

## **Civil Society Iraq: Ethnic, Religious, and Location Influences on Outgroup Perception**

Jon Gresham\*  
April 2004

### **Abstract**

A significant research question in the immediate post-war (May 2003) environment of Iraq was: "How do Iraqis' ethnicity, religious affiliation, and location affect expressed perceptions of threat from outgroups?"

We collected 479 surveys of Iraqi opinions, in five locations in Iraq, Jordan, and The Netherlands, with a single page instrument. Religion, ethnic origin, and location alone had little direct bearing on respondents' attitudes towards outgroups or change (another type of threat) in Iraq. However, certain sets of interacting elements did reflect significant differences in perceptions of threat. For example, Shi'a Muslims of urban Basra had very different expressions towards return of expatriate Iraqis than did Baghdad residents.

A serendipitous innovation was that of publishing our research process onto a "wiki" web page where visitors could add to or change contents of the documents. The wiki live publishing helped fellow scientists, decision-makers, resource agencies, and Iraq fieldworkers participate in our project.

Why Civil Society? The term describes both behavior and social systems and provides a sociological framework from which to explore social interactions in Iraq.

Follow-up is warranted. We found, for example, that "moderate Arabs" in Iraq were the most opposed to foreign involvement and were the most opposed to expatriate Iraqis returning to Iraq. This finding is relevant to decision-makers and field workers in relief, development, and reconstruction in Iraq.

This paper describes our research process in a post-regime-change environment. I would welcome comments onto the web site: <http://CivilSocietyIraq.seedwiki.com>.

---

\* Jon Gresham is a visiting scholar at the University of Utrecht, Netherlands. His work focuses on the Cyprus-Syria-Iraq-Iran area. Special thanks are given to Hub Linssen, Assistant Professor at the University of Utrecht, with interest in cross-national comparative survey methodology.

## **Introduction**

Inter-group relations research can be conducted in the laboratory of a university; research can also be done in social networks of a multicultural city. In this study, our laboratory was the immediate post-conflict (2003) environment of southern Iraq, the refugee-filled environs of Amman, Jordan, and the immigrant communities of The Netherlands.

### **I wanted to accomplish five things in this project:**

1. Collect data immediately after cessation of war about Iraq ethnic and religious groups and their perceptions about other groups and countries that may appear as threats;
2. Examine the data for evidence of consistent surveying by the field collectors;
3. Analyze the data, testing our hypotheses about intergroup biases and looking for interesting details and correlations about the people surveyed and their expressed opinions about themselves and about others;
4. Put the findings quickly into the hands of Iraqis, United Nations and Coalition Forces decision-makers, and non-governmental organization field personnel working in and around Iraq;
5. Define the social systems context within which to place follow up studies of social networks as they affect the repatriation and reintegration into home societies of Iraqi expatriates.

## **Background: Civil Society research in this post-conflict environment**

This "Civil Society" hope for good living in peace and security in Iraq comes from the three integrated levels of civility:

1. Personal norms, morals, and values promoted as "good";
2. Associations (organized entities and informal networks) that serve in geographic, financial, political, religious interests of members, and
3. Overarching authority to secure equality before the law, secure food-shelter-clothing resources, and secure voice in shaping future physical and social ecosystems.<sup>2</sup> According to 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".<sup>3</sup> Kaviraj's historical framework: comments 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'...It was Hegel who first bifurcated the concept, but in a way whereby state and civil society functioned in his account as redescrptions of one another".<sup>4</sup>

Nation building in Iraq provides governance through just political and legal processes, and support for threat-free associations for the common good. This is the first priority for the governing council in Iraq and is the only foundation from which to deal morally with criminal actions while increasing security for non-criminals. In the absence of a strong central government (or non-state trans-religio-ethnic organizations) to guarantee equal protection under the law and equal access to resources, and with uncertainty about the status of the former president (in April 2003), security had to be based, for most people, in social networks--mostly among near kinsmen.

Without this strong foundation for the more-distant future, an "implosion" is almost certain to occur. Drake uses this term as follows. "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, we 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."<sup>5</sup> Drake goes on to state that although a synthetic overarching superstructure can be enforced, it does not do away with the underlying group characteristics, though they may be hidden from view. Since the groups are not geographically limited, a geographic identity is not present to nurture cooperation and conciliatory behavior.<sup>6</sup> Neither is there evidence of many 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.

However, the lower-level groups and "patron-client" networks are very strong, as they are the social capital resource pools to which group members have first allegiance.<sup>7</sup> A confessional-pluralist democracy is not yet evident, but 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 (CSOs)--including community-based organizations, women's rights organizations, environmental groups, think tanks, religious congregations, grass roots and indigenous peoples' movements--have always been vital partners in helping communities build their own solutions to development challenges. From debt relief to land mine movements, the ideas and energy for the global Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) campaign have come from within civil society." Government agencies see civil society organizations as groups that are not of a government, and international organizations, such as the UN, see civil society organizations as community or trans-community groups within a nation-state or within a geographic region. Within Iraq, there are multiple definitions, each with its own usefulness in defining the future of civilization in Iraq and how our research applies.

Perhaps uncivil society is defined best by what it is not, as conflict is defined by what peace is not. If, as Abraham Herschel said, "The opposite of good is not evil, the opposite of good is indifference", then is the opposite of civil society, "apathetic society"? Anti-civility implies

consensus of opposition, but apathetic implies....nothing. No hope, no action other than survival, no corporate or personal initiative.

We define color in the graphical terms of RGB (spectrums of light), an additive combination of three colors, each with 256 or so levels of intensity, in layers or channels. The "color" we see as a social community is also an additive combining of layers or channels of community members. And, the filters of time and distance give us clearer or fuzzier perceptions. And what about the invisible spectrum? I am not sure what all would fit here, but surely elements the members and viewers have of personal and group history, the perceived spirit-world, ambition, and hatred. In this way, "civil society" must include norms and values of a given community at a point in time. That is how "criminal behavior" might be tolerated in some communities more than in others--because the costs of change might not be outweighed by the benefits to a larger community. Time does not wait for social betterment to come, that prosperity may reduce anti-foreigner activity.

I use the term "Civil Society" in a multi-purpose sense to include behavior, attitudes, and social systems. This relates also to the concepts in the field of social capital, "the features of the structure of social relations that facilitate action."<sup>8</sup>

Relevant topics in readings and conversations are found in the bibliography.

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

The history of Iraq shows considerable periods of constraints on the development of a non-democratic form of government.

--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 introduced and supported state-sponsored violence against minority populations.

--The Arab conquest in the 7<sup>th</sup> 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 Kufa, Iraq, "appears to have been of a mild and kindly disposition, insufficiently ruthless to dominate so turbulent a community".<sup>9</sup> Loyal followers of Ali killed him because he was insufficiently ruthless?

--Mongol massacres in the 13<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> centuries left the land and peoples destitute of their famous irrigation systems, their literature, and their organized social systems.

--Turkish occupation--16<sup>th</sup> century, reconstructed government systems for taxation and rule by decree and power, not law.

--Britain & France drew the first political boundaries (the Sykes-Picot Agreement) deciding on the distribution of Turkish/Ottoman Empire in **1916**, with rule over Arabia, Palestine, and Mesopotamia given to the Saudi Arabians.<sup>10</sup> The new king was not considered as representing the best interests of the Iraqi people; his reign was brief.

--In 1958, pan-Arab Baathists led to Saddam and his near kinsmen as being THE ingroup; everyone else was of the absolute outgroup. There was little capacity to become a socialistic welfare state or democracy, because under the Baath, party no sphere of life was without state control. There were NO civil or private affairs. Approximately four million Iraqis left the country to seek a better life elsewhere.

--The 2003 overthrow of the Baathists was not by popular elections, and rule by law is not yet the norm.

Our Civil Society Iraq project represents the **hope** to regain rights and privileges taken away by the state.

## **Methodology Used to Test Assumptions Concerning Ingroup-Outgroup Perceptions**

### **Assumptions and boundaries:**

1. We expected limited interview time with any individual respondent due to the post-war instability, so we limited the survey to one page. Survey items included write-in answers for demographic items of age, years in residence at the location of survey, education, number of children at home, etc.
2. The survey was designed to be self-answerable for individuals with a low level of literacy.
3. Opinion items were designed to be non-threatening and as non-hostile as possible, since we did not know exactly what would happen when we began asking questions about ethnic identity, religion, Saddam Hussein, Iran, and threat concepts. We chose to use a short survey instrument, with use of indirect questions (not attention-controlled) about intergroup relations so as to avoid "politically-correct answers" possible with direct-only questions.
4. The English version of the survey form was given to two professional translators, with an emphasis on quickly producing a simple format appropriate for marginally-literate respondents. Both translators returned the completed form on paper and disk within two days. Their translations were compared and combined into one final version. The ease and speed of translation was due to their skill and to the quality of the English original.
5. Research design (an "experimental guided assessment technique") was developed, tested, and validated in research on Russian Federation outgroup perceptions by Hagendoorn, Linssen & Tumanov (2000), then adapted, tested, and validated for Iraq and Europe situations in 2003.

Intergroup studies should have consistent explanation of variance and should be useful for prediction of responses in other situations.

6. Based on previous experience (studies of ethnic relations in the Russian Federation), we developed three versions of the survey instrument: "primed" against the main ethnic outgroup, "primed" against the main religious outgroup, and a neutral version.

This allowed implicit (indirect) and explicit (direct) measures of intergroup perception.

7. Our research process approximated a "grounded theory" approach, testing both our process (what could be done in an immediate post-war situation) and our theory (what might be the expressed perceptions of threat or bias against personal, group, and national identities). This may be considered as "in-depth" and "inferential" data mining, but it comes from specific hypotheses and specific proven approaches tested previously.

8. **Specific hypotheses tested** were:

- a. Ethnic and religious identities will relate strongly and consistently, across locations, to outgroup bias
- b. Differences between Iraq and non-Iraq survey locations will reveal psycho-social constraints to repatriation and reintegration
- c. There will be differences in perceptions by Iraqis of threat or domination by the principle foreign states with interests in Iraq
- d. The presence of Saddam Hussein (out of the presidency, but with unknown location) will give uncertainty in opinions about the return of a Saddam-like government.

9. We assumed the following for our data:

- a. Data were from a "normally-distributed" population
- b. Variance of responses was homogeneous
- c. Responses were of an appropriate interval type for opinion items
- d. Responses between respondents were independent
- e. Data would have validity for explanation and prediction of intergroup relations in other contexts and other domains of inquiry

10. We wanted to test responses specifically for:

- a. Expressed perceptions of threat from ethnic and religious groups
- b. Expressed perceptions of threat from foreign powers
- c. Expressed perceptions of threat regarding the return of expatriate Iraqis
- d. Influence of demographic factors on any of the above perceptions of threat

11. We structured variables to allow control for interrelationships of ethnic and religious identity

## Surveying Process:

To find surveyors I looked for groups of young Iraqi men in both Jordan and in Basra. 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. 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.

In Baghdad, I followed a similar process, except there I joined a food distribution project to meet a larger number of people. Through them I found two eager respondents and asked them to collect surveys for me.

Surveys were completed and returned to me quickly. There were few complaints about the content of the surveys. The difficulty was in the transport of collected surveys back to me from Iraq, as there was no reliable postal or courier service.

Data was collected, translated as necessary, and entered. Analysis began with data cleaning and standardization of entries for "other ethnic group," and "other religion," and to deal appropriately with incorrectly entered items. We created additional variables as composites or recodings of original items.

## Analysis Processes

Our handling of the **research process** itself was reported onto the website, <http://CivilSocietyIraq.seedwiki.com>. The wiki contained several "pages" or areas: the basic review of literature, the current events that related to our 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. We hosted our "wiki" at <http://www.seedwiki.com> under the management of Kenneth Tyler. Choosing content over high-bandwidth graphics, we 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 emailed comments about how bad the site looked without any graphics. They are correct, and I could have designed the pages to work better.

Our **data analyses** included:

- a. Frequencies. How many people in which group(s) provided which answers
- b. Other descriptive statistics:
  1. Means (averages) and ranges of responses.
  2. Standardized (z-score) comparisons of skewness and kurtosis for normal distributions by Shapiro-Wilk tests of normal distribution for parametric data.
- c. Descriptive Cross-tabs and Pearson's Chi-square
- d. Factor analysis. Which answers interact with which other answers with significance? Correlation and pattern matrixes helped to build multi-item constructs to attempt to build predictive explanations.
- e. 1-Way ANOVA. This test allowed answers to specific question pairs concerning interaction
- f. n-Way ANOVA, ANCOVA, MANOVA. These tools provided more answers to questions about the variance and covariance of answers from the sample averages.

## Results

**Collection Locations** (71% in Iraq and 38% outside of Iraq)

The data from 412 respondents (479 surveys<sup>11</sup>) were collected in:

Baghdad (55%), Southern Iraq—Basra urban and rural areas (16%), Jordan (31%), and The Netherlands (7%).

16% of respondents used an English version of the form and 83% used an Arabic version.

### **Sample of Demographic Item Responses**

--**Ethnic Origins** of respondents were: Arab 67%, Kurd 9%, and Other 24% (write-in answers for "Other" included Christian, Asshuri, Suriani, and Egyptian).

--"How important is it to be of your ethnic origin?" was answered as Not important 13%; Important 54%; Very important 25%; and Most important 8%.

--**Religious Backgrounds** were reported as: Shi'a 35%, Sunni 23%, and Other 42%.

--"How **important** is it to be of your religious community?" was answered as Not important 11%; Important 24%; Very important 33%; and Most important 32%.

--**Income Levels** were reported as: Low 41%, Average 56%, and High 3%.

### **Sample of Opinions of Iraqis on internal affairs**

--Probability of future **regime similar to that of Saddam's**: Never 52%; Not likely 3%; Very likely 13%; Absolutely 2%.

--**Division of the country** will be:

Very Good 6%; Good 14%; Bad 42%; Very Bad 38%.

--**Return of expatriate Iraqis**:

It should be encouraged 37%; It should be allowed 38%; They should ask permission first 11%; No access should be given 13%.

--**Will Iraqi people profit from return of expatriate Iraqis?**

Absolutely 54%; To some extent 25%; Not necessarily 13%; Absolutely not 8%.

--**The new government will be able to give peace and safety.**

Absolutely 34%; Very likely 47%; Not likely 17%; Absolutely not 3%.

--**All Iraqis will support the new government:**

Absolutely 28%; Very likely 37%; Have some doubt 31%; No Iraqi support 4%.

--**Do all Iraqis have duty to defend Iraq?**

Absolutely 66%; To some extent 21%; Not necessarily 10%; Absolutely not 3%.

### **Sample of Questions about external relations and threats**

--**How strongly will the USA protect Iraq's natural resources** (oil) against foreigners?

It will: Battle for it 73%; Mildly encourage protection 13%;

Mildly discourage protection 8%; Do nothing 5%.

--**How strongly will the USA dominate** the Iraqi people? It will:

Battle for it 68%; Mildly encourage 17%; Mildly discourage 12%; Do nothing 3%.

--**How strongly will the USA promote and support an Islamic Republic?** It will:

Battle for it 11%, Mildly encourage 3%, Mildly discourage 78%, Do nothing 8%

--**How strongly will Iran promote and support an Islamic Republic?** They will:

Battle for it 24%, Mildly encourage 70%, Mildly discourage 3%, Do nothing 3%

### **Non-Parametric Tests**

Mann-Whitney U test of significance ( $p < .001$ ) indicates a difference in responses to Arabic and English versions of the survey for items:

How Important is it to be of your religion? .012

Will the division of the country be good? .001

How strongly will the USA protect Iraq's natural resources? .000

How strongly will the USA promote and support an Islamic republic? .000

### **Collinearity.**

From linear regression collinearity diagnostics, we found that all independent (predictor) demographic variables affected our regression model (all showed VIF >1.0); that is, there is a strong correlation between the independent variables as predictors in the model of relationships with dependent variables. Collinearity refers to the amount of response variance present in multiple variables.

In our search for predictive ability of one independent variable to influence behavior of a dependent variable, the close connection between the independent variables makes it difficult, or impossible to predict some other outcomes.

For example, the variables of age, income, number of children, etc., relate similarly to changes in the strength of importance of religion and ethnicity. We cannot, therefore, claim any special predictive characteristic to any one of the independent variables on the strength of religious or ethnic importance or of other opinion items. And, while we may attempt to break apart the influence of each of these independent variables on the overall dependent variable values through factor analysis, we find that it seems more straightforward to state that, based on our current sample data, the model does not seem reliable enough to predict strength of religious or ethnic identity, or any other of the opinion items based on demographics (according to the VIF collinearity diagnostics).

I recognize that there are other procedures which can yield different interpretations, but our interest was in the predictive value of demographics on the perceptions of threat. However, we did use factor analysis and component analysis in an attempt to build a more comprehensive framework of predictors from which to conduct future studies on social systems and how they may influence capacity for reintegration of expatriates into former communities.

### **Correlations**

Cross-tabulations, Pearson correlations, and regressions showed the strong relationships between respondent opinions. To explore details of apparent relationships, simple main effect analyses were performed.

#### **--Religion and Ethnicity**

Religion and importance of religion showed correlation with ethnicity (.568 and .424, respectively) and with importance of ethnicity (.138 and .215). Religious identification showed correlation with importance of religion (.272).

#### **--Location Factors**

\*Division of the country (.313 at  $p < .001$ ). In Baghdad and The Netherlands, division of the country was seen as bad by fewer respondents.

\*Those in Baghdad expressed more often that there could again be a regime similar to Saddam's.

\*Expatriate Iraqis expressed full confidence that Iraqi people would profit from return migration, but those in southern Iraq and Baghdad were more opposed to the return of migrants.

\*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", more than were Iraqis living inside Iraq.

#### **--Confidence in a new government to provide security and peace:**

\*Those who identified themselves as Shi'a expressed less trust in the government;

\*Those in southern Iraq did not express confidence in the government;

\*Those in Baghdad and Jordan did express confidence in the new government.

#### **--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 our findings would be representative of Kurdish people living elsewhere.

-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.

-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.

**Pattern Matrix** (KMO .665)

(Principal Component Analysis, Rotated Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization)

Item	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Ethnic Origin	.88				
Religious Community	.77				
Importance of Religion	.63				
Migrants Should Return	.45				
New government will give peace		.79			
All Iraqis will support new government		.66			
Iraqi people will profit from re-migrants		.56			
Division of country is good or bad			-.80		
Location of survey			.61		
Importance of ethnic origin				-.66	
Mean benefit from re-migrants				.61	
Survey type (priming)					.64
All Iraqis have a duty to defend Iraq					.63

This standardized correlation matrix shows five main clusters of factors, grouping together factors that show common relations to each other and to other factors. Factor loadings <0.4 were suppressed to build a tighter set of fewer variables. 43% of the expressed variance was contained in the first five components. Kaiser's normalization was used because all communalities are >0.6 and our sample size was >250. Our intent was to explore a population sample, not to test a theory nor to generalize to the larger population. We acknowledge that our set of variables is not comprehensive enough nor is our sample size large enough for generalization to the population.

The first three items under Component 1 appear related in Religion & Origin, although the item "Importance of ethnic origin", was not significantly related to any of the other background items. The issue of migrant return is significant in this component, possibly because the strongest expressions concerning return of migrants were among the Shi'a Arabs.

The second component may be considered as support of government and the general benefit to the Iraqi people from re-migration of those who left Iraq because of the former government.

The third construct relates division of the country along ethnic lines, and it is strongest as an expression according to survey locations, which also relates strongly to ethnic identities.

The fourth component deals with importance of ethnic origin and the mean response to both of the re-migration items.

The fifth item related ethnic and religious priming to the duty of Iraqis to defend Iraq.

The value of a component matrix is that it allows grouping of variables into like elements to compare with each other, and for development of future survey items that can focus on expanding understanding of how the social systems in Iraq are structured and how to use those structures for peaceful communication and social capital development.

### **Further analysis and data collection:**

1. Future surveys need to look for correlations connected in any way to foreign domination and exploitation, especially with respect to the USA as a "high-exploiter" and Russia 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 used for peace-making and for in-depth social impact projects in place of western fieldworkers. It also appears that there may be strong correlations between years of residence and age and factors of exploitation/domination. Perhaps we could emphasize certain age and residence-length people as agents of peace, change, and moderation for Russians to build relationships with. This needs integration with analyses of social capital and social networks.

2. Respondents who expressed greater confidence in the new government also expressed a greater duty of Iraqis to defend Iraq. This appears to be "mediated" or influenced by the degree of expectation of a future government "like Saddam's." This appears to mean that those with confidence in the government would likely be more involved in civic action, reconstruction, and anti-disruptive activities to promote peace. This needs validation by further investigation of social capital and social networks.

3. We need comparisons with samples of known community leaders (merchant/middle class) and with opponents of the current government. Support of the government and profit from the return of expatriate Iraqis were related in our component matrix. This indicates that opinions concerning economic stability and return migration are linked. This is where a study of economic factors may introduce new understanding of the responses to social stability questions.

4. We need to collect detailed information on education and vocational background and test it 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 needs clarification in training by data collectors so that answers will be standard.

5. We need information on social networks to assess degrees of separation between families, clans, tribes, and communities, especially among the merchant class. We need to map the social networks 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 we did not find strong evidence of anti-foreign and anti-change opinion among those Iraqis expressing either strong religious attachment or poverty, we have adequate justification to focus future research on those social participants 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 previous ruling regimes than did others. What is the traditional relation of tribes towards central power systems?

6. With some four million expatriate Iraqis and many thousands considering returning to Iraq, we need to consider their needs in the repatriation and reintegration process. Social network analysis can help define the boundaries and strategies for successful building new lives in the old communities. Theoretical fields may need to include social capital, social networks, social conformity, and nationalism, with a research ethos of "appreciative inquiry".

7. Researching issues of 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 do we do

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.'"<sup>13</sup> Adler and Kwon propose that a guiding principle in social capital research is that "actors' resources are a function of their location in the social structure."<sup>14</sup> The "spoilers" of the new, more civil society must have resources. Those resources are found in their social networks and are related to the social connections that both facilitate and limit the behavior of the spoilers. Since the spoilers are not defined by national, ethnic, or religious identity alone, they must then find identity in other groups. Because the few captured "spoilers" seem to have no common megagroup identity, and they come from small, unknown groups, then the "bridging connectors" between those groups are 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.

What does that mean for academics? It means that social systems, social networks, and the movement of social capital must be in the forefront of social stabilization project research. Future work should include aspects of both behavior from underlying norms and values and a structural support for collective identity and function. Social capacity building is important, and it does require time and scholarly pursuit.

8. The work done must not be left in isolation. Findings must be discussed and debated with those better acquainted with social systems research and especially with social systems in Iraq. This wiki could serve better in this role if I invested time in developing this characteristic and/or one of the other more traditional forum approaches could be nurtured.

9. Some of the significant interaction effects are not easily understood or explained. They need to be re-tested and expanded in a search for meaning. I have a new survey form that expands questions of identity and group membership in traditional social network analysis protocol.

10. There is need for intensive research among expatriate Iraqis to address some of the particular concerns of repatriating Iraqis. A new survey has been developed, but there is need also to include 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.

11. Since social networks relate to ongoing instability in Iraq, there must be analysis of how information, norms, and values are communicated among Iraqis, and how some specific locations may have acquired approaches to governance and conflict resolution that work.

The new survey form includes elements of social capital and social networking that may open new sets of questions for conflict resolution approaches. Adler mentions that social ties of one kind have influence in other social contexts<sup>13</sup>, and therefore, "appropriability"<sup>14</sup> is a concept foundational to our own view of civil society in Iraq. This includes theory-based investigation on acculturation and integration of expatriate Iraqis in foreign cultures and how that might affect their reintegration into home communities. It may be that a probability factor for successful integration into other cultures will relate to the probability of successful reintegration into home communities.

12. 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. This is a deficiency that needs to be rectified if localized, longitudinal research is to be accomplished. I have applied to join the Iraqi Academy of Sciences and have contacts now at the University of Basra, so perhaps these networks will yield partners.

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, within a framework of "Appreciative Inquiry". There are many agencies with intentions of social engineering in Iraq. To separate the

honorable from the others, there must be a discriminate consideration of norms and values which promote healthy intergroup relations.

---

### **Conclusions**

The findings from our study of perceptions of threat in Iraq include the following.

- a. Ethnic and religious identities do not relate directly to outgroup bias
- b. Different survey locations did reveal biases towards repatriation
- c. There were differences in Iraqi perceptions of threat or domination by foreign states
- d. There was considerable variance in opinions about the return of a Saddam-like

government.

Our data relates well to domains of civil society, social identity & conformity, social networks, and intergroup relations. We established that rapid data collection in an immediate post-war environment could provide a useful foundation for deeper analyses of social systems and schisms between ethnic and religious groups.

We tested survey elements for useful content and format, data collection approaches, and combinations of survey instruments for use in Iraq and among Iraqi expatriates.

We used a web wiki for viewers to read, add comments, and add links to other sites; we put the theory, background information, and results on the wiki, giving us connections to the international academic and field decision-maker communities and yielded new co-thinkers and publications.

## End Notes

<sup>1</sup> I, Jon, wish to thank Hub Linssen, Lead Statistician and Research Methods Consultant in the Faculty of Social Sciences at 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 due only to myself.

<sup>2</sup> M Edwards, *Civil Society*, Cambridge: Polity, 2004, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> S Kaviraj, *Civil Society & its Possibilities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> L Drake, "Implosion of Iraq" in *Middle East Insight* March 1996, and personal communications 7/1996.

<sup>6</sup> A Wimmer, "Democracy and Ethno-religious Conflict in Iraq" in *Survival*, Vol. 45, no. 4, Winter 2003-04, p. 119).

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, p. 113.

<sup>8</sup> P Adler, and S Kwon, "Social Capital: Prospects for a New Concept" *Academy of Management Review* 27(1), p.17.

<sup>9</sup> J Glubb, *A Short History of the Arab Peoples*, New York: Dorset Press, 1969, p. 68.

<sup>10</sup> (*ibid*, p 275; P Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985, .p. 36.

<sup>11</sup>. In Basra, we 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.

<sup>12</sup>. Adler, p.37.

<sup>13</sup>. L Wantchekon, "The Paradox of 'Warlord' Democracy: A Theoretical Investigation" in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98, No. 1 (February 2004), p. 21.

<sup>14</sup>. Adler, p. 18.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*, p.20.

<sup>16</sup>. *ibid*, p. 37.

**Bibliography** (Resources studied in preparation of this project report)

Adler, Paul and Kwon, Seok-Woo "Social Capital: Prospects for a New Concept" *Academy of Management Review* 27(1): 17-40.

Al-Khayat, Sana *Honour & Shame: Women in Modern Iraq* (London: Saqi Books, 1990).

Axelgard, Frederick, ed. *Iraq in Transition: A Political, Economic, and Strategic Perspective* (Georgetown: Georgetown University Center for Strategic & International Studies, 1986).

Baali, Fuad *Relation of the People to the Land in Southern Iraq* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966).

Barabasi, Albert-Laszlo "Architecture of Complexity", <http://www.nd.edu/~networks>, viewed 8/12/2003.

ibid. *Linked* (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

Bauman, Zygmunt *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001).

Burt, Ronald "The Network Structure of Social Capital", Pre-print for a chapter in *Research in Organizational Behavior*, ed. Robert L. Sutton and Barry M. Staw, (Greenwich. CT: JAI Press, 2000).

Chatelard, Geraldine *Working Paper No. 61*, "Jordan as a Transit Country: Semi-protectionist Immigration Policies and their Effects on Iraqi Forced Migrants" (Florence, Italy: Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, 2002).

Cooperrider, David and Srivastva, Suresh "Appreciative Inquiry in Organizational Life", <http://www.appreciative-inquiry.org/AI-Life.htm>, as reprint from *Research in Organizational Change and Development* 1, 1987, 129-169.

Couto, Richard " Taking Stock: Almost Everyone's Guide to Social Capital and Civil Society", Unpublished Article, [rcouto@fc.antioch.learningnetworks.net](mailto:rcouto@fc.antioch.learningnetworks.net), viewed 10/12/2003.

Devereux, Stephen and Hoddinott, John, eds., *Fieldwork in Developing Countries* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993).

Dobbins, James, McGinn, John G., Crane, Keith, Jones, Seth G., Lal, Rollie, Rathmell, Andrew, Swanger, Rachel, and Timilsina, Anga *AMERICA'S ROLE IN NATION-BUILDING: FROM GERMANY TO IRAQ* (Santa Monica, CA:RAND, 2003).

Drake, Laura "Implosion of Iraq" in *Middle East Insight* March 1996, and personal communications 7/1996.

Eade, D. & Williams, S. eds. *Oxfam Handbook for Development and Relief* (London: Oxfam, 1995).

Edwards, Michael *Civil Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004).

Edwards, Michael "Enthusiasts, Tacticians and Skeptics: The World Bank, Civil Society and Social Capital" <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital/library/edwards.htm>, viewed 6/04/2004.

Field, Andy *Discovering Statistics* (London: Sage, 2000)

Fukuyama, Francis *Social Capital and Civil Society* (Fairfax, Virginia: The Institute of Public Policy, George Mason University, 1999).

Glubb, Sir John *A Short History of the Arab Peoples* (New York: Dorset Press, 1969).

Hagendoorn, Louk "Ethnic Categorization and Outgroup Exclusion: Cultural Values and Social Stereotypes in the Construction of Ethnic Hierarchies" in *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 16 No. 1, 1993, 27-51.

Hagendoorn, Louk "Stereotypes of Ethnic Minorities in the Netherlands" in Phalet, Karen and Orkeny, Antal, 43-58.

Hagendoorn, Louk and Nekuee, Shervin, eds. *Education and Racism: A cross national inventory of positive effects of education on ethnic tolerance* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1999).

Judge, Robert "Social Capital: Building a Foundation for Research and Policy Development" viewed at [http://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?pagenm=v6n3\\_art\\_03](http://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?pagenm=v6n3_art_03), 4/4/04.

Kaviraj, Sudipta *Civil Society & Its Possibilities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2001).

Mackey, Sandra *The Iranians: Persia, Islam and the Soul of a Nation* (New York: Plume, 1996).

Malinowski, Jon C. *Geographic Perspectives: Iraq* (Guilford, Connecticut: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2004).

Mansfield, Peter *The Arabs* (London: Penguin Books, 1992).

Marr, Phebe *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985).

Metz, Helen Chapin *Iraq: A Country Study* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1988).

Murrell, Kenneth "International and Intellectual Roots of Appreciative Inquiry" *Organization Development Journal* 6 (4) (1998), 13-17.

Nakash, Yitzhak *The Shi'is of Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1994).

Narayan, Deepa and Cassidy, Michael F. "A Dimensional Approach to Measuring Social Capital: Development and Validation of a Social Capital Inventory" in *Current Sociology*, 49 (2), 59-102, (London: Sage, 2001).

Nordstrom, Carolyn and Robben, Antonius C.G.M. *Fieldwork under Fire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

Paley, Julia *Marketing Democracy: Power and Social Movements in Post-Dictatorship Chile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

Pareja, M. *Preparing for a Rapid Livelihood Security Assessment* (Nairobi: CARE East Africa, 1997).

Phalet, Karen and Orkeny, Antal, eds. *Ethnic Minorities and Inter-Ethnic Relations in Context* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2001).

Roe, E. M. *Policy Analysis and Formulation for Sustainable Livelihood* (New York: UNDP, 1998).



Rubin, Barry *Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982).

Schwedler, Jilian, ed., *Toward Civil Society in the Middle East* Ed. (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner: 1994).

Shaaban, Bouthaina *Both Right and Left Handed: Arab Women Talk About Their Lives* (London: Women's Press, 1988).

Tabataba'i, 'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn, translated by Nasr, Seyyed Hossein *Shi'ite Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977).

Tester, Keith *Civil Society* (London: Routledge:1992).

Turner, John *Social Influence*, (Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press: 1999).

UNDP *UNDP and Civil Society Organizations* <http://www.undp.org/cso/>, viewed 28/4/2004.

UNHCR *Preliminary Repatriation and Reintegration Plan for Iraq* (Geneva: UNHCR, 2003).

UNICEF *Child Survival in Wartime: A Case Study from Iraq* (Paris: UNICEF, 1990).

Van Ham, Carolien "Migration Decision-making? A Social Psychological Model of Return Migration of Refugees: The case of Afghans in the Netherlands", Thesis, (Utrecht, Netherlands: University of Utrecht Faculty of Social Sciences Graduate School, 2003).

Verkuyten, Maykel "Ethnic Minority Identification" in Phalet, Karen and Orkeny, Antal, eds. *Ethnic Minorities and Inter-Ethnic Relations in Context* (Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2001), 97-112.

Wantchekon, Leonard "The Paradox of 'Warlord' Democracy: A Theoretical Investigation" in *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98, No. 1 (February 2004), p. 17-33.

Westney, Lynn C. Hattendorf "Historical Rankings of Science and Technology: A Citationist Perspective" *The Journal of the Association for History and Computing* Vol. I, No. 1., June 1998, viewed at <http://mcel.pacificu.edu/history/jahc11/Westney/Westney.htm> March, 2004.

Wilbur, Ken "The War In Iraq", <http://wilber.shambhala.com/html/misc/iraq.cfm>, viewed 22/February/2004.

Wimmer, Andreas "Democracy and Ethnoreligious Conflict in Iraq" in *Survival* 45 no. 4, Winter 2003-4, 111.134.

ibid. "Dominant Ethnicity and Dominant Nationhood", (personal communication of unpublished article, 2004).