸ In its public pronouncements at least, the Turkish government is vehemently opposed to the Kurdish goal of incorporating Kirkuk into the Kurdistan region. Whether that is because of an affective desire to protect its ethnic kith-and-kin or a strategic desire to ensure that a more powerful KRG does not stymie its regional ambitions is unclear. Cf. Anderson and Stansfield 2009, pp. 67-68; Stansfield 2017, pp. 7-8; cf. Romano 2007, p. 276; Uyanik et al. 2017; Voller 2015, p. 617.

Turkomans are represented by Islamic Union of Iraqi Turkmen which is part of the Shi'a Iraqi Alliance that is close to Iran. Nevertheless, both movements are strongly opposed the Kirkuk's joining the Kurdistan region and consider themselves loyal to the integrity of the Iraqi state. Both believe that their interests lie with the federal government and not with the KRG.

Kirkuk's Sunni Arabs are "native" to Kirkuk. By contrast, Kirkuk's Shi'a Arabs were settled by the previous regime as part of its Arabization policy (Anderson and Stansfield 2009, p. 81).⁹ Kirkuk's Arabs have gathered around two main tribes (the al-Jabouri and al-Ubeidi) living mainly in Hawija district and sub-districts.¹⁰ The number of the Arabs within Kirkuk city is not enormous but contact with Kurds and the Turkomens within the city has resulted in their being more open to compromise (Anderson and Stansfield 2009, pp. 195-196; cf. Rydgren and Sofi 2011, pp. 38-40). Still, the bottom line for most Kirkuki Arabs is that Kirkuk is an integral part of the Iraqi state (Natali 2008, p. 439) and hence are committed to its formal *de jure* relationship with Baghdad (Anderson and Stansfield 2009, pp. 83-84).¹¹

When Kirkukis discuss their future political arrangement, three options are often brought up:

1. Kirkuk's remaining a governorate under the authority of the Iraqi federal government (the status quo option);
2. Kirkuk's joining the Kurdistan region and hence becoming a governorate under the authority of the KRG; or

⁹ While they are commonly referred to as *wafideen* or "newcomers," many were forced to move to Kirkuk and hence regard themselves as victims rather than usurpers.

¹⁰ Hawija was incorporated into Kirkuk in 1961 as part of "Arabization" process.

¹¹ Some Arab leaders have also called for a regional status for Kirkuk. However, "most statements emanating from Arab political leaders rejected any concept of federalism outright" (Anderson and Stansfield 2009, p. 196).

3. Kirkuk's becoming a federal region in its own right with an extended range of constitutionally entrenched powers.¹²

The first option is generally supported by Kirkuk's Arabs and Turkomans and the second option by its Kurds. But as we said earlier, the members of each ethnic group are not consentient. For example, while the ITF has publicly committed itself to the integrity of the Iraqi state, and hence to the status quo option, some Turkomans have voiced support for option three.¹³ So, too, have some Arabs. (Anderson and Stansfield 2009, pp. 195-196; Romano 2007, p. 279). Nevertheless, the conventional wisdom has is that Arabs and Turkomans will line up against Kurds should the matter ever be put to a vote.

Expectations

We expect young, educated Kirkukis—Arabs, Kurds and Turkomans—to be divided in ways we describe above. We expect to find mutual mistrust and polarized views about Kirkuk's future. But we also expect deliberating with one another in diverse small groups under good conditions to change some of this. Learning more about each other and the reasons behind one another's views should lead to greater mutual understanding.¹⁴ For instance, in a mini-public conducted in Northern Ireland, both Catholics and Protestants came to think that the other group was more open to reason after deliberating together about the vexed question of how best to reform Northern Ireland's troubled education system (Luskin et al. 2014). Similarly, in two mini-

¹² For discussions, cf. Anderson 2013; Anderson and Stansfield 2009, pp. 189-203; ICG 2009, pp. 7-10; ICG 2017, p. 14; O'Leary 2005b; Romano 2007; Wolff 2010, pp. 1375-1373.

¹³ That support seems to be underpinned as much by strategic considerations as anything else: as a federal region, Kirkuk could not be incorporated into the Kurdistan region. For a discussion, see Anderson and Stansfield 2009, pp. 199-203.

¹⁴ Deliberation gives people the opportunity to learn about each other (Kanra 2012), have greater empathy for the other side (Morrell 2010), appreciate the arguments of the other side (Gerber et al. 2016), and recognize minority views (Pedrini et al. 2014).

publics conducted in Belgium, Dutch and French speakers developed greater mutual respect, and more positively acknowledged the validity of one another's claims, after deliberating together about the future of their country (Caluwaerts and Reuchamps 2014).

Deliberation should also increase people's knowledge about the topic under discussion (Luskin and Fishkin 2002; Cor and Sood 2016). And we expect participants who are given the briefing document in advance of deliberation to learn yet more (Fishkin and Luskin 2005, p. 291-292; O'Flynn and Sood 2014, pp. 48-50). We also expect access to balanced information to lead to more balanced views (Himmelroos and Serup Christensen 2014; cf. Baccaro et al. 2016 and Sanders 2012).

Deliberating should also give people an increased sense of their own and society's deliberative capacity (Searing et al. 2007, pp. 595-598). It should also give them a greater sense of political efficacy (Luskin et al. 2007; Andersen and Hansen 2007). For example, data suggest that participation in deliberative mini-publics leads participants to broaden their deliberative networks, to be more "deliberative" in their everyday political conversations, to seek out new political information, to be more trusting of others, to participate more in political life, and to be more supportive of democracy (Gastil 2000, pp. 118-119; Luskin and Fishkin 2002, p. 10; Searing et al. 2007, p. 605; cf. Delli Carpini et al. 2004, pp. 331-332). The fact that Kirkuk is deeply divided tempers our expectations, but we still expect to see some increase in political efficacy and greater belief in one's own and society's capacity to deliberate.

Finally, we expect young, educated Kirkukis to have little trust in political leaders and institutions, though not evenly so. For example, since the provincial council is dominated by Kurdish parties, we expect Kurdish participants to be (slightly) less negatively disposed than Arab or Turkoman participants. However, we still expect participants from each community to

gain a keener appreciation of the complexity of the political situation which may, in turn, temper their views of political leaders and institutions.

Data and Design

To get a handle on these issues, we organized a deliberative mini-public with Arab, Kurdish, and Turkoman students from the University of Kirkuk. The students were asked to deliberate about the future of Kirkuk generally and about its future administrative status in particular: should the status quo be maintained, or might some other administrative option be preferable? Before we expand on the design, we expand on the various considerations that apply to the sample, including ethnic diversity, and the language in which deliberation was conducted.

Sample

Young people make up a large part of the population of many developing countries. In Iraq, for example, nearly 50 per cent of the population is younger than 19 years old (UNDP 2016). Though progress has slowed in recent years, they are also increasingly educated (UNICEF 2017). So, while university students may be unrepresentative of society at large, they are—figuratively and in reality—the future of their countries. Compared to less educated youth, they are likely to go on to hold prominent positions in society. For these reasons, we are interested in educated youth.

But any data on university students likely gives us an all too rosy impression of what is likely to be the case—or of what is possible. For one, the students are taught in a diverse environment. The University of Kirkuk is ethnically mixed and attended by both males and females. For two, data suggest that people with more schooling are more likely to attend deliberative events, speak during deliberation, and are more likely to offer reasons for their claims (Luskin et al. 2009; cf. O’Flynn and Sood 2014, pp. 46-47). Some evidence from divided

societies suggests that the *obverse* is also true. Researchers working with marginalized communities in Colombia find that, even when participants with low levels of formal education are given clear instructions on how to deliberate—“be respectful,” “give reasons for your proposals,” “address yourself to the common good,” etc.—deliberation barely gets off the ground (Ugarriza and Nussio 2015, p. 160; cf. Orozco and Ugarriza 2014, p. 79).

The fact that a society is not just deeply divided but also highly violent means that people can be difficult to reach and yet harder to persuade to assemble for an experiment at a single location on a given date and time. And even when they can be reached, it is not always safe to do so (Steiner 2016, p. 3). For this reason, participants in our study were recruited through the Office of the Dean of the University of Kirkuk’s College of Education for Humanities. The fact that participants were recruited from a single university limits the inferences we can draw about educated youth more generally. But the data do provide a useful low bar. If students from an ethnically mixed university (as we discuss below, our survey results suggest that students from different ethnic groups regularly interact, or at least claim that they do) cannot deliberate well together, one must fear for the society generally.

Ethnic Diversity

It is crucial to the success of deliberative democracy that the best reasons on one side be countered by the best reasons on the other. In a place like Kirkuk, where ethnic sensitivities and tensions are likely to loom large, participants from minority ethnic groups may lack the confidence to voice their views (James 2008, pp. 120-123; Caluwaerts 2012; O’Flynn and Sood

2014, p. 47). To ensure that each ethnic group had the “critical mass” to speak openly, we asked the Office of the Dean to recruit roughly equal numbers of Kurds, Arabs, and Turkomans.¹⁵

Language

Classes at the University of Kirkuk are taught in both Arabic and Kurdish.¹⁶ Turkoman students speak Arabic, but neither Arabs nor Turkomans Kurdish. Kurdish students speak Arabic only patchily. This naturally raises concerns about the fluency of communication (see McGarry and O’Leary 2009, pp. 69, 78; O’Leary 2005a, p. 10). There are, however, two offsetting points. First, in our study, deliberations were facilitated by trained, neutral moderators who were fluent in both Kurdish and Arabic (cf. Caluwaerts and Deschouwer 2014, p. 440, n. 3). Second, some evidence suggests that the quality of deliberation can still be high even when interlocutors only share a second language. In a pair of mini-publics conducted in Belgium, the quality of deliberation was higher in the linguistically mixed groups (Dutch and French speakers deliberating together) than in the linguistically homogenous groups (Dutch or French speakers deliberating separately) (Caluwaerts 2012; Caluwaerts and Deschouwer 2014). (Presumably, the quality of deliberation was higher because there was a greater diversity of opinion in the linguistically heterogeneous groups.)

Design

On 18 April, 127 students showed up and filled out the arrival questionnaire. Although we had asked for roughly equal numbers of Arabs, Kurds and Turkomans, there were more Kurds (51) in the sample than Arabs (38) or Turkomans (32) (five students either gave their

¹⁵ As noted earlier, while there has been no formal census since 1957, estimates suggest that Kurds constitute just over half the population, Arabs about a third and Turkomans about a fifth.

¹⁶ For obvious reasons, the language requirement does not apply to the departments of Kurdish Language, Turkoman Language, and Arabic Language.

ethnicity or other or refused to give their ethnicity). But due to a delayed start, only 41 students stuck around for the experiment itself, leaving us with more Arabs (18) than Kurds (10) or Turkomans (12) (one male student who refused to give his ethnicity).¹⁷

The delayed start meant that we only had time to hold Deliberation-only (D), which was expected to take 1.5 hours, and not Deliberation and Information (DI), which was expected to take 3 hours. We decided to proceed with D and hold DI with a fresh sample at the next available opportunity.¹⁸ The 41 students who stayed were randomly assigned to one of four small discussion groups with 10-12 participants each. However, since there were more Arabs than Turkomans or Kurds, some students were moved to achieve more ethnically balanced discussion groups. After one and a half hours, the 41 participants retook a slightly amended version of the questionnaire (e.g., demographic questions were not asked the second time). This covers D. We call the group of students who left ($127 - 41 = 86$) L. (We use this group to determine whether there the people who remained were different from those who left.)

On 3 May, another group of 50 students (DI) filled out the pre-deliberation questionnaire. Again, we had asked for a roughly balanced sample, but this time there were more Arabs (19) in the sample than Kurds (15) or Turkomans (14) (two students did not give their ethnicity).¹⁹ There were also more women (33) than men (15) (two students did not give their gender). They were

¹⁷ We do not know why so many Kurds decided to leave (almost half of the ‘leavers’ were Kurds). However, the event’s start time had to be pushed back because of an ad hoc ceremony to commemorate a Turkoman student killed fighting IS in Mosul. The ceremony could have made participants more despondent about the political situation. But it could have also brought people together—such ceremonies not just commemorate fallen students but also try to convey that all of them have a common enemy.

¹⁸ The worry is that something might have occurred in the interim to significantly affect how participants answered the questionnaire. Two of the authors of this paper were present in Kirkuk throughout this period and report knowing of no such occurrence.

¹⁹ 19 Arabs, 15 Kurds, 14 Turkomans and two students who did not give their ethnicity.

then given a balanced briefing document to read.²⁰ One and a half hours later they were reassembled and randomly assigned to one of four small discussion groups. After deliberating for one and a half hours, they took the post-deliberation questionnaire (though one student who gave her ethnicity as Turkoman did not fill out the questionnaire for the second time; the student was eliminated from the analyses).

Each small discussion group was led by a moderator, fluent in both Arabic and Kurdish, trained to intervene only neutrally and as little as possible, e.g., intervene if the participants strayed too far off topic or if a participant began to dominate. Following the practice in Deliberative Polls, moderators did not push towards (or away from) consensus; the students were explicitly told that they need not agree on anything and that they might come to agree more or less over the course of the event (see Luskin et al. 2014, p. 118; see also Karpowitz and Mansbridge 2005; Neisser 2006). Our guiding assumption was that, if there was consensus, it would be revealed in the post-deliberation questionnaire.

Measures

To measure respondents' answers to our surveys, we used the following variables.

Socio-demographic variables. We asked respondents their age in years, their gender, how long they had lived in Kirkuk (in crude categories, ranging from 'All my life' to 'Less than 10 years'), which religion or religious sect they belonged to (Sunni, Shi'a, Catholic, do not belong to any religion, or Other), and what their ethnic background was (Kurd, Arab, Turkoman, or

²⁰ The briefing document was available in both Kurdish and Arabic (as noted above, our Turkoman participants spoke Arabic). It contained balanced background information relevant to the different administrative options (e.g., information about the current legal, demographic and economic situation) and factual premises concerning the pros and cons of each (e.g., concerning the need for new institutions or shifts in the balance between federal and regional governments). We include the English translation of the booklet in Appendix C.

Other). We also asked them about political activities in which they might have engaged. See Appendix A for the text of the questions and the response options.

Inter-ethnic interaction. To assess the degree to which students from one ethnic group interact with students from the others, we quizzed participants about how often they have contact with members of other ethnic groups and asked them to rank their answers on a 1 – 5 scale: never (1), seldom (2), regularly (3), often (4), and very often (5). We averaged their responses.

Knowledge of Political and Economic Facts About Kirkuk. To assess how much people knew about important political and economic facts about Kirkuk, we quizzed participants about five facts. We asked them multiple choice questions with a Don't Know option about the population of Kirkuk, the percentage of Iraq's proven oil reserves that Kirkuk's oil fields have, where the funding for public servants and city reconstruction comes from, what Article 140 of the 2005 Iraqi constitution provides for, and whether the federal government or provincial council had priority in case of a dispute.

Own Deliberative Capacity. We measured participants' capacity to deliberate by asking them how interested they were in political discussion, how comfortable they felt voicing their views, their interest in hearing others' views, their willingness to listen to conflicting views, whether listening to opposing views was unsettling, how valid they thought their views were, and openness to revising their views. We averaged responses to create an index and rescaled the average to lie between 0, reflecting lowest deliberative capacity on each item and 1 indicating greatest deliberative capacity on each item.

Society's Deliberative Capacity. To measure the society's capacity for deliberation, we asked participants to rate how interested in general people were in discussing politics, how comfortable people felt voicing their views, how interested people were in hearing others' views,

people's willingness to listen to conflicting views, and people's openness to revising their political views. Again, we averaged responses to create an index and rescaled the average to lie between 0, indicating lowest ratings on all the items, and 1, indicating highest ratings on all the items.

Political Efficacy. To assess how politically efficacious people felt, we asked them about how confident they were about their ability, qualifications, and understanding about political issues. We also asked respondents how informed they thought they were compared to others and whether they thought that politics was too complicated. We also asked them whether or not they felt that they had no real say in government and if they thought that public officials were indifferent to the issues that concerned them. Once again, we averaged responses to create an index and rescaled the average to lie between 0, indicating lowest ratings on all items, and 1, indicating maximal political efficacy ratings on each item.

Trust in Political Leaders and Institutions. We asked respondents how much they trusted the governor, the deputy governor, the provincial council, the federal government, the KRG, the council of representatives (Iraq's unicameral legislature), the judiciary, the police, the army, politicians, political parties, the Independent High Electoral Commission, the media, and UNAMI (the UN mission in Iraq). We rescaled the responses between 0 and 1. We also formed an index reflecting general trust in political institutions. We rescaled the index to lie between 0 and 1 with 0 indicating lowest ratings on all items, and 1 indicating ratings reflecting highest trust on all the items.

Given that there are concerns that trust in institutions and leaders is split along ethnic lines, we created separate indices to tap into these concerns. We expect Kurds to have trust in local leaders and institutions: the Governor, the Deputy Governor, the KRG, and the Provincial

Council (each of which was either a Kurd or Kurd-dominated at the time). And we expect Arabs and Turkomans to be especially distrusting of these local leaders and institutions. So we condensed these items into a separate index. We expect Arabs and Turkomans to have trust in federal government institutions: the Council of Representatives, the Federal Government, the judiciary, and the army.²¹ We averaged these items to create an index tracking trust in federal institutions. We did not expect specific ethnic cleavages on the following items: Politicians, Political parties, the Independent High Electoral Commission, the media, and the United Nations Mission in Iraq (UNAMI).

The Future of Kirkuk. Given the main topic of the deliberation was the future of Kirkuk, we asked respondents about their attitudes about each of the three main options. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means opposing something as strongly as possible and 10 supporting something as strongly as possible, we asked respondents how strongly they would support the three main options. To reduce measurement error, we also created indices for two of the options for which multiple items were available that tapped into the main underlying construct. For the status quo, we had also asked respondents, on the same 0 to 10 scale, whether it was “important to keep things as they are” and whether what mattered most was “how the country as a whole develops.” We averaged people’s answers to the two. To measure respondents’ attitudes about Kirkuk’s being a “federal region in its own right, with an extended range of powers,” we combined it with responses from other items eliciting attitudes toward the same basic 0 to 10 construct: whether it was important that “Kirkuk should have as many powers as possible”, “decisions that only affect Kirkuk are made in Kirkuk (free from excessive influence from Bagdad or the KRG)”, “Kirkuk

²¹ We could add the police to this list but there are two types of police: local and federal. The local police are trusted by Kurds and the federal police by Turkomans and Arabs. Given that we had phrased the item ambiguously (‘the police’), we omit it from the ethnic trust index.

develops its own political identity”, and “Kirkuk has equal standing within Iraq.” We averaged the responses to these items to create a new index that tallied people’s attitudes toward Kirkuk’s being an autonomous federal region in its own right.

Results

What do young Kirkukis think about Kirkuk’s political leaders and institutions? How, if at all, does deliberation change their views? To shed light on the status quo, we merged data from all the pre-deliberation questionnaires. This gives us the best estimate of the feelings, attitudes, and preferences of young, educated Kirkukis. For assessing the effects of deliberation, we compare T2 surveys of D and DI to the corresponding T1 surveys.²²

Sample

Our participants are students at the University of Kirkuk. The average age of participants in our sample is about 22 years (see Table 1). Nearly 77 per cent of participants were born in Kirkuk and about 82 per cent report having spent “all their life” in Kirkuk.²³ About 80 per cent of the participants are Sunni, and about 7 per cent are Shi’a. The ethnic breakdown is as follows: 38.6 percent of the participants are Kurds, 33.3 per cent are Arabs, and 26.9 per cent are Turkomans.

²² How much we can learn from these comparisons is hampered by small sample sizes. Small sample sizes mean that we cannot distinguish even large substantively meaningful changes from noise—many of the large changes are not statistically significant. This does not mean that if the experiment were replicated on a larger sample, we would see “no” effect. It just means that we cannot rule much out confidently.

²³ One might expect the percentage of people who report being born in Kirkuk to be the same or higher than the proportion who report having spent “all their life” in Kirkuk. But people plausibly interpreted the question about where they have spent their life to mean a vast majority of their life, especially if the period of their life when they were not in Kirkuk was when they were young.

As already noted, there are more Arabs in D and DI than Kurds or Turkomans. There are also more females than males in DI (which perhaps gives the lie to some stereotypical assumptions). And it is worth noting that DI is less politically active than D.

Inter-ethnic interaction

While the University of Kirkuk is ethnically mixed, the fact that classes are taught in both Arabic and Kurdish might give reason to pause. Kurdish students do not (or at least need not) share a classroom. However, inter-ethnic interaction scores for both D and DI are positive. However, while the average for D is 4.24, and the average for DI is lower at 3.33.

Status Quo

As expected, young, educated Kirkukis are cynical and distrusting of their political leaders and institutions. On a 0 to 1 scale, where 0 means do not trust at all and 1 means trust completely, the average rating of politicians was a mere .14 (see Table 4). For political parties, the rating was a shade higher at .17. No institutions except for the police and the army breached .5. Trust ratings of the governor, the deputy governor, the federal government, the provincial council, the KRG, the council of representatives, UNAMI, the media, and the Independent High Electoral Commission were all less than .5.

Not only do the Kirkukis not trust their political institutions, but they also think the government is badly run. For instance, when we asked respondents to rate how much they agreed with the statement that “The governorate council is efficient” on a 5-point scale running from strongly disagree (0) to strongly agree (1), the average rating was an eye-watering .06 (see Appendix Table C1). The mean agreement with “the governorate council uses money wisely” was an equally alarming .16.

If you thought that thinking that the government is badly run would make young educated Kirkukis politically active, you would be mistaken. The percentage of participants reporting that they have contacted a politician, signed a petition, or engaged in street protest, generally hovered in the low teens (see Table 1). The percentage of participants reporting working for a political organization or any other organization was in the low 20s. And somewhat surprisingly, just about 26 per cent reported engaging in a discussion on social media. This may suggest that students fear that the government monitors social media. But are numbers in the low teens and 20s that bad? They are. Self-reports of political behavior are generally inflated by self-presentation bias: people report engaging in political activities when they do not (Bernstein et al. 2001). If you deflate the figures just a bit to account for the bias, the figures are yet more deflating.

These young, educated Kirkukis also knew very little about some of the basic facts about Kirkuk. Less than 5 per cent knew that Kirkuk's population is more than 900,000 (see Table 2). Similarly, just 7.3 per cent of the respondents knew that Kirkuk has 20 per cent of Iraq's oil reserves. Other basic facts elicited similarly few correct answers. On none of the five basic facts was the proportion responding correctly greater than 20 per cent.

But until now, we have covered attitudes of the people on the whole. We also expect ethnic cleavages when it comes to trust in leaders and preferences for political future. In Table 5, we split trust in Kurdish and Turkomen/Arab leaning institutions and the three main options for the political future by ethnicity.

The results for trust are expected. There is considerable polarization. On average, Arabs and Turkomen give Arab and Turkomen leaning institutions and leaders ratings that are 1.5 times as large as Kurds' ratings (.475 vs. .29). The ratings for Kurdish leaning institutions and leaders

are yet more polarized, with Arabs and Turkomen giving an average rating of .44 and .19 respectively, and Kurds giving an average rating of .61.

Impact of D and DI

We expect both D and DI to increase political knowledge but expect DI to be more effective. We also expect D and DI to increase people's sense of political efficacy, their belief in their own and society's capacity to deliberate, and trust in political institutions as they better understand the constraints under which politicians from all sides operate. And we expect the impact of DI to be greater than D.

Political Knowledge

As we note above, young, educated Kirkukis did not know some of the fundamental facts about Kirkuk that we quizzed them about. Pooling across all pre-deliberation surveys, the average proportion correct was .14 (see Table 2). D did not help matters. The average proportion of correct answers post-deliberation was if anything possibly a bit lower ($D_{t2} - D_{t1} = -.03$, $p = .08$). This does not mean that respondents knew less at the end of the deliberation. There is a difference between the proportion of correct answers and what people know. And post-deliberation scores can be lower than pre-treatment scores because people were a bit luckier when guessing randomly on the pre-deliberation wave than on the post-deliberation wave (see Cor and Sood, 2016 for details).

DI participants, however, learned a fair bit. The knowledge scores of respondents assigned to DI more than doubled ($DI_{t2} = .25$; $p < .000$), starting albeit from the low baseline of .11. The absolute gain of .14 is in line with the kinds of gains we see in Deliberative Polls (often viewed as the 'gold standard' for mini-publics) (see Luskin et al. 2008). The post-DI score of

.25, however, suggests that even after DI, most of the participants still did not know some of the basic facts.

Political Efficacy, Own and Society's Deliberative Capacity

Deliberating under good conditions or being provided with balanced information and then deliberating under good conditions does little to increase participants' self-efficacy (see Table 3). Many of the differences in D have the wrong sign—post-deliberation assessments are potentially a shade lower—but generally small and we cannot discount the possibility that these numbers were obtained by chance.

The changes in DI are, if anything, yet smaller. On average, DI doesn't seem to have made any difference on how politically efficacious people feel ($DI_{t2} - DI_{t1} = .01, p = .85$). This is somewhat surprising given that a) participants in DI gained knowledge, and b) given that participants in DI start out with much lower political efficacy scores than D ($DI_{t1} = .34; D_{t1} = .54; p < .05$) and hence have more “room” to grow.

Moving to self-assessments of capacity to deliberate, D causes participants to think that they have a greater capacity to deliberate ($D_{t2} - D_{t1} = .06, p = .02$; see Table 3). The changes across the index items are all the same sign but generally small (less than .05) with only one item—assessments of comfort in voicing opinion—changing a lot ($D_{t2} - D_{t1} = .12, p = .02$). Moving to DI, we see no corresponding change in people's assessments of their own capacity to deliberate ($D_{t2} - D_{t1} = .02, p = .37$).

Corresponding with small, positive change in self-assessments of capacity to deliberate in D, assessments of other people's capacity to deliberate potentially show a small upward movement in D ($D_{t2} - D_{t1} = .04, p = .14$). All the changes in the constituent items of the index have the same sign, but the changes are generally small and imprecisely estimated. Only one

item—assessments of people’s willingness to listen to conflicting views—shows a statistically significant increase ($D_{t2} - D_{t1} = .10, p = .03$). And once again, DI doesn’t seem to change people’s assessments of others’ capacity to deliberate ($D_{t2} - D_{t1} = -.02, p = .42$).

Overall, it appears that D had a small positive impact. After participating in D, people felt more comfortable voicing their own opinion, and felt that others were more willing to listen to conflicting views. However, DI doesn’t seem to have made much of a difference to political efficacy or own or society’s capacity to deliberate.

Trust in Political Leaders and Institutions

Young, educated Kirkukis distrust political leaders and institutions. And neither D nor DI does much to change that. The effect of both D and DI is uniformly substantively small, generally less than .05, and statistically insignificant (see Table 4).

Given that some of the leaders and institutions are closely identified with certain ethnicities, in Table 5 we split trust in institutions and politicians that are closely identified with different ethnicities by ethnicity. We expected sharp cleavages to begin with and a narrowing of the cleavages post D and DI. But, there are no consistent changes in either D or DI.

Let’s start by focusing on trust in Kurdish institutions. In line with expectations, Kurds, on average, give Kurdish leaning institutions and leaders an average rating of .61, Arabs .44, and Turkomen .19. For polarization to decrease, ratings by Kurds needs to decline or ratings of Arab and Turkomen needs to increase. In D, Turkomen do indeed end up trusting Kurdish leaning institutions and leaders more ($D_{t2} - D_{t1} = .08, p = .05$), though this increase is offset by Arabs, whose trust in Kurdish leaning institutions and leaders declines by the same amount. Kurds ratings marginally increase but the rise isn’t statistically significant. You can see it as a wash. In DI, however, both Turkomans’ and Arabs’ trust in Kurdish leaning institutions and leaders

declines by .08 ($p = .25$) and .05 ($p = .11$), respectively, and Kurds' faith in Kurdish leaning institutions and leaders increases by .11 ($p = .05$). Even if you treat decline in Arab and Turkoman trust as noise, the fact that Kurds' faith increases means that there is a net polarization of trust.

We see a similar pattern when we move to trust in Arab/Turkoman leaning institutions—no change or a slight move toward greater polarization. In DI, the movements are substantively small (.05 or smaller) and wildly statistically insignificant. In D, the only change that is large enough that we can sort of see over statistical noise is in the ratings by Turkomen. Turkomen come to trust Arab leaning institutions and leaders more ($D_{t2} - D_{t1} = .14, p = .06$). The upshot, however, is that none of our groups are particularly trustful of leaders and institutions, and deliberation does nothing to increase that trust or to reduce polarization. If anything, it increases it slightly.

Future of Kirkuk

Did deliberation change participants' views about the three main options? Table 4 suggests that it did not. But given that we expect sharp ethnic divisions on attitudes toward various proposals, lack of movement in the aggregate may hide some patterns. To address that concern, we split the analysis by ethnicity (see Table 5). As expected, Arab and Turkoman participants expressed support for the status quo option. Averages began high and stayed high (hovering between .6 and .7). By contrast, support of the Kurdish governorate option began and remained rock bottom.

As expected, Kurds support Kurdish governorate option. DI began slightly lower (.577) than D but ended up in much the same place (above .8). We do not know why they began lower, but the treatment produced a statistically significant effect ($DI_{t2} = .021; p < .05$).

It is when we turn to the autonomous federal region option, that we see the most striking results. Kurds are only slightly less supportive of this option than of the Kurdish governorate option (averages hovering around .7). More strikingly still, while Arabs and Turkomans began roughly in the middle, DI increase their support significantly. In the case of Turkoman participants, scores rose from .552 to .699 ($DI_{i2} = .004$; $p < .05$), roughly the same as Kurds

Discussion

We began this paper by noting that Kirkuk is the most disputed of Iraq's disputed territories. But we also noted that Kirkuk has promise. Much is made of its huge oil resources, but perhaps its most valuable resource is its educated youth. The question, however, is how to tap that resource.

To shed light on this question, we conducted a survey and an intensive deliberative experiment. We expected to find apprehension and mistrust, but not to the degree that the survey reveals. Arabs and Turkomans do not trust Kurdish leaning institutions and s, and Kurds do not trust Arab/Turkoman leaning institutions and leaders ns. This is as one would expect. But while Arabs and Turkomans have some trust in Arab/Turkoman leaning institutions and Kurds have some trust in Kurdish leaning institutions, scores are hardly overwhelming, rarely making it past .5. The reason is perhaps obvious. The federal government, which tends to be Arab/Turkoman leaning, and the KRG, which tends to be Kurdish leaning, have been locked in a bitter struggle for control, as have the PUK and KDP. On top of that, Turkey and Iran also seek to exercise control, partly to extend their regional influence and partly to guard against contagion effects that might destabilize their own domestic politics. For these national and international actors, "the fate of local Kirkukis has become a peripheral distraction at best and an unwelcome inconvenience at worst" (Wolff 2010, p. 1362; see also Natali 2008, pp. 437-438).

Under these conditions, it is unsurprising that deliberation did not increase trust. But other measures give reason for hope. Participants assigned to DI learned a fair bit—the knowledge gains are in line with what we see in other deliberative experiments. And participants were no less convinced about their or society’s deliberative capacity, suggesting that on the whole deliberation went reasonably well. Granted, they were no more convinced either. But a sharp negative change would have suggested something deeply problematic. Exposure to conflicting views might have made participants feel uncomfortable, discouraging further deliberation (Mutz 2006; cf. Rydgren and Sofi 2011). More worryingly still, exposure to conflicting views might have made participants realize that their divisions were even deeper than they thought. In the worst-case scenario, a downturn of this sort might even serve as a catalyst for (further) violence (see McGarry and O’Leary 2009, pp. 69, 78; O’Leary 2005a, p. 10). The data suggest that, under good deliberative conditions, fears of this sort can be assuaged.

The most intriguing results cover attitudes about Kirkuk’s political future. Opinion on some proposals is expectedly factionalized. Arabs and Turkomans support the status quo and oppose the Kurdish governorate option, while Kurds support the reverse. Deliberation does nothing to change these polarized responses. But what it does change is Arab and Turkoman views about transforming Kirkuk into autonomous federal region. Before deliberating, this option had broad support across all three groups. But that support becomes yet broader after deliberation. In short, when given the opportunity to deliberate and learn, the only thing participants became more convinced of is a federal region. This increase in support may be read in two closely related ways. First, it may signal a rejection of “politics as usual.” Ethnic divisions typically give rise to ethnic parties, and ethnic parties typically attempt to grow their electoral support by being tough—for example, by sticking rigidly to hardline positions for fear of

appearing weak (Horowitz 1985, pp. 349-360; Horowitz 2014, p. 5; cf. Mitchell et al. 2009). Increased support for a position that arguably sits somewhere in the middle, however, suggests a desire for something else—a politics based not on *intra*-factional rivalry but on *inter*-factional compromise.

Second, increased support for a federal region option could signal a desire for greater control over their own destiny—a destiny free from excessive influence from either Baghdad or Erbil. Of course, there is reason to worry that ethnic divisions might simply reproduce themselves within this new administrative configuration. Kurds would presumably be in the majority and might not be willing to share power with Arab and Turkoman minorities. This is a possibility. But the fact that Arabs and Turkomans expressed support for this option suggests that, in their eyes, domination need not be taken as a given—that a new administrative configuration might potentially give Kirkukis of all persuasions greater control over their common political life. This is not a fanciful suggestion. The idea that all groups should have an equal say is something on all which all groups—across both D and DI—firmly support (see table 4). Indeed, nowhere else in the response do we see such consistently high scores.

All said, our expectations for improvements from deliberation continue to be modest. The “mutually contradictory assertions of identity that define a divided society” can take years to develop and even longer to dissolve (Dryzek 2005, p. 219). Yet while our participants deliberated only for an hour and a half, and while there were some important differences between our D and DI, there are nevertheless hints that more might be still possible—that factionalization need not be inevitable or that today’s youth are destined to repeat the mistakes of yesterday’s. We offer no ideas here on the question of how a more deliberative politics might be brought about; nor do we offer ideas on what deliberative institutions might need to look like in a divided

society like Kirkuk. But what we do offer is some modest encouragement for those interested in such questions.

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Table 1: Differences in Socio-demographics and Political Behavior Across Groups at T1

	Pooled	T1			Diff.			
	T1	L	D	DI	D - L	<i>p</i>	DI - D	<i>p</i>
Age	22.00	21.95	22.10	22.00	.14	.73	.05	.89
Female	.56	.56	.49	.63	-.07	.46	.07	.40
Born in Kirkuk	.77	.79	.76	.73	-.03	.67	-.06	.47
Lived All Life in Kirkuk	.82	.88	.74	.76	-.14	.09	-.12	.12
Religion								
Shi'a	.07	.07	.05	.07	-.02	.66	.00	.97
Sunni	.81	.79	.82	.84	.03	.65	.05	.48
Ethnicity								
Kurd	.39	.49	.25	.32	-.24	.01	-.17	.05
Arab	.34	.24	.45	.40	.21	.03	.16	.06
Turkoman	.26	.24	.30	.28	.06	.50	.04	.66
Inter-ethnic Interaction	3.75	3.76	4.24	3.33	.49	.01	-.42	.09
Political Activism								
Contact with Politician	.13	.14	.16	.06	.01	.85	-.08	.13
Worked for Political Org.	.23	.23	.33	.13	.09	.30	-.10	.12
Worked for Other Orgs.	.21	.25	.24	.13	-.01	.88	-.13	.07
Signed Petition	.12	.17	.10	.05	-.08	.24	-.13	.02
Lawful Public Demonstration	.23	.24	.25	.21	.01	.86	-.02	.77
Social Media Discussion	.26	.25	.29	.23	.04	.62	-.02	.84
Formal Group Discussion	.27	.28	.32	.21	.04	.65	-.06	.44
Street Protest	.14	.14	.18	.11	.04	.62	-.04	.54
<i>N</i>	176	86	41	49				

Note: The survey questions we report on in this table were only asked once—at T1.

Table 2: Proportion of Correct Responses to Factual Questions

Items	Pooled	D				DI			
	T1	T1	T2	Diff.	p	T1	T2	Diff.	p
Population of Kirkuk	.04	.10	.10	.00	1.00	.04	.39	.35	.00
Percent Oil Reserves	.07	.15	.17	.02	.32	.08	.31	.22	.00
Source of funding	.18	.20	.10	-.10	.10	.12	.12	.00	1.00
Article 140 of Constitution	.20	.22	.15	-.07	.26	.10	.29	.18	.01
Federal vs. Provincial Gov.	.19	.10	.10	.00	1.00	.18	.12	-.06	.26
<i>Average</i>	.14	.15	.12	-.03	.08	.11	.25	.14	.00

Note: All the p-values are two-tailed.

Table 3: Political Efficacy and Own and Society's Deliberative Capacity

Items	Pooled	D				DI			
	T1	T1	T2	Diff.	p	T1	T2	Diff.	p
<i>Political Efficacy</i>									
Confidence in own ability	.45	.49	.46	-.03	.41	.34	.34	.01	.85
Own qualifications	.43	.49	.52	.04	.47	.31	.33	.02	.74
Own understanding	.66	.63	.59	-.04	.35	.56	.52	-.05	.50
More informed than most	.49	.53	.49	-.04	.40	.32	.34	.02	.77
Politics too complicated*	.58	.51	.50	-.01	.81	.69	.68	-.01	.81
No real say*	.55	.50	.56	.05	.34	.43	.49	.06	.47
Public officials indifferent*	.72	.72	.62	-.09	.16	.72	.74	.02	.81
<i>Political Efficacy Index</i>	.57	.54	.51	-.03	.17	.34	.34	.01	.85
<i>Own Deliberative Capacity</i>									
Interest in political discussion	.37	.40	.44	.04	.37	.31	.36	.05	.20
Comfort voicing own views	.51	.49	.61	.12	.02	.50	.56	.06	.27
Interest in hearing others' views	.54	.52	.53	.01	.89	.55	.54	-.01	.78
Willingness to listen to conflicting views	.51	.46	.51	.05	.27	.58	.57	-.01	.81
Openness to revising own political views	.49	.51	.51	.00	1.00	.52	.53	.01	.83
<i>Own Deliberative Capacity Index</i>	.50	.48	.54	.06	.02	.53	.56	.02	.37
<i>Society's Deliberative Capacity</i>									
General interest in political discussion	.45	.40	.42	.03	.44	.46	.38	-.07	.04
Comfort voicing views	.53	.51	.52	.01	.88	.57	.54	-.03	.54
Interest in hearing others' views	.41	.43	.51	.08	.15	.41	.38	-.03	.61
Willingness to listen to conflicting views	.36	.38	.48	.10	.03	.29	.35	.06	.18
Openness to revising political views	.40	.44	.47	.03	.39	.36	.39	.02	.69
<i>Society's Deliberative Capacity Index</i>	.44	.43	.48	.04	.14	.44	.42	-.02	.42

Note: * Responses were reverse coded so that larger numbers reflect greater efficacy; All the p-values are two-tailed.

Table 4: Trust in Institutions and Leaders and Views About Kirkuk's Political Future

Items	Pooled	D				DI			
	T1	T1	T2	Diff.	p	T1	T2	Diff.	p
<i>Trust in Kurd Leaning Inst. & Leaders</i>									
Governor	.46	.33	.31	-.03	.55	.39	.39	.00	.93
Deputy governor	.41	.34	.33	-.01	.69	.31	.29	-.02	.57
Provincial council	.48	.39	.34	-.06	.20	.42	.37	-.04	.40
Kurdistan Regional Government	.37	.38	.34	-.04	.34	.25	.28	.02	.65
<i>Avg. Trust in Kurd Leaning Inst. & Leaders</i>	.45	.37	.34	-.03	.36	.39	.38	-.01	.68
<i>Trust in Arab/Turkoman Leaning Inst. & Leaders</i>									
Federal govt.	.37	.41	.41	.00	.97	.37	.36	-.01	.84
Council of Representatives	.28	.28	.24	-.04	.41	.27	.34	.07	.17
Judiciary	.31	.27	.26	-.01	.79	.32	.38	.06	.11
Army	.62	.72	.65	-.07	.24	.62	.60	-.02	.61
<i>Avg. Trust in Arab/Turkoman Leaning Inst. & Leaders</i>	.40	.41	.39	-.03	.51	.38	.41	.03	.30
<i>Trust in Other Institutions & Leaders</i>									
Politicians	.14	.12	.17	.05	.30	.10	.12	.01	.66
Political Parties	.17	.16	.18	.02	.53	.14	.12	-.01	.78
Independent High Electoral Commission	.22	.24	.27	.03	.60	.24	.25	.01	.90
Media	.48	.41	.43	.02	.64	.46	.42	-.04	.26
UNAMI (UN Iraq)	.35	.34	.38	.04	.52	.29	.26	-.03	.38
Police	.54	.62	.60	-.01	.68	.58	.62	.03	.25
<i>Political Future: Status Quo</i>									
Status quo	.54	.56	.58	.01	.84	.60	.52	-.08	.15
Keep things as they are	.33	.32	.36	.04	.54	.37	.31	-.06	.30
Good of entire country	.87	.89	.91	.02	.60	.89	.80	-.09	.04
<i>Status Quo Index</i>	.58	.59	.62	.03	.31	.64	.56	-.08	.06
<i>Political Future: Federal Region</i>									

Federal region	.41	.34	.48	.14	.03	.44	.51	.07	.28
Kirkuk increase powers	.71	.72	.65	-.07	.27	.68	.78	.10	.01
Kirkuk makes own decisions	.77	.75	.69	-.06	.23	.77	.72	-.04	.44
Kirkuk protect from outside interests	.85	.79	.81	.02	.73	.90	.73	-.18	.00
Kirkuk develop own political identity	.79	.71	.76	.05	.30	.76	.75	-.01	.82
Kirkuk equal standing in Iraq	.92	.92	.87	-.04	.23	.95	.92	-.03	.36
<i>Independent Region Index</i>	.73	.70	.68	-.02	.43	.73	.76	.03	.24
<i>Political Future: Kurdish Governorate</i>	.33	.30	.35	.05	.17	.21	.29	.08	.07
Ethnic groups equal say	.84	.83	.83	.00	1.00	.86	.90	.03	.57

Note: *Responses were reverse coded so that larger numbers reflect greater efficacy; All the p-values are two-tailed.

Table 5: Trust in Institutions and Leaders and Views About Kirkuk's Political Future by Ethnicity

Items	Pooled	D				DI			
	T1	T1	T2	Diff.	p	T1	T2	Diff.	p
<i>Trust in Arab/Turkoman Leaning Inst. & Leaders</i>									
Arabs	.50	.54	.48	-.06	.21	.45	.50	.05	.36
Kurds	.29	.34	.25	-.09	.35	.18	.19	.01	.87
Turkomans	.45	.27	.41	.14	.06	.51	.49	-.02	.67
<i>Trust in Kurd Leaning Inst. & Leaders</i>									
Arabs	.44	.48	.40	-.08	.04	.40	.32	-.08	.25
Kurds	.61	.43	.45	.02	.73	.52	.63	.11	.05
Turkomans	.19	.11	.19	.08	.05	.22	.16	-.05	.11
<i>Political Future: Status Quo</i>									
Arabs	.74	.70	.65	-.05	.20	.77	.75	-.03	.68
Kurds	.40	.39	.48	.10	.10	.46	.28	-.18	.02
Turkomans	.65	.58	.71	.13	.01	.63	.61	-.03	.72
<i>Political Future: Federal Region</i>									
Arabs	.64	.63	.63	.01	.91	.62	.65	.03	.55
Kurds	.86	.80	.79	-.01	.78	.92	.89	-.03	.42
Turkomans	.67	.72	.66	-.07	.22	.68	.79	.10	.03
<i>Political Future: Kurdish Governorate</i>									
Arabs	.09	.18	.21	.03	.65	.00	.06	.06	.16
Kurds	.69	.80	.87	.07	.28	.54	.83	.28	.02
Turkomans	.09	.09	.19	.10	.18	.09	.06	-.03	.34

Note: All the p-values are two-tailed.

Appendix A: Details About the Study

Links to the briefing materials and the pre- and post- deliberation survey instruments.

1. Briefing Materials:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/6xj28xp0qzfsz84/Iraq%20Project%20briefing%20document%20Final.docx?dl=0>
2. Pre-Deliberation Survey Instrument:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/6xj28xp0qzfsz84/Iraq%20Project%20briefing%20document%20Final.docx?dl=0>
3. Post-Deliberation Survey Instrument:
https://www.dropbox.com/s/5dbpif9w6bvjcim/POST_Full%20questionnaire_Final.doc?dl=0

Item Text

Socio-Demographics and Ethnic/National Identification

1. What was your age on your last birthday?
2. What is your gender? Male, Female
3. Where were you born?
4. How long have you lived in Kirkuk? All my life (1), Less than 1 year (2), Less than 5 years, Less than 10 years
5. Which religion or religious sect do you regard yourself belonging to? Sunni, Shi'a, Catholic, Other, I do not consider myself belonging to any religion
6. What is your ethnic background? Kurd, Arab, Turkman, Other
7. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as? Iraqi first and foremost, Kurdish first and then Iraqi, Arab first and then Iraqi, Turkoman first and then Iraqi, Kurdish only, Turkoman only, Arab only, Other

Inter-Group Contact

How often do you have contact with members of other ethnic groups? Never (1), Seldom (2), Regularly (3), Often (4), Very often (5)

Beliefs About and Attitudes Toward the 3 major Ethnic Groups

- On a scale of 0 to 10 scale, where 0 is ‘untrustworthy’, 10 is ‘trustworthy’, and 5 is exactly in-between, where would you place Kurds, Turkomen, and Arabs.
- On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is ‘not open to reason’ and 10 is ‘open to reason’ and 5 is exactly in-between, where would you place Kurds, Turkomen, and Arabs
- In general, how positive or negative are you with regard to members of other ethnic groups? On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is ‘negative’, 10 is ‘positive’ and 5 is exactly in between, where would you place Kurds, Turkomen, and Arabs

Political Knowledge

Correct answers are in **bold**.

1. According to the UN, the estimated the total population of Kirkuk is in excess of...?
1,300,000, 1,100,000, **900,000**, 700,000, Don't know
2. The Kirkuk oil field contains what percentage of Iraq's proven oil reserves? 50%, 40%, 30%, **20%**, Don't know
3. Funding for public servants and city reconstruction comes from? The Federal Government, KRG, **The federal government and the KRG jointly**, Neither the Federal Government nor the KRG, Don't know
4. Article 140 of the 2005 Iraqi constitution provides for? Kirkuk joining the Kurdistan region, **A referendum on the constitutional status of Kirkuk**, Kirkuk becoming a federal region in its own right, Don't know.

5. With regard to the powers shared between the Federal Government and the Provincial Council, which institution currently has priority in cases of dispute? The Federal Government, **The Provincial Council**, Neither has priority, Don't know

Trust in Institutions and Leaders

Can you, on a scale from 0 to 10, indicate how much trust you personally have in each of the following institutions? 0 means that you have no trust at all in this institution and 10 means you have complete trust in it. ----- The Governor of Kirkuk, The Deputy Governor of Kirkuk, The Provincial Council, The Federal Government, The Kurdistan Regional Government, The Council of Representatives, The judiciary, The police, The army, Politicians, Political parties, The Independent High Electoral Commission, The media, UNAMI (United Nations Iraq).

Political Efficacy

How interested would you say you are in politics? Not at all interested, Hardly interested, Quite interested, Very interested, Don't know

And how confident are you in your own ability to participate in politics? Not at all (0), Extremely so (10), Don't know.

Respondents were then presented a series of statements:

1. I feel confident about my own ability to participate in politics.
2. I consider myself to be well qualified to participate in politics.
3. I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important issues facing Kirkuk.
4. I think I am better informed about politics and government than most people.
5. Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.
6. People like me don't have any say about what government does.

7. Public officials do not care much about what people like me think.

Appendix B: English Translation of the Briefing Materials

Kirkuk is an oil-rich city. It is also known throughout the region for its distinctive ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural diversity. The city's ethnic and religious groups lived peacefully together for centuries. Today, however, control of Kirkuk is hotly contested by its ethnic groups on one hand, and the federal government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan regional government (KRG) on the other. In particular, *the question of how the city should be governed* has remained unsettled. This dispute is a threat to peace in Kirkuk and to stability in the country as a whole.

The purpose of this deliberative forum is to give you the opportunity to discuss the options for governing Kirkuk in a safe and constructive environment. We want to know what you think and we hope this information booklet will help guide your deliberations. At the end of your deliberations, we would kindly ask you to fill out the same questionnaire that you took on initial contact.

The Situation in Kirkuk

The situation in Kirkuk is complex, so let us start with some factual information.

Demographics

Discussing population statistics for Kirkuk is a sensitive affair, particularly in the absence of comprehensive census data. Nevertheless, in 2011 the UN estimated the total population of Kirkuk to be in excess of 900,000 people.²⁹

Estimating the size of each ethnic group is particularly tricky. However, electoral results do give us some indication. Three provincial elections (2005, 2009 and 2013) have been conducted in Iraq, though Kirkuk only participated in the 2005 elections. In that election, the Kurds won 26

²⁹ Inter-agency Information and Analysis Unit: Kirkuk Governorate Profile.
<http://www.kurdipedia.org/documents/87932/0001.PDF>.

out of 41 seats (about 63% of the seats), Turkomans won 9 (about 22%), and Arabs won 6 (about 15%) (though the low turnout of Sunni Arabs should be noted).

Provincial elections results in Kirkuk, January 2005

Parties	Votes	Seats
List of Kurdistan Brotherhood	237,303	26
Iraqi Turkoman Front	73,791	8
Iraqi Republican Group (Sunni Arab)	43,635	5
The Islamic Turkoman Coalition	12,678	1
National Iraq Union (Sunni Arab)	12,329	1

Economics

In theory, Kirkuk is one of the richest cities of the world. The Kirkuk oil field is the second-largest oilfield in the country, containing 20% of Iraq's proven oil reserves. The Kirkuk field's production is predicted to peak at just over 500,000 barrels per day around 2025 before trailing off to fewer than 200,000 barrels per day in 2050. However, in spite of the presence of large amounts of oil, Kirkuk governorate has experienced little economic benefit from its presence.

Financially, Kirkuk has institutional linkages to both Baghdad and the KRG and depends on both of them to pay its public servants and to reconstruct the city. Since 2006, Baghdad has used the Accelerated Reconstruction and Development (ARD) mechanism to transfer block grants from the federal budget to the provinces. The aim has been to facilitate short-term projects in parallel with the longer-term budget initiatives carried out by the ministries. The KRG, on the other hand, has been involved in the province and provides financial support to develop various projects. For example, according to one report, of a total of about 1,390 schools across Kirkuk province, 460 of them were funded by KRG in which their curriculums and teaching are entirely Kurdish. This means that both Baghdad and KRG rather than Kirkuk Provincial Council (KPC) are more influential when it comes to appointing public employees. Due to both falling oil prices and rising

Iraqi military expenditure because of fighting against ISIS, Kirkuk has faced a financial crisis. The ARDP fund has been suspended by the federal government since August 2014. Nevertheless, to meet its financial needs, the KPC currently depends on both Baghdad and the KRG.

The legal situation

The population of Kirkuk has shifted considerably as a result of the policies of various Iraqi regimes, which has in turn led to tensions between Kirkuk's ethnic groups. Article 58 of the 2004 Transitional Administrative Law (TAL) was intended to deal with this tension and 'normalize' the situation. The law outlines a number of steps including the return of displaced people, the recovery of their properties and homes, and the reversal of border alterations.

In 2005, the new Iraqi Constitution was adopted and ratified. Article 140 replaced the TAL's Article 58 and includes provision for a census and a referendum on the constitutional status of Kirkuk. Both the wording and the timing of the referendum remain under negotiation. Potentially, however, it may result in one of three options, as we will now outline.

THE OPTIONS

There are three major options for governing Kirkuk which are constitutionally plausible:

- (1) A governorate under the authority of the federal government
- (2) Becoming an autonomous region
- (3) Joining the Kurdistan region.

Option 1: A governorate under the authority of the federal government

Under this option, the existing arrangements for governing Kirkuk would be maintained (the status quo option). That is, the governorate would ultimately remain under the control of Baghdad. However, the Provincial Council of Kirkuk would maintain certain powers, including the power to develop policies and pass laws, to approve local security plans, to select the symbols

for the governorate, and to collect taxes, duties and fees. Moreover, with regard to the powers shared between the Federal Government and the Provincial Council, priority would continue to be given to laws made by the Council in case of dispute.

Advantages	Disadvantages
No new government institutions would need to be created and agreed.	Kirkuk would remain under the control of the Federal Government.
Kirkuk would still be entitled to an equitable share of national revenues.	Kirkuk will not have full control over the levy of taxes or over monetary and fiscal policy more generally.

Option 2: Becoming and autonomous region

Under this option, Kirkuk would enjoy more executive and legislative powers than as a governorate. As an autonomous region, it would enjoy the rights of a federal region rather than mere decentralization. The 2005 constitution lists the competencies that the federal and regional authorities are to share together. These include: managing customs, electric energy sources and distribution, environment, general development and planning, public health, education and internal water resources (Article 114, constitution of Iraq). Priority is given to the regional law over federal law in case of any dispute.

Advantages	Disadvantages
It would allow Kirkuk to exercise greater control over its own internal affairs.	New institutions would be required that might be difficult to design and to agree.
It would reduce the desire for secession.	It might cause a domino effect in regard to other governorates.

Option 3: Joining the Kurdistan region

Under this option, Kirkuk would remain a governorate, but would become part of the Kurdish federal region. As a governorate under Erbil, the Provincial Council of Kirkuk would have roughly the same powers as it does today under Bagdad. Ultimately, however, it would be answerable to Erbil (just as, today, it is ultimately answerable to Bagdad).

Advantages	Disadvantages
No new government institutions would need to be created and agreed.	It would change the balance between the centre and the periphery
It would redress the historical grievances of the Kurds.	Arabs and Turkomans would become minorities inside the Kurdistan Region.

Appendix C: Attitude Change on Other Items

The survey instrument included other questions beyond the ones discussed in the main text of the manuscript. We don't discuss the results from all the items because we wanted to focus on a few big questions in the manuscript. Here we present results from the remaining items along with a discussion of the results.

The remaining items fall into the following broad categories: 1) Attitudes towards own and other groups, 2) Evaluation of the Government, 3) Priorities for the Government. For item text of all the questions, see Appendix A. Of the items measuring attitudes toward own and other groups, we built a measure of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentric bias means that you think your ethnic group is better than other ethnic groups (Levine and Campbell 1972). We measured the concept by asking participants (1) how open to reason and (2) how trustworthy they thought various groups were, and (3) how positively they felt about each group, on a 0 to 10 scale. We calculated ethnocentrism as the difference between participant's ratings of their group and their average rating of other groups. We use self-reported ethnicity to condition the responses. For instance, for Arabs, we averaged the ratings they gave to Arabs on the three questions and subtracted the average ratings they gave to Kurds and Turkmen on the same questions. We then rescaled the measure to lie between 0 and 1, where 0 means the participant gave the top rating on trust, openness to reason and feelings toward the group to their own group and the bottom rating to the other two groups, and 1 means the opposite: top ratings to other groups and bottom ratings to own group.

Results

Ethnocentrism

On average, before deliberation (pooled T1), participants thought that Arabs, Kurds, and Turkmen were somewhat open to reason, thought they were trustworthy, and felt positively toward them—all the means are above .5 on a 0 to 1 scale, where 0 means the person thinks the group is not open to reason, is untrustworthy, and the person feels negatively about the group, and 1 means the person thinks that the group is open to reason, trustworthy, and the person feels positively about the group. As we stated above, we condensed these attitudes and beliefs into an index that tapped into an ethnocentrism measure that tracks how much ‘better’ a person thinks their own group is, and how much more positively a person feels toward their group than toward other groups. At T1, the mean difference between own group and other groups was a hefty .306 on a 0 to 1 scale.

Our expectation was that the opportunity to deliberate under ‘good’ conditions would reduce ethnocentrism. Surprisingly, there is little evidence of that. D alone does very little to alter participants’ beliefs about the various groups and how they feel about them versus their own group. DI, on the other hand, leads to a sharp *rise* in ethnocentrism, from .297 in the pre-deliberation wave to .445 in the post-deliberation wave ($p = .025$).

Table C1: Miscellaneous Items

Items	Pooled	D				DI			
	T1	T1	T2	Diff.	<i>p</i>	T1	T2	Diff.	<i>p</i>
<i>Attitudes Toward Ethnic Groups</i>									
Regard for Arabs' views	.68	.78	.68	-.11	.02	.57	.63	.07	.13
Regard for Kurds' views	.74	.75	.63	-.11	.03	.67	.64	-.03	.54
Regard for Turkomans' views	.65	.72	.59	-.13	.01	.60	.66	.07	.06
Trust in Arabs' views	.55	.67	.64	-.04	.33	.49	.55	.05	.20
Trust in Kurds' views	.61	.62	.55	-.07	.02	.54	.54	.00	.96
Trust in Turkomans' views	.54	.59	.53	-.06	.07	.56	.64	.08	.01
Arabs' openness to reason	.55	.63	.63	.00	.95	.58	.57	-.01	.89
Kurds' openness to reason	.62	.59	.59	.00	1.00	.55	.52	-.03	.52
Turkomans' openness to reason	.53	.59	.53	-.06	.08	.56	.66	.10	.02
<i>Ethnocentrism</i>	.31	.22	.27	.05	.44	.30	.45	.15	.03
<i>Evaluation of Government</i>									
Kirkuk best governed governorate	.42	.39	.35	-.03	.38	.43	.49	.05	.35
Provincial council operates efficiently	.06	.05	.05	.00	.88	.06	.06	.00	.73
Provincial council uses money wisely	.16	.15	.15	.00	.86	.15	.21	.06	.07
<i>Equitable Government</i>									
Governor works for good of all society	.47	.44	.41	-.03	.36	.42	.40	-.02	.74
Deputy Governor works for good of all	.46	.44	.39	-.05	.11	.41	.41	.01	.89
Provincial council accountable to all	.57	.46	.50	.04	.52	.62	.57	-.05	.38
<i>Governing Capacity</i>									
Provincial council well financed	.45	.44	.45	.01	.88	.45	.48	.03	.61
Provincial council sufficient powers	.50	.52	.53	.02	.73	.43	.41	-.01	.79

Provincial council and Fed. Govt. cooperate	.27	.30	.34	.04	.30	.24	.31	.07	.21
<i>Priorities for Government (Choosing as 1st)</i>									
Greater employment opportunities	.53	.75	.58	-.17	.15	.72	.61	-.12	.01
Giving citizens a greater say	.07	.33	.17	-.17	.53	.50	.50	.00	1.00
Improving health	.03	.44	.36	-.08	.35	.44	.40	-.04	.53
The environment	.06	.54	.43	-.11	.36	.38	.44	.06	.63
Security	.34	.72	.76	.04	.63	.73	.70	-.02	.72
Fighting corruption	.20	.54	.70	.16	.08	.53	.61	.08	.15
Improving education	.09	.48	.48	.00	1.00	.44	.50	.06	.29
Economic growth	.02	.21	.18	-.04	.79	.33	.21	-.13	.20
Better inter-ethnic relations	.22	.69	.53	-.16	.05	.38	.42	.04	.70
Gender equality	.05	-	-	-	-	.06	.38	-	-
Mixed schools	.00	-	-	-	-	.13	.50	-	-
Multilingualism	.06	-	-	-	-	.75	.75	-	-
Inter-marriage	.00	.17	.17	-	-	.38	.25	-	-

Note: ^a Responses were reverse coded so that larger numbers reflect greater efficacy; All the p-values are two-tailed.