

How do Perceptions of Outgroups Indicate Barriers to Civil Society in Iraq?

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Abstract

At the Iraq "liberation" in 2003, many of us asked, "Is there really hope for civil society to emerge from the chaos?" We guessed about how Sunni, Shi'a and Kurdish factions could be brought together, and if it was likely that ethnic conflicts would lead to civil war. Seeking a better understanding of the situation, this project tried to address: "How do Iraqis' ethnic and religious identities relate to perceptions of other groups (outgroups)?" and "how does place of residence relate to those perceptions about outgroups?"

I collected 479 surveys of Iraqi opinions in Iraq, Jordan, and The Netherlands. I asked Iraqis for their own ideas about their future, personal and collective, and their perceptions of Those Other Groups, their "outgroups." What did I find? That background items of religion, ethnic origin, and location, alone, did not relate strongly to respondents' attitudes towards outgroups. But, some combinations of background items did give significant differences in perceptions towards other groups.

For example, "moderate" Arabs in Iraq were the group most opposed to foreigners, and were the group most opposed to expatriate Iraqis returning to Iraq.

This project, and the follow-up project on social networks of Iraqis, presents one approach from which researchers and fieldworkers can develop theories to explore and explain elements of civil society in Iraq, and beyond.

CIVIL SOCIETY IRAQ

المجتمع القومي العراقي

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Which Perceptions of Which Outgroups Indicate Barriers to a Civil Society Nation-State in Iraq?

Introduction

The 2003 change of government in Iraq set up opportunity for a different Iraq to emerge: a unified nation-state, with some degree of civil society and tolerance by each of the main ethnic groups for each others' rights to:

- equality before and rule by law
- secure access to food, shelter, and clothing
- equal voice to shape their future.

Unfortunately, there was no body of literature available on:

- tribal or intergroup confederations, allegiances, or compositions
- ingroup, outgroup, or intergroup definitions or perceptions of each other
- differences between intergroup perceptions in different locations

I also could not find research instruments designed to measure intergroup perceptions of Iraqi peoples.

All together, this seemed a unique opportunity to explore intergroup relations in a regime-change context.

Purpose

I wanted to accomplish five things in this pilot project:

1. Collect data on Iraq ethnic and religious perceptions about threat from other groups-- immediately after the war,
2. Evaluate this research process,
3. Analyze the data, looking for interesting facts about the people surveyed and their perceptions of those of other groups,
4. Put findings quickly into the hands of Iraq fieldworkers,
5. Design follow-up studies on Iraqi social networks and how they affect repatriation into home societies of Iraqis living abroad.

Questions I explored included:

1. How do ethnic and religious identities relate to perceptions of threat from other groups?
i.e.: Would all Sunni respondents express similar perceptions towards Shia Iraqis?
2. How do locations of respondents relate to perceptions of threat from other groups?
i.e.: Would respondents in urban Basra express different ideas than those in rural Basra?
3. How do perceptions about return migration differ among groups and locations?
i.e.: Would all Iraqis express similar perceptions towards the return of expatriate Iraqis?
4. How do perceptions differ concerning threat by foreign states?
i.e.: Would all respondents perceive in the same way the intentions of the USA and Iran?

Background: This post-conflict environment and ideals of "Civil Society"

Before I present my research process, it is important to describe my understanding of Iraq's social situation, because it seems to me that hope for good living in Iraq would come from three integrated types of civility:

1. Personal norms, morals, and values promoted as "good" in a community,
2. Associations of organized groups and informal networks that are active in geographic, financial, political, and religious interests of their members, and
3. Overarching authority to provide equality before the law, provide food-shelter-clothing resources, and provide a voice in shaping their common future.²

These are reasonable ambitions for nation-builders in Iraq. According to Michael Edwards, the World Bank working definition for civil society is "the arena in which people come

together to pursue the interests they hold in common; it includes all organisations and associations between family and state, except firms".³ Kaviraj contributes a historical perspective, saying that "Civil society is not a new, post-Hegelian concept. It is a much older term, which entered into English usage via the Latin translation, 'societas civilis', of Aristotle's 'koinonia politike'. In its original sense, it allowed no distinction between 'state' and 'society' or between political and civil society: it simply meant a community, a collection of human beings united within a legitimate political order, and was variously rendered as 'society' or 'community'" ⁴

This applies here, because nation building in Iraq needs a government established through just political and legal processes, and needs threat-free associations for the common good. This is the only basis from which to deal morally with criminal actions, while increasing security for non-criminals. Without a strong central government to facilitate equal protection under the law and equal access to resources, and without evidence of many non-state organizations with membership across ethnic and religious lines, security seems mostly based in social networks--among near-kinsmen and close friends. Without security beyond such a small circle of relationships, Civil Society and civil society, is unlikely to happen.

This is why perceptions of threat from outgroups must be understood.

How can we compare outgroup perceptions?

Nelson claims that traditional prejudice and bias research relies upon measures that can confuse a specific emotional response with a general group stereotype.⁵ For example, bias is usually measured as the difference between how we see our own group and how we see That Other Group. My opinion is that exploring bias and prejudice between and among groups in Iraq needs to access both open and hidden personal viewpoints on outgroups.

For example, a common media expression now is that Iraqis hate Americans. That is not true. There is no national hatred of Americans. Yes, there are some groups, and many individuals who hate America, or Americans. But not all groups and certainly not all individuals.



Unless personal views of groups are measured and dealt with personally, before action at the group level is taken, an "implosion" of society into smaller and smaller units seems likely. Drake describes perfectly the past and present situations in Iraq.

The model for Iraq's disintegration, if it occurs, will likely not be the Soviet Union but rather Lebanon; in contrast to the notion of "breakup," which implies a territorial explosion of an entity into separate states, I refer here to the opposite notion of "breakdown"--a form of civil anarchy resulting from the implosion of society, economy, and polity within the boundaries of a failed state.⁶

She goes on to state that although an overarching government could be enforced, it does not do away with underlying group characteristics, even though they may be hidden from view.

Since most groups in Iraq are not strictly limited by geography, then geographic identities are not present to promote cooperation and conciliatory behavior.⁷ Neither is there evidence of inter-ethnic non-state organizations, other than the General Federation of Iraqi Women, the UNICEF/WHO-promoted Primary Health Care services, and the agricultural research system. Multi-group coalition building was not tolerated during the previous regime.

However, other social groups and "patron-client" networks are very strong, since they provide the social capital resources that group members need.⁸ A true multi-party democracy is not yet evident, but, thankfully, neither is an absolute re-tribalization of Iraq.

The article "UNDP and Civil Society Organizations" at <http://www.undp.org/cso/> states, "On the ground, civil society organizations...have always been vital partners in helping communities build their own solutions to development challenges...and...have come from within civil society." Government agencies tend to see civil society organizations as groups that are not of a government; and international organizations, such as the UN, tend to see civil society organizations as community groups within a within a geographic region.

Perhaps civil society is defined best by what it is not--uncivil society. Abraham Herschel said, "The opposite of good is not evil, the opposite of good is indifference"; so, then, is the opposite of civil society, "apathetic society" or "anti-civility"? Anti-civility implies consensus, but apathetic implies...nothing. No hope, no action other than survival, no corporate or personal initiative except to take from others before they take from you. And that may be an accurate description of many Iraqi groups, both in 2003, and today.

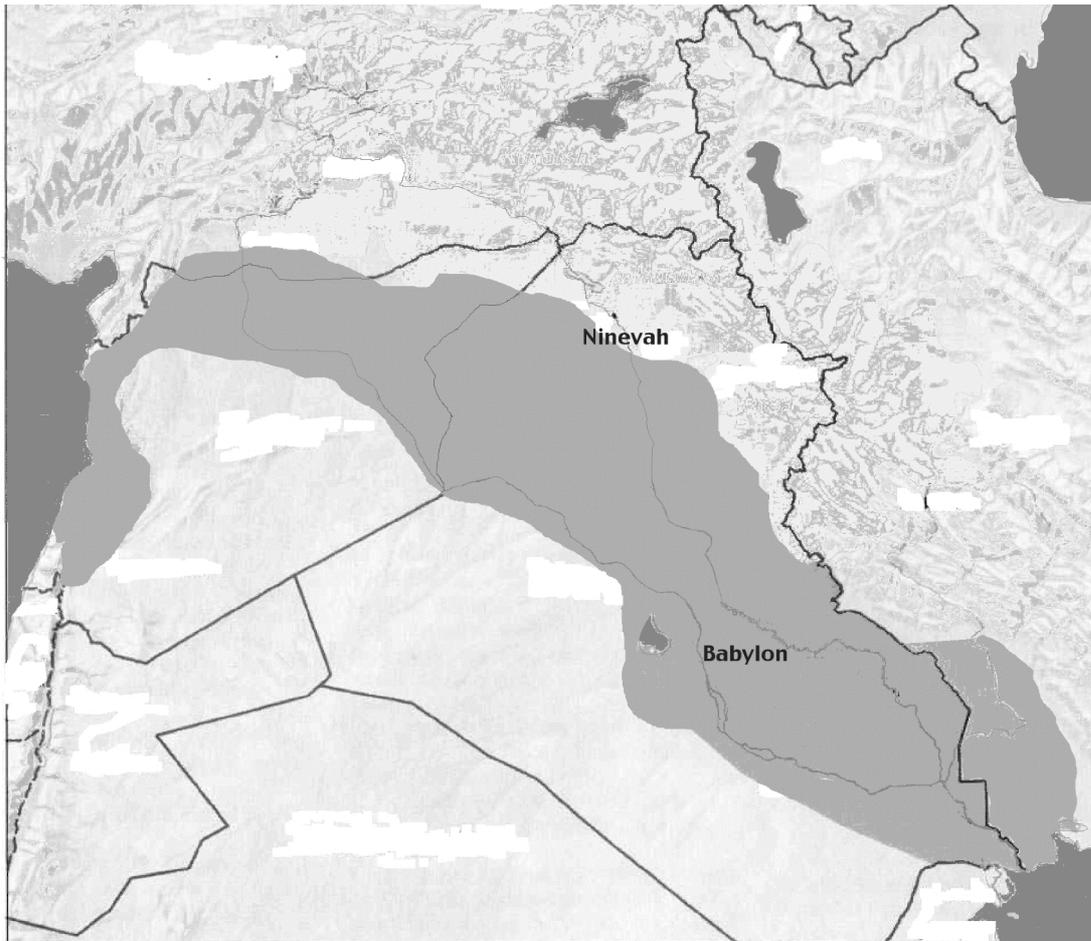
We define color of light as a combination of three colors, red-green-blue, each with many levels of intensity, in layers or channels. The "color" we see as a social community is also a combining of layers and channels of community members. And, the filters of time and distance give us both clearer and fuzzier perceptions. And Iraq has also an invisible spectrum, including perceptions of personal and group history, the spirit-world, ambition, and hatred. In this way, "civil society" must include the norms and values of a given community at a point in time, including "criminal behavior" tolerated in some communities more than in others.

I, then, use the term "civil society" in a multi-purpose sense to include behavior, attitudes, and social systems. This also relates to similar concepts in the studies of social capital and social networks, "the features of the structure of social relations that facilitate action."⁹ More discussions and a bibliography are found on the website, <http://www.civilsocietyiraq.seedwiki.com>.

Historical Context of Iraq: The main thread of importance--Power against Outgroups

The history of Iraq built many constraints on the development of a representative and civil society expression in Iraq. I list the major points tersely to emphasize their significance, not to minimize them.

--The area known as Iraq was the birthplace of agriculture, domestic animals, the wheel, and writing. It was also home to the mega-power centers of the Akkadian, Assyrian, Chaldean, and Babylonian empires which all supported regime-sponsored violence against minority populations.



The Fertile Crescent, Iraq and its neighbors

--The (foreign) Arab conquest of Iraq in the 7th century AD magnified power struggles between Mesopotamian and Arab cultures. Ali ibn abi Talib, son-in-law and cousin of the Prophet Mohammed, who was murdered in Iraq, "appears to have been of a mild and kindly disposition, insufficiently ruthless to dominate so turbulent a community".¹⁰ Did loyal followers of Ali kill him because he was insufficiently ruthless to rule Iraq?

--The (foreign) Mongol massacres in the 13th - 14th centuries left the land and peoples destitute of their famous irrigation systems, their literature, and their organized social systems. These foreign-led massacres are remembered.

--The (foreign) Turkish occupation from the 16th century, reconstructed government systems for taxation and rule by decree and power, not law. Social groups seen as indomitable were destroyed.

--The Sykes-Picot Agreement, 1916, drew the multi-ethnic geographic boundaries within the Turkish/Ottoman Empire, with rule over Arabia, Palestine, and Mesopotamia given to a (foreign) Saudi Arabian tribe as reward for their political loyalty.¹¹ The new king did not represent the best interests of the Iraqi people and his reign was brief.

--In 1958, pan-Arabism & anti-foreignism brought Saddam and his near kinsmen into being THE ingroup; everyone else was of the absolute outgroup. Under their rule, no sphere of life was without state control. There were NO civil or private affairs, and approximately four million Iraqis left the country to seek a more civil life elsewhere.

--The 2003 (foreign) overthrow of the ruling regime was not by popular election, and rule by law is not yet the norm. Security is still missing, as is civility.

This past is not forgotten; it is not even past
(paraphrasing William Faulkner).

My Assumptions Concerning the Process

1. I planned for very limited time with any individual respondent due to the post-war instability, so I limited the survey to one page. Write-in items included items about age, years residing at their current location, education, and number of children at home.
2. The survey was designed to be self-answerable for individuals with a low level of literacy. See Appendix 2 for a sample.
3. As there were few outgroup studies similar to this project, research design was adapted from a Russian Federation outgroup perceptions study by Hagendoorn, Linssen & Tumanov.
4. Opinion items were designed to be non-threatening as possible, since I did not know exactly what would happen when questions were asked about ethnicity, religion, Saddam Hussein, Iran, etc. I chose to use a short survey instrument, with indirect questions about intergroup perceptions to avoid getting "politically-correct answers."
5. Favoring expedience over perfection, the English version of the survey form was given to two Iraqi translators, with an emphasis on producing a simple format appropriate for marginally-literate Iraqi respondents. Both translators quickly returned the completed form on paper and disk, and their translations were compared and integrated into one final version.
6. Intergroup studies should explain the variance in answers to questions. That is, differences in answers to some questions, (the **dependent** variables), should be explained by a few answers to other questions, (the **independent** variables). For example, different perceptions of other groups might be explained by ethnic or religious identity.
7. Needing to measure both obvious and hidden opinions, three versions of the survey instrument were used:
 - "primed" against the main ethnic outgroup,
 - "primed" against the main religious outgroup, and
 - a neutral version with no specific priming or mention of outgroups in questions.Priming is using a key word choice, or question ordering, to elicit a stronger reaction that may not be "politically correct." This combination of questions allowed both implicit (indirect) and explicit (direct) measures of intergroup perceptions. Comparing answers to both indirect and direct questions can reveal not only the politically-correctness of the respondent, but also an estimate of a range of probable answers to other questions that may not include both the indirect and direct forms.
8. This research process needed to test both process (what could be done in an immediate post-war situation) and content (what might be the expressed perceptions of threat or bias against personal, group, and national outgroups). This may be considered as "inferential data mining", but as a pilot project, it was appropriate, especially given the lack of pre-war literature on Iraq social systems. The intent of this project was not to test pre-established theories, nor to generalize to the larger population, but to work on a methodology and to lay a foundation for follow up studies on the social networks of Iraqis. The set of variables is not comprehensive, and neither is sample size large enough to apply to the whole population.
9. Statistically-speaking, I assumed the following for the process & methods:
 - a. Data would be representative of a "normally-distributed" population
 - b. Variance of responses would be homogeneous
(a bell-shaped curve should appear)
 - c. Responses would be appropriate to the survey items asked
 - d. Responses between respondents would be independent
(each person would answer independently of others who may have been present when the survey was taken)
 - e. Data would show internal validity for describing some intergroup relations,

and for planning research in the future, but the sample size was too small to make generalizations about the whole population of Iraq.

Some data analyses might go beyond description and seek to explain some relationships, but that would not be the overall objective of the project.

- f. Due to my estimation of the post-war environment, it would be inappropriate to ask questions concerning gender, personal identity, tribal affiliation, and political participation.
- g. Questions would be designed for quick response, using a 4-point Likert scale, instead of a 5 or 7-point scale.

Surveying Process

Basic research goals and research questions were defined and the survey was emailed to professional Iraqi translators, with explanations given by email and by telephone calls before I arrived in Jordan. Surveys were tested with Iraqi friends of friends, before I traveled to Iraq. Appendix 2 shows a sample of the English, non-primed version of the survey.

To find surveyors in Iraq, I looked for groups of young Iraqi men. In the groups, I found a few that would complete for me a survey on the "Social Community of Iraqis." After we went through the survey together, I asked them if they would like to help interview others in the same way. We went back through the survey again, discussing any points of confusion. They asked if I could pay. I agreed, negotiated a reasonable price, gave them an advance of half of the agreed price, and sent them out with a pile of survey forms, a number of pens, and large envelopes in which to carry the forms. A sample of the instructions given (orally) is in Appendix I, "Sample of Instructions Given to Surveyors."

Data was collected through "snowballing", that is, going to close friends who would not reject their first attempts, collect opinions, and then ask them to find others who would also give opinions. Respondents were not selected completely at random, they were not part of a complicated, stratified sampling, and they were not completely independent from previous association with the surveyor.

My preference was to move fast. Given the violence and uncertainty in Iraq at that time, I was grateful to have collected data with no harm to any of the surveyors. Later in 2003, other organizations also collected opinions on quality of life and political situations. Their research cost some of them more than ten times the price per survey as mine, but they did extensive oral interviews on economics and politics and as well as more-traditional census items, and their surveyors often collected only a few surveys per day due to travel curfews and fear for safety. I do appreciate their contributions in Iraq.

Respondents were interviewed (almost always), in homes, sometimes with two or three adult members of a family completing the surveys at the same time with the surveyor guiding the process and answering questions.

Location-Specific Differences in Collection

In Baghdad, I contacted a former friend to ask for his help. I also joined a food distribution project to meet a large number of people, and found two respondents willing to collect surveys for me in their home communities.

In Basra, I found two students eager to answer questions and to collect from others. They were asked to interview twenty-five people each, with one student working in the Basra city area, and the other in two provincial areas outside of Basra.

In Amman, Jordan, and Leiden, the Netherlands, I contacted students who were willing to collect surveys. In Jordan and in the Netherlands, I also offered an English language version of the form in the event that some respondents could not read Arabic.



Survey locations in Amman, Baghdad, Basrah

Post-Collection

Surveys were completed and returned to me quickly. Surveys were numbered in order of collection, write-in comments were added to the files, coding sheets were developed to handle accurately the Arabic and English differences in formatting and answering, and then numerical data was entered. Analysis began with data standardization, especially with entries for "other ethnic group," and "other religion," and to deal appropriately with incorrectly entered items. I created additional variables for composites of original items.

Analysis Processes

Web Presentation

Handling of the **research process** itself was reported onto the website, <http://www.CivilSocietyIraq.seedwiki.com>. This wiki (an internet web forum) contained several main areas: a basic review of literature, current events that related to research interests, links to other agencies and individuals with an interest in Iraq, and, most importantly, forums where visitors could participate in the writing and rewriting of the web content itself. The "wiki" was hosted at <http://www.seedwiki.com> under the management of Kenneth Tyler.

Choosing dense content over high-bandwidth graphics, I opted for a text-only format after experimenting with a variety of graphics and other features that looked good but interfered with fast skimming for information. Several web designers and webpage hosters commented to me about how bad the site looked without any graphics. They are correct, and I could have designed the pages to work better. The wiki led me to meet many other academics and field worker administrators with documents and research to contribute. I was amazed that there were often over one hundred different visitors per day to the wiki.

Technical Analyses

After converting all write-in and multiple-choice answers to standard numerical scales, they were processed using SPSS to find which respondents gave what answers, and then comparing all possible answers with all other answers. That is, to look for any patterns of response between all thirty-two survey questions. For example, age of respondent was compared to answers to all other questions to see if age was directly related to opinions.

Then, using multivariate analysis, all combinations of questions were compared to see which combinations of questions gave common answers to other items. Since there were no traditional theories to prove or disprove, I was free to explore what the Iraqi people could tell me about themselves and about Those Other Groups.

Results: Five Locations: Baghdad, Basra urban, Basra rural, Jordan, Netherlands
(71% in Iraq and 38% outside of Iraq) from 412 respondents (479 surveys¹²).

Sample of Demographic Item Responses (% of Respondents by Location, N=412)

ITEM	LOCATION				
	Baghdad N=225, 55%	Basra (urban) N=13, 3.2%	Basra (rural) 14, 3.4%	Jordan N=129, 31%	Netherlands N=31, 7%
Ethnic Identity	Arab 59%, Kurd 6%, Other 35% ^a	Arab 100% Kurd 0% Other 0%	Arab 93%, Kurd 0% Other 7%	Arab 73%, Kurd 14%, Other 13% ^a	Arab 80%, Kurd 20% Other 0%
Ethnic Importance	Little 3% Important 61% Very 28% Most 8%	Little 7.7% Import. 31% Very 54% Most 7.7%	Little 0% Import. 50% Very 21% Most 29%	Little 33% Import. 44% Very 18% Most 5%	Little 10% Import. 59% Very 17% Most 14%
Religious Identity	Shi'a 20.3% Sunni 12.4% Other 67.3%	Shi'a 76.9% Sunni 15.4% Other 7.7%	Shi'a 57.1% Sunni 35.7% Other 7.1%	Shi'a 43.4% Sunni 41.1% Other 15.5%	Shi'a 76.7% Sunni 23.3% Other 0.0%
Religious Importance	Little 5% Important 15% Very 36% Most 44%	Little 8% Import. 15% Very 54% Most 23%	Little 0% Import. 14% Very 36% Most 50%	Little 23% Import. 39% Very 24% Most 14%	Little 6% Import. 32% Very 39% Most 23%
Age (Years)	Mean 31.5 Std. Dev 11.2	Mean 35.8 Std. Dev 5.2	Mean 35.9 Std. Dev 9.0	Mean 32.4 Std. Dev 9.28	Mean 31.5 Std. Dev 9.53
Number Dependent Children	Mean 2.8 Std. Dev 3.5	Mean 6.1 Std. Dev 4.2	Mean 4 Std. Dev 3.4	Mean 7.5 ^b Std. Dev 3.5	Mean ^b 3.1 Std. Dev 2.9
Years at this place	Mean 24.4 Std. Dev 10.8	Mean 33.8 Std. Dev 5.4	Mean 34.9 Std. Dev 10.9	Mean 3.7 Std. Dev 2.2	Mean 10.5 Std. Dev 4.6
Probability of another Saddam-like regime	Never 46% Unlikely 37% Likely 13% Absolute 4%	Never 54% Unlikely 23% Likely 23% Absolute 0%	Never 43% Unlikely 43% Likely 14% Absolute 0%	Never 56% Unlikely 29% Likely 14% Absolute 1%	Never 73% Unlikely 23% Likely 4% Absolute 0%
Division of Country Good/Bad	Very good 8% Good 22% Bad 44% Very bad 26%	Very good 0% Good 0% Bad 61% Very bad 39%	Very good 7% Good 7% Bad 22% Very bad 64%	Very good 1% Good 2% Bad 40% Very bad 57%	Very good 16% Good 13% Bad 39% Very bad 32%
Return of Expatriate Iraqis	Help 45% Allow 33% Must Ask 17% Deny 5%	Help 31% Allow 69% Must Ask 0% Deny 0%	Help 100% Allow 0% Must Ask 0% Deny 0%	Help 62% Allow 29% Must Ask 9% Deny 0%	Help 32% Allow 52% Must Ask 16% Deny 0%

N = no. of respondents; Mean = average; Std. dev = how much difference there could be off the mean

^a Other Ethnicity. Baghdad: Not-defined-86%, Chaldean-11%, Assurian-3%, Armenian-0.4%; Amman: Assurian-100%. These were write-in responses, and very unexpected. The main purpose of the survey was to compare Sunni-Shia communities; the high number of non-Muslim responses can be dealt with in another article.

^b Number of Children: Amman-98 missing responses; Netherlands-19 missing responses. Most of the 400,000 Iraqis in Amman are reported to be single, young men, and therefore no response might mean that they were not married either.

^c Questions concerning expatriate Iraqis. "Iraqi citizens forced to leave the country during Saddam's rule should: Be encouraged to return (Help); Be allowed to return (allow); First ask permission (Must Ask); Be denied access to return to Iraq (Deny)", and "Do you think that all Iraqi people will profit if Iraqi people living outside would return soon?". Answers to the first question (reported above) were strongly in favor of repatriation, but answers to the second question were not.

ITEM	Baghdad N=225, 55%	Basra (urban) N=13, 3.2%	Basra (rural) 14, 3.4%	Jordan N=129, 31%	Netherlands N=31, 7%
USA will ... for domination	Battle 8% Encourage 70% Discourage 20% Do Nil 2%	Battle 8% Encourage 92% Discourage 0% Do Nil 0%	Battle 36% Encourage 64% Discourage 0% Do Nil 0%	Battle 25% Encourage 73% Discourage 2% Do Nil 0%	Battle 7% Encourage 93% Discourage 0% Do Nil 0%
Iran will ... for domination	Battle 17% Encourage 48% Discourage 34% Do Nil 1%	Battle 46% Encourage 23% Discourage 31% Do Nil 0%	Battle 0% Encourage 21% Discourage 15% Do Nil 64%	Battle 5% Encourage 44% Discourage 49% Do Nil 2%	Battle 3% Encourage 65% Discourage 32% Do Nil 0%
Turkey will ... for domination	Battle 12% Encourage 18% Discourage 51% Do Nil 19%	Battle 0% Encourage 62% Discourage 39% Do Nil 0%	Battle 0% Encourage 36% Discourage 0% Do Nil 64%	Battle 0% Encourage 17% Discourage 61% Do Nil 22%	Battle 0% Encourage 35% Discourage 52% Do Nil 13%
Russia will ... for domination	Battle 4% Encourage 6% Discourage 46% Do Nil 44%	Battle 0% Encourage 0% Discourage 100% Do Nil 0%	Battle 0% Encourage 21% Discourage 14% Do Nil 64%	Battle 0% Encourage 6% Discourage 49% Do Nil 45%	Battle 0% Encourage 10% Discourage 48% Do Nil 42%

Notes on the Findings

1. Religion and Ethnicity

-Respondents were mostly Arab, and mostly Shi'a, which reflects the composition of all Iraqis worldwide; most Iraqi respondents expressed a strong attachment to their religion.

Compare Iraq statistics (generally reported, but not considered reliable) with our sampling:

	Our sample %	Reported Iraq statistics (1990)
Ethnic Identity	Arab 81%, Kurd 8%, Other 11% ^a	78% 20% 4%
Religious Identity	Shi'a 55% Sunni 26% Other 19%	65% 17% 18%

There are no ethnic or religious identity breakdowns available for Iraqis living in Jordan or the Netherlands, or worldwide, except for rough estimates at <http://www.Ethnologue.com>.

Comments on this table:

-Only in Basra did most respondents place a strong value on their ethnicity.

-Those who identified themselves as Shi'a expressed less trust in the government. Other groups did not express such strong perceptions.

-There were a large number of respondents who chose to respond as "Other" for religion or ethnicity, without any explanation or other comments given. A large number of "Other" wrote in a Christian identification for ethnicity and/or religion (see footnotes to the table above).

-Religion and importance of religion showed correlation with ethnicity
(F 74.98 and F .424 at p<.001, respectively)

and with importance of ethnicity
(F .138 and F .215 at p<.001).

-Religious identification showed a strong relationship with importance of religion
(F (3,398)=39.07; p<.001).

2. External Threats

- Those who expressed that foreign countries were expected to help protect Iraq's natural resources also expressed more support for division of Iraq, but those who expected the USA to protect Iraq's natural resources did not support the division of Iraq.
- Those who expressed that Iran, Turkey or Russia were expected to support creation of an Islamic Republic also expressed greater support for division of Iraq.
- Russia was not seen as seeking to either dominate Iraqi people or to promote an Islamic Republic.
- Turkey was seen in southern Iraq and among expatriate Iraqis as almost identical to Russia in perceived threat of domination and exploitation. The small number of Kurdish respondents, none of whom lived in the north of Iraq, would limit the extent to which findings would be representative of Kurdish people living elsewhere.
- The USA was expected to dominate Iraqi people but also to protect Iraqi oil (against other foreigners).
- In southern Iraq, the USA was expected to dominate the Iraqi people but NOT to support an Islamic republic.
- Iran was seen to promote an Islamic Republic, and to seek to dominate Iraqi people. More perception of this threat was expressed in non-Basra locations, which relates directly to ethnic and religious backgrounds of respondents. Those who were Shi'a did not express a perception of threat from Iran, which is also Shi'a, but is mostly Persian, not Arab.

3. Location Factors. Location of respondents had a significant relationship with many survey questions, much more than factors of religion or ethnicity. That is why the tables (above) were reported by location instead of by other factors. Location appears also related to the length of residence in a location (seven years on average for expatriate Iraqis and thirty-one years in one location for those surveyed inside of Iraq).

- In Baghdad and The Netherlands, fewer respondents saw division of the country as bad.
- Those in Baghdad expressed more often that there could again be a regime similar to Saddam's.
- Expatriate Iraqis full confidence that Iraqi people would profit from return migration.
- 100% of those in urban Basra expressed that all Iraqis have a duty to defend Iraq. This was not the case in other places.
- Expatriate Iraqis were confident that "the new government of Iraq will be able to give peace and safety", and that "all Iraqis will support the new government", much more than were Iraqis living inside Iraq.
- Those in southern Iraq did not express confidence in the government.
- Those in Baghdad and Jordan did express confidence in the new government.

It is beyond the scope of this project to speculate as to the reasons behind the above descriptions of responses.

Conclusions

Content. The findings from my study of perceptions of outgroups in Iraq include the following outcomes with respect to my purposes of the project.

1. Ethnic and religious identities, alone, *did not* relate directly to perceptions of outgroups. There were no strong perceptions that could be directly attributed to only ethnicity or to religion. In future surveys, there needs a stronger differentiation for other ethnic and religious identities, such as Armenian, Chaldean, Assyrian, Turkoman and Mandaean, as well as those with foreign ancestry.
2. Different survey locations did reveal differing perceptions towards the repatriation of foreign-living Iraqis, and towards other outgroup perceptions. That is, people in different places expressed different perceptions about groups different from themselves.
3. There were differences in perceptions of threat or domination by foreign states. That is, not all Iraqis expressed the same perceptions about anything or any state!
4. There was considerable difference in opinion about the return of a Saddam-like government. This work began in May 2003, when his location was still unknown to most people.
5. Questions relating to education and number of children were not answered reliably by all respondents.

Comments on the Methodology

This research process was successful in setting out a point of departure for future studies on social systems of modern Iraq.

1. The data and process relates well to studies in the fields of civil society, social identity & conformity, social networks, and intergroup relations.
2. Rapid data collection in an immediate post-war environment can provide a useful foundation for analyses of social systems and schisms between ethnic and religious groups. Moving fast in the data collection was a good choice for this project. None of the team were injured or hindered by curfews.
3. Survey elements were useful in content and format, data collection approaches worked even without highly-controlled environments, and the use in Iraq and among Iraqi expatriates of the same survey forms allowed comparison across locations. I am not confident about using different language surveys for the same types of populations in different locations. Words do have different meanings in different contexts, and the use of Iraqi Arabic with some expatriate Iraqis gave difficulty. For example, some expatriate Iraqis did not read Arabic well, or they used the same words in different ways because of living outside of Iraq for many years.
4. Using a web [wiki](#) for viewers to read, add comments, and add links to other sites was a great contribution towards a global collaborative effort. It allowed live updating continually as new information was found; I put theory, background information, and results on the wiki, giving connections to the international academic and field decision-maker communities and found new co-thinkers and publications. It has been continuously updated for two years, and has become a very useful site for research or writing on Iraq. Recently, sister pages have begun for social networks studies in Iran, Cyprus and Syria.

Further Work

1. Future surveys need to look for concepts connected in any way to foreign domination and exploitation, especially with respect to the USA as a "high-exploiter" and Russia (non-western, non-neighbor?) as a "low exploiter." If we can confirm the reputation of Russia as a strong "non-exploiter", then we may suggest that Russian personnel be tested for peace-making and for in-depth social impact projects in place of western fieldworkers.

There are also correlations between years of residence and age and factors of exploitation/domination. Perhaps we could emphasize certain types of citizens, based on demographics, as possible agents of peace for Russian fieldworkers to seek out. This needs exploration through studies of social capital and social networks to look at underlying causes and possible benefits.

2. Future work should compare samples of known community leaders (merchant/middle class) with opponents of the current government. Support of the government and profit from the return of expatriate Iraqis were related in the answer patterns. This indicates that opinions on economic stability are linked to opinions on return migration. This is where a study of economic factors and social capital may introduce new understanding of the responses to social stability questions.

The next project (2005) expands questions of identity and group membership in traditional social network analysis protocol. However, data collection is slow, and there is a great reluctance to answer survey items on tribe, money, external threats, or politics.

Recently, ten out of ten small business owners approached refused to answer any survey questions because of "being found out what they answered." This is a common issue in social networks research, in studies dealing with illegal activities or socially-unacceptable behavior.

3. Detailed information on education and vocational background must be tested for relationship to outgroup stereotyping and perceptions of threat. Responses to "Years of Education" in this survey were not standard. Some respondents answered with years of school, while some answered with how old they were when they stopped attending school. This shows the need for more training of data collectors so that answers will be standard.

4. Social networks analyses are needed to assess degrees of separation between families, clans, tribes, and communities, especially among the merchant class. The social networks must be mapped to include estimations of hub person/resource node connectedness in the merchant/middle class.

The merchant class has been singled out for attention, as it may be a social group with the most to lose by radical change in the marketplace and governance systems of Iraq, especially in the Sunni and Christian communities.

Since I did not find strong evidence of anti-foreign and anti-change opinion among those expressing either strong religious attachment or strong poverty, there is enough justification to focus future research on people with less attachment to religious identity.

I estimate that the merchant class suffered severe economic loss during the post-war riots in 2003. The merchants lost buildings to squatters, property to thieves and vandals, and then they lost income because of the massive distributions of aid that bypassed the marketplace system to distribute food, clothing, and shelter.

Some tribes demonstrated more solidarity in opposition to the ruling regimes than did others. What is the traditional relation of tribes towards central power systems? There is almost no documentation on the social systems of Iraq, either structural or functional.

5. With some four million expatriate Iraqis, not returning to Iraq, we all need to consider their needs in the repatriation and reintegration process. Social network analysis can help define the boundaries and strategies for building new lives in the old communities.

In this process, I have attempted to accommodate academic traditions of quoting quoters of others, and qualifying statements. As audacious as some of the findings in this study have been, trying to reconcile my own data with statements of philosophy and theory from the social sciences has been difficult. Therefore, I focused on what I found, and what I have experienced, and will leave it to other works to explain how this fits or does not fit with other writers' opinions.

6. Researching details of Iraqis' social systems is the logical next step. For example, why is there unresolved unrest in Falluja and among the tribes of Jumaila, Albu Issa, Shumar, and Azzawi?

And what about the "spoilers?" Leonard Wantchekon states "Spoilers are factions that believe that 'the emerging peace threatens their power, world view, and interests, and who use violence to achieve it.'" ¹⁵

Adler and Kwon state "actors' resources are a function of their location in the social structure." ¹⁶ The "spoilers" of the Iraq have resources. Those resources are found in their social networks and are related to the social connections that both facilitate and control the behavior of the spoilers.

Since the spoilers are not defined by national, ethnic, or religious identity alone, they find identity in other groups. Because the few captured "spoilers" seem to have no common megagroup identity, and they come from small, unknown groups, and many are from outside Iraq, then identifying the "bridging connectors" between those groups is a serious problem. These bridgers have power because of their role in linking groups together, and their role in many "weak links" and fewer "strong links" puts them into the category of Marwan Al-Shehhi and Mohamed Atta, the strongest nodes of the September 11, 2001, attacks. See social network analysis literature for interesting descriptions that seem appropriate.

What does that mean for scientists and analysts? It means that social systems, social networks, and the movement of social capital must be in the forefront of nation-state stabilization research. Future work should include aspects of both behavior coming from underlying norms and values and a structural support for group identity and function.

7. The work done must not be left in isolation. Findings must be discussed and debated with other social scientists, especially with scholars on Iraq and the Middle East. The wiki could better serve in this role if more traditional forums were added.

8. Some of the significant interactions are not easily explained, and there is a level of skewedness in responses to many items. Some answer patterns appear in a Pareto or fat-tail or power-curve, but these terms in this context are descriptive, not explanatory.

For example, in personal conversation with me, Iraqis indicated that religious identity was not too important, yet 91% of those surveyed replied that religion was important and only 8% replied that religion was not important to them.

9. There is need for intensive research among expatriate Iraqis to address some of the particular concerns of repatriating Iraqis. There is need also to study levels and intensity of integration of expatriates into other cultures, as the amount of personal change will affect the ability to reintegrate into their (or their parents') home communities in Iraq.

10. Since social networks are part of ongoing instability in Iraq, there must be analysis of how information, norms, and values are communicated in Iraq, and how some specific places may have approaches to governance and conflict resolution that do work.

The new survey work includes elements of social capital and social networking that may open new sets of questions for conflict resolution. Adler mentions that social ties of one kind have influence in other social contexts¹⁷, and therefore, "appropriability"¹⁸ is a concept important to my own view of society in Iraq. This includes long-term study on acculturation and integration of expatriate Iraqis in foreign cultures and how that might affect their reintegration into home communities. It may be that successful integration into

other cultures will relate to the probability of successful reintegration into home communities.

11. During the course of this project, there has been little, very little, involvement by Iraqi scientists or philosophers. I initiated contacts with Iraqi scientists, academics, journalists, and web forums, yet with very little response to my request to learn of other social science work in and among Iraqis. Even personal visits with Iraqis yielded no contributions or opportunities for collaboration.

For changes in the structural systems of Iraq's social networks, local ownership and leadership must emerge. I want to serve that process if possible, to learn what could be done to build peaceful, civil society in Iraq.

There are many agencies with intentions of social engineering in Iraq. To separate the honorable from the others, there must be a recognition and affirmation of norms and values, which promote healthy intergroup relations. Count me in!

--JG

Appendix I. Sample of instructions given to surveyors.

"I am a researcher working for the Utrecht University in The Netherlands."

"Because a lot of Iraqi people started to settle in The Netherlands some decades ago, Utrecht University became interested in how their communities there and in their homeland help the individuals, and how the individual helps the community. In these hard times in Iraq, it is even more important to for everyone to have some people they can count on to help them.

"Would you consider to take part in this research? It is not difficult and I ask only your opinions to a few questions I have with me. It will take some 15 to 20 minutes."

If the sample-subject might ask for money for cooperating, then repeat that the only the reward you can offer is the opportunity to explain how Iraqis do take care of each other.

It is important to get answers without too much reflection by the participant. There are neither perfect answers nor bad answers. Only answers which come first to mind are important for this study.

Point out that all answers will be treated with the highest secrecy.

Absolutely anonymous protection is guaranteed by Utrecht University.

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The assessment.

It is ok if others want to listen to the surveying, and they should not interrupt, but if they are willing to wait and give their own opinions after the first person is done, that is even better.

Do not give long explanations or discussions, unless it helps to explain all answer choices.

If the person brings a strong objection: apologize and find a way to go ahead to the next questions.

If the sample-subject does not know how to give an opinion on a 4-point response-scale, try the following example to demonstrate.

Sample Question: Do you believe that Women should speak freely what they think?

"If you think that all women are allowed to say what truly is in their thoughts, then point to label where the mark is, below "Absolutely agree."

Absolutely agree	Agree	Disagree	Absolutely disagree
X	o	o	o

"If, on the one hand, you think that women are allowed to say what they think but, on the other hand, have to keep in mind that other people can become abused by their words, then point to a label where mark is, below "Agree."

Absolutely agree	Agree	Disagree	Absolutely disagree
o	X	o	o

"If you believe that women should keep quiet and only are allowed to speak out if they have permission to do so, then point to label where the mark is, below "Absolutely".

Absolutely agree	Agree	Disagree	Absolutely disagree
o	o	o	X

If still not understood, repeat the procedure, but if they cannot understand how to answer, then thank them for their time and ask if they would help find others to take a survey.

#####

I prefer the sample-respondent to point out which response is closest to their opinion, if speaking their response might be overhead by others who may not agree with that response.

Finalize the session by showing them how you put the survey into the official University of Utrecht envelope. Thank them, again, and ask who else might complete a survey.

Appendix 2, Sample of Neutral (non-primed) Survey

I r a q S o c i a l C o m m u n i t y : T y p e 2

To which Iraqi people do you belong?	<input type="checkbox"/> Arab		<input type="checkbox"/> Kurd		<input type="checkbox"/> Other
How important is it for you to be a _____ people?	Little important <input type="checkbox"/>	Important <input type="checkbox"/>	Very important <input type="checkbox"/>	Most important <input type="checkbox"/>	
How old are you?	_____ years				
How many years did you attend school?	_____ years				
How long have you lived in this place?					
How high do you estimate your total Income?	<input type="checkbox"/> Low	<input type="checkbox"/> Average	<input type="checkbox"/> High		
How many children do you have?	male		female		
How many children are you responsible for?	male		female		
To which of the religious communities do you belong?	<input type="checkbox"/> Shiite	<input type="checkbox"/> Sunni	<input type="checkbox"/> Other		
How important is it to you to be of this religion?	Not important <input type="checkbox"/>	Important <input type="checkbox"/>	Very important <input type="checkbox"/>	Most important <input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you suppose that in the future a ruler like Saddam will govern Iraq again?	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Not likely <input type="checkbox"/>	Very likely <input type="checkbox"/>	Absolutely <input type="checkbox"/>	
Will it be good or bad for your religious community if Iraq becomes divided into Arab and Kurdish parts?	Very good <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Bad <input type="checkbox"/>	Very bad <input type="checkbox"/>	
Those people from that opposing ethnic community, forced to leave the country during Saddam's rule should:	Be encouraged to return <input type="checkbox"/>	Be allowed to return <input type="checkbox"/>	First ask permission to return <input type="checkbox"/>	Be denied access to Iraq <input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you expect that the new government, in which an other ethnic community takes part, will be able to give peace and safety for all citizens of Iraq?	Absolutely <input type="checkbox"/>	Very likely <input type="checkbox"/>	Not likely <input type="checkbox"/>	Absolutely not <input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you think that all Iraqis will support the new government if an other ethnic community is part of that government?	Absolutely <input type="checkbox"/>	Very likely <input type="checkbox"/>	Have some doubt <input type="checkbox"/>	It will not get any support <input type="checkbox"/>	
Do all Iraqis of your own ethnic community have the duty to defend Iraq, even if Iraq as a whole is harmed?	Absolutely <input type="checkbox"/>	To some extent <input type="checkbox"/>	Not necessarily <input type="checkbox"/>	Absolutely less important <input type="checkbox"/>	
The countries of Iran, Turkey, Russia, and United States each have their own interests in Iraq. In your opinion, how strongly would each pursue the following interests?					
Protect Iraq's natural resources (oil) against foreigners.	Battle for it	Mildly encourage	Mildly discourage	Do nothing	
• Iran	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
• Turkey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
• Russia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
• United States	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Promote and support an Islamic Republic	Battle for it	Mildly encourage	Mildly discourage	Do nothing	
• Iran	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
• Turkey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
• Russia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
• United States	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dominate the Iraqi people	Battle for it	Mildly encourage	Mildly discourage	Do nothing	
• Iran	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
• Turkey	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
• Russia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
• United States	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you think that all Iraqi people living outside would return soon?	Absolutely <input type="checkbox"/>	To some extent <input type="checkbox"/>	Not necessarily <input type="checkbox"/>	Absolutely not <input type="checkbox"/>	

End Notes

- ¹. I, Jon, wish to thank Hub Linssen, Lead Statistician and Research Methods Consultant, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Utrecht, for his patient remedial tutoring in quantitative research, without which this project would never have come about. Success in this work is due to Hub (and to his Alena), but faults are mine. Thanks also to associates at ERCOMER for their encouragement and support.
- ². M Edwards, *Civil Society*, Cambridge: Polity, 2004, p. 4.
- ³. M Edwards, "Enthusiasts, Tacticians and Skeptics: The World Bank, Civil Society and Social Capital" <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital/library/edwards.htm>, p.1.
- ⁴. S Kaviraj, *Civil Society & its Possibilities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 17.
- ⁵. T Nelson, "Group Affect and Attribution in Social Policy Opinion" in *Journal of Politics*, May99, Vol. 61 Issue 2, p347.
- ⁶. L Drake, "Implosion of Iraq" in *Middle East Insight*, March 1996, and personal communications 7/1996.
- ⁷. A Wimmer, "Democracy and Ethno-religious Conflict in Iraq" in *Survival*, Vol. 45, no. 4, Winter 2003-04, p. 119).
- ⁸. *ibid*, p. 113.
- ⁹. P Adler, and S Kwon, "Social Capital: Prospects for a New Concept" *Academy of Management Review* 27(1), p.17.
- ¹⁰. J Glubb, *A Short History of the Arab Peoples*, New York: Dorset Press, 1969, p. 68.
- ¹¹. (*ibid*, p 275; P Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985, .p. 36.
- ¹². In Basra, I tested a repeated measures effect in combination with the priming effect. There were three versions of the survey form (ethnic primed, religious primed, and neutral). We administered the three versions of the survey to the same respondents, at one sitting, to assess if they would respond to the priming, or if they would differ in their responses to the primed versus neutral versions of the surveys. In other locations, each respondent completed only one survey form, with one of the three versions only. For reporting purposes, here and elsewhere, only the neutral-priming version of the survey was used.
- ¹³. Adler, p.37.
- ¹⁴. The KMO (0.622) and Bartlett's (.000) tests were highly significant, allowing us to assume that a factor analysis is appropriate for this dataset. Kaiser's normalization was used because all communalities are >0.6 and sample size was >250.
- ¹⁵. L Wantchekon, "The Paradox of 'Warlord' Democracy: A Theoretical Investigation" in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98, No. 1 (February 2004), p. 21.
- ¹⁶. Adler, p. 18.
- ¹⁷. *ibid*, p.20.
- ¹⁸. *ibid*, p. 37.



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