



## **ECONOMIC CORRUPTION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DIMENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO IRAQ**

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<b>Received:</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> February 2023 <b>Accepted:</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2023 <b>Published:</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> April 2023	The aim of the research is to shed light on the impact of economic corruption on development in general and on Iraq in particular, in order to address weaknesses and provide a set of solutions to confront this scourge that resulted in a significant backwardness in development. Economic conditions that threatened economic stability, so the research problem was summarized by the impact of corruption. On the comprehensive development in Iraq as a result of wasting and wasting economic resources, so the importance of the research was manifested in the fact that it deals with a serious negative economic phenomenon that left devastating effects on the Iraqi economy, and for this purpose the descriptive analytical approach was used, and thus the study came with many results, and in light of that. Appropriate recommendations have been made
<b>Keywords:</b> economic corruption, development, economic growth, the cost of corruption	

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Economic corruption is a complex and ever-changing phenomenon that all peoples and nations have suffered from, and it has developed in multiple stages and has taken various forms, which have led to an increase in its cost, which negatively affected economic and structural policies. In addition, it undermined governance reforms and weakened confidence in the government. Consequently, this was reflected in all aspects of life, which impeded development opportunities, whether directly or indirectly. Iraq is one of the countries in which corruption has become an epidemic that ravages all aspects of society. As corruption took to dangerous levels, it undermined the authority of the state, weakened its aspects, and changed the course of growth, which left deep effects in various aspects, especially the economic one. Thus, the country emptied the elements of its stability and advancement.

### **RESEARCH PROBLEM:**

The impact of economic corruption on the comprehensive development in Iraq as a result of wastage and loss of economic resources, which hampered economic development plans and lost opportunities for economic growth.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:**

Shedding light on the impact of economic corruption on development in general and on the Iraqi economy in particular, in order to address the weaknesses of this scourge, which resulted in a significant backwardness in the economic conditions, which threatened economic stability.

**Importance of the Research:** To identify a serious negative economic phenomenon that left devastating effects on the Iraqi economy. Consequently, it was reflected in development in all its fields, and therefore the state must fight it for the purpose of controlling the optimal exploitation of its funds.

**Research Hypothesis:** The research stems from the hypothesis that rampant corruption in all state institutions has generated negative effects that have been scaled down from the Iraqi economy. Consequently, many investment projects and development plans failed.

### **Previous Studies:**

1- A study (Rahi, 2015) (financial and administrative corruption in Iraq and ways to address it). The study aimed to diagnose the reality of financial and administrative corruption in Iraq. As well as diagnosing the causes that generated this



phenomenon and describing its effects on the Iraqi economy. The study showed the negative effects of corruption on the macroeconomic variables and thus obstructing the development process. The study recommended breaking the monopoly of leadership positions, job rotation, and reducing bureaucracy and complex routines in performance.

2- A study (Daoud, 2011) (administrative corruption and its political and economic effects, with special reference to the Iraqi experience in corruption). The study aimed to focus on administrative corruption and its causes, including the American occupation of Iraq, and the negative political and economic effects of corruption on society and the state.

Thus, the current research is an extension of previous studies that contributed to defining its directions, theoretical construction, and analysis. The benefit of the previous studies was to direct the current research to choose to reach its goals, by deepening understanding of the subject of the research by examining the contributions of researchers in the field of corruption and its effects on the Iraqi economy and development. Examining these studies contributed to determining the starting point for the current research and the use of analytical and descriptive tools that previous studies did not address (from the low development indicators in Iraq) to summarize the weakness of development in Iraq and its inability to advance Iraqi society and achieve justice as a result of widespread corruption in all aspects of society and its institutions. .

### **The first requirement: economic corruption and its causes**

#### **First: Concept of economic corruption**

Economic corruption is the mismanagement of society's resources by the public authority for private benefit. Thus, corruption is the misuse of public office to obtain private gain, which undermines trust, weakens democracy, impedes economic development, and exacerbates inequality, poverty, and social division (Shang 1, 2014). It collects literature and research that dealt with the issue of corruption in all its forms as a set of practices that are contrary to the interest of society, offend it and violate the principle of equal treatment among members of the same society. These practices are mostly issued by people who occupy a certain position and work to harness it to serve their personal purposes and achieve through it special benefits that are harmful to society (Salman, Attia, 2017, 3). And as an inevitability of this, corruption arises, which makes economic activity the way to

reach the material aspects only without turning to other aspects that complete the economic construction, such as moral and spiritual values and principles (Khalil, 2014, 12-13). Thus, it is the use of public office for private gain for the purpose of achieving material benefits that cause waste of public money and be the final outcome of corruption crimes. This results in serious repercussions and repercussions on the economic and social life in the state and society in terms of squandering national resources and not spending them in a way that achieves the public interest (Al-Alamy, Amarah, 2020, 69). From this we conclude that corruption is the misuse of the country's leaders for the resources of that country for their personal gain. In doing so, trust is undermined, democracy weakened, and economic development impeded, which further exacerbates inequality, poverty, and social division, thus weakening social justice. As it violates law and order and hinders their achievement, which threatens the sovereignty of the state and delays the development and progress of societies. That is, it is an anti-development factor that depletes resources and creates an imbalance in the basic structures required by the development process.

Thus, corruption is characterized by the following (United Nations, 2021, 5)

- 1- Adapting to changing events and circumstances.
- 2- Its ability to develop in accordance with changes in rules and legislation.
- 3- He can empower anyone who does not have moral scruples.
- 4- It launders and hides illegal wealth.
- 5- Happening in secret (and with the help of powerful politicians, bankers, lawyers, accountants, real estate agents, opaque financial systems, and anonymous shell companies) they are professional enablers that enable him to gain control and influence that allow corrupt schemes to flourish.

#### **Second: the causes of economic corruption**

Corruption has many and varied causes

- 1- For economic factors represented in the following (Al-Dhafiri, Al-Rifai, 2012, 3)
  - The expansion of the economic role of the state and its monopoly of a limited number of institutions and the disruption of market mechanisms, which paralyzes individual and private initiatives and is accompanied by the ineffectiveness of the economic and financial control systems in institutions.
  - Limited investment opportunities and a decrease in the size of jobs with the low



standard of living and the existence of poverty and unemployment. In addition to the policy of expanding monetary issuance to the point of excess leading to inflation and currency depreciation. Without taking into account economic policies, such as taking into account the achievement of balance or justice in the distribution of economic resources to the population.

- Assigning the government agencies or the public sector the burdens and tasks required by the development programs, and what this entails is to grant them wide powers and provide them with large budgets and financial appropriations without enabling them to build institutions, develop capabilities and qualify the country's cadres. It disposes of public money without financial or accounting control, and this is considered appropriate for the spread of corruption and bribery.
- Failure to take into account the need to achieve balance or justice in the distribution of economic resources to the population. This leads to an imbalance in the distribution of income between groups and segments of society. This enables the rich to exploit the poor and low-income employees to multiply their illegitimate profits and gains.
- The low level of economic development leads to increased levels of corruption. Corruption is a function of the average wages of government employees. If a country's GDP is low, government officials are likely to be underpaid, which tempts employees to ask for bribes or embezzle money. (Chowdhury & Steppes, 2014, 42)

#### 2- Political factors:

Represented by the absence of political ability, i.e. the weak will of political leaders to fight corruption due to the involvement of some of them in corruption issues or their failure to activate deterrent measures to prevent corruption, the spread of government bureaucracy, the over-centralization of government administration, and the lack of independence of the judiciary, which is linked to the principle of separation of powers (Al-Jabouri, 2015, 45).

#### 3- Social factors

The weakness of religious faith among individuals and the absence of conscience, which caused the spread of corruption. As this made the individual extravagant in satisfying his desires and lusts, so he tries by all means to achieve this, whether through

a legitimate or illegal way, which leads to bribery and other manifestations of corruption. In addition to the exposure of many prevailing social values and concepts to deformation and decomposition, in contrast to the emergence of other values and concepts that are predominantly materialistic in judging the individual and his achievements (Hafnawi, 2019, 116). In addition, there are some social variables that contribute to creating an atmosphere of corruption and motivate some to practice it, including the use of regional and sectarian affiliations to gain unjustly advantages, the prevalence of mediation, and the practice of social influencers in exploiting their personal relationships (Al-Jamal, 2014, 545-546.)

#### 4- Administrative factors:

The inflation of the administrative apparatus and the adoption of an improvisational employment policy that exceeds the actual work need. Severe centralization, multiplicity of administrative levels, and the lack of a comprehensive planning of the workforce resulted in the problem of incompatibility of academic qualifications with job specializations. In addition to the contradiction of legal texts and the repeated partial amendment and abandonment of the paragraphs of the law (Bishr, 2017, 31).

### **Third: Types of economic corruption**

1- Accidental individual corruption: Corruption may sometimes be an occasional case for some political individuals or public officials, or temporary and not regular (Baghdadi, Stripe, 2021, 9).

2- Institutional corruption: which is found in a specific institution and in specific sectors of economic activity to the exclusion of other sectors, such as the presence of some corrupt official employees in some ministries and various sectors (Baghdadi, Tape, 2021, 10).

3- Regular corruption: which becomes a phenomenon that society suffers from in all its classes and its different treatment, which affects institutions and the behavior of individuals at all levels of the political, economic and social system. It is the most dangerous type of corruption, as it permeates the entire society and becomes a phenomenon from which everyone suffers. Which undermines the credibility of governments and political representation, threatens democratic institutions, and the fundamentals of the market economy by absorbing the basic political and economic structures of the state and affects the security of the state at the internal and external levels (Al-Jamal, 2020, 538).



## **The second requirement: development, its dimensions and its relationship to economic growth**

### **First - Economic Growth and Development:**

Economic growth is the sum of the values added to all production units operating in the various branches of production in a given economy. Growth works to achieve a high rate of total changes such as the domestic product, which achieves a high rate of satisfaction and well-being for the members of society (Ali, 292, 2021). That is, it is the automatic, unapproved economic expansion that does not necessitate a change in the economic structure of society. It is measured by the size of the quantitative change in economic indicators. The prevailing concept of development is a dynamic process consisting of a series of structural and functional changes in society. It occurs as a result of interference in directing the amount and quality of resources available to society. This is to raise the level of well-being of the majority of the members of society by increasing the effectiveness of its members in investing the energies of society to the maximum" (Abu Al-Nasr, 2007, 189). So it is the intended economic expansion, which cannot happen without government intervention. Necessity necessitates a change in the economic structure of society Accordingly, quantitative measures become insufficient to measure the degree of development. Development is a broader concept, and economic growth is an important and necessary condition for development, but it is not a sufficient condition. Growth alone cannot guarantee development. Development is about creating freedom for people and removing barriers to more freedom. These obstacles become obstacles to development and weaken it, such as poverty, lack of economic opportunities, corruption, mismanagement, lack of education, and lack of health (sen, 2001, 3). Therefore, corruption will work to undermine all the elements of development and impede them first through its impact on the necessary condition for development, which is economic growth. And investment in them is weak. Development is bringing about a set of radical changes in a particular society with the aim of giving that society the ability to continuous self-development at a rate that guarantees an increasing improvement in the quality of life for all its members in a way that guarantees an increase in the levels of satisfaction of basic needs through the continuous rationalization of the exploitation of available economic resources and the proper distribution of the proceeds of that exploitation. Aref, 2008, pp. 2-3).

## **SECOND: DIMENSIONS OF DEVELOPMENT**

**A- The economic dimension of development:** The concept of economic development is that it is a process by which the real national income rises during a certain period of time. If the rate of development is higher than the rate of net population growth, the real per capita income will rise. And the occurrence of economic growth is not considered sufficient for the occurrence of development, as it is possible to achieve rapid economic growth, while a slowdown occurs in the development process. This may be due to the failure to complete the fundamental transformations that lead to or precede the development process in the technological, social, cultural, political and economic fields. It is possible that rapid economic growth occurs and development does not occur when an imbalance arises between the development of the economy and the needs of society, represented by the increasing imbalances in the economic and social fields (Blasy, 2020, p. 10).

### **B- The social dimension of development:**

It is based on the fact that all peoples need a good level of education, health care and infrastructure. In addition to taking into account the rights of future generations of natural resources. This dimension is based on the advancement of human well-being, the development of his abilities to work and production, and the facilitation of his access to health and educational services, respect for human rights, the development of cultures, diversity and pluralism, and effective participation in decision-making (Friday, 2021, 2).

### **C- The political dimension of development:**

It is one of the indicators of political modernity that achieves equality among all citizens of society, regardless of different origins, affiliations, or sub-culture. As well as the participation of the masses in democratic decision-making through parliamentary systems and constitutional and legal institutions. However, there are other indicators of political modernity in this regard. This is because political development in the end is nothing more than a process aimed at ridding society of the crisis of participation, identity crisis, and others (Friday, 2021, 3.)

## **THE THIRD REQUIREMENT: THE COST OF CORRUPTION AND ITS EFFECTS ON DEVELOPMENT**

### **First: the global cost of corruption**

Cost of corruption: quantitative analyzes of the social, environmental, human and economic costs





that express the total losses and damages caused by all corrupt activities in society. and that the total of those losses and damages (which are unlikely to be fully identified or quantified) is the cost of corruption. So calculating this cost is a very complicated process. Measuring the cost of corruption is often considered a necessary part of determining how to fight corruption (United Nations, Global Infrastructure, 2020, 45).

Therefore, many intergovernmental organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund emphasized quantitative analyses of the social, environmental, human and economic costs that express the total losses and damages caused by all corrupt activities in society. Which impedes the development process, as a result of its exorbitant cost. It provided loans and development aid conditional on the implementation of effective anti-corruption measures. As these organizations explained through their statistical data the following (United Nations, 2014, 37):

1- According to World Bank data, the average income in countries with a high level of corruption is about a third of that in countries with a low level of corruption. The infant mortality rate in these countries is about three times higher than in other countries. Also, the literacy rate is 25% lower for countries with widespread corruption than for other countries. It appears that the level of corruption in countries with emerging market economies is much higher than in developed countries (MIRZAYEV, 2021, 21).

2- It is estimated that the cost of corruption is more than 5% of global GDP. That is, \$1 trillion is paid annually in bribes, while an estimated \$2.6 trillion is stolen annually through corruption. An amount equivalent to a larger proportion of the world's GDP in developing countries. The cost of corruption in economic growth and foreign investment is reduced by approximately 5% in corrupt countries, according to IMF research (UNDP, TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL, 2013, 2).

3- According to the United Nations Development Programme, the money lost due to corruption is estimated to be 10 times the amount of Official Development Assistance. But corruption doesn't just steal money from where it's needed most; Rather, it leads to the weakness of the government. Which in turn can feed organized crime networks and promote crimes such as human trafficking (Pippidi, Hartmann, 2019, 237). International development organizations, led by the World Bank, began to monitor the increasing indicators of corruption, and among the most

prominent of these indicators were the following (OECD, 2019, 55).

**A-** Inflated the total cost of corruption around work by about \$6.2 trillion annually, equivalent to 2% of the GDP.

**B-** An increase in the poverty rate to 22% of the working population, who live on an income of \$1.25 per day or less. That is, more than a fifth of the world's population lives below the poverty line.

**C -** The increase in conflicts and disagreements in state apparatuses, the sagging of administrative systems, the spread of nepotism and nepotism, and the encroachment on public money.

### Second: The Effects of Corruption on Development Dimensions:

The impacts of corruption on development have varied and varied, including economic, social and political ones. The most important of them are summarized as follows:

#### 1- Impact on the economic dimension

**A- Double the economic growth:** The traditional theory considers that corruption is a major impediment to economic growth through extracting rents, "excluding the economic surplus." Which negatively affects this growth, whether by influencing the productive and distributional efficiency within the economy, or influencing the organizers of local or foreign projects. If their investment incentive decreases, and thus leads to misallocation of resources (Age, 2006, 385).

**B- Distorting government spending:** Corruption has resorted to directing government resources and spending towards projects and objects of spending in which it is easy to obtain bribes and hide them due to the difficulty of determining their price in the market. And the state, in which corruption is rampant on the part of its officials, increases public investment in the regions on the basis of preference for projects from which large bribes can be extracted, and not on the basis of projects that achieve social welfare for society. The state's arrangement of its projects must be according to social values and not according to corrupt payments. At a time when spending on health and education services is reduced, with fewer opportunities for corruption. Accordingly, corruption affects economic efficiency, which ensures the optimal and efficient use of economic resources, by squandering and wasting those resources through their misuse and exploitation (Elliott, 2000, 13).

**C- Corruption has a negative impact not only on investment as a percentage of GDP, but also on the investment growth rate.** Corruption causes a weak investment climate and the flight of



investors, due to the influential people's request to obtain commissions and hinder their work, which negatively affects the structure of the economic sector and weak economic growth, which is reflected in the increase in poverty and unemployment (Musa, 2014, 27).

**D - the spread of the shadow economy:** small companies in corrupt countries tend to avoid officially registering their business with the tax authorities to avoid taxes. As a result, the income generated by many businesses exists outside the formal economy. Thus it is not subject to state taxes or included in the calculation of a country's GDP.

**E - Economic corruption causes inflation,** as a result of the high costs of doing business, which leads to higher prices to compensate for the bribes paid to the corrupt, and as a result of their high spending rates on consumer goods, real estate, durable goods, etc., and not as a result of their production costs. Which leads to great pressure on the budget of those with limited incomes and exacerbates this poverty on the one hand, and on the other hand, corruption causes the depreciation of the national currency against international currencies. This leads to an increase in the burden of imports denominated in the national currency. Hence the rise in local prices and an increase in the rate of inflation (Abdul Azim, 22, 2008).

**F- The impact of economic corruption on the stock market:** The stock market is based on transparency in making available information related to companies that offer securities in the financial markets, whether related to financial ratios or the final budget, which reflects the real situation of the company's activity and the extent of its creditworthiness, but the spread of corruption entails taking measures Accounting is not true and is often misleading (Al-Alami, Amara, 2020, 72).

**G- The aggravation and deficit of the public budget:** Corruption reduces public revenues and increases public expenditures through tax evasion or attempts to obtain illegal tax exemptions. It also increases the cost of building and operating projects, which negatively affects the state's general budget. Where the government cannot carry out sound financial practices, which exacerbates the problem of deficit if it is funded by the banking system. As it generates with it inflation and economic instability, which impedes economic growth (Al-Mursi, Al-Sayed Hegazy, 2001, 27).

**H - It leads to undermining economic development,** because it causes major deficits and distortions. In addition to the increase in administrative expenses that result from negotiating

with officials for fear of violating agreements or being exposed.

## **2- It affects the social dimension of development**

**A- Poor education and health care:** Corruption has a negative impact on the quality of education and health care provided in countries with emerging economies. Corruption increases the cost of education in countries where bribery plays an important role in the recruitment and promotion of teachers. As a result, the quality of education decreases and this affects the overall health of the economy (MIRZAYEV, 2021,17).

**B - It leads to a lack of social justice among the members of the same society** as a result of the misdistribution of wealth and income caused by corruption, through the monopoly of the elite of the ruling class, their parties and their acquaintances with the largest part of the economic benefits on an ongoing basis. This leads to widening the gap between this elite and the rest of society (pippidi, Hartmann, 2019, 237). Which leads to an increase in poverty and a decline in living standards, which leads to a decrease in economic growth rates and a regression in all stages of development (Al-Sakarneh, Bilal Khalaf, 2009, p. 288).

**C - Corruption leads to an increase in the cost of government services** such as: education, housing and other basic services. This, in turn, reduces the volume and quality of these services, which reflects negatively on the neediest groups (Musa, 2014, 27). This negatively affects social welfare and sustainable human development, and thus comprehensive development.

## **3- Impact on the political dimension of development**

**A- Undermining people's trust in governments,** and in the legitimacy of both public and private sector institutions. Therefore, corruption is a tax with devastating effects on the national economy, especially when free global markets can change the direction of investments and the flow of capital as a result of the loss of confidence in some markets, due to the spread of institutional corruption (Sullivan, 12, 2121).

**B - The collapse of the ethics of the public office:** as nepotism or favoritism reduces the chances of justice and equality. Changing standards leads, for example, to subjecting job promotions to nepotism and nepotism, and corruption turns into a factor that expels competencies and academic qualifications. Thus, the energies that are supposed



to be used at the local level are wasted (Qabbanji, Yaqoub, 265, 2019).

### **The fourth requirement: the reality of economic corruption in Iraq and its impact on development**

#### **First: the causes of corruption in Iraq**

There are many causes of corruption in Iraq and its manifestations and problems varied, but the most important of these reasons are:

1- The absence of confidence in the rule of law, and the ignorance of the political elites of the importance of the law. The failure to apply the law to all those involved and the failure to hold suspected officials accountable is one of the objective reasons for the failure of government policies to combat corruption.

2- The weakness of the institutions charged with fighting corruption: Most of the files uploaded by the reports of these institutions did not take deterrent measures. So, most of the files were subject to selectivity and were controlled by political instructions and directives.

3- State interference in economic activity and decline in purchasing power: The most corrupt sectors are those in which state interference is important and direct, especially service sectors. Which puts the citizen in a position of dependence on the administration and makes him inclined to bribery and other forms of corruption to benefit and obtain illegal privileges.

#### **Second: The reality of economic corruption in Iraq**

Economic corruption is one of the most prominent challenges in Iraq, and corruption extends from the highest authority in the state to the police station and food distribution centers in every small town. Thus, the wide scope of corruption undermines public and private attempts to achieve a better life for the Iraqi citizen and has taken several forms and types of waste of public money. This hindered the development process through empty governmental institutions, dilapidated infrastructure, and an inefficient public sector to advance the reality of development and its requirements. The process of wasting public money also took other forms of corruption at the hands of the highest levels of the state, represented by (bribery, expansion in the public sector, fraud in contracts, nepotism, and expansion of the private grade system). Many local and international reports referred to the extent of corruption and the funds drained from the international budget, which were as follows:

1- The value of the funds that the Integrity Commission was able to detect amounted to (604,423,239,815) Iraqi dinars and (9,999,150,085) US dollars. As for the money that was returned to the treasury (22,846,563,421) Iraqi dinars and (398,244) US dollars. As for the money that judicial decisions were issued to return, it amounted to (15,147,310,968) Iraqi dinars and (26,215,000) US dollars. As for the money that was seized during the seizure operations, it amounted to (81,385,000) Iraqi dinars and (16,400) US dollars. Thus, the total amount of money that was wasted and wasted is six hundred and forty-two billion, four hundred and ninety-eight million, four hundred and ninety-nine thousand, two hundred and four Iraqi dinars, ten billion, twenty-five million, seven hundred and seventy-nine thousand, seven hundred and twenty-nine US dollars (Federal Integrity Commission, 2021, 33).

2- Corruption in electricity generation and distribution led to losses ranging between 4 and 6 billion dollars between 2003 and 2020. Primarily, through implicit contracts, the purchase of equipment, and the use of bogus shell companies, such as the British Power Engines Company to build a power station in Dhi Qar, which acquired \$21 million from the Iraqi government for a bogus company. As well as the loss of 8 million dollars in the General Directorate of Northern Energy Production.

3- Building competitive electoral bases for power, which included many corruption deals, my agencies (Dodge, Mansour, 2021, 10-12).

**A-** The disappearance of at least \$320 billion of government funds over the past 15 years. This is according to what the Iraqi Parliamentary Transparency Committee estimated by state officials.

**B-** Illegal assets that were transferred abroad by some officials, with a value ranging between \$100 billion and \$300 billion.

**C -** Corruption transferred between 25% and 30% of the government budget to political parties.

**D -** Corruption devours a quarter of ministries' budgets on fraudulent bids, and the other quarter is wasted on political appointments and government employees who receive regular wages, but who have never come to work (ghost employees). The percentage of ghost employees ranged from (10-25)% for the year 2013, and they reached 300,000 ghost employees in the year 2000.

**E-** The number of employees increased from 850,000 in 2003 to 6.5 million in 2019, which allowed the expansion of salary scales for political



parties to build patronage networks by providing job opportunities for members of their constituencies.

It is noticeable that billions of dollars are smuggled out of the country through fictitious financial companies, most of which have been drained from the state treasury and from the livelihood of the Iraqi people. This led to the emptiness of the public treasury and the disruption of many economic and service projects, in addition to lagging projects. And that the reason for the economic collapse is the period of rule from 2006 to 2014, when an amount of 551 billion dollars entered Iraq, the government imported a total of 115 billion dollars, and the central bank sold 312 billion dollars to private banks. And this amount that was wasted could have built up the cash reserve (Shabib, 2021, 2).

**Second: Iraq's position on the scale of international corruption perceptions**

Transparency International's guide to global corruption is illustrated by the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) of 183 countries. It ranks countries from 0 to 100, where zero constitutes the highest levels of corruption, while 100 constitutes the lowest levels of corruption. According to the data of Transparency International, Iraq is one of the countries that have reached very advanced levels of corruption and occupied high levels. The corruption index in Iraq averaged 18.05 points from 2003 to 2021. It reached an all-time high of 23 points in 2021. And a record low of 13 points in 2008 (2022), (transparency international

Table (1) The value of the Corruption Index in Iraq from (2012-2021)

Years	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Degree	18	16	16	16	17	18	18	20	21	23

Source: tradingeconomics, 2022, transparency international

Through the above table, we notice that the Corruption Perceptions Index scored (18) out of (100) degrees for the year 2012, which is a low score that indicates the extent of corruption rates, especially after the deterioration of the security situation. Then, soon after 2012, corruption increased more widely. Therefore, the index value decreased to 16 degrees in 2013. This means that the degree of corruption increased by a change of 2 degrees compared to 2012. This is due to the escalation of corruption of all kinds and from the highest levels of the state. Whereas, this indicator witnessed a constant rate during the years (2013-2016). This is due to the fact that the political situation is still deteriorating and Iraq was suffering from a fragile and sectarian situation in all aspects of the state. Then the index witnessed a relative

increase, to return to its inclusion at (18) degrees. And it began to gradually increase by a change of only 2 degrees until it reached 23 degrees for the year 2021. This is still a low degree that is not commensurate with the independent budgets spent to combat corruption. As the budget of the Federal Integrity Commission only for the year 2021 amounted to (60,783,877,820) Iraqi dinars, and the number of its employees reached (2258) employees. (Federal Integrity Commission, 2021, 13). As for the global corruption rank, this rank starts from (1), which is the country that is free of corruption, to 183, the most corrupt rank according to the number of countries. The farther the country is from one number, the more it indicates the degree of corruption that the country has reached, according to the rank it has obtained.

Table (2) Global corruption rank for Iraq from year (2012-2021)

2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	Years
157	160	162	168	169	166	161	170	171	169	Rank

Source: 2022, tradingeconomics, transparency international

In the second table, we note that Iraq ranked 169 for the year 2012 out of 183 countries. And the rank took a negative fluctuation as a result of the large penetration of corruption. Until 2021, Iraq's rank in corruption reached 157, which is a rank that indicates that corruption in Iraq has reached a large and advanced degree. It seems that Iraq continues to achieve the same results, which have not changed much. This means, from the perspective of the international body, that the anti-corruption

agencies have not made significant efforts to besiege the centers of corruption rampant in the country in a manner commensurate with the scale of corruption and embezzlement crimes of all kinds in all aspects of the state.

Through Table No. (3), we notice that Iraq is in harmony globally with its peers from the countries in the Middle East and North Africa, such as Syria, Somalia, Yemen, Libya, Sudan, and the Comoros, which were unable to control pockets of corruption.





Therefore, according to this rank occupied by Iraq, which is at the bottom of the list with the most corrupt countries, the country needs more work in order to get out of the lagging positions on the index. Transparency Organization believes that corruption in Iraq has taken a systematic form by its political system based on power sharing and has been weakened by sectarianism. At a time when

civil society is under constant pressure as a result of the weakening of development and its inability to advance the reality of society. As corruption at its high levels deprives people of their basic rights, including access to safe drinking water, health care, electricity, job opportunities, and adequate infrastructure (Khurisan, 13, 2021.)

Table No. (3) The global ranking of Arab countries on the anti-corruption index 2021

Country	Rank
Emirates	24
Qatar	31
Saudi Arabia	52
Oman	56
Jordan	58
Tunisia	70
Kuwait	73
Bahrain	78
Morocco	87
Algeria	117
Egypt	117
Djibouti	128
Mauritania	140
Lebanon	154
Iraq	157
Comoros	164
Sudan	164
Libya	172
Yemen	174
Somalia	178
Syria	178

Transparency International for 2021

**Third: The effects of economic corruption in Iraq and the obstruction of the development process**

Corruption has become widespread within state institutions and has taken several forms, including bribery to obtain public services and nepotism in employment policies. In addition to the increasing cases of financial embezzlement, suspicious deals and fictitious jobs, the sale and purchase of high positions of the state and the sharing of customs revenues and direct taxes. This led to widening the gap between the formal and informal sectors, between the rich and the poor, and between urban

and rural society. The best evidence for this is the classification of Transparency International for the year 2021, which places Iraq in the position (157) out of 182 countries, according to Table No. (2). This shows a significant defect in the independence of the fight against corruption, its financial and human competence, and the weakness of the rule of law. Thus, corruption affected all development projects, obstructing the development process significantly and prominently, and obstructing all developmental dimensions, as follows:

1- Iraq fell into the trap of bad management, which hindered the translation of development



paths into tangible achievements. As the degree of deprivation reached (37.9%) according to the Human Development Report for the year 2021. The poverty rate in Iraq exceeded (25.5) for the year 2022, according to the latest report of the Ministry of Planning. Official and international statistical data showed the spread of poverty in Iraq. Whether it is the low level of human development in Iraq to an average level and equivalent to the level of development in the non-oil state of Morocco. Although Iraq is the second largest oil exporter after Saudi Arabia, in addition to the increase in the number of the unemployed to more than 5 million unemployed, and the decrease in the per capita GDP to 5955.11 dollars annually, and thus the rate of income poverty increased by 20%. Poverty is multidimensional at a rate of 35%, which means that more than a third of Iraq's population are poor. That is, 13 million poor people in Iraq at the present time (Al-Nidawi, 2021, 18). In a related context, corruption reduces investment incentives by tampering with specifications and curbing initiative, creativity and innovation. Its features are evident in Iraq's occupation of low ranks in the classifications of the business climate, which are not commensurate with its components, production capabilities, and reserves of natural resources. Not exploiting them in an optimal way for privatization processes to open up markets and consolidate competitiveness. As the Iraqi business environment suffers from a labor force that is not qualified for modern technology, weak protection of intellectual property rights, government bureaucracy, and slowness in regulatory reform. Iraq also occupies the center (0.686) in the scale of human development, which reveals the deterioration of living conditions and the decline in income-producing opportunities. It should be noted that Iraq loses annually due to the loss of job opportunities despite economic growth due to economic corruption. This is due to the obstacles placed in front of expanding the establishment of private projects and increasing the costs of doing business, and then pushing those businesses to the informal sector, which leads to reducing job opportunities by the private sector, especially small projects.

2- Corruption in Iraq is linked to the form of rents that dominate the economic system, which establishes a monopolistic system that protects illegal exploitation. In addition to social aspects through total or partial tax exemptions for some sectors. In addition to monopolistic practices and

the loss of fair competition. With the expansion of money smuggling, which reduces development opportunities in every decade. Thus, corruption weighed heavily on the shoulders of the Iraqi citizen. Where his purchasing power weakened, especially the poorest of them. Thus, corruption contributed to the deviation of democratic practice, the undermining of the rule of law, the deterioration of living conditions, the spread of crime and insecurity.

3- Job inflation through the influential people using their influence to hire large numbers of employees without the need for their services in exchange for bribes or personal considerations. This leads to a deterioration in government performance and an increase in expenditures on the operational aspects without regard to the important investment and service aspects. In addition to the poor presence of the basic service infrastructure.

4- Corruption hampered the efficiency of public services, undermined confidence in public institutions, and increased transaction costs. As a result, Iraq leads the country in terms of lack of confidence in government institutions in the Middle East and North Africa region. The process of building strong and anti-corruption institutions is an endeavor that requires effort and continuous improvement in order to achieve real development capable of advancing the country (OECD, 2019, 9).

5- The consequences resulting from the corruption of the general environment created a growing culture that established a general principle completely opposite to the principle of sustainable development, which is the principle of sharing temporary wealth instead of developing it and ensuring its permanence. And it created great suspicion of corruption of parties in the government and its failure to confront corruption. The focus has become not on the essence of development, which is the only way to salvation, but rather on political gain in accusing the parties of power to each other. While the truth is that the government's soft history in confronting corruption is the action that deserves confrontation, not reaction.

6- The difficulty of obtaining grants and loans from abroad or not benefiting from them due to the lack of confidence of international institutions in the ability of the government to direct them properly to serve the higher priorities of the state and society. As a special report of the International Monetary Fund indicates that there is a large percentage of the funds lent by American banks to developing countries, which return back to the United States



and Switzerland and are deposited in their banks in the personal accounts of officials from those countries.

7- Weakness and paralysis of investment Despite all the advantages included in the amended Investment Law No. (13) of 2006 and the security improvement, Iraq has not succeeded in attracting foreign capital. Iraq ranked (172) out of (190) countries, with only 7.44 points out of 100 points in the Doing Business Report for the year 2020. Iraq's classification declined in most of the report's axes, whether executive or legislative, including (Hassan, 7, 2020).

8- Exhaustion of funds that could be used in development projects. As 70% of the budget is spent on operational aspects and only 30% for investment (Chene, 2014). The state's resources were also wasted on ministries that do not carry out their duties and do not provide their services to the population. Iraq's wealth grew by 133 percent in the period 2005-2014. Which is one of the highest rates among resource-rich countries and was mainly driven by the depletion of oil reserves, but even with this significant contribution of oil resources Iraq's per capita income has not kept pace with other upper-middle-income countries. And during the period 2005-2019, the per capita GDP grew by 1.7 percentage points. It has not kept pace with upper-middle-income countries. This growth rate remains much slower than the UMIC average of 4.4 percent. It is imperative not to invest these funds in real continuous development that will benefit the development of Iraqi human capital. Today, human capital constitutes the largest share of wealth globally (64 percent). In contrast, Iraq's share of human capital as a percentage of total wealth is only 15 percent, which is the lowest in the Middle East and North Africa region. At a time when Iraq occupies the fifth largest oil reserves in its wealth (Word Bank GROUP, 2021, 222).

9- Iraq remains in a continuing crisis with the electricity network, despite the huge funds that are achieved from the sale of oil. Where Iraq occupies the second place in the OPEC oil-producing countries, but it is still completely dependent on the import of electricity and oil products. This is a problem that has a great impact on the production process and then on development through the operation of medium and small factories and simple business owners in light of a society whose children are suffering from unemployment.

10- Paralysis of the country's health institutions, whose fragility and shortcomings became evident

during the COVID-19 pandemic. So Iraqi citizens still lack access to adequate treatment and health care in government hospitals. At a time when Iraq's budget amounted to 106.5 billion dollars for 2019, and only 2.5 percent was allocated to health. The data of the World Health Organization indicated that Iraq's spending on health care per capita is much lower compared to the poorest countries during the past ten years. The Iraqi per capita share of this spending amounted to approximately \$161 on average, compared to \$304 in Jordan and \$649 in Lebanon (WHO, 2020, 53). In its latest assessment, the World Bank estimated Iraq's need to recover the health sector at (2.7) trillion dinars, or 2.3 billion US dollars (World Bank GROUP, 2021, 23).

11- The impact of corruption on educational institutions. After pioneering the region in the field of education during the 1970s, Iraq has since neglected its educational system and the country has been absent from the Global Education Quality Index issued by the World Economic Forum in Davos for the year 2015-2016. Corruption in the Ministry of Education could be a major factor in the deterioration of development as a result of corruption and neglect that has led to a low level of education and a lack of job opportunities for Iraqi university graduates (Odriscoll, 2018,21). Therefore, the World Bank estimated Iraq's total need for the reconstruction and recovery of the education sector to be (5.4 trillion dinars), or 4.6 billion US dollars (Word Bank GROUP, 2021, 32).

#### **Fourth: Obstacles facing anti-corruption agencies in Iraq**

1. The lack of a real desire to hold the corrupt accountable and seriously stand up to them, and the lack of available staff and workers in these agencies compared to the workers in the departments and institutions that monitor their work mechanisms, which makes the matter extremely difficult.
2. The recent creation and incorporation of anti-corruption agencies, which made them lack experience in controlling the outrageous and widespread corruption.
3. Adopting a bargaining mechanism to cover up corruption. As the leaders of the ruling parties participated and shared the proceeds of corruption. And the agreement of all the ruling political parties on the partnership to keep the situation as it is. With the existence of partisan competition between the ruling political parties and



forces that prefer their own interests over the public interest, and for them the government is only a source of enrichment. In addition to the government's lack of interest in reports of corruption and the ruling parties' lack of seriousness in confronting it. With the refusal of the ministries to cooperate with the Integrity Commission, which cannot bring its investigators into the ministries except in an unreal routine that did not achieve results on the ground.

4. The lack of full independence of the commission, the lack of political support for it, the political, social and clan pressures exerted on it, and the illegitimate hands that try to corrupt or politicize the commission's investigators (Muhammad, 2013, 14).

#### **Fifth: Ways to address the phenomenon of economic corruption in Iraq**

1. Combating corruption is a complex process that requires a comprehensive strategy and approach that combines two broad functions: (a) investigating and prosecuting corrupt entities (b) developing a national anti-corruption strategy and reducing opportunities for corruption in government operations. A third function does not deal with corruption directly, but involves educating people about the risks of corruption and creating public support for the activities of the anti-corruption agency. These three functions do not need a single institution to implement them, but they are all linked to the overall anti-corruption strategy. Failure to include any of these functions exposes all anti-corruption efforts to undermining (Mohammed, 16, 2013).
2. Correcting the path requires reform pillars that formulate a unified vision incubating political conviction and strategic direction. Corruption does not coexist with development, but rather drains it, and besieging it requires will and management. Any sincere will with responsible behavior and exemplary management with conscious and dynamic leadership.
3. Building a base of public support and strengthening political will, provided that reform starts from the top down. With broad powers given to one regulatory body

that enjoys independence in monitoring the three authorities.

4. Integrity and transparency are effective values in combating corruption. It requires work to establish the concept of integrity through comprehensive reform programs that enjoy strong political and media support. It is based on diagnosing the problem, addressing its causes, and the cooperation of government agencies and society alike. To work to establish the moral principles and values of society and to promote the concept of integrity and transparency on the basis of partnership in the fight against corruption. Establishing the values of integrity and transparency in societies leads to achieving sustainable development and improving the quality of life for citizens and the rule of law on the one hand. On the other hand, corruption is costly and low-profit.
5. Efficient handling of complaints is an integral part of the function of the anti-corruption agency because people should have a way to express their grievances to an institution they trust. This role is of exceptional importance in post-authoritarian democracies.
6. The anti-corruption agency should be subject to oversight. There are two main elements in oversight: the first is the transparent administration of the apparatus itself, and the second is its accountability to other branches of government. That is, subjecting the apparatus to the review of an external committee composed of representatives of various state institutions, such as parliament, the judiciary, and even the private sector.
7. Encouraging the role of civil society organizations in taking preventive measures to ensure the participation of civil society organizations in defining the dangers of corruption and its effects on society, and expanding their role in anti-corruption activities and combating it.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

1. Corruption obstructs and distorts the development process, as most of the funds allocated for development programs go to the benefit of the corrupt. Thus draining more development resources. Those





resources that society desperately needs. Corruption is a reason for high unemployment rates, the increase in the cost of living, and the underdevelopment of the education and health sectors, all of which impose heavy costs on the state treasury and impede the development process.

2. Iraq has achieved very advanced positions in corruption, which made it a country where corruption is greatly advanced in all its joints and institutions.
3. The negative economic effects of corruption are compounded, as each corruption creates a "double" corruption. The negative economic impact of corruption creates a "negative" multiplier effect.
4. The high level of corruption in any society is only a reflection of the absence of good governance and the absence of moral scruples. Any rule must consist of a number of elements that, if available in any political system, would make the phenomenon of corruption a limited phenomenon, and among these elements is the availability of transparency, accountability and accountability.
5. The large spread of corruption despite the great demands, plans and bodies that have been put in place to combat it in Iraq indicates a defect in the administration and financial control in the Iraqi state.
6. Corruption in Iraq has risen to the highest hierarchy in power, with the absence of accountability and lack of oversight of the influential classes that have an active role in governance, starting from the top administrations. This led to the spread of corruption in it in a cancerous manner, rampant in all state agencies and at all levels.
7. Economic corruption has caused the loss of the Iraqi people's money and wasted economic and financial resources that affect the future of future generations.
8. Corruption has led to the flight of investors and qualified people outside the country, due to nepotism and nepotism, and the filling of public positions by a certain group over another, which leads to a weak sense of citizenship and belonging to the country.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Starting the reform process from the highest hierarchy of power, including ministries, special grades, senior officials and party leaders. That is, an attempt to reform the political system first, and hold the higher ranks of the Iraqi state accountable, and subject their accounts and funds to scrutiny.
2. Iraq is a rentier country that is decreasing over time while people's needs are increasing sharply, and the correct diagnosis of the diseases of its economy. And the intense focus in building on the aspects of strength in it requires the mobilization of all the powers of the mind to avoid the evil of resource theft. Time and resources are limited and failure to utilize them properly is the way to push the country into a state of instability. The country needs to create double the job opportunities it created in 60 years in less than 30 years.
3. Adopting a correct vision to be the road map for fixing some defects in the awareness and competence of the main management of the development project at the current prevailing levels of corruption. Confronting corruption does not require many speeches and declarations of intentions, but requires confronting facts that have become epidemic and known to all.
4. Establishing the principle of transparency and integrity in economic and administrative transactions, which ensures the rational management of funds, resources and state property and the optimal use of them.
5. Promoting the principle of cooperation and participation with countries and regional and international organizations in anti-corruption campaigns, while strengthening the authorities concerned with combating corruption administratively, technically and financially, and developing citizens' sense of social justice and the danger of corruption.
6. Carefully reviewing government structures and procedures, distributing tasks, responsibilities and powers, and developing them to ensure clear separation in the decision-making process, its implementation, monitoring



implementation, and work on continuous and flexible restructuring of government agencies on an ongoing basis.

7. Allocating an independent budget for basic services and infrastructure, which is the basis for advancing the development process, provided that this budget is supervised by oversight bodies known for their integrity.

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